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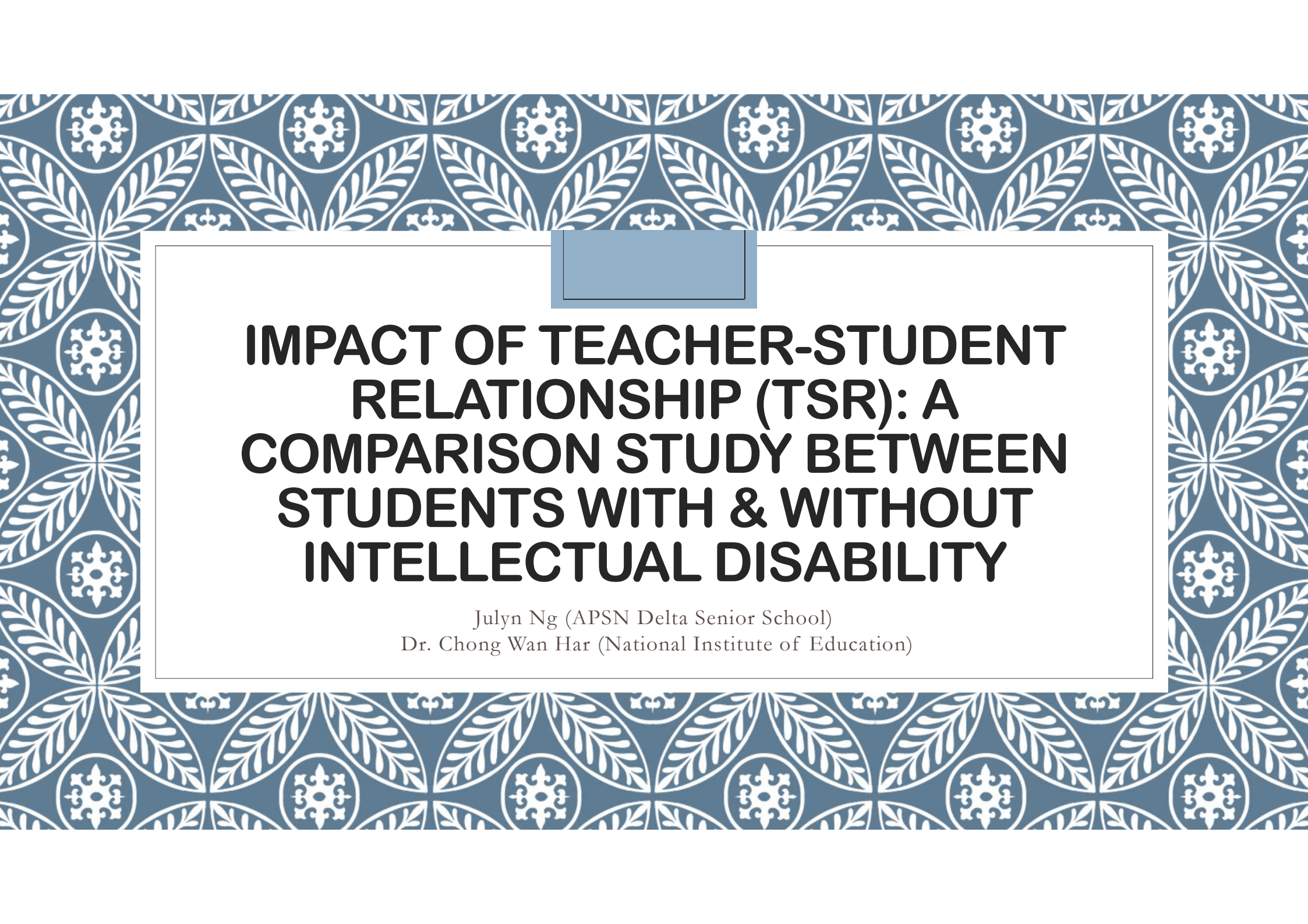
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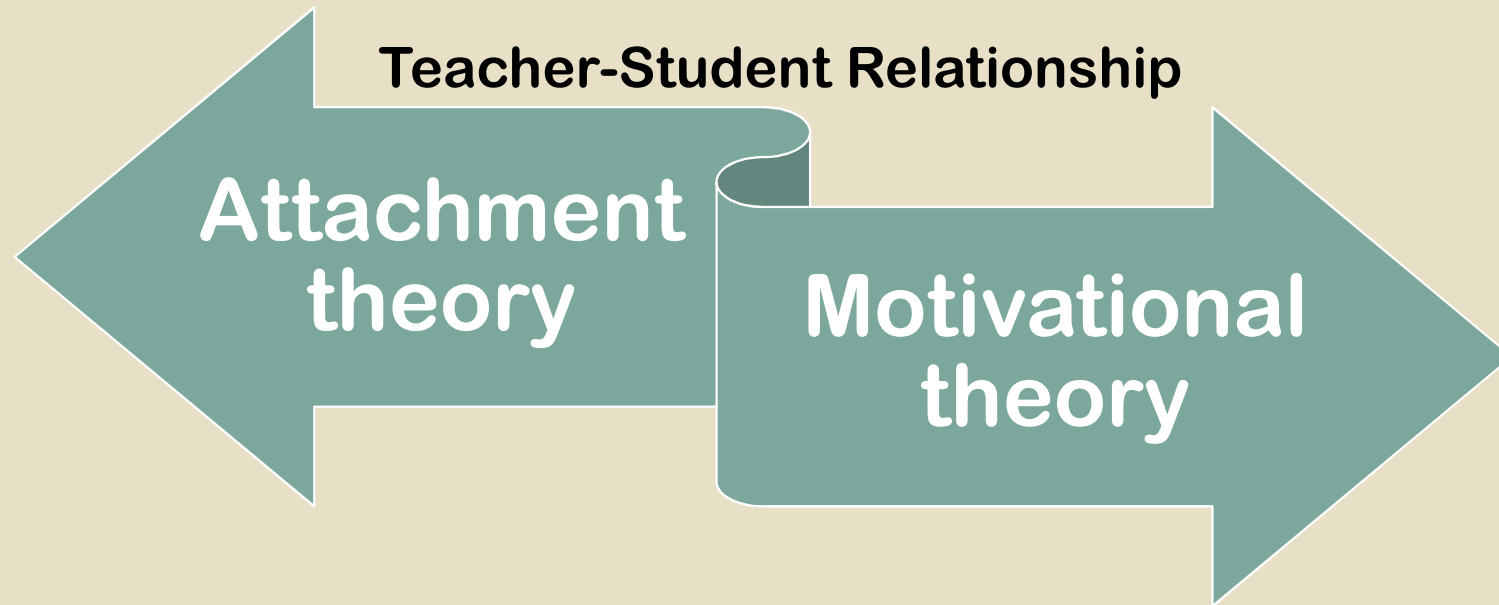
IMPACT OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP (TSR): A COMPARISON STUDY BETWEEN STUDENTS WITH & WITHOUT INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

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Overview

1. Literature review
2. Rationale and Significance of this study
3. Research Questions
4. Methodology
5. Results
6. Discussion
7. Implications and Suggestions
8. Limitation & Future Directions

Literature review



Literature review

- According to the Attachment theory, teachers become key adult figures to whom children develop various degrees of attachment to.
- Warm and secure relationships with teachers provide children with a secure base and resources to explore their school environment (Howes, 2000).
- The degree of closeness with teachers was significantly correlated to students' academic performance, attitude and engagement in school (Birch & Ladd, 1997).
- It was argued that the closeness with teachers allowed students to be more open and trusting to seek help and guidance from their teachers, leading to more appropriate and helpful behaviours in school.

Literature review

- Motivational theories view teachers as one of the significant factors in influencing students' level of motivation in school.
- Murdock and Miller (2003) found that higher quality of teacher-student relationship predicted higher level of motivation and teachers had a stronger impact on students' motivation, in comparison to parents and peers.
- In a meta-analysis of 99 studies, Roorda et al. (2011) reported strong association between teacher-student relationship and academic performance.
- Poorer relationships with teachers led to less motivated students-to engage in school, causing poorer academic performance.
- Being unable to relate well to teachers may diminish students' intrinsic motivation to perform in school (Hughes et al., 1999).

Literature review

Essential dimensions in teacher-student relationships:

1. Presence of Instrumental help
2. Level of satisfaction with the teacher-student relationship
3. Presence or absence of conflict

Literature review

1. Presence of Instrumental help

- Willingness of teachers to provide help or advice and encouragement.
- Students develop a sense of relatedness towards teachers who care and are interested in interpersonal dealings with them (Ang, 2005).
- They are more likely to pursue goals valued by teachers, such as behaving well and be more motivated to learn and achieve in school (Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wentzel, 1994).
- Teachers could have provided students with an internalized resource which in turn, enabling them to regulate their own academic behaviour and to develop positive beliefs and attitude about self as learners (Baker, 2006).

Literature review

2. Level of satisfaction

- Sense of being liked or accepted by teachers
- The extent of affection, attunement, dedication and dependability by teachers influences the way students assess if their needs are met (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).
- Being liked and accepted by teachers are positively related to students' school related adjustment (Wentzel, 1994).
- Pursuit of academic goals was positively related to teachers' acceptance (Davis, 2003).

Literature review

3. Presence or absence of conflict

- Lack of nurturance or use of critical and negative feedback negatively affect students' adaptive functioning (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).
- Students prefer teachers who provide constructive feedback and practice adaptive communication styles than those who provide harsh and critical feedback as well as those who yell and interrupt (Wentzel, 2003).
- Conflictual teacher-student relationship has been consistently associated to school adjustment difficulties (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Palermo, Hanish, & Martin, 2007).

Rationale

- Previous studies conducted on teacher-student relationships focused primarily on students from the West studying in school for typically developing children. Very few studies were conducted in the East, especially with students with special needs.
- This study sampled participants from both mainstream and SPED sectors as it will enable valuable comparison of the impact of TSR between the 2 student profiles.
- As Singapore has strong emphasis on education, the findings from this research may have direct implication on the focus of training for both mainstream as well as SPED teachers.

Research Questions

1. Do students with and without ID experience teacher-student relationship (TSR) differently?
2. Which domains of TSR best predict behavioural adjustment of students with and without ID?
3. Which domains of TSR best predict socio-emotional adjustment of students with and without ID?

Methodology

- Two main comparison groups – 200 students from a mainstream secondary school and 164 students from 2 special education (SPED) secondary schools.
- Comparable group in term of age range.
- Data obtained from mainstream secondary school was a secondary data.
- Data collection in the SPED schools was done through survey questionnaires in a group format. Each group administration took about 45 minutes to an hour.
- Profile of student from SPED school
 - IQ range from 50 – 70
 - Mild intellectual disability

Demographic (N = 364)

	Mainstream Secondary School (n = 200)	SPED Secondary School (n = 168)
Gender		
Male	57.5%	58.5%
Female	42.5%	41.5%
Ethnicity		
Chinese	60.0%	54.9%
Malay	36.0%	39.0%
Indian	1.0%	5.5%
Eurasian	.5%	-
Others	2.5%	.6%

Measures used

1. **Network of Relationships Inventory (NRI; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) – 12 items**
 - > Assesses perceived teacher-student relationship on these dimensions:
(1) Support, (2) Satisfaction, (3) Instrumental aid and (4) Conflict
2. **Behavioural Engagement Questionnaire (BEQ; Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007) – 9 items**
 - > Assesses students' behavioural adjustment in school
 - > Three behavioural dimensions:
(1) Attendance, (2) At-risk behaviour, and (4) School preparation
3. **Personal Strengths Inventory (PSI; Liao, Chow, Tan, & Senf, 2011) – 4 items**
 - > Assesses students' socio-emotional adjustment in school

RESULTS – (1) Do students in SPED and non-SPED schools experience teacher-student relationship differently?

	Mainstream Secondary School Mean (SD)	SPED Secondary School Mean (SD)	t	df	r
Network of Relationships Inventory (NRI)					
Support level	2.38 (.97)	2.93 (1.11)	5.05*	362	.26 [^]
Instrumental help level	2.84 (.98)	3.79 (1.15)	8.40*	362	.41 ^Y
Satisfaction level	2.99 (1.03)	4.15 (1.10)	10.27*	362	.48 ^Y
Conflict level	1.93 (1.01)	1.64 (.83)	2.92*	362	.15 [^]
*p < .01, [^] small effect size r > .10, ^Y medium effect size r > .30					

Generally, students studying in SPED schools reported **better** TSR.

They are more likely to turn to their teacher for support and rely on their teachers for instrumental help.

They also reported lesser conflict with their teachers.

Overall, they are more satisfied with their relationships with teachers in comparison to those in mainstream school.

RESULTS – (2) Which domains of Teacher-Student Relationships best predict behavioural adjustment of students with and without ID?

Variables	Mainstream Sec School			SPED Sec School		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Support level	.02	.07	.03	.02	.04	.04
Instrumental help level	.07	.08	.11	-.03	.04	-.07
Satisfaction level	-.15	.07	-.24*	-.07	.04	-.16
Conflict level	.18	.05	.29**	.25	.04	.42**
R ²	.13			.26		
F	7.58**			13.87**		
* <i>p</i> < .05, ** <i>p</i> < .01						

Conflict was a significant predictor for students' behavioural adjustment in both school settings.

Additionally, **level of satisfaction** was also another significant predictor.

Conflict level contributed 26% of the variant for SPED school compared to 13% in the mainstream school.

RESULTS – (3) Which domains of Teacher-Student Relationships best predict socio-emotional adjustment of students with and without ID?

Variables	Mainstream Sec School			SPED Sec School		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Support level	.01	.11	.01	-.10	.10	-.09
Instrumental help level	-.15	.12	-.15	.00	.10	.00
Satisfaction level	.27	.11	.29	.25	.10	.23*
Conflict level	.02	.09	.02	-.18	.11	-.13
R ²	.04			.08		
F	2.01			3.41*		
* <i>p</i> < .05, ** <i>p</i> < .01						

The results showed that TSR was a significant predictor of students' socio-emotional adjustment **only** among students in the SPED school.

Specifically, only **level of satisfaction** significantly predicted students' socio-emotional adjustment in school.

Teacher-Student Relationship seemed to be a better predictor for behaviour as compared to socio-emotional adjustment.

DISCUSSION

- Students studying in SPED schools reported **better** TSR than those in mainstream school.
- This finding contradicts existing research.
- Current state of research indicated that students with special needs have poorer teacher-student relationships as compared to their typically developing peers (McIntyre et al., 2006; Eisenhower et al., 2007; Blacher et al., 2009; Demirkaya & Bakkaloglu, 2015).
- Two plausible reasons:
 - Class ratio
 - Differing education demands

DISCUSSION

- **TSR Conflict contributed 26% of the variance in explaining behavioural adjustment of students in SPED school as compared to 13% in the mainstream school.**
- **The findings is in line with current research that conflictual teacher-student relationships are closely related to poorer students' adjustment in school.**
- **A possible explanation is the limited repertoire of problem solving skills amongst SPED students. As such, they may have the tendency to express themselves through maladaptive behaviours such as disengagement, avoidance, and anger. Further studies would be useful to verify this link between behavioural adjustment and problem-solving and coping skills of SPED students.**

IMPLICATIONS

- The findings seemed to suggest that the quality of teacher-student relationships can have direct impact on students' adjustment in school, particularly with respect to behavioural adjustment.
- This implies that training for teachers should look beyond equipping teachers with just instrumental assistance and support capabilities.
- Teachers in SPED settings may consider focusing more on strengthening students' coping and problem solving capacity.

LIMITATIONS

- **All data collected were based on students' self-reports. Future studies could consider having teachers' account as well as other measures such as observation.**
- **As data were collected through personal survey in students' respective schools, it was possible that there may be inaccurate report of responses.**
- **Future studies could consider other ways of gathering data such as face-to-face interview or behavioural observation.**

Future directions

- As there is rising number of students with special needs in mainstream schools in Singapore, research can be extended to this group of students to explore in what ways their TSR experience are similar and different from their peers in the same mainstream and SPED schools.
- With more students in inclusive classrooms, training for teachers may need to focus on teaching them strategies to foster students' conflict management and resolution skills.

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THANK YOU

SUGGESTIONS

- 1. Communicate your expectations clearly to students from the start**
- 2. Understand the needs of your students and be attuned to them**
- 3. Be aware of personal values and individual differences**
- 4. Demonstrate respect and acceptance towards students**
- 5. Be mindful of the quality of feedback**