Dominance and Cooperation toward Positive Teacher-Student Relationship

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Abstract

A plethora of literature provides evidence that strong and supportive relationship between teachers and students are fundamental to the healthy development of students. It indicates that academic achievement and student's behaviors are influenced by the quality of the teacher-student relationship. This paper explores the role of dominance and cooperation toward positive student-teacher relationships as perceived by 80 BSED students at the College of Education, Bulacan State University. A descriptive survey method was used to gather pertinent data. The researcher used Pearson r to determine the relationship between dominance and cooperation. Among the four components of teacher dominance, Establishing Rules and Procedures got the highest mean score of 3.59 which was interpreted as "Great Extent" while Establishing Clear Learning Goals got the lowest mean of 2.07 and was interpreted as "Moderate Extent." Establishing rules and procedures is the most powerful aspect of teacher dominance. Rules and procedures govern how teachers and students conduct themselves so that learning objectives are achieved.

Keywords: Teacher education, teacher-student relationship, correlational research, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Creating a learning environment requires designing a classroom that supports the learning activities and management of students that are desired (Hardin, 2012). In a learning environment, additional attention must be given to traffic flows, teacher-student areas, and visual displays on the walls. Aside from student learning, one of the most important concerns of teachers is effective classroom management. Without effective classroom management, learning may not occur. Classroom management involves teacher's actions to produce a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning and self-motivation (Burden, 2006). Various aspects of classroom management include building a positive teacher- student relationship, managing whole-group instruction and helping students assume responsibility for their behaviors, particularly those that are positive.

Research indicates that student motivation and positive behavior increase, when students perceive their relationship with teachers and their peers to be positive and supportive, (Wentzel, 2003). Supportive teachers are critical to academic success. It is assumed that a good teacher - student relationship is the key to producing student achievement.

A survey among 225 seniors in an urban high school conducted by Plank, McDill, McPartland, and Jordan (2001) reported that all students indicated they had the ability to act in a manner either supportive of or contradictory to the teachers' goals and wishes and the decision was based on their perceptions of the teachers particularly whether the teachers attempt to get to know them and respect them. It only shows that students have the ability to act according to what they want based on how their teachers treat them.

A positive behavior in the classroom is manifested in the teacher-student relationship that is characterized by open communication, as well as emotional and academic support. A positive relationship starts with a comforting reception from day one. It means that students have to feel a sense of belongingness. The decisions teachers make concerning the particulars of how their classroom climate will be established are critically important to whether students will see themselves as permanently valued members of the classroom or as perpetually facing the possibility of exclusion (Landau, 2004).

Teachers can frame rules that reflect a punitive stance. With this, students would know they are in the presence of adults who may not have their best interests at heart. However, if teachers show interest and concern coupled with respect and acceptance, students know that their teachers are willing to help them feel their worth. In fact, students of all ages have a strong need to belong. The desire to fit in provides a major source of motivation (Campbell, 2010). Learning to work within a social group is important to maturity. Helmer and Eddy (2003) also noted that students who are insecure about their place in the classroom might place negative connotations on statements about which they are uncertain. A sense of belongingness makes students feel they are not alone or isolated. It is construed that students develop a sense of belongingness when they receive recognition, approval, appreciation, and respect. These feelings are important to promote appropriate behavior.

It is important for teachers to consider their relationship with students. The quality of teacher-student relationship is an important aspect of classroom management. Cushman (2003) reported that if teachers set a steady example of fairness and respect, students positively respond whether or not they like a teacher's personality. In other words, aside from supportive teachers, students" relationships with teachers are

founded on respect and fairness. Effective teacher-student relationship has nothing to do with the teacher's personality or even with whether students view their teacher as a friend. Accordingly, teacher behaviors—exhibiting appropriate levels of dominance and cooperation characterize the most effective teacher-student relationship (Marzano, 2003).

Dominance is not power or control exerted over others. Marzano (2003) defined dominance as the teachers"ability to provide clear purpose and strong guidance regarding both academic and student behavior." In short, dominance is characterized by assertiveness and establishing clear behavioral expectations. High dominance is characterized by clarity of purpose and strong guidance in both academic and behavioral aspects of the classroom (Burden, 2006). An optimal teacher-student relationship consists of four equally important parts of dominance and cooperation (Burden, citing Marzano). Teachers can express dominance in the following ways: establishing rules and procedures, using disciplinary interventions, exhibiting assertive behavior, and establishing clear learning goals.

On the other hand, effective teachers use certain techniques to communicate appropriate level of cooperation in the classroom. High cooperation indicates the teachers" concern for the needs and opinion of others and a desire to function as a member of a team as opposed to an individual (Burden, 2006). According to Marzano (as cited by Burden), teachers can also express cooperation through the following ways: providing flexible learning goals, taking a personal interest in students, using equitable and positive classroom behaviors, responding appropriately to students' incorrect responses.

Classroom management has been the subject of teacher discussions; no other aspect of teaching is more frequently discussed in the professional literature or the

faculty lounge. The reason is quite blatant. Classroom management is a complex set of behaviors the teachers use to establish and maintain classroom conditions (Jones & Jones, 2001). Classroom management also includes the formulation of instructional objectives that will enable students to learn. Thus, effective classroom management is a prerequisite to effective instruction. The positive teacher-student relationship brings forth effective instruction. It is in this context that the researcher attempted to identify the level of dominance and cooperation toward positive teacher- student relationship. Figure 1 shows the conceptual paradigm of the study.
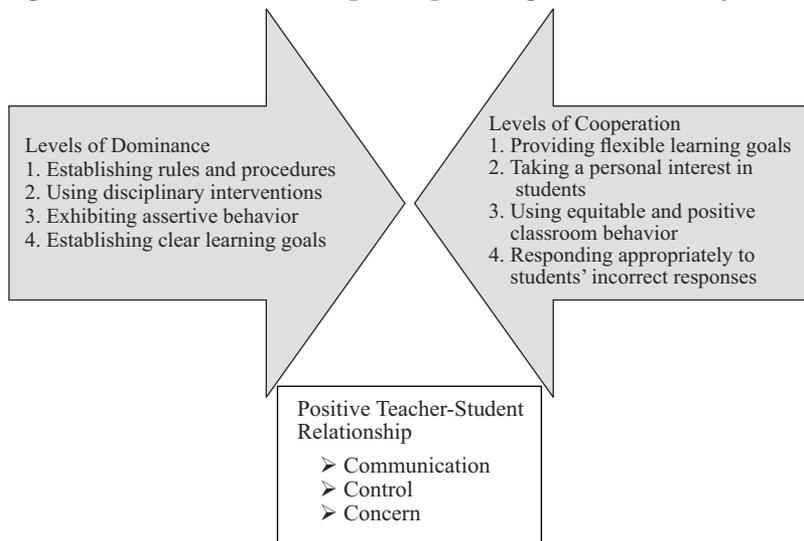
Levels of Dominance
1. Establishing rules and procedures
2. Using disciplinary interventions
3. Exhibiting assertive behavior
4. Establishing clear learning goals

Levels of Cooperation
1. Providing flexible learning goals
2. Taking a personal interest in students
3. Using equitable and positive classroom behavior
4. Responding appropriately to students' incorrect responses

Positive Teacher-Student Relationship
➢ Communication
➢ Control
➢ Concern

Figure 1: Confluence of the levels of dominance and cooperation to positive teacher-student relationship

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, the following ancillary problems are posted:

1. To what extent do the teachers express their level of dominance regarding:

    1.1 establishing rules and procedures;
    1.2 using disciplinary interventions;
    1.3 exhibiting assertive behavior; and
    1.4 establishing clear learning goals?

2.   To what extent do the teachers exhibit their level of cooperation in relation to:
    2.1 providing flexible learning goals;
    2.2 taking a personal interest in students;
    2.3 using equitable and positive classroom behaviors; and
    2.4 responding appropriately to students' incorrect responses?

3.   How may the teachers express their positive relationship with their students through:
    3.1 communication;
    3.2 control; and
    3.3 concern?

4.   Is there a significant relationship between the levels of dominance and levels of cooperation to positive teacher-student relationship?

A substantial body of literature indicates that academic achievement and students behaviors are influenced by the quality of the teacher-student relationship. Students prefer teachers who are warm and friendly (Hardin, 2012). It is construed that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with positive student responses to school with increased academic achievement.

The quality of the teacher-student relationship is important for a positive learning experience. The classroom characterized by positive teacher-student relationship encourages cooperation and support. Just because of these positive relationships, there may be fewer disruptions and misbehaviors. Hence, effective learning occurs.

METHOD

The researcher used the descriptive survey method in gathering data with correlational design to explore the interaction of dominance and cooperation with the positive teacher-student relationship.

Respondents

Participants in this study were the 80 second year Education students who are currently enrolled during the first semester of school year 2012-2013, College of Education, Bulacan State University. The researcher randomly selected ten participants from the different areas of specialization such as English, Filipino, Math, Science, Social Studies, Computer, Technology and Livelihood Education (short for TLE) and Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (short for MAPEH).

Instruments

A researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather pertinent data. The questionnaire is divided into three parts: one for the level of dominance; another for the level of cooperation; and the last part about the aspects of student-teacher relationship. There were four equally important components under these two levels; five items for each component were slated.

Data Collection and Analysis

Items in the questionnaire were modified based on the experts' suggestions after that the dry- run had been conducted. Then, the final draft was reproduced for the actual conduct of the study. Questionnaires were distributed to the target participants. The data were gathered, sorted, tallied, tabulated, and analyzed using frequency count and mean to describe the levels of dominance and cooperation. The researcher used the

Pearson r to determine the interaction of dominance and cooperation with the positive teacher-student relationship. To measure the level of dominance and cooperation, the researcher used a five-point Likert scale.

Mean Numerical Rating	Verbal Interpretation	Descriptive Equivalent
4.50-5.00	Very Great Extent	High Dominance/Cooperation
3.50-4.49	Great Extent	Sufficient Dominance/Cooperation
2.50-3.49	Moderate Extent	Fair Dominance/Cooperation
1.50-2.49	Less Moderate Extent	Minimal Dominance/Cooperation
1.0-1.49	No Extent	Low Dominance/Cooperation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Level of Dominance

Among the four components of teacher dominance, 'Establishing Rules and Procedures' got the highest mean score of 3.59 which was interpreted as "Great Extent" while "Establishing Clear Learning Goals" got the lowest mean of 2.07 and was interpreted as "Moderate Extent." Results showed that based on students' perceptions with regard to the teachers' level of dominance, "Establishing Rules and Procedures" manifested "sufficient dominance", "Using Disciplinary Interventions", "Establishing Assertive Behavior" and "Establishing Clear Learning Goals" manifested "fair dominance" respectively. It could be noted that establishing rules and procedures for classroom behavior, group work, transitions, and interruptions are important.

The most obvious aspect of classroom management is establishing classroom rules and procedures. These convey the message that teachers are ready to teach and that students are also ready to learn. They give students the structure they need and also help them feel that the classroom is a safe and predictable place (Marzano, Gaddy, Foseid, Foseid, & Marzano 2005). Rules and procedures are general codes of conduct that are intended to guide individual behavior in an attempt to promote

positive interaction and avoid disruptive behavior. In the same way, these add consistency and structure to daily classroom activities. During the quick interview with the participants, they disclosed that classroom rules were specifically taught. The participants had an agreement with the teachers on the procedures to be observed when rules are followed and when these are violated.

"Establishing Clear Learning Goals" manifested "fair dominance." It could be said that teachers seldom communicate the learning goals to students.   Obviously, learning goals are stated in every course syllabi. However, these should be trimmed down behaviorally on a classroom level and should be communicated to students. Learning goals or objectives state what students should learn during or after instruction. To celebrate both knowledge gain and status at the end of a unit of instruction, learning goals must be established at the outset. This idea is supported by Gagne's nine instructional   events which   include "Informing the learners of objectives". Establishing learning goals for students provides teachers with a clear vision for student learning. These learning goals do provide not only an overview of the lesson but also the rules to follow and the tasks to perform. Learning objectives facilitate instruction, provide discussions, and produce a defined outcome for student learning. When learning goals are not clearly defined, students are likely to take their cues from what happens in class and what appears on tests (Driscoll, 2005). The learning goals help students understand what they are to learn during instruction. Providing objectives before instruction begins is important because students know the direction of the lesson. Objectives guide learning and direct students to learning.

Teachers' Level of Cooperation

Of the four components in teacher cooperation, "Using Equitable and Positive Classroom Behavior got the highest

mean score of 3.77 which was interpreted as "Great Extent." Next in rank was "Responding Appropriately to Students "Incorrect Responses" which generated a mean score of 3.73 and was also interpreted as "Great Extent." Then, this was followed by "Providing Flexible Learning Goals" with a mean score of 3.54 which was likewise interpreted as "Great Extent." "Taking Personal Interest in Students" got the lowest mean score of 3.34 and was interpreted as "Moderate Extent."

Results further showed that there was "sufficient cooperation" in terms of using equitable and positive classroom behavior, responding appropriately to incorrect responses, and providing flexible learning goals. Based on these results, it could be said that students perceive their teachers as showing equitable and positive classroom behavior by encouraging all students to participate in the discussion by providing appropriate wait time for those who find difficulty to answer the questions right away, and by letting them feel their importance in class. In the same way, students perceive their teachers to show cooperation in terms of responding appropriately to incorrect responses by providing credits or simple appreciation for their responses, by encouraging collaboration so that they learn from each other, by allowing them to think before they give their responses and by emphasizing that they are headed in the right direction. However, teachers should monitor the equitability of response opportunities. Teachers who keep track discover they call on a small number of students frequently and allow few chances for those whom they have low expectations. Hence, if teachers fail to recognize some students, they can communicate a low level of confidence in their abilities (Boynton & Boynton, 2005). Thus, if students feel they are ignored, they may believe they do not belong and that they cannot perform something.

On the other hand, „Taking Personal Interest in Students" yielded "fair cooperation." This could be

explained that teachers fail to comment on important students‟ experiences and achievements such as participation in sports, drama, or any extra-curricular activities. Some of their comments according to the participants during the cursory interviews were all reprimands and mere behavior corrections. This is quite striking given that research suggests in most classrooms, the rate of teachers‟ reinforcing comments is less than corrections and reprimands (Southerland & Webby, 2000).

Teachers' Expression of Positive Relationship through:

Concern

Among the five indicators under concern, item number 2 (Ask what you have learned from the lessons) received the highest mean score of 4.19 (Great Extent). Item number 4 "Take time to talk about your academic problems" got the lowest mean score of 3.01 and was interpreted as "Moderate Extent." While it is true that teachers show concern for student learning, it cannot be denied that they also need to be concerned about what academic difficulty students encounter. When students see that teachers have a genuine interest in their wellbeing, they are more likely to work for improvement. Showing a caring attitude helps students see the sincere interest in their welfare. It is not enough that teachers ask what students learn from the lessons; it is also important that they know what students find difficult to comprehend. Not all students are the same; some may excel in numbers while others in language.

Students having difficulty in some lessons should seek help from their teachers so that appropriate academic interventions can be made. Essential to supportive classroom environment is the teacher's willingness to establish a caring relationship with each

student. Also, teachers should learn about a student's individual needs and strengths, and provide support and encouragement because each student needs to be a successful learner (Alberta Education, n.d.). To ensure effective learning environment, teachers should also examine the use of responsive pedagogy in the classroom (Richards, Brown, Forde, 2004). Such pedagogy may be academic scaffolds to support struggling students.

Communication

For teacher communication, item number 10 "Use a variety of tones and pitch levels, as well as the various paralinguistic techniques" received the highest mean score of 4.01 (Great Extent). Item number 9 was interpreted as "Moderate Extent" and got the lowest mean score of 3.49. It is true that the teachers" voice needs to be effective in a variety of circumstances. In fact, warm and expressive voice, used in a creative way, draws students in and makes them want to pay attention (Martin & Darnley, 2004).

Control

For teacher control, item number 12 „They set deadlines for every activity" got the highest mean score of 4.03 and was interpreted as "Great Extent" while item number 11 "Emphasize the importance of exercising responsibility, fairness, friendliness, and firmness." received the lowest mean of 3.16 and was interpreted as "Moderate Extent."

Relationship between the Level of Dominance and Cooperation and Positive Teacher- student Relationship

Dominance (r = -.278) and cooperation (r = -.421) registered a negative correlation coefficient at .05 level of significance to positive teacher-student relationship,

particularly to concern, communication, and control. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: 1) Establishing rules and procedures are the most powerful aspect of teacher dominance. Rules and procedures govern how teachers and students conduct themselves so that learning objectives are achieved.2) Using equitable and positive classroom behavior is the most powerful aspect of teacher cooperation. Positive classroom behavior encourages collaboration, support, respect and stimulates learning. 3) Effective communication manifests a strong influence in the expression of teacher-student relationship. Effective communication is the foundation upon which effective teaching may be built. It is the quality of communication that spells effective teacher-student relationship. 4) There is no significant relationship between dominance and cooperation and the teacher-student relationship.

Based on the conclusions drawn, the researcher recommends that: 1) Learning goals may be formulated not only for syllabi and course outlines but also for lessons on a daily basis at the classroom level; 2)Programs may be formulated to emphasize the importance of practical strategies to communicate interest in students. Since students are very sensitive to teachers" attitudes, such strategies should foster the connection between their personal interest and classroom work. Social, emotional learning opportunities can likewise be formulated to improve students" abilities to understand their feelings; 3) Teachers show positive concern and make it manifested in the way they talk, compliment, or greet students; 4) Other researchers conduct studies that account for related constructs to the positive teacher-student relationship such as interpersonal behavior, teacher characteristics, teacher wellbeing, motivation, classroom characteristics, or locus of control.

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