



The Role of Psychology Teacher's Motivation in Supporting Depression in College Students: Intercultural Perspectives

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Abstract. In recent years, depression in university students has been of growing concern. This especially attracted attentions among research degree students due to higher levels of stress they faced; Master's and PhD students have been reported the highest suicide rates in comparison to undergraduate students. Psychological counselling that provided by psychology teachers in colleges thus became significantly important to these students. As such, this research study aims at analysing depression levels in college students, through an intercultural perspective focusing on how college psychology teachers were motivated to support these students. This article starts with an introduction to the research background, followed by a review of literature on the definitions of depression, psychology teacher motivation, and intercultural perspectives. Furthermore, the article explains how psychology teacher motivation plays role in college students depression from an intercultural perspective. This article concludes by a brief summary of the study and emerging recommendations.

Keywords: Depression · psychology teachers' motivation · intercultural perspective

1 Introduction

By reviewing previous literature on the topic of psychology teachers' motivation in supporting depression in college students, a gap was found in between educational, psychological, and motivational stances in viewing such a topic. Teacher motivation studies heavily emphasised on motivation theories [1, 2], such as self-determination theory, expectancy-value theory, and achievement goal theory, as well as on investigating factors affecting teacher motivation [1–3], such as intrinsic values (e.g., staying with students), extrinsic values (e.g., job stability, time for family), altruistic value (e.g., doing good for society). Amid with the extreme focus on motivation theory lens within this research field [1, 2], teacher motivation studies lacked a focus from intercultural perspectives, as well as on subject-specified investigations into teachers' motivation. Therefore, the current research study aims to fill this void.

Previous studies were found on the relationship between culture and motivation, indicating the crucial role of culture in students' motivation and learning process [6]. In

the contemporary world where international education became increasingly developed, “schools all over the world are becoming more diverse” [6, P1], and university education is also becoming more intercultural, promoting the term interculturalism a crucial theme in education fields [7]. Therefore, it is critically important to study teacher motivation for offering any psychology subjects or counselling sessions particularly from an intercultural perspective.

The prevalence of depression among college students has been a concern. With an increasingly diverse environment shared in the higher education field, researchers focused on examining students’ mental health issues from intercultural perspectives [8]. Furthermore, intercultural perspectives usually provide cultural-specified and contextualised meaning-making of depression which resulted in misunderstanding among contextual differences, i.e., Western and Eastern culture and contexts [9, 10]. Alternatively, beyond emphasising on the Western understanding of depression and its treatment, it is significantly important to establish an intercultural standpoint in this study. This is especially critical for college psychology teachers, who provide consultation for college students, as well as regularly teach psychology subjects in the university they serve. Consequently, research studies on college psychology teachers’ motivation and its role in supporting depression in college students are essential steps forward from an intercultural perspective.

2 College Psychology Teachers’ Motivation from an Intercultural Perspective

Motivation has probably been one of the most frequently studied topics in psychology and education. There are many possible concepts to take in reaching retrospective literature review. Kiziltepe claims that motivation is a force that keeps us moving, acting or performing things [11]. Maslow believes that motivation is a category of factors that determines behaviour which is always biologically, culturally, and situationally determined [12]. Weiner deduces that motivation forms the basis of much human behaviour [13]. Maslow theorises that motivation is a force triggered by eight needs, derived from a system of needs in an ordered hierarchy, ranging from physiological needs to self-actualisation, with the needs for security, belonging, love, and self-esteem in between. Adequate rest, food and physical needs and comfortable working conditions are physiological needs; creative, challenging work and opportunities for advancement are examples of self-actualisation [14]. Legault identified two dimensions of motivation, intrinsic motivation, which was concerned with engagement in behaviour that is inherently satisfying or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, referring to the performance of a behaviour that is fundamentally contingent upon the attainment of an outcome that is separable from the action itself [15].

As discussed above, in these studies motivational theories were initially used to examine students’ motivation in the educational, psychological, and motivational sciences, yet studies on teachers’ motivation were merely conducted by the late 1990s. Expected Value Theory (EVT) is used to investigate influential factors of individuals pursuing teaching career, and the consequences of their professional engagement, teaching

style, and personal well-being. Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) focuses on how teachers endeavour to feel successful in classroom and envision success in their day-to-day work. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which draws more attention to human growth and functioning, explores teachers controlled and autonomous motivation, the effect of teachers' quality teaching behaviour and burnout, and the impact of the quality of their students' motivation [2]. Within SDT, Controlled motivation refers to engaging in behaviour as result of perceived pressure. When stress is entirely external to the ego (e.g., to seek rewards or avoid punishment), behaviour is completely controlled by external forces—called external control—the most controlled form of motivation. When stress comes from within (e.g., a motivation to avoid shame or guilt), it reflects introverted control, another form of controlled motivation. Autonomic motivation refers to behaviours that arise from within the ego. And it is the least intrinsic form of autonomous motivation that requires full will, volition, and a sense of choice, in which behaviour is motivated because one finds value or importance in it [5]. Involving the full integration of regulation into one's identity is more intrinsic regulation, in which motivated behaviour becomes the outer expression of the inner self [16]. Consequently, teacher motivation can be defined as the reasons for choosing teaching pathways and maintaining their teaching career arising from the intrinsic value of the individual and the intensity of teacher motivation which is stated by effort spent on teaching as affected by many situational factors [4].

With respect to above mentioned needs for security, belonging, love, and self-esteem, few studies used these needs to examine psychology teachers' motivation. Besides, Brown states that love is something we nurture or grow, as well as a connection that can only be developed between people when it exists within each of them – we can love others as much as we love ourselves. Our love develops when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful self to be deeply seen and known. It facilitates when we honour the spiritual connection that offering us with trust, respect, kindness and affection [17]. Based on the expounding above to teacher motivation, I, as the researcher of this study, believe that motivational psychology under the intercultural environment is continuously changing. Accordingly, there are more emerging definitions along with parallel development within the field of teacher motivation studies. Therefore, this research study believes that psychology teachers' motivation to teach and counsel should be empathy of intrinsic values with love, mind, and heart that connect to students so that they can meet the needs for security, belonging, love, and self-esteem. In this sense, issues of depression in college students can be improved.

3 Depression in College Students from an Intercultural Perspective

Previous studies indicated that suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students, and depression is one of the most significant associated risk factors [18]. However, one problem in the diagnosis of depression is that the term “depression” has multiple meanings. In addition to its usual meaning of being depressed, depression can also refer to a mental illness and even a symptom of the disorder [9]. Research studies also showed that there are different cultural understanding of depression [19]. For instance, Western culture considers a healthy lifestyle as emphasizing on one's mental

wellness, including positive emotions and feelings, however, this may not be always acceptable in different cultural contexts. Also, in viewing individuals as an independent existence within the Western culture, symptoms of depression can easily be attributed to internal factors. Nevertheless, in collectivist cultures, where group identity and collective agency are more pursued, these symptoms may be attributable to social and interpersonal factors. [9].

As such, these differences in contextualised concepts make it difficult to study role of psychology teacher motivation in dealing with students' depression from intercultural perspectives. This difficulty may explain the recorded cultural differences in the prevalence of depression. Simultaneously, such differences and difficulties also indicated that the combination of depression and psychology teachers' motivation can provide a new perspective to investigate role of psychology teachers' motivation in supporting college students' depression.

4 Intercultural Perspectives

The differences between “cross-cultural” and “intercultural” should be clarified at first since the term “intercultural” has a special connection in this research study. Based on Fries' viewpoint, “cross-cultural” refers to things that cover multiple cultures without any focus on the interactions between them. On the contrary, the term “intercultural” involves interactions. From an intercultural perspective, it is possible to study the experiences of students and teachers who study or work in an international learning and teaching environment and may have worked with people from diverse background and experienced “culture shock” and “cultural adaptation” [20]. In the present study, the motivation of psychology teachers centrally focuses on having subjective initiative to empathy students' emotions and to interact with them.

Based on the previous studies, “intercultural education refers to the different cultures that must coexist; this coexistence is considered mutually beneficial, but also brings difficulties that must be understood and coped with”. Moreover, intercultural education and training stem from intercultural communication. Thereby, it starts with intercultural education, moves to intercultural training, and ends with multicultural education [21].

The intercultural perspective discussed within this research study is derived from the psychological communication of intercultural education. This perspective requires psychology teachers to empathy with students and be motivated to practise intercultural communication. According to the widely used theoretical model of teacher professional competence in teacher education, which was developed by Baumert and Kunter (2013), teacher professional competence comprises the interaction of four main components: 1) expertise, 2) values, beliefs, and goals, 3) motivational orientation, and 4) self-discipline. Expertise includes declarative and procedural knowledge and can be considered the core of professionalism [22]. The theoretical framework is used in this research study in order to embed motivational orientation and values in teachers' competencies to achieve intercultural perspective. The following section outlines the mechanism behind the use of this framework.

5 The Mechanism of the Role of Psychology Teachers' Motivation on College Students' Depression

Research studies showcased that teacher education is one of the main reasons for the inability of education policies to promote diversity and inclusion, i.e., intercultural education. Moreover, teacher education plays a crucial role in ensuring inclusive education for all which is especially critical in developing teachers in the diverse teaching and learning environment [23]. Thereby, the researcher of this study believes that in the context of intercultural education intercultural psychological motivation is one of the key factors for psychology teachers in supporting the depression in college students.

Concerning psychology teachers' motivation discussed above, the researcher of this study believes that the concept of psychological communication from an intercultural perspective refers to the emotional responses generated by people's communication, understanding and dialogue in different regions and cultural backgrounds. Due to the general understanding of such an emotional response as being a link between emotional differences and social support across cultures, psychological communication has become an essential part of therapy and recovery to a certain extent. Psychological communication from an intercultural perspective is especially important for students with depression because they may not be able to converse or speak with their friends. Hence, it is necessary to investigate whether psychology teachers promote cultural empathy in psychological communication to satisfy students' needs of safety, belonging, love and self-esteem, rather than being limited to cold techniques and teaching per se character.

For college students, intercultural psychological communication or dialogue may affect their cognition, behaviour, and emotion through their psychological problems, psychological contradictions, or psychological trauma [24]. The role of motivation for psychology teachers lies in identifying students' needs for safety, belonging, love, and self-esteem to connect with them on a cognitive and emotional level. Considering the cultural differences in the levels of depression among students [9], the motivation of psychological teachers should be the subjective initiative of individual students to receive information from their counsellor, which is believed to help identify and select the emotional responses involved. The researcher of this study contends that, as a consequence, such empathy mode is cultural empathy motivation.

6 Conclusion

This article analysed the role of psychological teachers' motivation in supporting college students' depression from an intercultural perspective. This article also defined psychology teachers' motivation employing motivation theory and explained the notion of intercultural perspectives and further analysed student depression from intercultural perspectives. Furthermore, interdisciplinary educational theory and motivation theory provided a comprehensive framework for studying the role of psychology teachers' motivation on college students' depression from intercultural perspectives in the current study.

Therefore, the research study indicates that from the perspective of teacher typology, it is necessary to study psychology teachers' motivation and its far-reaching role in

dealing with depression in college students. The study also suggests a use of interdisciplinary research methods in future research studies, whereby the discipline of mental health education is associated with intercultural issues.

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