Research Paper

Relationship between Character Strengths and Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs for Students' Moral Education: The Mediating Role of Interpersonal Teacher Behavior

Zeynab Ghorbani[1], Omid Shokri[2*], Jalil Fathabadi[3], Masoud Sharifi[4]

1. M.A in Educational Psychology, Shahid Beheshti University. bamdad1404@gmail.com
2. Corresponding Author: Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. oshokri@yahoo.com
3. Associated Professor of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. fathabadi51@gmail.com
4. Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran, m5charif@yahoo.fr

Abstract

Aim: This study examined the mediating effect of interpersonal teacher behavior on the relationship between character strengths and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education. In a sample consisting of 200 teachers (100 male 100 female), the Short Measure of Character Strength, the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction and Teacher Efficacy for Moral Education Scale were administered. Results showed that the partially mediated model of interpersonal teacher behavior on the relationship between character strengths and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education had acceptable fit to data. In these hypothesized model, character strengths and interpersonal teacher behavior accounted for 25% of the variance in self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education. These finding show that the part of available variance in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education in the context of prediction the teachers' beliefs by character strengths, accounted for interpersonal teacher behavior.

Keywords: Character Strengths, Interpersonal Teacher Behavior, Mediation Analysis, Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs for Students' Moral Education.

Introduction

In recent years, the emphasis on the ethical aspect of teaching and learning has become an international research priority. Accordingly, in recent conceptual formulations about teacher adequacy and competence, in addition to elements such as knowledge and skills, the selection of components such as attitudes and values has also been specifically in the focus of researchers (Merida-López & Extremera, 2020). A group of researchers believe that one of the safest ways and platforms to demonstrate the interpretive power of moral values active in the teacher psychological field, emerges and appears in the qualitative model of teacher-student interactions (Uitto, et al, 2018). Ethically, the teacher's respect for different beliefs or the degree of dominance of a moral value, such as caring for the context of the teacher-student interaction, reflects specific examples of the interpretive contribution of moral values in predicting the teacher's interpersonal relationship behavior model. The results of various studies show that some ethical perspectives such as "care", "commitment" and "empathy" are the most fundamental elements of teacher professional ethics and the most determining factors in the quality of interpersonal interactions in the achievement environments (Wang & Hall, 2019). On the other hand, many researchers have emphasized some areas of study, such as learners 'academic commitment and learners' behavioral problems, in order to clarify the explanatory power of the teacher's interpersonal behavior in academic achievement environments (Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2020).

Therefore, considering the role of meaningful conceptual elements of teacher professional ethics and the need to focus more on the conceptual domains of this study area, researchers in the present study try to predict teachers 'self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education through profile of teachers' character strengths, emphasize the mediating role of teachers' interpersonal relationship behavior with students. Accordingly, the present study aimed to test the mediating role of teacher-student interpersonal behavior in the relationship between character strengths and teacher self-efficacy for moral education of learners.

Methodology

In the present study, a correlation design was used. The statistical population of the present study included all male and female teachers of different educational levels in Khodabandeh city in Zanjan province. The statistical sample in this study included 200 male and female teachers who were selected by available sampling method.

Short Measure of Character Strength (Furnham & Lester, 2012)

Furnham & Lester (2012) developed the short version of the character strengths inventory based on the original version of the character strengths inventory. In the short measure of character strength, in line with the original version, 24 strengths relate to the six virtues of wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. In the present study, the internal consistency coefficients of virtues of courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence were equal to 0.77, 0.74, 0.72, 0.77, 0.67 and 0.81, respectively.

Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (Lourdusamy & Khine, 2001)

The Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction was developed based on this model and can be used to map students' (and teachers') perceptions of teacher interpersonal behaviour according to the MITB. The QTI originally consisted of 77 items, answered on a Likert-type 5-point scale. The items of the QTI refer to the eight sectors of behavior – leadership, helpful/friendly, understanding, giving responsibility/freedom, uncertain, dissatisfied, admonishing and strict – that jointly make up the Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behavior. In this study, the internal consistency coefficients of subscales of leadership, helpful/friendly, understanding, giving responsibility/freedom, uncertain, dissatisfied, admonishing and strict were equal to 0.64, 0.60, 0.57, 0.50, 0.53, 0.65, 0.77 and 0.70, respectively.

Teacher Efficacy for Moral Education Scale (Narvaez, et al, 2008)

The scale consists of 13 questions, and teachers answer each question on a five-point scale from completely incorrect (1) to completely correct (5). In the study of Narvaez et al. (2008), the results of exploratory factor analysis of the teacher self-efficacy scale for students' moral education showed that this scale consists of two subscales of teacher positivity and instructional practices. In the present study, the internal consistency coefficients of the subscales of teacher positivity and teacher instructional practices were 0.80 and 0.82, respectively.

Results

Results showed that there is a positive significant correlation between character strengths with positive interpersonal teacher behavior and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education and a negative significant correlation with negative interpersonal teacher behavior. Results also indicated that there is a negative significant correlation between negative

interpersonal teacher behavior with teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education and a positive significant correlation between positive interpersonal Teacher Behavior with teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education. Results showed that the partially mediated model of interpersonal teacher behavior on the relationship between character strengths and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education had acceptable fit to data (table 1).

Table 1: Fitness indices of the hypothesized model

RMSEA	CFI	AGFI	GFI	df/$^2\chi$	df	$^2\chi$	
0.09	0.93	0.85	0.90	2.41	72	173.71	Model before modification
0.058	0.97	0.90	0.94	1.95	71	139.07	Modified model

In these hypothesized model, character strengths and interpersonal teacher behavior accounted for 25% of the variance in self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education (figure 1).
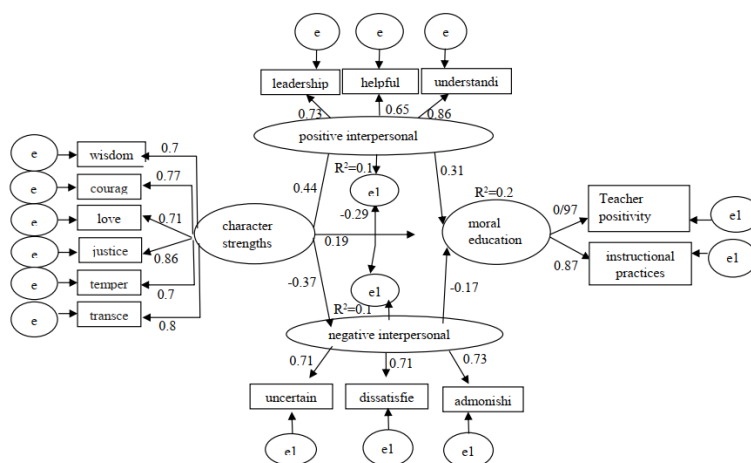

Figure 1: Partial mediation model of positive and negative interpersonal behaviors on the relationship between character strengths and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for students' moral education.

Discussion and conclusion

In general, the results of the present study re-emphasize the interpretive role of the value construct of character strengths as the beating heart of the concept of moral adequacy in predicting teachers 'interpersonal relationship behavior with learners and their self-efficacy belief in teaching learners'

moral character. Also, it shows that rethinking the semantic scope of the concept of teachers' professional adequacy and the necessity of including elements with moral-value burden for this concept along with emphasizing their knowledge and technical skills is an undeniable necessity. Therefore, the results of the present study are in line with the findings of Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim (2020) and Wang and Hall (2019) studies show that redefining the meaning of adequacy and double emphasis on the interpretive role of ethical conceptual elements in teacher preparation, Is one of the most important concerns and priorities of trans-regional and international research for educational researchers interested in improving and transforming the role of the education system.

Reference

Furnham, A., & Lester, D. (2012). The development of a short measure of character strength. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 28(2), 95–101.

Lavy, S., & Naama-Ghanayim, E. (2020). Why care about caring? Linking teachers' caring and sense of meaning at work with students' self-esteem, well-being, and school engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 91, 103-111.

Lourdusamy, A., Khine, M. S. (2001). *Self-evaluation of interpersonal behavior and classroom interaction by teacher trainees*. Paper to be presented at the International Educational Research Conference, University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, Western Australia, 2-6 December 2001.

Mérida-López, S., & Extremera, N. (2020). When pre-service teachers' lack of occupational commitment is not enough to explain intention to quit: Emotional intelligence matters. *Revista de Psicodidáctica (English ed.)*, 25 (1), 52-58.

Narvaez, D., Vaydich, J. L., Turner, J. C., & Khmelkov, V. (2008). Teacher self-efficacy for moral education: Measuring teacher self-efficacy for moral education. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 6(2), 3–15.

Uitto, M., Lutovac, S., Jokikokko, K., & Kaasila, R. (2018). Recalling life-changing teachers: Positive memories of teacherstudent relationships and the emotions involved. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 87, 47–56.

Wang, H., & Hall, N. C. (2019). When "I care" is not enough: An interactional analysis of teacher values, value congruence, and well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, 102109.