Role of Teachers in Furthering Development of Social Competence in Primary School Pupils

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Abstract: Both successful academic performance and social functioning are correlated with social competence. On all teacher training programs, instruction in children's social development and social skills is not a must. However, recognizing social competency abilities and elements that support its development in kids might be helpful for pre-service teachers. Children who are socially competent are better able to form bonds with their peers, and strengthening these bonds can boost social competence, which in turn improves academic performance. According to the study, both positive and bad trends in a child's social and emotional development can be predicted by their teacher interactions. Children's social skills can be predicted by their educational environment, and direct instruction can predict skills and frequently enhance social skills in areas where children may be deficient. Early interactions between teachers and students are important for the development of healthy teenagers. The development of a positive teacher-student relationship is crucial for young children. Beginning on the first day of school, teachers can establish a positive rapport with the students by, for example, smiling, warmly welcoming them, speaking in a soft voice, and assisting them in feeling at ease in social situations. The setting of the classroom is crucial for learning. It has the potential to either engage kids and reduce problem behaviors, or it has the potential to cause chaos and increase the likelihood of such behaviors. The end result of "deep-level learning" is social competence. By fostering a learning environment where students can engage in experiences addressing capacities to understand feelings in both themselves and others, teachers can help children's basic social worldviews shift as they grow. The study concluded that the social competency of the instructors is the most crucial factor in establishing a communication between teacher and administrator, between teacher and teacher, between teacher and student, between teacher and pupil's between a parent, a teacher, and the community.

Keywords: Classroom Environment, friendship, Peer Status, Social Competence, Teachers

Introduction

Take a moment to think about an educator who had an impact on your life. For most children, their positive or negative educational experiences affect their development. Children's academic growth, behavior, and social and emotional competency are all impacted by these experiences. Therefore, thorough analyses of the teacher-student connection are crucial. Making sure that these relationships are solid and healthy will also aid in the development of children's social-emotional, academic, and behavioral skills. Due to their high level of sensitivity, most teachers work hard to assist young students develop vital social skills. The teacher-student relationship needs to be thoroughly investigated because numerous studies have discovered strong associations between these relationships and the kids' conduct and academic achievement (Lippard, Paro, Rouse, & Crosby, 2018). This link has a significant impact on children's development, especially in preschool and kindergarten, and it persists far into primary school (Lippard et al., 2018). Additionally, Lippard et al. (2018) discovered that positive teacher-student connections promote children's development of positive behavioral traits, academic performance, and cognitive, social, and emotional skills.

Competence in social and emotional skills is important throughout childhood. In the early years, it can predict a young child's successful transition to preschool (Miller, Gouley, Shields, Dickstein, Seifer, Dodge Magee, & Fox, 2003). Following the preschool years, social and emotional behaviors in kindergarten are predictive of later academic success (Romano, Bachishin, Pagani, & Kohen, 2010). Peer acceptance in kindergarten children is linked to classroom participation and engagement (Buhs & Ladd, 2001). Children lacking such skills can be referred to school psychologists when they have exhausted the resources of the classroom environment (Doveston & Keenaghan, 2010).

Teachers play a critical role in enhancing the quality of education, particularly the procedures and learning results. According to the study, which suggests a model of the pro-social classroom, teachers with social and emotional competence are better equipped to integrate social and emotional curriculum because they set excellent examples of desired social and emotional behavior. Teachers must perform at least the following responsibilities as professionals in the field of education: teaching, mentoring, class administration, curriculum development, professional development, and community relations building. The assignments are carried out in order to advance and enhance students' talents as well as their knowledge of science, knowledge, and technology.

Concept of Social Competence

Social competence is defined by Spence (2003) as "the successful management that is social world (which) requires a sophisticated repertoire of social competence and in interpersonal problem solving capacity". The term "social skills" is defined by Shaffer as "thoughts, actions, and emotional regulatory activities that enable children to achieve personal or social goals while maintaining harmony with their social partners" (2005). Mastering this skill set brings regarding social skills. Behavioral competence is skill in action, emotional proficiency is the regulation of emotion skill, and social cognition is the thought skill. To better understand social competence, these three components – mental, behavioral, and emotional - will be further discussed, including relations between these skills and peer competence and academic adjustment.

Peer Relationships and Social Competence

At the heart of social competence lie children's relationships with their peers and friends. These friendships and peer relationships are strongly predictive of academic adjustment. Children who had quality friendships in kindergarten show greater school adjustment and higher social competence in first and third grade, while children who have no friends or low quality friendships in kindergarten show lower school adjustment (Engle, McElwain &, Lansky, 2011). Ultimately, such poor adjustment to school is linked to poor academic performance (Rhoades, Warren, Domitrovich, & Greenberg, 2011). Thus, social competence can assist children in developing relationships with peers and developing relationships with peers can improve social competence, in turn, which leads to better academic adjustment. Similarly, a lack of social competence is also cyclical in nature, where children are rejected due to lower social competence, which in turn can lead poorer adjustment and fewer opportunities to engage with others to develop these skills.

Peer Status

Peer status is defined by Buhs and Ladd as "an attitudinal construct that reflects the collective valence of group members' sentiments (i.e., liking, disliking) toward individuals in the group" (2001). Research indicates that peer acceptance or rejection is strongly linked to both social and academic adjustment (FitzGerald & White, 2003; Buhs & Ladd, 2001). Youngsters who are accepted by peer group show greater levels of pro social as well, behavior as lower levels of aggression (FitzGerald & White, 2003). When children have poor peer status, they may experience peer rejection. Peer rejection is defined by Buhs and Ladd as "negative peer treatment" (2001) and includes excluding children from activities and group entry as well as victimization. Peer rejection is predictive of poor social and academic adjustment (Buhs & Ladd, 2001). For example, Buhs and Ladd (2001) found that youngsters who experienced peer rejection had lower academic success. These children also reported being lonely.

Understanding peer status can help in meeting children's social needs. As children enter elementary school, peer status becomes more consistent and can be accurately described by children (Keane & Calkins, 2004). For example, Keane and Calkins (2004) found those children's perceptions of their peers' sneakiness; bossiness, fighting, and wildness were negatively correlated with those perceptions. A greater peer status was also positively connected with sharing. This indicates that peer status is predicted by children's behaviors. Enabling teachers to facilitate improved social skills through educating them to identify which children need improvement as well as how they can assist in this development could alter the course of many children's social competences.

Peer disapproval may stem from multiple and sometimes complex reasons that may not be easily identified. However, research has indicated that youngsters who have greater emotion knowledge at the start of school entry experience less peer rejection in the spring (Miller, Gouley, Seifer, Zakriski, Eguia, & Vergnani, 2005). Both emotion knowledge and the corresponding language to label emotions were negatively correlated with rejection among kindergarten children. Children who are atypical in a multitude of ways were also found to be rejected by peers (DeRosier & Mercer, 2009). Although many of the factors children cited for determining peers were irrelevant or unchangeable (such as clothing or accents), DeRosier and Mercer list several factors helpful in understanding how to help rejected children; social skill differences, such as disruptive behaviors and aggression, were among responses given as to why third grade pupils rejected peers.

Thus, increasing children's emotion knowledge and their understanding of appropriate social interactions and reactions could decrease peer rejection likelihood in young children.

Friendships

Reciprocal friendships are important social relationships in school as they are positively linked to school adjustment (Engle et al., 2011; Ladd, 1990). Engle found that youngsters who had and maintained friendships in kindergarten showed better school adjustment. Furthermore, longitudinally, the higher quality of friendships children had in kindergarten correlated with academic success.

Engle et al. (2011) built upon past research but added the dimension of how high the quality of their relationships with others was and then rated children into four categories. To determine a child's rating, parents and teachers provided information on how many friends the children had and how close these friendships were. Kindergarten children were categorized as having no friends, low-quality, average-quality, or high-quality friendships and then were revisited in the first and third grades. Within the large longitudinal population, they found correlations between the quality of children's friendships and later social skills and behavior problems.

Looking at kids who don't have friends or good friends can be a sign that a kid lacks social skills because kids who are rejected by their peers frequently lack these qualities (DeRosier & Mercer, 2009). Although this method has a wide use, it can readily help teacher's spot pupils who might be in danger.

Factors Predicting Social Competence

Understanding what factors predict social competence allows for a greater understanding of how social competence can be facilitated and improved. Quality teacher relationships can predict children's social and emotional development both negatively and positively (Garner et al., 2008, Howes, 2000). Similarly, Children's social skills can also be predicted by the educational environment (Peisner-Feinberg, Burchinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, & Yazejian, 2001). Direct instruction can predict competencies and often improve social competencies in areas children may be lacking (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008).

Quality of the Teacher-Child Relationship

Preschool and kindergarten teachers play an important role in developing young children's skills. Specific qualities, such as honesty, tolerance, adaptability, fairness, and respect for all students, are required of these teachers. According to Graves and Howes (2011), teachers' perceptions have a significant influence on how they interact with students. Breeman et al. (2015) illustrated that teachers with high levels of well-being have a strong influence on their pupils' social and emotional development.

Teacher-child relationships are important part to the education process. To assist children's development, a good relationship is required. Children love engaging with teachers who are nice, patient, adaptable, creative, and dedicated. The vast majority of kids engages in and listens to teachers whom they feel comfortable with. Early-childhood teachers thus need to have high-quality education. Parents constantly seek out the best and most compassionate educators for their kids, especially for young kids.

Teachers frequently have the chance to form close bonds with their students. Additionally, by utilizing a variety of techniques and exercises, teachers can build relationships with their students. Making a difference in the lives of young children is a crucial concern aspect of this job, and every teacher should seize the chance to help students improve their social and emotional abilities, which will alter their behavior and increase their chances of success in life. Children's school experiences are greatly impacted by the dynamics of the teacher-student interaction. According to White (2015), having a positive teacher-student connection provides numerous advantages for young children, and these advantages last for a very long period. Teachers need to make the students feel secure and at ease. As a result, teachers can establish a solid rapport with their students over time by treating them with respect, paying attention to what they have to say, conversing with them, and maintaining eye contact. According to White (2015), preschool and kindergarten students who have positive teacher-child interactions demonstrate greater peer communication in the classroom and have more robust general social skills than students who do not.

White (2015) believed that a child's behavior and academic progress in primary school were related to the teacher-student connection in preschool and kindergarten. Children who have positive teacher-child interactions in preschool or kindergarten, for example, are more enthusiastic about primary school than those who do not (White, 2015). Similarly, children who do not have good relationships with their teachers in early childhood display less interaction with their peers, express more disappointment, and show less tolerance of others, as compared to those with good relationships (White, 2015). Moreover, White showed that there is a connection between children's academic performance and their relationships with teachers: Children who had good relationships with early-childhood teachers later showed higher reading performance.

Teachers can provide many opportunities for children to interact during class. Wu et al. (2018) mentioned that developing children's social and emotional competence is essential to ensuring their readiness for school. Additionally, there is a correlation between teacher-student interactions and a number of significant life outcomes, such as academic performance, behavior, mental health, and physical health (Wu et al., 2018). Early infancy is also a crucial moment, according to Wu et al., because this is when kids start learning how to control their emotions and can occasionally take some time to process them.

According to Wu et al. (2018), warm and welcoming classroom environments with strong teacher support are particularly successful in raising kids' academic achievement; kids in these settings behave well in class and get along well with others. Healthy teacher-student interactions are therefore beneficial for children's growth and last till adulthood.

Study indicates that positive teacher-child relationships are important in the earliest years of school (Vitaro, Boivin, Brendgen, Ginard, & Dionne, 2012). According to Vitaro et al. (2012) the quality of the relationship between a kindergartener and their teacher will predict the quality of the relationship between the pupil and their first grade teacher as the pupils are likely to replicate the interactions they learned to be true of pupil-teacher relationships. Further, Vitaro et al. (2012) found that the quality of this relationship is also correlated to academic outcomes in grade one. Howes (2000) conducted a longitudinal study to understand how child-teacher relationships in preschool predicted child outcomes through second grade. In this study rating scales were used to rate peer play, class behaviors, and child-teacher relationships over the course of five years. Results supported positive child-teacher relationships during the preschool years, finding that they were predictive of high second grade pro-social ratings. When a child is able to establish a caring relationship with a teacher, they are not only safe to explore the environment, but they are also safe to engage with others in the social realm.

Educating pre-service teachers on the importance of the teacher-child relationship in building social competence can allow them to understand their pupils on a deeper and more meaningful level. If teachers are more knowledgeable in this area, they may feel a greater sense of agency to help children and can encourage fellow teachers to work harder to connect with pupils with whom they may not easily connect. In creating this handbook, which educates teachers on both social competence and the importance of teacher-child relationships in building those competencies in children, the current project can potentially make significant strides in helping children reach optimal development. Teachers who are interested in assessing their quality of interaction with children can benefit from a tool created specifically to enhance social competence.

The Importance of Teacher-Child Relationship

The teacher-student bond is crucial since it serves as the basis for many abilities. Early interactions between teachers and students are important for the development of healthy teenagers. The teacher-child interaction has an impact on a variety of areas of a child's development, according to numerous researchers. For instance, the interaction between a teacher and student promotes the development of social and emotional abilities as well as academic success and positive behavior. For instance, Lippard et al. (2018) asserted that classroom behavior of children is highly tied to the teacher-child contact. According to Lippard et al. (2018), a child's bond with their instructor affects how well they do academically. According to Lippard et al., good teacher-student relationships promote children's social, emotional, and cognitive growth (2018). According to Lippard et al., children's interactions with teachers have a significant impact on their social and emotional development, academic success, and classroom behavior (2018). According to White (2015), a smooth transition from kindergarten to first grade is substantially connected with prior teacher-student connections.

Growing Teacher-Child Relationships

There are numerous approaches to creating positive teacher-student interactions. Children can be encouraged to communicate with their teachers and peers through a variety of tactics and activities:

• Early in the morning, smiling as you welcome each youngster to class
• Giving every youngster a task and the necessary time to fulfill it
• Using a soothing voice
• Encouraging kids to listen to their peers and paying attention to them when they speak
• Paying attention to kids
• Using friendly body language
• Eliciting the source of any distress from young children
• Encouraging kids to embrace every new day
• Making eye contact with youngsters when speaking to them
• Sitting down at the kids' level to foster positive interactions
• Talking with children in basic language
• Addressing the children by their names
• Calling the kids by their names
• Using one-on-one techniques to treat each child as an individual
• Participating in small-group activities
• Asking kids to play together; and encouraging kids to engage with others.

The development of a positive teacher-student relationship is crucial for young children. For example, Ng and Bull (2018) discovered that everyday classroom routines helped children gain social and emotional skills. Beginning on the first day of school, teachers can establish a positive rapport with the students by, for example, smiling, warmly welcoming them, speaking in a soft voice, and assisting them in feeling at ease in social situations. Ng and Bull (2018) discovered that instruction is more effective in boosting children's social and emotional development when different tactics are used. A solid teacher-child relationship should be cultivated using a variety of techniques; this is a straightforward way to assist young children.

Quality in the Setting of the Classroom

The environment plays a crucial function in the classroom. It can either engage children, thus limiting problem behaviors, or it can create chaos and lead to a high incidence of such problem behavior. Further, the norms and social interactions accepted into the environment can instruct and support social competencies or allow them to remain stagnant. Creating a high-quality environment is of great importance in the early years because it is a time when children are learning how to function socially in a group. A high-quality environment, once established, can benefit the entire classroom, making both the teacher's day more manageable and decreasing teacher burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

In the research previously discussed for teacher-child quality by Howes (2000), By lowering aggressive and antisocial behaviors in second grade, a supportive social and emotional learning environment aided in children's growth. Teachers who create a favorable social climate early into the academic year through things such as routine, direct instruction, and conflict resolution have classrooms with fewer conduct problems (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008). Such positive school climates not only control the day-to-day environment, but can teach children how to behave in school. This can then be generalized by children, who can work to strengthen positive social competencies outside the classroom. Understanding what is indicative of high-quality classroom environments is not the same in every grade and in every class, but there are many tools that can help to assess classroom environment. One classroom tool is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). This assessment looks at the environment of the classroom to determine how optimal the environment is. Additionally, the CLASS rating will also consider the quality of interactions between the teachers and pupils as well as the overall positivity of the class (La Paro, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004). Using tools such as this can be a first step in improving environments for young children to gain optimal social competence support.

Theoretical Review

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological System Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory serves as a framework guiding the current study. This systems theory takes into account the complex factors that contribute to children's development, with a focus on adaptation to interconnected environments

(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This core understanding was later applied to his theory, most familiarly described through the image of five concentric circles surrounding the child. His model reflects his natural observations that shape young people by environmental factors both directly and indirectly, as well as individual factors and the time in which they live.

Bronfenbrenner's model is based on the idea that complex interactions between Process, Person, Context, and Time (PPCT) will result in the individual development of the child (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Bronfenbrenner and Morris used the term "proximal process" to describe interactions that occur between the child and their environment (2006). This can be between a child and a toy or children interacting together. Process is usually a repeated scenario, such as dinner with family every night (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). Person includes the characteristics unique to the individual child (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). This can be the child's gender, motivation, temperament, or any other aspect about the individual.

Context is the setting of the interaction and is made up of the concentric circle that represents the child's environment (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009), often viewed as nested interconnected systems. The microsystem is the context including the child and anything else, such as a toy, playmate, parent, or childcare center. The mesosystem included the interactions between microsystems. For example, a meeting between parents and teacher will connect the two microsystems of home and school. The exosystem does not contain have the child it in, yet directly impacts the child. A common example for this system is a parent's career choice. A professional might have a highly stressful job and may make a large sum of money, both of which will affect a child despite the fact that the child is not involved in the work setting. The largest system is the macrosystem. This system includes cultural and societal practices or ideologies that filter through the other systems. For example, the obesity epidemic, global warming, consumerism, religion, and public education are all macrosystem factors. Finally, the time in which a child experiences processes is of key importance (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). For example, pupils who graduated before No Child Left Behind will have a different reality around education than those who did not.

For this study to use Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, all of these factors must be taken into account. The individual social competence levels a child brings to the classroom environment will affect how they adjust to school as well as the peer group. A child interacting with emotion competence is likely to elicit warm relations with others while a child who does not read social cues correctly may not. All the microsystems created amongst a classroom will continually impact the proximal processes of the pupils. Further, the teacher in the class can intentionally direct these processes to positively support social competence development. Teachers who do not understand what social competencies are will be less likely to understand how they can alter these processes. Teachers entering the field need to understand these important concepts to help pupils develop fully. In relation to social competence in this time, this theory is relevant. Bronfenbrenner has famously stated that, "No society can long sustain itself unless its members have learned the sensitivities, motivations, and skills involved in assisting and caring for other human beings" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Teachers' Role and Implications for Teacher Education

The end result of "deep-level learning" is social competence. By fostering a learning environment where students can engage in experiences addressing capacities to understand feelings in both themselves and others, teachers can help children's basic social worldviews shift as they grow. Additionally, schooling should teach kids how to interact with others and develop a variety of social skills. The Experiential Education definition of social competence covers all these elements and therefore, it seems to be the most relevant.

A teacher plays a significant part in helping students improve their social skills. He or she should be able to choose resources and tools that aid in children's social development. A teacher ought to provide exercises that deal with feelings and interpersonal interactions. It can be accomplished through a variety of activities, such as a circle time during which kids can think about their emotions, reading books and stories that give kids the chance to discuss how people interact and the motivations behind their actions, role playing, and artistic forms of expression like painting, drawing, and modeling that help kids express their emotions. How children interact with classroom environments is crucial for the development of social skills. Two metrics—well-being and involvement—are used by Experiential Education to assess the caliber of children's experiences (Laevers, 1998).

Well-being occurs when children feel at ease, act spontaneously, are open to the world, express inner rest and relaxation, show vitality and self-confidence, enjoy life and are in touch with their feelings and emotions. Involvement is the process variable that refers to the child's activity. It is an intense mental activity characterized by extreme concentration and persistence, a high level of motivation and openness to stimuli. The satisfaction is determined by the exploratory drive and the individual pattern of developmental needs. Moreover, involvement occurs when the activity is situated in child's zone of proximal development.

Conclusion

The most crucial factor in establishing a communication between a teacher and a principal, between instructors, between teachers and students, between teachers and students' parents, and between teachers and the community is shown to be the teachers' social competency. While extracurricular competency is the ability to understand and apply additional material learned in educational events done outside of the classroom with the purpose of improving learners' potential. So the pupils' extracurricular activities might stimulate their additional activities through outside of school activities such as religious, sporting and artistic and others. If the teachers at the school are experts in their subjects, the students will be educated to be smart. The relationship between a student and

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instructor will be successful if the teacher is competent, and the student's performance will be successful as well. A teacher needs social skills because they often impart knowledge to their students. In order to communicate clearly and cautiously, the sole teacher needs learn a lot. The tranquil soul promotes morality, has a pleasant outlook, and takes a strong position. The primary purpose of extracurricular activities is to help students develop better behavior, constructive actions, and excellent man attributes.

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