

Teacher-Student Relationships Aid to Develop an Inclusive Learning Environment for Students with Depression

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Abstract- Education has clearly become a motivating factor in moving the world towards knowledge innovation. In order to identify the depression problem faced by the students in their learning activities teachers should take more attention towards these students. This study examined the factors that influence students to get depression and how teacher-student relationships aid to develop an inclusive learning environment among students. The secondary data collection method has been applied in the research and data was gathered from secondary sources, mainly journals. The study concluded that there are many factors influenced students to get depression and teachers should play in an essential role to develop an inclusive learning environment among students in order to mitigate their depression. As a result, this study recommended that to introduce new training programs that guide teachers on how to adapt and handle the changes needed to make the learning environment inclusive. And also, schools should arrange regular workshops for students on stress management, time management, assertive training, and communication skills.

Indexed Terms- Depression, Teacher-student relationships, Inclusive Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Depression is considered to be the leading psychiatric disorder among young students and is a major risk factor for students to failure their academic achievement. There are many factors that influence students to get depression such as pressure to succeed in academics, stressful life events, medications, and medical problems, socio-economic difficulties and issues of social support experienced by the learners who have been shown to predispose them to depressive symptomatology. Teacher-student

relationships are essential to support the student toward their academic performance in classroom activities. And many teachers are already aware of the significance and power of teacher-student relationships. This understanding stems from direct interactions with students who respond positively to increased personal attention and support from teachers. Thus, Teachers should create an inclusive learning environment for students with depression. Inclusion in the learning environment means adopting a novel structure in the schools, classrooms, and in teaching strategies used by the teachers to allow for the participation of all learners. The research I propose to do is of great importance as it examines the factors that influence students to get depression and how teacher-student relationships aid to develop an inclusive learning environment among students. The research will propose recommendations to improve the teacher-student relationships to improve the student's performance.

II. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Most of the students frequently have more complex problems today than they did over a decade ago common stressors in schools include greater academic demands, being on their own in a new environment, changes in family relations, changes in social life, exposure to new people ideas and temptations. Some of the salient problems specific in school's students are, time pressure, fear of failure, struggle to establish identity, the pressure of academic excellence, and tough competence. The rest of that most of the students have emotional problems such as feeling inferior to others, not being able to think properly, worrying too much, feeling life is not worth living, feel anxious without any apparent reason. Furthermore, Education watchers have long known that the relationship with a

teacher can be critically important to how well students learn. But emerging research is giving a clearer picture than ever of how teachers can build and leverage strong relationships with their students. (Kumaraswamy 2013). However, in the modern era, teacher-student relationship security weakens as students advance to higher grades. Furthermore, the quality of the teacher-student relationship depends not only on what the child brings to the relationship, in terms of mental representations of relationships with caregivers and interpersonal competencies but also on what the teacher brings to the relationship and the teacher-student daily interactions.

III. AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This research study aims to explore the factors that influence students to get depression and how teacher-student relationships aid in developing an inclusive learning environment among students. That is, the research identified factors for students to get depression and how teacher-student relationships aid to develop an inclusive learning environment among students. By identifying these factors, and exploring the related research literature, the study will be suggesting recommendations to consider improving teacher-student relationships aid to develop an inclusive learning environment among students.

• RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching research question of the current study is:

What are the factors that influence students to get depression? How can an authentic teacher-student relationship be of help in developing an inclusive learning environment for students with depression?

To answer the main research question, sub-questions have also been developed. These are:

- i. What teaching strategies can support students with depression in an inclusive learning environment?
- ii. What systemic barriers associated with students obstruct the development of an inclusive learning environment?

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is important in identifying the factors that influence students to get depression and how teacher-student relationships aid in developing an inclusive learning environment among students. Further, few studies focus on the depression that students face in the classroom, with very little attention given to the teacher-student relationships aid in developing an inclusive learning environment among students. However, this study also explores the challenges faced by school students and the teacher-student relationships that aid to develop an inclusive learning environment among students. Moreover, the recommendations will support the teachers to help their students.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review section provides an overview of the literature on the research topic by different scholars, any existing gaps in the research topic, and the contributions of the research study to the field. Thus, this literature review is divided into three main sections: Firstly, it explains the Policy Context of Inclusive Education. The next section details the Inclusive Education Environment. Finally, the literature review focuses on the psychological problems of Students.

VI. THE POLICY CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

For the past few years, inclusion in education has become an important topic in all over the world. In Australian Educational system gave priority for inclusive education. People have pushed for policies that consider special learners and students suffering from psychological disorders, such as depression. According to Boon et al. (2014), the country has made significant progress to ensure that there exists legislation and policy that supports an inclusive environment. For instance, Victoria's national policy on inclusive education, commonly known as "The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education", was adopted in 2017. The policy advocates for the right to receive quality education for all students irrespective of their social, economic, or political backgrounds. There have been several laws and legislations that fight for

inclusion to support a positive learning environment for all students in the country. The latter aims at ensuring the Department of Education remains committed to supporting an inclusive education system. Specifically, the policy state that children across the country from different social and cultural backgrounds learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from bullying and harassment. The policy is a guide that helps the education system to remain on track when it comes to the issue of inclusivity.

Anderson and Boyle (2015) confirm that policy guidelines are essential when it comes to creating an inclusive, positive learning environment. This is because the education system is dynamic with an increasingly diverse student population. Such a population has also been encouraged by migration and the issue of globalization. The educational jurisdictions in different parts of Australia have developed new policies and increased funding in support of Inclusive Education (IE). However, there lacks procedures and practices both at the state and federal levels to measure the success of IE practices. For this purpose, the inconsistency of IE practices in different education centers across the country results in differences when it comes to the overall academics of the learners (Ralston et al, 2019). It is essential to establish a national approach to IE practices to enhance the positive outcomes in education settings.

Despite the gap noted, Australia is making an effort to ensure that inclusive education will become the standard in the future learning environment. For example, the study by Ralston et al. (2019), affirms that education principles and learning have earned an increased interest in modern education research. The study confirms that the education system has to incline to an inclusive learning environment to conform to the developing culture of diversity (Worthen, 2016). This is because an inclusive learning environment prepares the learner to co-exist with others in society and their career discourse.

In most cases, inclusion has been perceived wrongly, with most people thinking that it addresses only those with disabilities. The establishment of various policies has created a new meaning for IE practices. These principles guide that good practice in IE considers a

range of aspects, such as cultures, practices, policies, and access to equitable learning opportunities. Victoria has set the right policies to support IE and is the right decision towards providing quality education to all children despite their limitations.

VII. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

Inclusion tends to rely on different aspects that affect the learner, either positively or negatively. Gaie and Parker (2016) pointed out that most students who are unprepared to join school or college environment are influenced by various cultural deficits that prevent their social integration in to university life. While this author concentrates on higher education, the issue also persists at the primary level. Students from different cultural backgrounds face different issues that prevent them from interacting well with others. For instance, depressed children can have challenges in not only interacting socially at the school ground but also during an academic engagement with their teachers in the classroom. This ideology relates to Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theory that stresses the importance of culture in the sociocultural nature of human cognition and learning (Kozulin, 2004). Furthermore, Vygotsky's Cognitive Development Theory argues that cognitive abilities are socially guided and constructed. As such, culture serves as a mediator for the formation and development of specific abilities, such as learning, memory, attention, and problem solving. However, inclusion, especially where culture is involved, cannot occur void of the interaction of different stakeholders. For this purpose, Cape Media (2016) suggests that leaders involved in the education system should denounce their pride for the benefit of the greater good. Also, it is essential to value the diversity of thinking and encourage all parties to make their contributions when it comes to inclusive education (IE) practices. When people are encouraged to brainstorm, the team ends up making the best choice that will yield positive results in an academic outcome.

An intense discussion about the needs and challenges for depressed children is important, and parents and teachers should take part in such issues. There exists a need for an honest conversation that will lead to a dedicated action to help these learners in their

academic achievement. Other benefits involved include a more positive and engaging experience for parents. In other words, they get an opportunity to take part in important issues that impact their children's academic outcomes. Also, the teacher has a significant role to play as he or she spends most of the time with the students. Among the strategies put across for teachers to adopt includes designing novel lesson plans within an innovative classroom that ensure that each learner feels like part of the class. On a similar note, Notional PTA (2016) teachers need adequate preparation to shift practice. there is a need to establish specialized training to help teachers understand how to engage learners with special needs by grasping their unique strengths and weaknesses. Also, parents play an integral role, and they should take part in enforcing these changes at the classroom level. Therefore, parents, learners, and teachers should be involved when creating a positive, inclusive environment for personalized learning. This ensures that the interests of all these parties are considered to minimize the expected challenges and maximize positive outcomes.

An inclusive classroom is the one where students with special needs, such as those depressed, can learn alongside their peers in the general classroom. Modern teachers adopt different methods to foster inclusivity even in the primary levels of the students and especially in years 4 and 5. A significant example of a popular methods is co-teaching. This requires both general and special-education teachers to work together when seeking to complete the school curriculum. Another strategy is through differentiated instructional strategies (Picard, 2014). This requires learners with diverse learning needs, such as depressed children to receive instructional materials that match their specific learning needs.

The differentiated strategy is further expounded by Robinson and Hutchinson (2014) through their Tiered Approach to Intervention. Learning is taught through evidence-based teaching practices that allow them to succeed. Failure to report positive outcomes forces the learner to be moved to Tier 2, which is characterized by intense and focused small-group instruction. Finally, the teachers introduce peer-mediated instruction and interventions (PMII). This method gives the teacher the role of a facilitator who utilizes

the moment to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student as they respond to class proceedings.

VIII. PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS

Academic Problems: Some students are facing difficulty in concentration and remembering. For the rest of this, there are many students are faced some problems such as being unable to study properly, easily distractible unable to understand the language. particularly some subject is very difficult to understand and have no interest in studies (Kumaraswamy, 2013).

Emotional Problems: Students believe they are inferior to others. sometimes unable to think clearly. Irritated and enraged for trivial reasons. For trivial reasons, students are sad and depressed and feeling anxious for no apparent reason. They are feeling useless and inept. Feel as if life isn't worth living. Unnecessary concern. Excessive worry for trivial reasons.

IX. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section focuses on the techniques used for the collection of data. Most of the school students are faced with depression in the educational system. In this research, secondary data collection methods were used to develop this study. Various factors led to the selection of the secondary data collection method for this research paper. Firstly, it was easy for the researcher to access books, journals, or government documents, and many other sources. It helps researchers consider different author perspectives on a particular topic. Secondly, due to the COVID-19 social restrictions measures, researchers were unable to contact the participants. According to the respective researcher adopted a secondary method for gathering data or information about the students to get depression and how teacher-student relationships aid to develop an inclusive learning environment among students. It is so because through this method they able to collect data through existing documents or articles or books.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

The finding of the review reveal that teachers face the greatest challenges when it comes to creating an inclusive classroom. it is essential to introduce new training programs that guide teachers on how to adapt and handle the changes needed to make the learning environment inclusive. it is difficult to achieve inclusion void of important stakeholders affected either directly or indirectly by the changes made. As a result, teachers, parents, and learners should take active participation in making these changes. Moreover, counseling centres should address the issue of identifying depressed students early on. Conducting seminars and workshops on how to identify students' psychological problems can help teachers in schools. With the assistance of mental health professionals, student counseling centres can be established in all schools, and counseling can be provided as an early intervention. There should be regular workshops for students on stress management, time management, assertive training, and communication skills. This will raise awareness among students to seek the help of mentors or student counseling centres if they notice any academic or emotional problems. Finally, depressed children learn better in the presence of their peers. Rather than segregating them, it is essential to mix them and adopt co-teaching to enhance better understanding and the completion of the curriculum on time.

CONCLUSION

Depressed students require special attention from teachers so that they can learn as their peers. The Victorian government has suggested different policies that seek to improve IE practices that cater to the more diverse population witnessed in the country today. The policy demands teachers to incorporate changes and promote instructional strategies that foster inclusion. However, most teachers are not ready to handle these changes and this can alter their service delivery. Resultantly, the government, in collaboration with the education system, should consider intense training to prepare these teachers for such adjustment.

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