

## **COGNITIVE- BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH IN MENTORING COLLEGE STUDENTS FOR PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*A need for efficient mentoring plan for personal Effectiveness at colleges and universities is well acknowledged in the literature. Unfortunately, many mentoring programs are often quite unproductive, thus leading to a high rate of program dropouts. One of the key reasons why some programs fail is that student often lack the understanding of what the mentoring process actually entails in terms of focus. Prerequisite for personal effectiveness include self-awareness, openness which has two aspects-self-disclosure and use of feedback. In addition, perceptiveness or sensitivity to others feelings is also important. A holistic awareness and integration of Self-disclosure, openness to feedback and Perceptiveness can lead to more fruitful mentoring program for college students. The current paper studies possible scope of Johari Window framework based cognitive behavior approach in mentoring college students. The rationale of this study is to facilitate integration of mentoring program based on framework of cognitive psychological approach for self awareness among college students for enhanced personal effectiveness. A sample of 100 Undergraduates students ranging from 18 to 21 years was taken. Personal Effectiveness Scale for student was administered to measure Self-disclosure, Openness to feedback and perceptiveness. Frequency of effectiveness types (Effective, Insensitive, Egocentric, Dogmatic, Secretive, Task-Obsessed, Lonely Empathetic, and Ineffective) was obtained on the basis of the three factors. Personal Effectiveness scores of individual subject were analyzed. Across the three factors the findings clearly reflect higher frequency of openness to feedback compare to Self-disclosure and Perceptiveness. Key findings indicate Cognitive Behaviour framework can structure mentoring more scientific and professional for personal effectiveness of college students.*

Keywords: Cognitive Behaviour Approach, Self Disclosure, Openness to Feedback, Perceptiveness, College Students.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Role of Mentoring is a vital element of success in higher education [1]. Concept of Mentoring is growing its recognition across various Universities as an approach for personal and professional excellence of College students. Despite of its explicit significance in

professional and personal development of college students due to lack of widely accepted operational definition it struggles with conceptual clarity [2]. Additionally in absence of any systematic approach the outcomes of mentoring program in higher education appears inconsistent and more mentor specific adding to unmethodical process.



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A framework based approach for mentoring can indeed assure better and defined development. It is significant to note here mentoring in higher education faces additional challenges of diverse scope for application and lack of self awareness among the mentees.

The phenomenon of mentoring is not clearly conceptualized ,leading to confusion as to just what is being measured or offered as an ingredient in success. Mentoring appears to mean one thing to development psychologists, another thing to business people, and a third thing to those in academic settings [3].Role of mentoring in students academic success though globally acknowledged yet is difficult to be established in absence of appropriate defined variables.

The core of human development is accepted as the changes that takes place in a person. These changes include improved self-understanding and self-confidence. Broadly self is considered to be center of person's competence. The term 'efficacy' has been used in the sense of potential effectiveness [4].Self-efficacy i.e. beliefs in one's capacities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action to meet given situational demands [5].According to Bandura (1982) the concept of self-efficacy include judgment of one's perceived capability to perform a specific task, changeability of the judgment and the mobilization component i.e. differential performance.

Cognitive Behavior approach fundamentally rooted in motivating self analysis believes one prerequisite for personal effectiveness is enhanced self-awareness. Johari Window, developed by Luft and Ingham (Luft, 1973) is a popular model for self awareness, which is widely used. It focuses on two key dimensions for understanding the self: first is features of a person's behaviour and mode that are known to him (self) and second feature is of his behaviour that are known to those with whom he interacts (Others). Johari Window is the framework based on cognitive Psychological Approach to self discovery. [6]

deliverables for college students for self

Personal Effectiveness scale based on cognitive behaviour models gives personal effectiveness types in terms of self-disclosure, feedback and perceptiveness. Personal Effectiveness scores serves as Data thus generated was used to process work in helping students take the necessary steps to increase their personal effectiveness by experimenting with openness, and empathic functional feedback. Further when integrated with mentoring session can be used to identify ways to improve effectiveness in deficient areas. The present study has following objectives

- To identify possible scope of cognitive behavior approach in building framework for mentoring college students.
- To empirically test the significance of Personal Effectiveness variables in Mentoring founded upon cognitive behavior framework i.e. self-disclosure, feedback and perceptiveness.

#### *Cognitive Behaviour Framework for Enhancing Mentoring Effectiveness*

Personal effectiveness is unique characteristic of an individual. It capsules one's personality. Personal effectiveness facilitates individual's adjustment and function in any environment. It develops through diverse exposure in everyday living.The Johari Window is a tool designed to enable individuals to better understand their personal effectiveness and Interpersonal interactions. Cognitive behavioral approach uses questioning techniques to stimulate information gathering. This is named "Socratic dialogue" after the philosopher Socrates in around 400BC. His questioning method was for a student to elicit their own conclusions through questioning enquiry, rather than by question and answer [7]. Socratic dialogue is used to explore different points of view and perspectives by exploring other possibilities [8].

The purpose of the questioning method in cognitive behavior approach is for the individual to recognize their current thoughts, sparking the possibilities of alternative thoughts, behaviors and, ultimately, change. Fundamentally mentoring communications are also founded on the similar objective. "By definition, mentoring is a form of professional socialization where by a more experienced (usually older) individual acts as a guide, role model, teacher and patron of a less experienced (often younger) protégé. The aim of the relationship is the further development and refinement of the protégé's skills, abilities, and understanding"(p 45). [9]

Personal effectiveness has Openness as one of the most important factor. Further, Openness has two aspects-Self-Disclosure and use of feedback. In addition, perceptiveness or sensitivity to others feelings and non-verbal cues, is also important. The extent to which one shares ideas, feelings, experiences, impressions, perceptions and various other personal data with others, shows the degree of openness which is an important quality and contribute a great deal to person's effectiveness.

Openness in combination with perceptiveness and communication makes a person much more effective. But openness alone is often misunderstood as sharing everything with everyone. Destructive openness can result from an inordinate value being placed upon "telling it like it is, from insensitivity to the receipts of the communication, or from a desire to be punitive". They suggested what they call strategic openness as an alternative, that is, "determining how much open data flow the system can stand and then giving it about a ten per cent boost." [10].

Openness can be characterized as effective, first, if the person sees that sharing what he wants to share is appropriate. Inappropriate does not contribute to effective openness.

Feedback on those aspects of a person about which others are aware but the person himself does not know about may be positive or negative. Generally, there is no problem in

positive feedback. Negative feedback, however, creates dissonance with self-image, and may be threatening to the ego.

The knack to select up verbal and non-verbal cues from others indicates perceptiveness. However, like openness, this dimension must be combined with the other two dimensions for effectiveness. Perceptiveness and openness reinforce each other and, if used appropriately or inappropriately. [11]

Thereby openness turns out to be a very significant variable as it reveals the perception of an individual which helps in better understanding of Individual. During mentoring knowing about the existing personal effectiveness can guide the mentor for cognitive restructuring. As mentoring is a medium for supporting the process a self awareness and self analysis .The results of the Personal Effectiveness tool can help in bringing desirable changes ensuring sustainable mentoring relationship.

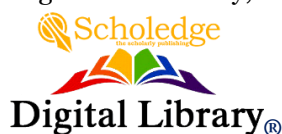
## METHOD

The present study was conducted on Undergraduate students in Gujarat, India. The total respondents comprised of 100 Undergraduate students with equal representation of males and females. Subject's age group ranged from 18 to 21 years.

For the purpose of our study, Personal Effectiveness Scale for student was administered to measure Self-disclosure, Openness to feedback and perceptiveness. Frequency of effectiveness types (Effective, Insensitive, Egocentric, Dogmatic, Secretive, Task-Obsessed, Lonely Empathetic, and Ineffective) was obtained on the basis of the three factors. The objective of the test was well explained to the subjects before administration.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

Personal Effectiveness Scale-S by Dr. Udai Pareek is meant to be used with students as it is specially adapted for them. It gives the profile in terms of self-disclosure, feedback



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and perceptiveness. Like the original scale, it contains 15 statements, 5 for each aspect. The respondent checks each statement on a 5 point scale.

The total scores on openness, feedback and perceptiveness are given, each ranging from 0 to 20. The score 11 can be used as the cut-off point for classifying the scores, on each of the three aspects, as low and high. [11]

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained was classified into the eight effectiveness types- Effective, Insensitive, Egocentric, Dogmatic, Secretive, Task-obsessed, Lonely empathic and Ineffective. Each effectiveness type was determined on the basis of a unique combination of Self-disclosure, Openness to feedback, and Perceptiveness, since each of the three factors could be described as either high or low, depending on the score obtained.

Table no.1 and Graph 1 showing the percentage of students possessing each of the effectiveness types indicates that the four most common effectiveness types among college students were Task-obsessed (29%), Secretive (23%), Insensitive (16%), and Effective (15%). The least common were Ineffective (6%), Lonely empathic (5%), Egocentric (3%), and Dogmatic (3%).

These findings bear significance in mentoring to enhance personal effectiveness, since they point out both- the potential a young person already possesses for being effective, and domains in which there is scope for improvement. Mentoring programmes for students may vary in their objectives but most of them support and encourage their academic and personal growth, as well as their social development. They also often help a young person through a difficult transitional phase. Personal effectiveness can be enhanced by fostering qualities such as self-confidence and determination, as well as by developing skills of problem solving, decision making and stress management.

According to the findings of the study, the focus during mentoring would, therefore, often be on the most frequently found effectiveness types-Task-obsessed, Secretive, and Insensitive and Effective- which made up nearly 83 percent of the sample studied.

The Task-obsessed person is high on Openness to feedback, but low on Self-disclosure and Perceptiveness. Such a person is likely to initiate change in herself/ himself but at the same time may fail in relationships because of an inability to share opinions and feelings, and also due to a lack of ability to be sensitive to the feelings of others.

The secretive student (low on Self-disclosure, high on the other two factors) gives a lot of importance to what other people and situations say about her/him, and is also concerned about her/his impact on others and their well-being, but may suffer in the long run by not letting others know what truly matters to her/him.

The Insensitive student (low on Perceptiveness, high on the other two dimensions) clearly cannot be successful for long in interpersonal relationships as she/he may appear both uncaring and manipulative to others as time goes by.

The Effective student has huge potential from the viewpoint of mentoring, being high on all three dimensions. These resources enable a person to make easy transitions to higher levels of efficiency and adaptability, always monitoring the messages obtained from the environment as well as successfully conveying personal thoughts, feelings and attitudes.

Table no. 2 and Graph 2 shows the average scores of the four most common effectiveness types among college students, on the three dimensions of the personal effectiveness scale.

On Self-disclosure, both the task-obsessed and the secretive person score low that is, 8.3 and 7.5, respectively. This dimension needs to be worked on by both the groups.

All the four groups are high on openness to feedback, which is particularly relevant in the process of mentoring.

On perceptiveness, the task-obsessed and the insensitive groups have scored 9.2 and 9, respectively, both being low scores.

These findings have two implications where mentoring is concerned. One, they prepare the mentor to anticipate the possible limitations in the mentee's personality, and to work around them while moving towards the specific goals of mentoring, such as improving grades, preventing dropouts, or even being supportive to a student with an unstable home situation.

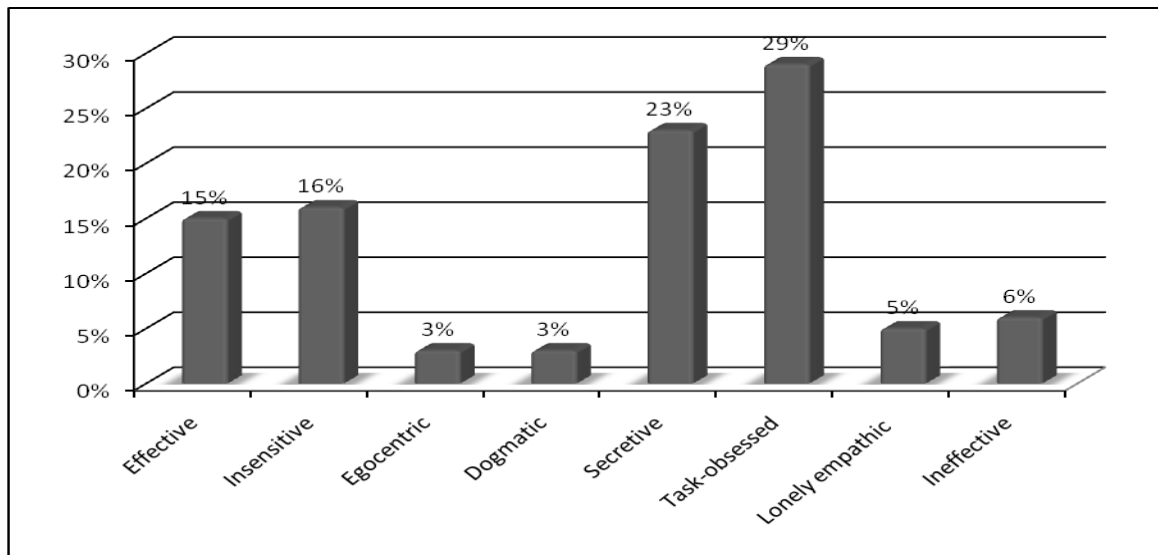
Secondly, these limitations themselves can be the focus of the mentoring programme.

Mentoring is an extremely time-consuming pursuit. Students may find it does not always fit into their schedule, or may not remain

motivated enough, and may quit midway, which perhaps puts to waste a lot of effort. For this reason, it is believed that a good match between the mentor and mentee is a must. A good beginning may, therefore, be to know where the student lies on the three dimensions of effectiveness.

**Table 1**  
**Percentage Scores Across Dimensions of Personal Effectiveness**

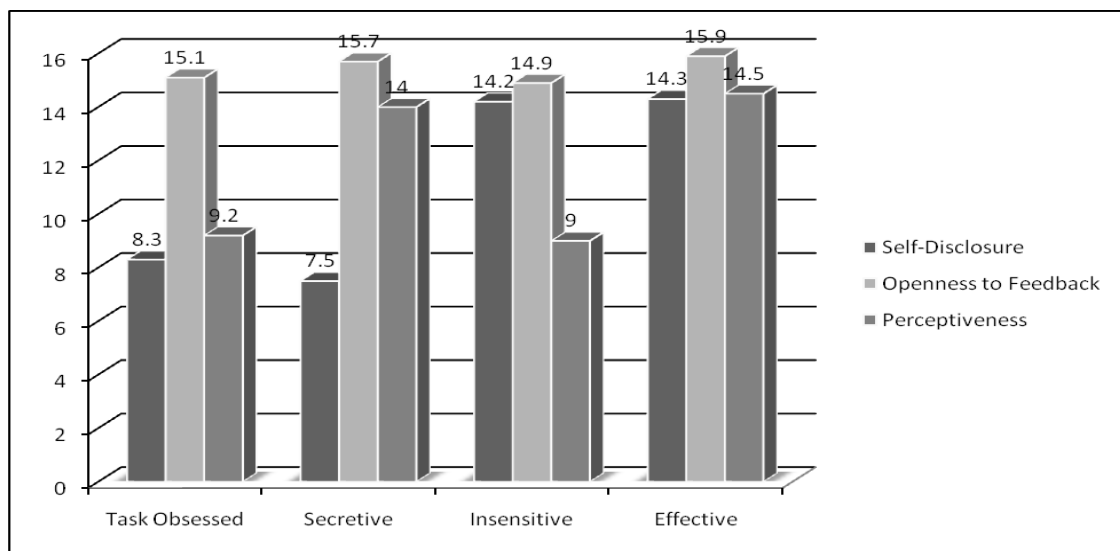
<b>Effectiveness type</b>	<b>Percentage of students</b>
<b>Effective</b>	15%
<b>Insensitive</b>	16%
<b>Egocentric</b>	3%
<b>Dogmatic</b>	3%
<b>Secretive</b>	23%
<b>Task-obsessed</b>	29%
<b>Lonely empathic</b>	5%
<b>Ineffective</b>	6%



**Graph 1-Percentage Scores Across Dimensions of Personal Effectiveness**

**Table 2 -Mean Across Effectiveness type with high frequencies**

Effectiveness Type	Self-Disclosure	Openness to Feedback	Perceptiveness
Task Obsessed	8.3	15.1	9.2
Secretive	7.5	15.7	14
Insensitive	14.2	14.9	9
Effective	14.3	15.9	14.5



**Graph 2-Mean Across Effectiveness type with high frequencies**

## PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION/ RECOMMENDATION

An explicit objective of the present study is to offer more robust and structured mentoring program for higher education through integration of Cognitive Behaviour approach with primary focus as personal effectiveness.

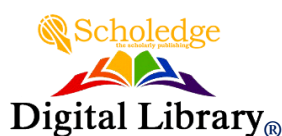
Adopting cognitive behaviour approach may be one of the ways to meet the need, however further research is needed to build the relevance of cognitive behaviour approach in mentoring program. In summary, this study is one of the few attempts to use personal effectiveness as an indicator of cognitive behaviour approach to enhance outcomes of mentoring program conducted for Higher education. Further research is needed to examine the relationship between the personal effectiveness factors and Professional success of college students.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors extend their gratitude to the respondents (College Students) without whom, this study would not have been possible.

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