

Examining the Shared Heart Accompaniment Programme of Education's (SHAPE) Best Practice Process

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ABSTRACT

Shared Heart Accompaniment Programme of Education (SHAPE), is an holistic formation plan for undergraduate students in Sacred Heart College. The Salesian System of Education has a unique way of mentoring the young by providing them with profound guidance and direction. In this unique practice every mentor tries to lead their mentees in taking responsibility for their actions and in becoming good citizens of the Nation. The present research was undertaken to study the effectiveness of the programme "SHAPE" as one of the best practices of Sacred Heart College. The study was extended to the second year undergraduate students. The random sampling technique was adopted and 50% of the total population of 1032 students were taken for the study. A scale was developed and the reliability of the instrument was found to be .799 Cronbach's Alpha. From the presented research it was revealed that the programme has catered in making a difference in majority of the students whereby providing them proper academic guidance, enabling them to develop their personality and in making them confident individuals to solve their day to day problems.

***Keywords:** Academic & Career Guidance, Personality Development, Rapport Building and Overall Effectiveness of SHAPE.*

Introduction

Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur is geographically situated in Vellore District and it is the agricultural hub. Needless to say that the students at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, hail from many villages located in and around the periphery of Tirupattur. These students are typically from rural backgrounds. When it comes to education, students from rural areas face a number of challenges. As the students of Sacred Heart College are from the rural areas, the need for guidance, mentoring and

direction is quite high. The students who get in the college are mostly first generation learners; also most of them are of low socio economic profile, below poverty lines. SHAPE is a holistic formation plan for undergraduate students in Sacred Heart College. The Salesian System of Education has a distinctive way of mentoring, which is by accompanying the young with Salesians and teachers. Faculty members play a crucial role in the success of students and at every stage of the student's life. As followers of Don Bosco, the staff accompanies the students by being present among them. The mentors direct their thoughts, words and deeds towards the positive development and reduce their attention towards the negative perspectives of life. Every mentor tries to lead the mentees to become good citizens of the Nation. The SHAPE is designed for a staff member to accompany a group of about 8 students from each year to take responsibility for their own growth. The respective staff will help the allotted students for three years in their journey of shaping themselves. It is not a substitute for the counseling programme.

Review of Literature

Ghosh, R. & Reio, T.G. (2013), in their research on "The Benefits of Serving as a Mentor", revealed that, only few studies have explored mentor outcomes, there remains limited cohesive understanding of the ways in which mentors benefit from mentoring. The findings from this study have implications for youth mentoring, specifically the need for both researchers and practitioners to consider potential mentor outcomes in more direct ways. For example, a systematic analysis of mentor benefits within youth mentoring could present a comprehensive picture of current findings as well as potential gaps that could be addressed in future research. Suruchi Pandey & Tanya Chhaila (2014), carried out a study on "The Trends in Mentoring Relationships Existing in the Indian IT industry", revealed that, while mentoring has yielded significant insights as to importance of mentoring and its outcome for the protégé, mentor and the organization. This study highlights on employee's perspective about the mentoring program and roles of a mentor with respect to the organization and with respect to his protégé. The findings of the study also gave an insight into factors that affect the mentoring relationships in an organization.

Rajesh Garg & Shobha Goyal (2017), in their article on "Lack of Research Amongst Undergraduate Medical Students in India", stated that very few research opportunities are available at under graduate level for students. The reason behind this is lack of encouragement, lack of basic infrastructure, facilities and structured mentorship programs, no extra incentives to researchers and the long journey to get academic acclaim. Another additional aspect is of lack of writing skills for biomedical publication. Additional incentives to students as well faculty members are required to foster the research environment in India. The presented review of literature denotes studies that are conducted with regard to mentoring and guidance. However, the lacunae depicted in these practices carried out are the extent to which these practices are undertaken towards the undergraduate students of arts and science colleges in India.

Methodology

Aim: To study the effectiveness of the programme "SHAPE" as one of the best practices of Sacred Heart College.

Objectives:

- To understand the effectiveness of academic guidance rendered to the students.
- To highlight the level to which students feel they have been given proper career guidance.
- To denote the extent to which students feel they have developed their personality.
- To highlight the level to which students have developed their rapport building skills.
- To ascertain the level to which students are now confident in solving their day to day problems.
- To understand to effectiveness of the mentor based on his/her guidance rendered to the students.

Universe and Sampling

The study was extended to the second year undergraduate students who have been provided guidance, support and direction by their mentor. The random sampling technique was adopted and 50% of the total population was taken for the study which constituted of 516 respondents being selected.

Research Design

Descriptive studies are aimed at finding out "what is," so observational and survey methods are frequently used to collect descriptive data (Borg & Gall, 1989). The Descriptive research design thus was adopted in the present study since the research aims in understanding, highlighting and describing the effectiveness of SHAPE as one of the best practices at Sacred Heart College.

Tools of Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed and tested using an online platform to facilitate students to provide their feedback. The rating scale used in this research is a five point "Likert" type scale. The reliability of the instrument was tested and found to be .799 Cronbach's Alpha.

Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1: Distribution of respondents with regard to their Native Domicile

S.No.	Native Domicile	Frequency (N:516)	Percentage (%)
1	Rural	324	62.8
2	Urban	42	8.1
3	Town	150	29.1

Table (1) clearly reveals that majority (62.8%) of the students from Sacred Heart College are from a rural background. Less than one-third (29.1) of the respondents were hailing from a town and a less than one-tenth of the respondents are from an urban setup respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents with regard to the Effectiveness of Academic Guidance Rendered

Effectiveness of Academic Guidance	Frequency (N:465)	Percentage (%)
Low	209	40.5
High	307	59.5

It is evident from the presented table that majority (59.5%) of the respondents felt that they have been given proper academic guidance with regard to their studies. However, (40.5%) of the respondents felt that the academic guidance rendered needed to be improved.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents with regard to the Effectiveness of Career Guidance Rendered

Effectiveness of Career Guidance	Frequency (N:465)	Percentage (%)
Low	226	43.8
High	290	56.2

The table denotes that more than half (56.2%) of the respondents revealed a high rating with regard to the effectiveness of career guidance provided by their mentors, while less than two-fourth (43.8%) of the respondents felt that they needed more guidance with regard to their future career.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents with regard to the Effectiveness of Personality Development

Effectiveness of Personality Development	Frequency (N:465)	Percentage (%)
Low	221	42.8
High	295	57.2

Table 4, states that more than half (57.2%) of the respondents felt that they have benefited from the personality development classes conducted by their mentors, while less than two-fourth (42.8%) of the respondents revealed a low rating with regard to the same.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents with regard to the Effectiveness of Rapport Building Skills

Effectiveness of Rapport Building Skills	Frequency (N:465)	Percentage (%)
Low	223	43.2
High	293	56.8

The presented table states that more than half (56.8%) of the respondents have developed their rapport building skills and can now relate to their teachers, friends and peers in an effective manner. Less than two-fourth (43.2%) of the respondents stated that their rapport building training administered through their mentors needed to be improved.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents with regard to the Effectiveness of Problem Solving Skills

Effectiveness of Problem Solving Skills	Frequency (N:465)	Percentage (%)
Low	252	48.8
High	264	51.2

It is evident from the above presented table (13) that, a little more than half of the respondents stated that SHAPE has helped them to deal with their day to day problems and develop effective problem solving skills. Less than half (48.8%) of the respondents revealed a low rating with regard to the same.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents with regard to the effectiveness of the mentor based on his/her guidance rendered to the students.

Effectiveness of the Mentor	Frequency (N:465)	Percentage (%)
Low	208	40.3
High	308	59.7

From the above presented table it is evident that majority (59.7%) of the respondents felt that their mentor provide resourceful and effective guidance with regard to the SHAPE Programme, while (40.3%) of the respondents differed with regard to the same.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents with regard to the Overall Effectiveness of the SHAPE Programme

Overall Effectiveness of SHAPE	Frequency (N:465)	Percentage (%)
Low	223	43.2
High	293	56.8

From the presented research undertaken to study the effectiveness of SHAPE as one of the Best Practices of Sacred Heart College, it is revealed that more than half (56.8%) of the respondents stated that they have benefited from the aforesaid programme. The table further reveals that (43.2%) of the respondents felt that the programme could be still improved. While, understanding the composition of the programme, it is revealed from previous analysis presented in table 1, that majority of the students are from a rural background. On analyzing effectiveness of the programme, it is evident that SHAPE has catered in making a difference in majority of students whereby providing them proper academic and career guidance, enabling them to develop their personality and improve on their effective rapport building skills and in making them confident individuals in enabling them to solve their day to day problems.

Findings

The presented study clearly highlights that SHAPE has enabled, majority of the students acquire proper academic and career guidance in making them employability ready. It has further enabled students to develop their personality with effective rapport building skills and problem solving skills. SHAPE as a method of providing personal guidance, direction and facilitating self-efficacy has enabled students to gain more confidence, solve the personal problems, become employability savvy and better citizens of our nation.

Conclusion

As the students of Sacred Heart College are from rural areas, the need for guidance, mentoring and counselling is quite high. The students who get in the college are mostly first generation learners; also most of them are of a low socio economic profile and below poverty line. One of the best practice of Sacred Heart College is that on identifying students with academic, psychological and emotional setbacks with the help of the SHAPE Programme, the Seeding Hope Counselling Centre further incorporates these students by providing them with adequate counselling. UG students are given individual orientation about counselling in the beginning of the semester, which creates awareness and enable them to build a rapport with the counsellor. Students those who have arrears are given special counselling. Students who for reasons like, fear of English, inferiority complex, poor body image, low self-esteem etc. often have problems with sustaining in the college. These students either perform poor in their subjects, or are most of the time absent or in worst situation want to discontinue their studies. Students with such issues are also identified through SHAPE (Shared Heart Accompaniment Programme of Education). This approach has helped so many students to cope up with their studies and reduced the rate of drop outs in the college and the state at large.

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