Teacher's behaviour towards students' motivation practice

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Abstract. Education goal is not to produce higher exam scores, but to educate learners to become responsible people with well-developed minds and good character. Fact says, most of the students who graduated from Islamic elementary school in Kera island (a small island in the Gulf of Kupang city, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia) prefer to work as fishermen instead of continuing their study to higher education levels. This practice has been continued for several years. In relation to such fact, the present study aims to reveal the teacher-student interaction in connection to teacher's behaviour in students' motivation practice. For this purpose, a qualitative research design was applied to gain deeper understanding on such practice naturally. The data collection process was part of authors' Community Service Project (IbM RISTEKDIKTI for Bajo tribe) on the island. Data were collected using classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. This study reveals that the teacher performed positive roles in motivating the students during classroom interaction. Hopefully, the present study may help teachers and educators in Indonesia concerning teacher behaviours in elementary classroom environment.

Introduction

It is truly believed that when students' needs are met, they will have a good engagement in classroom activities with their teachers and peers [1]. When teachers treat students with care and affection, students will have feeling of belonging to school. As a result, a connection between students and teachers would be well established and feeling safe at school would also be increased [2]. When such things occur, the success of teaching and learning process would be successfully achieved and the goal of education would be easily obtained.

In contrast, when poor relationships occur in classroom, not only hard on students but also as source of stress for teachers [3]. Students could have difficulties in learning lesson materials and teacher could have problem in delivering lesson materials. In addition,

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when students face problems and difficulties, they would have neither the personal nor social resources to bounce back and are prone to utilize maladaptive coping strategies and to give up [4]. As a matter of fact, in general terms, these patterns are related to lower academic achievement, dropout, and other disadvantages for students [5]. Thus, it can be argued that, motivational and disciplinary problems with students are among the most upsetting issues teachers face [6].

Teacher and student positive relationship have effects on both side. This means that, when teachers have positive relationship with their students, this will raise better satisfaction with their job and with preventing of burnout [7]. On the other side, when students experience teachers' positive interpersonal behavior, this will lead to their positive motivation and performance in all subjects [8]. Thus, a positive connection is necessary needed between teacher-student relationship and learning activities in classroom. In addition, it is agreed that a healthy interpersonal relationship would create better results for students to engage in learning activities [9].

Many researchers believe that good and strong relationships between teachers and students are essential components to make healthy academic development of students at school environment [11, 12]. In addition, many studies have shown that the nature and quality of teachers' interactions with children have significant effects on their learning [13, 14]. Hence, teachers' engagement in classroom interaction with students is necessary needed to make learning process occur actively. It also provides a unique entry point for teachers to improve the social and learning environments of schools and classrooms [11].

Brackett *et al.* [15] used a multi-method, multi-level approach to examine the link between classroom emotional climate and student conduct, including as a mediator the role of teacher affiliation, i.e., students' perceptions of their relationships with their teachers. They found that there was a direct positive relationship between classroom emotional climate and conduct mediated by teacher. They also highlighted that teacher has the role of emotionally supportive classroom environments in promoting teacher affiliation and better conduct among students.

Downey [16] conducted a study about synthesizing educational research on factors that affect academic success. For him, students need teachers to build strong interpersonal relationships with them, focusing on strengths of the students while maintaining high and realistic expectations for success. Downey [16] added that the interactive relationships should be based on respect, trust, caring, and cohesiveness. Classroom interaction is the communication between teachers and learners in the classroom [17]. By means of this interaction, both teachers and learners receive input and produce output. Teachers have opportunity to know their students performance during the interaction and produce teaching practices that fit their needs. For students, interaction increases their knowledge and competence and produces better skill as the output.

Teachers' motivation in classroom interaction is in one important factor that educators can target in order to improve learning. Fact says that teachers play important role in students' motivation. Many scholars suggest that when teachers treat students with respect and seek out, listen to, and value their opinions, students are more willing to commit themselves to the hard work entailed in learning [18, 19]. If teachers can see classroom interaction as valuable resources, this will increase students' motivation and encourage them in experiencing the value of learning in the classroom. Hence, learning objectives are achieved and academic goals are obtained successfully.

When students are motivated, they pay attention, begin working on tasks immediately, ask questions and volunteer answers, and appear to be happy and eager [20]. Students need motivation as it is an essential element needed for thier education quality improvement [21]. Williams and Williams [21] propose five key ingredients impacting students' motivation, they are: student, teacher, content (should be relevant and useful),

method/process (an approach in which content is presented in classroom instruction), and environment (must be available and accessible, safe, open and free to learn from mistakes).

Williams and Williams [21] say that, as one of the key ingredients impacting students' motivation, a teacher must possess some characteristics. The teacher must be well trained (knowledge, qualifications and skills), must focus and monitor the educational process (test administration, scientific management and human relations), be dedicated and responsive to his or her students (be conscious, reach out to students, and build relationship and strength) and be inspirational and enthusiasm. In addition, William and William [21] say that motivation is optimized when students are exposed to a large number of these motivating experiences and variables on a regular basis. That is, students ideally should have many sources of motivation in their learning experience in each class.

Efforts to promote students' motivation need to be done by teachers at classroom level and school administrators at school or district level. Brewster and Fager [22] suggest some strategies for both teachers and administrators seeking to increase students' motivation in classroom as follows: giving rewards, performing clear and consistent classroom interactions, knowing each student, giving positive responds, promoting mastery learning, breaking tasks into smaller goals and evaluating students' work and providing feedback.

To measure the perceptions of interpersonal teacher behavior, Wubbels *et al.* [23] developed an instrument called questionnaire on teacher interaction (QTI). The QTI was constructed to describe teacher interpersonal behavior along two dimensions: influence (the degree of control of the teacher over the communication process) and proximity (the degree of cooperation or opposition between the teacher and the students). These dimensions are then subdivided in terms of the eight scales or sectors as: leadership, helpful/friendly, understanding, student freedom, uncertain, dissatisfied, admonishing and strictness.

Hence, for this purpose, students need structured interactions, where standards and clear expectations are set for them, as to achieve positive behaviors and performance and consistently follow through on teachers' demands [3]. By having such optimal structured interaction, students are able to figure out how to interact and behave to reach better performances at school. Such interaction includes teachers' confidence in helping students to reach high levels of understanding and performance [10]. At school environment, teachers can explain to students regarding ways to improve their performances by giving feedback and motivation. These will increase students' perceptions of themselves as academically competent, including their beliefs about what it takes to do well in school and their own capacities to enact those strategies [3]. Based on these concepts, this paper aims to find out how teacher-students interaction occurred in an elementary school classroom situation. In a narrow scope, this paper investigates the practice on teacher's behaviour in motivating students during teaching and learning process in Rijalul Ghad Islamic elementary school in Kera island, Kupang regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. The results of the present study may help teachers and educators in Indonesia concerning teacher behaviours in elementary classroom towards students' motivation practice.

Research method

The present study used a qualitative research design. In addition to find out how teacher-student interaction in connection to teacher's behavior on student motivation practice, some methods of data obtain were also applied. The data was obtained by classroom observation, questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The concepts of William and William [21] key ingredients impacting students' motivation, Brewster and Fager [22] strategies to increase students' motivation in classroom and Wubbels *et al.* [23] QTI were also applied as research framework for the present study.

In classroom observation stage, the writers observed how the interactions between teacher and students occurred in the classroom. The teacher's behaviors and strategies to motivate the students during the interaction were noted down and analyzed. After that, the writers used the notes to carry out semi-structure interview to get a clear picture about such interaction happened.

During semi-structure interview, a set of question was used as guidelines. These questions were administrated based on Williams and Williams [21], Brewster and Fager [22] and Wubbels *et al.* [23] classroom motivation strategies. The question was a self-reporting questionnaire, design to assess teacher's behavior and interaction (perceptions and responses) in the classroom. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. Part one was about respondents' personal information and part two was about the application of teacher's motivation practice during the interaction. The question in part two consisted of 20 items of a five-point Likert scale from "Never "to "Always". In responding to this questionnaire, the respondents were also asked to give additional information with example regarding the implication of the practice. The participants in this study were 15 students and a teacher in Rijalul Ghad Islamic elementary school.

Results and discussion

Generally, this paper talked about teacher's behavior in students' motivation practice during classroom interaction. Specifically, this paper was focused on teacher's leadership practice in teaching technique and administrating questions. Teacher's feedback were measured and analyzed using classroom observation and a questionnaire. In addition about the school, it was found that, this school only has one teacher and he teaches in all grades.

During the classroom observation, it was found that the teacher demonstrated positive practice teaching behavior in motivating the students during classroom interaction. However, it was also found that, the teacher talked too much and less interaction among the students. In general it was seen that the teaching technique applied in the classroom was teacher-centered model, and most of the classroom activities were done by the teacher. It was teacher's dominant classroom typed. In some instances, there were some shared activities between the teacher and the students such as when giving demonstration and examples. In contrast, when explaining lesson materials, most of the activities were done by the teacher.

In relation to questioning procedure, most of the classroom interaction was devoted to ask questions. The teacher asked questions about lesson content as meant to seek students' answer to promote classroom interaction. It was also found that, when students could not answer teacher's question, it was the teacher who gave the right answer. The teacher gave the correct answer and the students wrote down the answer. Examples of question applied were: requesting factual information, yes/no questions, short answer (one or two words) questions.

In relation to the use of teaching aids in the classroom, it was found that, the teacher well applied teaching aids during his classroom interaction. For example, he used his family pictures when explaining about family relationships topic. The use of teaching aids may increase interaction in the classroom, especially when the teaching aids are related to students' real life. Making the content relevant to real life can increase a student's motivation [21]. In addition, Palmer [20] suggests that, teachers should emphasize the links between real life and school subject that is by designing assignments and experiments which have connection with students' everyday life. In addition, Frey and Fisher [24] add that tasks which have meaningful relationship with students' real life can motivate them.

The practice of giving reward to students was carried out very well by the teacher. When the students accomplished their assignment and gave correct response to his

questions, the teacher used positive verbal statements to praise students as encouragement. Positive statements can strongly influence student motivation and increase students' self-confidence [21].

Conclusion

When students' needs are met, they will have a good engagement in classroom. It is also believed that when students are treated with affection, it will increase their feeling of belonging to school. However, when poor relationships happen in the classroom, students could have difficulties in learning the lesson materials and teacher could have problem in delivering and motivating the students. Hence, connections between teacher and students need to be established in the form of structured interactions. The present study revealed that teacher's behaviour contributing students' positive motivation practice in the classroom. The teacher's behaviours applied are: questioning the students, giving examples, using teaching aids and giving rewards by using positive verbal.

Acknowledgement

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