

The Relationship between Teacher Affective Support and Educational Enjoyment with Attachment to School Male High School Students of Ahvaz, Iran

Sirous Alipour Birgani¹, Hakim Sahaghi^{2*} and Sayyed Ali Mousavi²

¹Assistant Professor and faculty member of Shahid Chamran University, Department of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran

²Department of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran

*Corresponding author's Email: sahanghihakim@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this research the relationship between teacher affective support and educational enjoyment with Attachment to school Students in Ahvaz. 180 students have been selected through multi stage random sampling. In order to collect data, Sakiz's teacher affective support (2007), Educational enjoyment Subscale of Pekrun's Progress Emotions Questionnaire (2002) and Sakiz's Attachment to school (2007) have been applied. Research data were analyzed by Pearson's correlation and Regression analysis. The results of the simple correlation showed that the teacher affective support as well as Educational enjoyment had a positive and significant relationship with Attachment to school. The results of regression analysis also showed that such variables as teacher affective support and Educational enjoyment played a major role in predicting Attachment to school.

Key words: Teacher Affective Support, Educational Enjoyment, Attachment To School

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
Pii: S232247701500020-5
Received 15 Oct. 2014
Accepted 22 Apr. 2015

INTRODUCTION

Attachment to school is a psychological need that leads to positive psychological outcomes (Anderman, 2003). In other words, Attachment to school refers to the extent which students feel integration with other peers in school (Gueto et al., 2010). Researches showed that children with low attachment to school are likely experiencing feeling of estrangement, weak achievement and finally dropout. In contrast, high sense of belongingness may lead to high motivation and scores (Juvonen, 2006). Attachment to school refers to students' mental perception of atmosphere and settings of a school in which they are accepted and respected. Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggested that all of the people have an intrinsic need, which is sense of belongingness to social groups and establishing interpersonal positive relationships with others. With regard to the time the children and adolescents spend in academic and social fields in activities related to school, the students' sense of belongingness to school should be set by accurate program so that people goes through healthy development levels. Goodenow (1991) refers to sense of belongingness as a sense in which the person has mental membership with the school or the classrooms and the student personally feels being accepted and respected by school and is supported from the people in school setting and the other students. Other researchers with similar impressions of this sense have used the words such as communication with the school or school connections, however, the term attachment to school is more common (Andreman and Freeman, 2004). According to many commentators, the psychological sense of attachment to

school and class and even the society for students is considered prior to their learning experience. In an era when traditional sources of belongingness are declined due to demographic changes of the family and society, the school has a more important role in relation to the need (Blum et al., 2002). The students who have more sense of belonging to school are more likely involved in healthy and successful scientific behaviors. Fail of most students in school is not due to lack of necessary cognitive skills but due to being separated from others and becoming alien to the educational process. One of the major factors affecting adolescents' perceptions of the academic environment is the teacher (Ferreira and Bosworth, 2001). In recent studies, educational researchers have placed great emphasis on the influence of teacher practices, attitudes, and support on students' academic, behavioral, and psychological functioning (Baker et al., 2003). In many of these studies, teacher support was examined under several categories such as academic/instrumental support, autonomy support, social support, and expressive support. Although social and expressive support involved several affective support dimensions, the complete investigation of teacher affective support has not yet been pursued. Teacher affective support refers to teacher behaviors, attitudes, and practices involving caring, respect, concern for and interest in students, valuing, recognition, fair treatment, encouragement, high expectations, and listening. Although there is a recent growing interest in emotional and affective dynamics in teacher-student relationships, the literature is still scant (Sakiz, 2007).

Like other general emotions, educational emotions can be defined as the temporary events in

certain position and at a certain time (Pekran, 2006). Learning induced enjoy, exhaustion due to classroom instructions and frustrations and angers due to difficult home works are examples of educational emotions. Studies have shown that emotions such as enjoy, hope, pride, relief, anger, anxiety, shame, frustration, and boredom are significantly related to motivation, use of cognitive resources, learning strategies, self-regulation and academic achievement (Pekran et al., 2002). In general, the experience of positive emotions such as hope, enjoy, and pride can lead to increased motivation and engagement in the tasks while experiencing negative emotions such as frustration, disappointment, shame or anger leads to worse motivation leading to less task involvement and more avoidance. In a research done with aim of examining the role of variables related to teacher in mathematical educational enjoy and emotional regulation of students, Sadat Hosseyni and Khayer (2010) found that the variable teaching quality of teacher can positively, significantly predict mathematical positive emotions and emotional regulation, and the variable emotional support of teacher can negatively, significantly predict mathematical negative emotions. In another research, Goetz et al. (2006) investigated the role of the variable teacher in educational emotions of students and showed that positive reinforcement of teachers have a positive relationship with enjoy and negative relationship with educational anxiety, but educational pressure from teachers has inverse results. The relationship between emotions and support of competent from teacher was significant. The relationship between educational enjoy and teacher characteristics (close relationships) is also confirmed. Students perceived mathematical teachers as supportive experienced more educational enjoy; the relationship of emotional support of teacher with educational enjoy, therefore, was positively and with educational disappointment was negatively correlated (Sakiz, 2007). In several related studies, Goodenow examined the relationship between adolescents' sense of belonging and expectations, values, motivation, effort and progress. In her first study, Goodenow (1993a) examined the relationship between the sense of membership to the school, the expectation of success, worth. The results showed that the sense of membership to the school was positively, significantly related to expectations of future achievements and academic value but was not statistically significantly related to academic effort or behavior. Goodenow (1991) mentioned that the relationship between academic effort and academic achievement may be mediated by motivation. In other research, Goodenow (1993b) examined the relationship between sense of belonging-support, academic motivation, academic effort and

achievement in adolescents. Students responded to Motivation environments Inventory Questionnaire of their particular area (expectation of success and educational value), sense of belonging, and personal support in four domains (math, social studies, English and Science), that sense of belonging and class support appeared as the most powerful and highest predictor of adolescents' educational values and expectations of success. In a study, the relationship between contextual factors of school setting and motivational, emotional and academic consequences of students were similar to work of Roeser et al. (1996). Two hundreds and ninety six 8th grade students participated in this study. Students' responses to self-report question-naire showed that students' perceived sense of belonging to school was one of strongest predictors of their perceived academic self-efficacy. Sense of belonging to school showed a small but significant relationship with academic consequences. Students who reported high sense of belonging to school settings reported lower self-awareness (e.g. agitation and shy) in their school task involvement in compared to those who reported lower sense of belonging to school. Senses of belonging to school were significantly related to positive school emotions (e.g. good mood and glee).

Perceived teacher interpersonal behaviors significantly influence students' academic enjoyment. In Brunei, 1,305 elementary students responded to a self-report questionnaire investigating the relationship between students' academic enjoyment and teacher characteristics (den Brok et al., 2005). Students' responses provided evidence for a positive and powerful association between teacher proximity (e.g. closeness) and students' enjoyment from science classes. A follow-up study conducted by den Brok et al. (2005) in Australia with the participation of 2,178 fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-grade science students showed that teacher interpersonal proximity powerfully predicted students' collaboration, engagement in activities, the perceptions of equity, the establishment of congruence between school and home, and enjoyment from 57science lessons. Students' perceptions of teachers in terms of teachers' interest, support and respect for student, was the strongest factor associated with the efforts and progress of the students. Other research, Lang et al. (2005) found that teacher's friendly and perceived behaviors, such as listening with interest, being considerate, and sympathy, caused to increase the academic enjoy of chemistry students. These studies show that, regardless of cultural, developmental, educational, or gender differences, there is a positive relationship between teachers' affective attitudes and students' academic enjoy.

Research questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between teacher affective support and Attachment to school?
2. Is there a significant relationship between educational enjoy and Attachment to school?
3. Is there a significant multiple relationship between teacher affective support and educational enjoy with Attachment to school?

Research hypotheses

In this study, we sought to examine the following hypotheses:

1. There is a significant relationship between teacher affective support and Attachment to school.
2. There is a significant relationship between between educational enjoy and Attachment to school.
3. There is a significant multiple relationship between teacher affective support and educational enjoy with Attachment to school.

METHODS

The statistical sample and population

Current study is correlational and predicting. The statistical population of this research consisted of all first high school year male students of high schools of Ahvaz, Iran in academic year of 2014-15. The sampling method of current research was multistage random sampling method; in which, initially two areas among all schools of Ahvaz were selected, from each of which, two schools chose (totally 4 schools); and, then, in next stage, sample groups were randomly simple selected in proportion to all existing first high school year students of that school; all of students of selected classrooms were used in the sample. Totally, 180 students of high schools of Ahvaz were sampled. In this study, research ethics were completely followed so that participants were ensured about confidentiality of information and they filled questionnaires with full consent and anonymously in a quiet environment.

Research tools

In this research, following questionnaires were used to collecting information:

Teacher affective support scale

In current research, Sakiz's teacher emotional support scale (2007) was used to measure students' perceived teacher emotional support. The scale is a 5-point likert (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no comment, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) self-report instrument based on existing different instruments. Teacher emotional support is consisted of 9 items (e.g. my English teacher frequently encourages me when I'm not doing well in class) and its validity and

reliability are verified by Sakiz (2007). Teacher emotional support scale translated and validated by Sadat Hosseyni and Khayer (2010). To measure reliability of this questionnaire, they used internal consistency method and calculated the value of 0.79 for Cronbach's alpha of the test indicating its desired reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis method was used to examine its validity. The extracting criterions were eigenvalue higher than one and slope of Scree curve. The results indicate a general factor in whole of the scale. They calculated the value of 0.90 for KMO and 584.801 for χ^2 of Bartlett test which were significant at the level of 0.0001. Also, the Cronbach's alpha was 77% in this research.

Pekrun's Educational enjoy Scale (2002)

In present research, Pekrun (2002) Educational enjoy scale was used to measure students' Educational enjoy. This scale is a self-report scale which its items are of likert type (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no opinion, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) and has made based on existing different tools. The Educational enjoy scale consisted of 6 items (e.g. I enjoy of taking part in English class) and the evidences of its reliability and validity are reviewed and confirmed. Sakiz (2007), using Cronbach' alpha, obtained 88% for reliability coefficient of academic enjoy subscale from Educational enjoy scale. Also, he examined the validity of this subscale using confirmatory factorial analysis and the obtained results showed that the structure of this subscale has an acceptable fitness with data. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha for this research was 88%.

Attachment to school

In present research, Sakiz's (2007) Attachment to school scale was used to measure students' Attachment to school. This scale is a self-report scale which its items are of likert type (1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no opinion, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree) and has made based on existing different tools. The sense of belonging to school scale consisted of 8 items (e.g. I am treated as respectful as others in English class) and the evidences of its reliability and validity are reviewed and confirmed. Sakiz (2007), using Cronbach' alpha, obtained 0.88 for reliability coefficient of Attachment to school subscale from Attachment to school scale. Also, he examined the validity of this subscale using confirmatory factorial analysis and the obtained results showed that the structure of this subscale has an acceptable fitness with data. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha for this research was 71%.

Methods of data analysis

The descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the obtained data.

Mean, standard deviation, the largest and smallest scores were used in level of descriptive statistics, and correlation coefficient and regression analysis in simultaneously entry way have been used in level of inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Table (1) shows the descriptive indices related to the participants' achieved scores in research variable.

Correlation coefficients between teacher affective support and Educational enjoy with Attachment to school are presented table 2. Table 2 shows the relationship of teacher emotional support, educational Enjoy and attachment to school in students. As it is shown in table 2, there is a positive, significant correlation between teacher emotional support and attachment to school ($p = 0.001$, $R = 0.35$). Also, there is a positive, significant correlation between

educational Enjoy and attachment to school ($p = 0.001$, $R = 0.40$). Regression method was used to examine the linear combination of teacher support and educational Enjoy with attachment to school. In doing so, two predicting variables (teacher emotional support and educational Enjoy) entered into stepwise multiple regression equation one by one and values of R^2 , R and F are calculated.

Table 3 shows the linear combination of teacher emotional support and educational Enjoy with attachment to school. In stepwise multivariate regression analysis, teacher emotional support initially entered explaining .127% ($R^2 = 0.127$) of variance of attachment to school ($F = 26.002$, $p < 0.000$). Educational Enjoy is then entered which explained 0.216% ($R^2 = 0.216$) of variance of attachment to school ($F = 24.350$, $p < 0.000$).

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation, smallest and largest scores achieved by participants in research

Variable	Index	Mean	Std. Dv.	Largest score	Smallest score
teacher affective support		4.11	1.51	10	2
Educational enjoy		5.13	2	10	2
Attachment to school		5.09	2.04	10	2

Table 2. Relationship between teacher affective support, Educational enjoy and Attachment to school

Research Variables	1	2	3
Teacher Affective Support	1		
Educational Enjoy	0.36**	1	
Attachment to School	0.35**	0.40**	1

** $p \leq 0.001$; $N=180$

Table 3. Predicting stepwise multivariate regression of attachment to school

Variables	R	B	Std.Error	Beta	T P	F P
Teacher affective support	0.357	0.482	0.095	0.357	T=5.099 P=0.000	F=24.350 P=0.000
Educational enjoy	0.46	0.325	0.073	0.319	T=4.465 P=0.000	F=24.350 P=0.000

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main aim of this research was to examine the relationship between teacher affective support and educational enjoy with Attachment to school. In general, the results of correlation analysis shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between teacher affective support and Attachment to school, and also between educational enjoy and Attachment to school. The findings of the current study extend our knowledge in understanding the role of affective learning environments on students' motivational,

emotional, and academic outcomes, especially during early adolescence. In the present study, essential teacher affective support dimensions were successfully gathered under one category. Also, the associations among perceived teacher affective support and early adolescents' Attachment to school, educational enjoyment outcomes in mathematics classrooms were examined through a hypothesized study, which adequately fit to the sample data. The findings provided illuminating evidence regarding the proposed hypotheses.

In the present study, without exception, teacher affective support significantly influenced all the variables Research. Specifically, consistent with expectations, teacher affective support was powerfully associated with students' Attachment to school, educational enjoyment directly. Consistent with the findings of Sakiz (2007); Roeser et al. (1996); Stipek et al. (1998) and Wentzel (1997, 2002), the results of the present study showed the powerful influence of teachers on classroom psychological climate, Attachment to school and the psychological adjustment of students. Consistent with expectations, perceived teacher affective support significantly positively predicted Attachment to school of early adolescents. That is, students who reported higher teacher affective support tended to report greater Attachment to school, as well. Similarly, students who reported greater teacher affective support were likely to report higher academic enjoyment. This finding is aligned with the findings of Lang et al. (2005) in terms of the association between perceived teacher characteristics and students' educational enjoyment. Although the populations in the current and Lang et al.'s studies completely differed in terms of culture (Singapore vs. America), achievement level (gifted vs. regular), developmental stage (tenth vs. seventh and eighth graders), and subject area (chemistry vs. mathematics), the findings revealed proximity. Similar relationships were also observed in relation to den Brok et al.'s (2005) study in Brunei with elementary school students and Fisher et al.'s (2005) study in Australia with early adolescent students. Given the parallel nature of the results, it is plausible to argue that the relationship between educational enjoyment and teacher affective characteristics can be generalizable to widely differing contexts. Perhaps further research will advance our confidence in this assertion.

Consistent with expectations, Attachment to school was directly associated with students' educational enjoyment. Students who reported greater Attachment to school within their classroom were likely to report higher educational enjoyment, lower and higher academic self-efficacy in classroom. This finding was consistent with the assertions of Baumeister and Leary (1995) that increased Attachment to school leads to the experience of positive emotions while its deficiency results in the experience of negative emotions. Although the measurement preferences in terms of scale selections were different, the results of the present study were consistent with the findings of Roeser et al. (1996) regarding the positive predictive influence of Attachment to school on educational enjoyment of early adolescents. The present study introduced the

essential components of teacher affective support. As findings provided evidence, teacher affective support is an important factor impacting students' emotions, motivation, and learning. Therefore, it is necessary to provide several suggestions on how to convey affective support messages to students successfully within classrooms. Developing affective learning environments first requires the elimination of competitive learning environments. The presence of competitive learning environments deteriorates the development of Attachment to school, educational enjoyment, academic motivation, and cognitive advancement.

There are several steps teachers may follow to create warm, welcoming, and engaging classroom environments: These are (a) encouraging students' initiations and involvement in classroom discussions, (b) creating non-threatening learning environments by avoiding negative evaluations of students' responses to questions, (c) providing students opportunities to elaborate on their thoughts, (d) putting effort on understanding students' perceptions, and (e) treating students' responses as valuable and legitimate contributions in discussions (Hall and Walsh, 2002). Showing personal excitement and enjoyment in classroom activities as a teacher, offering warm, positive, and improvement-based praise, emphasizing effort, avoiding pressuring students for correct answers and adopting an autonomy-oriented approach (Patrick et al., 2001) may increase students' academic enjoyment and may stimulate their willingness to put more effort into completing their tasks. Also through providing all students equal opportunities for classroom participation, having high expectations, and treating them fairly under all circumstances, teachers may increase students' sense of belonging, positive emotions, and academic motivation.

Given all these suggestions, one final point to add is that to increase awareness about the impact of affective learning environments on students' functioning, educational policies as well as pre-service teacher preparation programs should dedicate more time emphasizing this concept in their agendas and curriculums.

Limitations of the study

Among the limitations of the present study was that the study was conducted on male high school students. Therefore, generalization to female students or lower levels is not possible. In this study, questionnaires were exclusively used. Because of this reason, there may be a bias in obtained information. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to other cities and cultures.

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