Jalal Deen Careemdeen

Malaysia

Mohd Mahzan Awang

Malaysia

Abdul Razaq Ahmad

Malaysia

The Influence of Social Pedagogy Towards Educational Well-Being in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This research was aimed at determining students' educational well-being, mainly taking into account social pedagogy among secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka. The study used a survey research design and a questionnaire instrument for data collection. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1350 secondary school students. To analyse the data, the research used descriptive analyses such as mean, standard deviation and multiple regression analysis. The results demonstrate that the social pedagogy and the students' educational well-being were at moderate levels. Multiple regression analysis, using the stepwise method, showed that the social pedagogy correlated significantly with the students' educational well-being. However, the study found no significant relationship between the teachers' academic support and the students' well-being. The implications of the study indicate that teachers need to have a good relationship with students and implement student-centred teaching methods. Various activities and mechanisms need to be organized to enhance student's educational well-being related to social pedagogy, incorporating teachers, parents and community members.

Keywords: *Social Pedagogy, Socio-Environmental Support, Educational Well-Being*

Introduction

Student well-being is considered to be a significant aspect because it is related to positive student learning outcomes (Cadime et al., 2012; Noble et al., 2012),

being emotionally and socially competent and optimistic about the future (Miller et al., 2013; Holsted 2015). The level of student well-being is indicated by their satisfaction with their academic life at school and home; socio-environmental support tends to influence student well-being (Careemdeen et al., 2020). However, there is no unified definition for the term 'student well-being'. In general, the term 'well-being' refers to the 'psychological, cognitive, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need to live a happy and fulfilling life' (OECD, 2017). There is a consensus that human well-being is a multi-dimensional construct that comprises both objective (material and sociological components) and subjective (psychological) facets. Student well-being includes the interrelated nature of the physical, social, cognitive, psychological, relational and material health of children and their experience in learning, academic attainment and adaptation with academic life (Awang et al., 2014; Cahill et al., 2014). This paper refers to students' educational well-being as access to learning resources and social, hard and soft skill capabilities and functioning, which children need to achieve fulfilment in life, as based on the Psychosocial Well-Being Framework of Sri Lanka (2009). Students are the labour pool of the nation. Consequently, they can also enrich the nation with their talents; if they are provided with helpful information and skills, they will contribute to developing the country both economically and socially.

Social Pedagogy

The discipline and practice of social pedagogy is currently widespread in Continental Europe, providing the basis for work in various services for children and young people. The term 'pedagogy' is described as the science of teaching and learning, as concerned with educational practices in the classrooms and school environment (Moss et al., 2019). Social pedagogy concerns an individual's emotions, mind, spirit and body, which are integrated with the environment where they live (Úcar, 2012). According to Kiriacoú (2009), 'social pedagogy can be characterised as taking an integrated view of the needs of the whole child in terms of five key dimensions: care and welfare; inclusion; socialisation; academic support; and social education'. Social pedagogy provides the platform on which children obtain the attitudes, knowledge and skills that lead to lifelong learning. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socioecological theory, which emphasises the social context of individual interactions and experiences, determines how individuals can develop their abilities and realise their potential. Accordingly, in this paper, social pedagogy is understood in terms of socio-environmental support for student learning.

Schoolchildren who perceive a higher level of educational support from their home, school, community and virtual environments for learning and extracur-

ricular activities demonstrate a more substantial level of academic well-being (Careemdeen et al., 2020). Socio-educational support from teachers, parents, siblings and peers leads to stronger well-being of schoolchildren (Nirmala et al., 2018). Home environmental support could be described as the consistent contributions of the father and mother in a meaningful way, encouraging and providing for their children's educational needs, which tends to enhance their well-being as students (Ahmad et al., 2017; Suhaimi, 2013). Both teacher and peer support may foster a responsive learning environment and have unique implications in supporting adolescents' classroom engagement, academic motivation and school belonging. Virtual environments influence student's involvement in learning, so that they tend to learn more school subjects, explore more new information and seek out more on global and local issues (Köse, 2016). A school's pro-social organisation is a significant factor in students' well-being (Ratnik et al., 2017).

Research Problem

The school dropout rate in Sri Lanka is at 10%. Children leave school for various reasons such as feeling unsafe in the school environment and lacking interest in academic education (Department of Census and Statistics, 2017). Parental unconcern in children's education, low parental academic support (Aturupane et al., 2018; Rasmy et al., 2017), parents' tolerance for schooling (Samuels et al., 2017), poor teaching, weak teachers, inadequate school facilities (Rasmy et al., 2017) and teachers' negative behaviour (National Education Commission, 2016) are socio-environmental factors that have an influence on the number of school dropouts. Unemployment is increasing in Sri Lanka because of skills and education mismatches (Kanagasisingam, 2017). Parents and teachers ignore student well-being in applying knowledge and enhancement of soft and life skills. Still, parents push their children to rote memorisation (Sedere, 2019). Although numerous studies have examined social pedagogy as it relates to students' academic achievement, little attention has been directed towards enhancing students' educational well-being (Awang, Jindal-Snape, & Barber 2019), mainly through social pedagogy in secondary schools in Sri Lanka.

Research Focus

This study attempted to determine whether the social pedagogy in terms of home, community, school and virtual environments influences Sri Lankan secondary schoolchildren's educational well-being in terms of access to learning resources and social, hard and soft skill capabilities and functioning, which children need to achieve fulfilment in life.

Research Methodology

This investigation used a quantitative research design. The study population included secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka. Using a stratified random sampling technique to select the study sample, a total of 1350 secondary schoolchildren from throughout Sri Lanka (i.e. east, west, south, north and central zones) were selected for the study.

Instrument and Procedures

The questionnaire instrument was developed in line with the needs of the study. It included 63 statements that measured both social pedagogy and educational well-being constructs. The respondents were given five choices for social pedagogy constructs based on the Likert Scale (1–5): Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Often (4) and Always (5). They were given five choices for educational well-being constructs, also based on the Likert scale (1–5): Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Quite Agree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The opinions of experts from sociology of education were used to establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The internal consistency of the instrument was based on the report of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for social pedagogy and educational well-being constructs as 0.951 and 0.898, respectively.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysing the data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was used for the data analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to obtain the mean and standard deviations, to determine the overall level of socio-environmental support and educational well-being. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify the relationship between social pedagogy and educational well-being.

Results

Descriptive analyses, such as mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the level of social pedagogy for student learning. The social pedagogy construct included parental educational support, community support, peer support, virtual support and teacher support for student learning.

Table 1. Level of Social Pedagogy

No.	Socio-Environmental Support	Aspects	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Home Environment	Parental Support	4.296	0.702	High
2	School Environment	Teacher Support	4.325	0.695	High
		Peer Support	4.146	0.810	High
3	Virtual Environment	Virtual Support	3.522	0.931	Moderately-High
4	Community Environment	Community Support	3.467	1.022	Moderately-High
		Overall Score	3.951	0.609	Moderately-High

Table 1 shows that the overall social pedagogy for student learning was moderately-high ($M = 3.951$ and $SD = 0.609$). The level of social pedagogy in terms of parental support was high ($M = 4.296$ and $SD = 0.702$). Teacher ($M = 4.325$ and $SD = 0.695$) and peer support were also high ($M = 4.146$ and $SD = 0.810$). Virtual ($M = 3.522$ and $SD = 0.931$) and community support were both moderately-high ($M = 3.467$ and $SD = 1.022$). It can be concluded that the overall social pedagogy was moderately-high, and teacher support was the highest level when compared to parental, peer, virtual and community support.

Descriptive analyses, such as mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the students' level of educational well-being. The educational well-being construct included access to learning resources and social, hard and soft skill capabilities and functioning, which children need to achieve fulfilment in life.

Table 2. Level of Educational Well-Being

No.	Educational Well-Being	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	Access to Learning Material	3.932	0.717	Moderately-High
2	Soft Skills	3.916	0.737	Moderately-High
3	Social Skills	4.070	0.701	High
4	Hard Skills	3.924	0.732	Moderately-High
	Overall Score	3.960	0.620	Moderately-High

Table 2 shows that the level of the students' educational well-being score was moderately-high ($M = 3.960$ and $SD = 0.620$). The dimension of student access to learning resources was also moderately-high ($M = 3.932$ and $SD = 0.717$), as

was the enhancement of soft skills ($M = 3.961$ and $SD = 0.737$) and hard skills ($M = 3.924$ and $SD = 0.732$). The students' social skills were shown as a high level ($M = 40.070$ and $SD = 0.701$). It can be concluded that educational well-being is at a moderately-high level among secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka.

Relationship between Social Pedagogy and Educational Well-Being

Multiple regression analysis was used to ascertain the influence of social pedagogy on the educational well-being among secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka. The findings of the multiple regression stepwise are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Regression	177.489	1	177.489	698.331	0.000
Residual	342.610	1348	0.254		
Total	520.099	1349			
Regression	209.868	2	104.934	455.616	0.000
Residual	310.231	1347	0.230		
Total	520.099	1349			
Regression	223.629	3	74.543	338.432	0.000
Residual	296.470	1346	0.220		
Total	520.099	1349			
Regression	234.496	4	58.624	276.080	0.000
Residual	285.603	1345	0.212		
Total	520.099	1349			

Table 3 shows that parental support ($F = 698.331$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$), community support ($F = 455.616$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$), virtual support ($F = 338.432$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$) and peer support ($F = 276.080$, $\text{sig} = 0.00$) are significant factors in contributing towards the students' educational well-being.

Regarding social pedagogy, Table 4 shows that parental support contributes as much as 34.1%, community support as much as 6.2%, virtual support as much as 2.6% and peer support contributes as much as 2.2% towards students' educational well-being. However, teacher support was not a significant factor in contributing to educational well-being among secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka.

Table 4. Contribution of Social Pedagogy Variables towards Students' Educational Well-Being

Variable	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	R2	Contribution
	B	Standard Error	Beta				
Parental Support	0.325	0.022	0.367	14.839	0.000	0.341	34.1%
Community Support	0.099	0.016	0.149	6.201	0.000	0.403	6.2%
Virtual Support	0.109	0.014	0.180	7.668	0.000	0.429	2.6%
Peer Support	0.139	0.019	0.181	7.154	0.000	0.451	2.2%
Constant	1.261	0.084	0.367	15.022	0.000	0.341	34.1%

Discussion

This study revealed that the level of social pedagogy in terms of home, school, virtual and community support for student learning was moderately-high. These results are in line with those of Sidik (2019), who found that the overall socio-environmental support for student learning was moderately-high in Malaysia. The results of this study are also in line with those of Aziz et al. (2018), who found in their empirical research that socio-environmental factors such as teachers, parents and peers were significant factors that supported student participation in learning. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory additionally explained the relationship between parents and their children; it further identified that environment, community and society consisting of government, parents, occupation, home, school, mosque, church, culture and neighbourhood all contribute to improving a child's capabilities. Bronfenbrenner (1979) further described how a child develops through the context of his or her environment.

The outcome of this current paper established that the overall level of students' educational well-being in terms of access to educational resources and enhancing social, soft and hard skill functioning is moderately-high. However, the outcome of this study contradicts the results of Programme for International Student Assessment (2015), which showed that the students' well-being in New Zealand was high,

as students felt positively about academic abilities and school life (Peña-López, 2016). Noble et al. (2015) suggested that students need to have a sense of belonging at school, experience positive emotions, feel safe, have positive relationships and think that they will obtain achievements if they work persistently hard with their capacities towards goals.

It additionally demonstrated that parental, peer, virtual and community support for student learning were all significant factors in enhancing students' educational well-being. However, it was found that teacher support was not a considerable factor in contributing to students' academic well-being. The results of this study are in line with those of Awang, Jindal-Snape & Barber (2019), which found that those who have more socio-environmental support demonstrate greater well-being. This study is also in line with that of Ansong et al. (2017), who showed that parental and peer support contributed towards student engagement in learning, but that there was no correlation between teacher support and student engagement in education. With the exception of teacher educational support, the results of this study are in line with the findings of Zakaria et al. (2012), who demonstrated that environmental support has factors that can influence the process of shaping student behaviour and is a source of learning through various social learning patterns such as modelling, feedback and encouragement (Awang, Jindal-Snape, & Barber 2019). In addition, they also demonstrated that, while humanitarian elements of environmental support include teacher, parental, peer and community support, nonhuman factors such as various types of mass media influence student learning and educational outcomes as well.

Conclusions

This empirical study demonstrated that, for better educational well-being among secondary school students in Sri Lanka, social pedagogy in terms of home, community, school and virtual environmental support for student learning should not be disregarded. The study results demonstrated that parental, peer, virtual and community support for student learning were significant factors in enhancing the students' educational well-being. However, the findings also found that teacher support was not a significant factor in improving the educational well-being among secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka. Therefore, secondary school teachers should implement student-centred teaching methods that follow the concepts of twenty-first century learning, and they should build good relations with students. The Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, should provide adequate

learning materials and other facilities that can make learning effective on several levels. Schools, homes and communities should also play supportive roles directed towards enhancing students' educational well-being.

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