

The Roles of Self-efficacy Beliefs and Teacher-Student Relationship (TSR) in Student Engagement

Perspectives from Normal Stream Students

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KEY IMPLICATIONS

- A focus to direct teacher support towards building students' self-regulatory capacity to master school-related work can strengthen student efficacy and related competency outcomes.
- Efforts should focus on strengthening students' emotional bonding with the school as this sense of identification fosters their resolve to 'hang in' when faced with school-related challenges.

BACKGROUND

Innovative instructional practices alone are insufficient to bring about desired academic and behavioural changes in lower-achieving students. As such, equalizing educational opportunities does not necessarily equalize the desired educational outcomes for these students. Schools need to maximise their potential by paying closer attention to motivational factors that engage these students productively.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study sought a deeper understanding of affective and cognitive factors that contribute to the purposeful engagement of lower-achieving

students. These factors provide avenues through which perceived teacher support and personal efficacy can work to foster and strengthen their learning and developmental competencies (Chong, et al., 2005, 2010).

KEY FINDINGS

A caring school culture does more than convey care to the students. Schools that work at strengthening students' emotional bonds with the school help them "hang in" when faced with school difficulties. At the class level, students' perception of teacher support and their efficacy to manage schoolwork effectively work through instructional efforts aimed at strengthening their self-regulatory capacity to shape competencies related to positive development and learning. These competencies include goal setting, emotional regulation, developing future educational aspirations, academic buoyancy and behavioural engagement (Chong, et al., 2004).

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

Implications for Practice

Teachers with good student support can use this influence to help them to master cognitive skills instrumental for academic success. Such mastery experiences strengthen the latter's self-efficacy to manage and do well in their studies.

Implications for Policy and Research

Professional Development (PD) training on Teacher-Student Relationship (TSR) and school curricular activities should sharpen their focus in seeking to promote the engagement of lower-achieving students.

Proposed Follow-up Activities

It is essential that teachers teaching the Normal streams be well supported in schools to mitigate the effects of burnout and turnover intention. This is particularly important for form teachers who follow their classes through the entire four years of school.

POPULATION

Eleven schools with 3778 lower secondary students from Express and Normal streams.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Student self-reported surveys were used. Express stream students were included to provide for baseline comparisons.

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