Stress Free and High Self-Esteem: Approaches of Motivation towards Teachers and School Students

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the paramount importance of teachers’ and students’ motivation in secondary school level. This is a descriptive and analytical study on issues in motivation from teachers’ perspectives, based on a qualitative study. The study investigates the relationship between teachers’ stress free and high self-esteem as approaches to motivate themselves and their students. Stress and low self-esteem are assumed to have a significant link to maximize teachers’ difficulties in dealing with students in school. Therefore, to have stress free and high self-esteem is important for teachers to motivate themselves to optimize their teaching performance. The current study also investigates the effects of these approaches on students’ motivation to increase their school’s achievement. A semi-structured interview method was conducted to two teachers in one International School in Malaysia. The study found that stress free teachers are able (1) to understand and to deal with their own problems, (2) to involve in school’s activities with students, (3) to perceive their tasks as important and to handle tasks easily, (4) to perceive their job as significant for themselves and others, (5) to understand and deal with students’ problems, (6) to perceive students as capable in resolving their study problems, and to (7) control their emotion. The study also found that high self-esteem teachers are able (1) to manage their classes, (2) to deliver their lessons, (3) to organize their work, (4) to evaluate students’ performance, (5) to perceive students’ differences and to work with their differences. The study also revealed that teachers perceived difficult students as challenges to produce strategies to cope with their problems. The study indicated motivation among teachers whose stress is perceived as a challenge in teaching and learning process. The study also indicated motivation among teachers with high self-esteem to perform their duty and responsibility at their optimal level in school for the purpose of students’ motivation.

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1. Introduction

Teachers’ motivation is one major influential factor to students’ achievement. Numerous researches have been dealing with teacher’s motivation for better academic achievement among students. The relationship between stress and low self-esteem and academic achievement is reported in a large number of studies (Marsh, 1995; Hay et al.,

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The theories of stress and self-esteem have been for decades discussing on the different elements of people’s life and its consequences. Selye (1974) defines stress as non-specific response of the body to any demand. He terms the theory as General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) which refers to stress as an event that threaten an organism well-being that links to a three-stage bodily response, namely, alarm, resistance and exhaustion stage. He further explains that when stress presents, the individual appraises and copes with the stress to reach the goal of adaptation. Selye’s theory of stress supports the current scientific research of stress which supports many previous theories including James-Lange theory of emotion with the fight of flight mechanism or response to stimuli encountered by an individual as well as Lazarus theory of cognitive appraisals. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) emphasize the theory of stress on two things; the production of stressor and the individual’s response subjected to the stressor. These two processes lead to Cognitive Appraisal theory. They explain that stress is a psychological and physical response to the stimuli that alters the body’s equilibrium. They further stated that stress is the result of cognitive appraisal towards the stimuli or event. This cognitive appraisal itself is the result of the two combinations of emotion and physiological arousal. Aamodt (2007) argued that stress occurs when physiological and physical reaction produce respond to certain life events or stimuli.

Meanwhile, Self-esteem is crucial to mental and social well-being, it influences aspirations, Personal goals and interaction with others. Heatherton and Polivy (1991) stated that self-esteem is based on three main sources, namely, Self-Evaluation, Social Skill and Appearance, and Social Value. This means that people need to evaluate themselves to show their potential in society and to satisfy themselves. According to Branden (1987), self-esteem is the sum of self-confidence; a feeling of personal capacity, and self-respect; a feeling of personal worth. It exists as an import of the implicit judgment that every person has of his ability to face life’s challenges, to understand and solve problems, and their right to achieve happiness, and be given respect.

Motivation is an influential predictor of relevant outcomes, such as academic achievement or exercise behaviour, Hagger and Chatzisarantis (1998) and other successful of life. Therefore, Self-esteem has been conceptualized as an outcome, motive, and buffer, but there is no overall theory of self-esteem. Identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979) from this theory can provide a theoretical framework for the integration of the various conceptualizations of self-esteem. It suggest that self-esteem is an outcome of, and necessary ingredient in, the self-verification process that occurs within groups, maintaining both the individual and the group. Besides many dimensions which contribute to the otherwise condition, stress and low self-esteem are the two interrelated variables that are assumed to lead to low level of motivation, thus resulting in low level of achievement among teachers. Therefore, the current study investigated the perception of teachers on their level of motivation to students’ achievement both in academic and conduct.

2. Stress and Teachers Motivation

The current study investigated teachers’ perception on their motivation. The results of the study suggested a profound and remarkable consideration for other educators to dedicately continue their work in educating the students and motivating themselves. Stress and teachers motivation are interrelated. Stress in the workplace indicates failure to continue work mentally, physically and emotionally. As Evers et al. (2004) reported, teachers play a valuable role in helping children grow in academic and social life. Similarly, Scott and Dinham (2003) examined teacher’s satisfaction and they found that it is positively related to student achievement and personal efficacy. Stress occurs at any moment at all. The occurrence of stress definitely depends on stress provoking stimuli or event. If a teacher found disturbing condition due to many identified and unidentified causes such as school’s management, students’ behaviour, peers’ influences, leaders’ dictatorship, and attitude problem, then the condition leads to less or absent of high qualified performance. In fact, the process of providing education to the students is dependent on the great performance of teacher. Motivation impacts teachers’ performance and that is increased in presence of resources and positive personality characteristics and vice versa. On the other hand, teachers are not able to perform efficiently in the presence of stress. Their motivation and job satisfaction decreases by presenting
unwanted behaviour such as violence at work. As a result stress and motivation are closely correlated and in fact they are two sides of the same coin.

3. Self-Esteem and Teachers Motivation

The fourth step of Maslow theory (Maslow, 1943) discusses self-esteem which focuses on confidence and acceptance. If a person has high self-esteem, s/he is more likely to try new things, develop closer relationships, continue self-confidence, and remain flexible. Parents and teachers who create an atmosphere that is characterized by acceptance and freedom from anxiety tend to promote the high self-esteem, having limits and some regulation, having the opportunity to explore. Branden (1969) states that self-esteem is an essential human need that is vital for survival, normal and healthy development. It arises automatically from a person's beliefs and consciousness, and occurs in conjunction with a person's thoughts, behaviours, feelings and actions. He defines self-esteem formally as “the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and as worthy of happiness”. He consequently proposes that self-esteem relies upon various internally generated practices when anyone can individually nurture and support self-esteem. A high self-esteem teacher is a teacher who can control and evaluate situation in any circumstances. Teachers with high self-esteem tend to focus more in their tasks or job assigned, manage the problems well and evaluate the situation based on what he they perceive positively (Branden, 1994).

4. Research Methodology

The current study is obviously subjective in its nature whereby the study’s focus is the perception of teachers towards their students. Semi-structured interview is considered as a remarkable method in qualitative research to deeply lift up the hidden insights of a particular informant. Taylor and Bogden (1998) stated about the importance of having qualitative research whereby it involves individual’s own expression and is valuable for the research purpose. The current study focused on the teachers’ perception of teachers towards their own motivation to improve or to help students’ achievement. Two senior teachers, age is 38 and 45 with the experience of 10 and 15 years of teaching, from one International school in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, were selected to participate in this study on teachers’ stress and self-esteem to increase motivation and students’ achievement.

5. Result

As the current study deals with teachers’ perception towards their own motivation to increase students’ motivation and achievement, it is important to analyze the interview prescribed earlier. The perception of two teachers was expressed during interview session and recorded using USB to transcribe and to produce main ideas from the perception to find the final results in general themes provided by the researchers. The study found that stress free teachers are able (1) to understand and to deal with their own problems, (2) to involve in school’s activities with students, (3) to perceive their tasks as important and to handle tasks easily, (4) to perceive their job as significant for themselves and others, (5) to understand and deal with students’ problems, (6) to perceive students as capable in resolving their study problems, and to (7) control their emotion. The study also found that high self-esteem teachers are able (1) to manage their classes, (2) to deliver their lessons, (3) to organize their work, (4) to evaluate students’ performance, (5) to perceive students’ differences and to work with their differences. The study also revealed that teachers perceived difficult students as challenges to produce strategies to cope with their problems. The study indicated motivation among teachers whose stress is perceived as a challenge in teaching and learning process. The study also indicated motivation among teachers with high self-esteem to perform their duty and responsibility at their optimal level in school for the purpose of students’ motivation.

6. Conclusion

Teachers are the primary source of knowledge for students. When teachers experience stress in the workplace they tend to decrease self-esteem and have no confident to perform the task. Therefore, it is important to minimize teachers’ stress to gain teachers’ motivation in order to be fully functioning in teaching as to increase students’ motivation and achievement. The current study provides readers significant results of research and the interview
results in remarkable analysis of transcription to produce themes from teachers’ perception. However, due to limited pages of report, the analysis cannot be shown here. The study is beneficial for educators, nevertheless it is nor for generalization. The study is important for further research to focus more on stress and teachers’ performance. Future study of stress and motivation can also be from students’ perspective.

References


