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The impact of delegator teaching style on the motivation to achieve of primary level students

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Abstract. In the learning process, different teaching styles can facilitate the retention of information by students, that is a reason why many education specialists focus their attention on the impact of educational style and school results. This study aims to identify the impact of the delegator teaching style on the motivation to achieve of primary level students. In this context, the central concept is operationalization of the independent and dependent variables, respectively the delegator teaching style and motivation to achieve, configuration and implementation of pedagogical program based on the principles of delegator teaching style and realization of initial and final evaluation to identify the impact of delegator teaching style on achievement motivation.

Keywords: educational style, teaching style, achievement, motivation, learning style

1. Delegator teaching style

The educational style of teachers is a very studied subject, that's why we find a series of definitions in the specialized literature: "educational style refers to the teacher's behavior in the classroom, the type or nature of educational relationships, a quantity of personality traits that are translate through a philosophy of life and education and the teacher's beliefs"(Bota, Petre, 2015); according to Abello (2020, p.143) "educational style is conceptualized as the specific instructional approach of the teacher that influences students motivation, learning and performance"; E. Geissler (1977, in Sălăvăstru, p.154) "defines educational style as the expression of preferred modes of behavior, which return with a certain regularity", and for B.O. Smith "is the characteristic way in which deeds of surrender are executed. Educational style is personal and unique for each individual", and Grasha (2002, p.153) believes that educational style refers to "stable and consistent behaviors of teachers, manifested in the context of their interactions with students during the educational process".

Antony F. Grasha, a renowned psychology professor at the University of Cincinnati has extensively studied both students learning styles, which he structured into six categories (competitive, collaborative, avoidant, participative, dependent, and independent), and the teaching styles he structured into five categories: expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator and delegator.



Delegator teaching style is “concerned with developing students' ability to function in an autonomous manner. Students work independently on projects or as part of an autonomous team. The teacher is available at the students' request as a resource person”(Grasha, 2002, p.154).

Specific to the delegative teaching style are group learning, observing students, ensuring consultation and promoting interaction between groups and between individuals to achieve learning objectives. According to Gill (2013) “Grasha showed his disapproval of teachers limiting themselves to being placed in one category. Instead, he argued that teachers play multiple roles in the classroom. He believes that most teachers possess a combination of all or most of the teaching styles'.

The best teachers are like actors who use their voice, gestures and movements to maintain and stimulate the emotions of their students. Teaching styles are more than interesting qualities that people possess, that is why Grasha (2002, p.155) likens the teacher to “an artist creating a painting. Colors on a canvas are mixed and organized to make a statement or create a mood”. The ideal teacher's style should be a mixture of all these teaching styles in varying percentages.

Teaching styles are only half of the equation to understanding classroom dynamics. A complete picture must take into account the presence of the teacher, as well as the nature and quality of the meeting with the students. An important variable influencing such interactions is the students' learning style. It is essential that teachers combine teaching styles or, at some point, focus on one because students have different learning styles that require different pedagogical approaches.

2. Achievement motivation

Motivation is the result of processes, internal or external to the individual, that arouse the enthusiasm and persistence to follow a certain course of action. This concept can be explained with the help of an equation like "Performance = Motivation x Ability". In other words, "motivation can be defined as a decision-making process by which the individual chooses desired outcomes and sets of behaviors appropriate to their acquisition" (Huczynski and Buchanan, 1991 in Islam, 1999). Maier (1965 in Islam, 1991) emphasized the use of incentives and the development of professional interest in defining motivation. He defined motivation as a part of production by showing an equation like "Production = Skills x Training x Motivation - Fatigue Pattern". Thus, motivation is the dynamic of behavior, which energizes and activates the internal organisms of human beings.

McClelland and Atkinson are two of the most prominent theorists who have studied achievement motivation ”focused on individuals cognitive processes involving the expected value or perceived value of an action. In the early 1970s, Atkinson and McClelland hypothesized how top performers think, feel, and act. Their belief was that if we can identify how high performing individuals think and act, we should be able to teach others those thoughts and behaviors” (Smith, Karaman, Balkin, Talwar, 2020)

In general, motivation theorists are interested in explaining physical activity, such as task engagement and persistence, as well as cognitive activity, such as problem solving and decision making. In educational research, according to Roeser and Eccles (1998 Meece, Anderman, Anderman, 2006) “theories of motivation are most often used to explain student activity choice, engagement, persistence, help-seeking, and school performance. Most of the time disaffected or alienated students cannot engage in learning due to lack of motivation”.



Among the most important goals of educational researchers is to identify the most effective student motivation strategies to help improve learning outcomes. "Effective learning depends not only on methods and forms of work in the teaching process, but on students' feelings, attention, assignment and their goals" (Gardner, 1999; Morgan, 2006 in Antonijević, Bojović, 2017). According to Schunk et al., (Antonijević, Bojović, 2017) "teaching researchers and practitioners increasingly recognize that motivation is an important quality that permeates all aspects of teaching and learning".

Different researchers' perspectives result in various definitions of achievement motivation. The original definition of achievement motivation belongs to Blyth and Foster-Clark, (1987 in Singh 2011) who defined it as "comparing performance with others and against certain standard activities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (1999 in Singh, 2011) suggested that achievement motivation is a combination of two personality variables: the tendency to approach success and the tendency to avoid failure. Bornholt and Goodnow (1999 in Singh, 2011) defined achievement motivation as "the drive to work diligently and vigorously, to be consistently goal oriented, to achieve mastery in challenging and difficult tasks, and to create a sense of achievement as a result. This definition consists of three elements: the stimulation of personal capacities, constant efforts with momentum, and the achievement of satisfaction. Christenson Rounds and Gorney (1992 in Singh, 2011) conducted a factor analysis and argued that achievement motivation consists of four elements: mastery of needs, work orientation, competition, and self-concern. After further study, they discovered that the interaction of the first three elements is the key reason that contributes to the excellent performance of individuals.

Achievement goal theory is situated within the social-cognitive view of motivation and "over the past 25 years, it has emerged as one of the most prominent theories of motivation" (Anderman, Wolters, 2005 in Meece, Anderman, Anderman, 2006, Pintrich 2000). It served as an important piece for analyzing the influence of different classroom structures and school environments on student motivation and learning. Rather than focusing on perceptual abilities and causal attributions, goal theories of motivation focus on types of goals that individuals pursue in achievement situations: "Achievement goal theorists view behavior as intentional and directed toward achieving certain goals (Pintrich, Schunk 2002, in Meece, Anderman, Anderman, 2006). According to Nicholls (1984 in Meece, Anderman, Anderman 2006) "the distinguishing feature of achievement behavior is its competence goal or perceived competence". Thus, the criteria or standards of excellence that people use to judge their competence are key to achievement goal theory. This point is critical because classrooms and school settings differ in the assessment standards used to assess students, academic progress and achievement (Ames 1992a,b; Ames, Archer 1988; Eccles, Midgley 1989; Nicholls 1989 in Meece, Anderman, Anderman, 2006).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Objectives:

1. Operationalization of the independent and dependent variables, respectively the delegator teaching style and motivation to achieve;
2. Configuration and implementation of a pedagogical program regulated by the principles of delegator teaching;



3. Realization of initial and final evaluative measures associated with the dependent variable, the motivation to achieve, to evaluate the impact of the implementation of the dependent variable, delegator teaching style.

3.2. Research hypothesis

Involvement of students in learning experiences generated by a delegating teaching determines the amplification of the level of achievement motivation.

3.3. Batch of participants

The group of participants consists of 33 pupils of 4th grade from school number 24 "Ion Jalea" Constanța.

4. Applied tools

The methodological design has as a key element an experimental approach completed by the questionnaire method. The experiment took place between February and May 2024. The operationalization of the independent variable was done through the implementation of the pedagogical program. Its total duration was 12 weeks distributed as follows: 2 weeks initial assessment, 8 weeks of activities, 2 weeks final assessment. The dependent variable was operationalized using the Achievement Motivation Scale (Kankaras 2017). This scale contains two subscales: Item 1-5 are measuring "hope of succes" (approach tendency) and Items 6-10 measure "fear to failure" (avoidance tendency).

We also used *School Achievement Motivating Rating Scale (SAMRS)* (Chiu 1997). This scale consists of 15 items, with each item describing a behavioral characteristic believed to be related to academic achievement motivation. This characteristics include tendencies of being persistent, overcoming obstacles, maintaining high standards, responding positively to competition, and being able to take risk to failure.

At the end of the pedagogical program we applied a satisfaction questionnaire that we created using Fieger, Peter 2012 and So, Brush 2008, to capture the level of satisfaction of the students following the implementation of the pedagogical program. The captured dimensions are teaching, generic skills and learning experiences.

In the figure below we have made a comparison of the data obtained from the initial and the final assessment, on the two dimensions, the hope of success and the fear of failure. We can see that there is a slight increase in the values from the final evaluation, especially regarding the dimension hope of success.

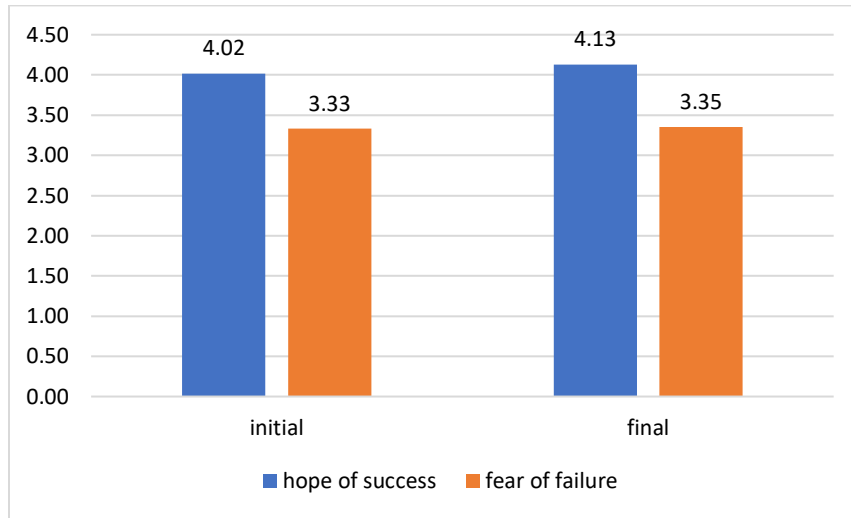


Figure 1. Dimensions of motivation questionnaire. Initial vs final. Arithmetic means

In figures 4.2 and 4.3 we made a comparison of the data obtained from the initial and the final assessment regarding the SAMRS Questionnaire addressed to students. The comparison was made on the 5 dimensions of the questionnaire. We can observe that following the implementation of the pedagogical program, two dimensions registered increases in the initial values, these dimensions are: maintaining high standards and being able to take risk to failure.

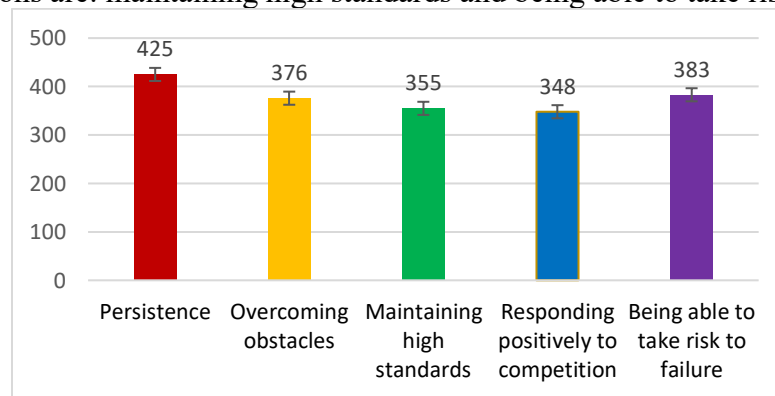


Figure 2. Total score. SAMRS - students. Initial. Dimensions

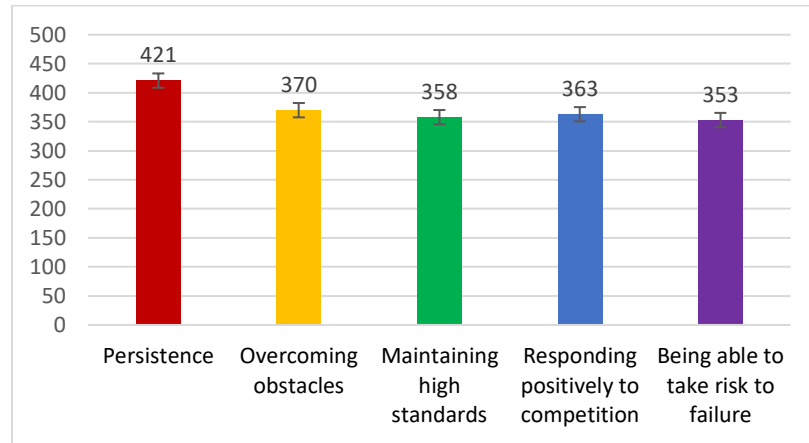


Figure 3. Total score. SAMRS - students. Final. Dimensions

In figures 4.4 and 4.5 we made a comparison of the data obtained from the initial and final evaluation regarding the SAMRS Questionnaire addressed to teachers. The comparison was made on the 5 dimensions of the questionnaire. We can see that following the implementation of the pedagogical program, all dimensions registered increases in their initial values.

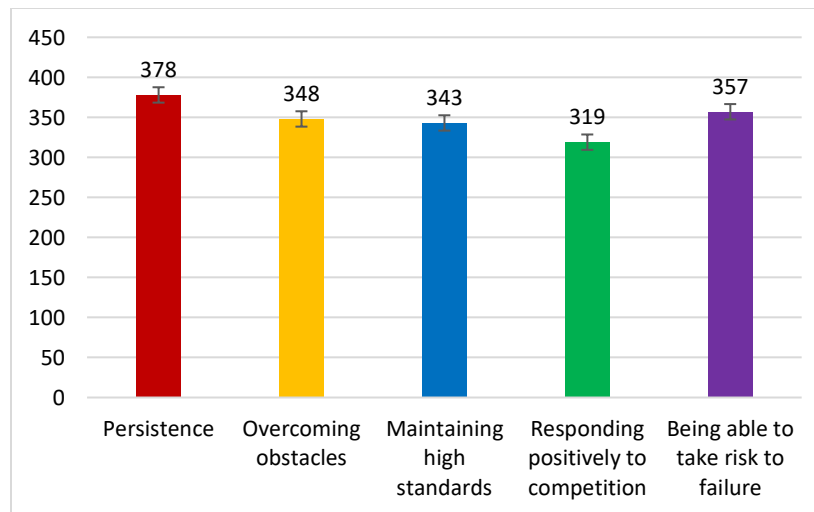


Figure 4. Total score. SAMRS - Teacher. Initial. Dimensions

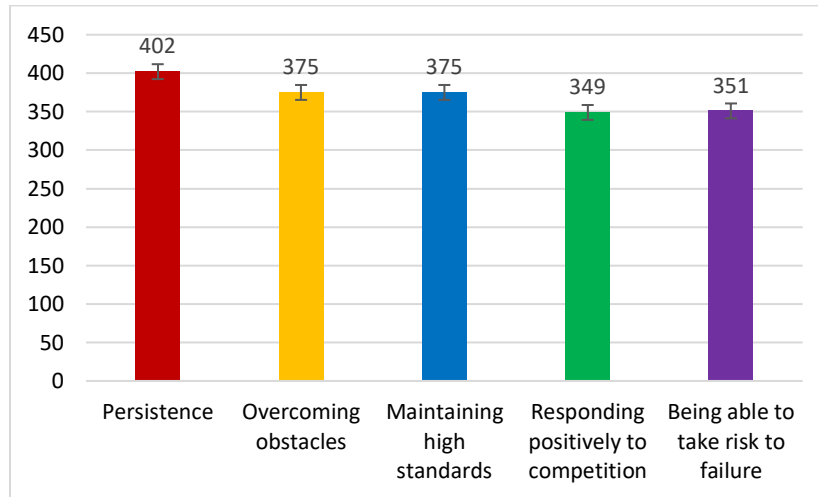


Figure 5. Total score. SAMRS - Teacher. Final. Dimensions

In figures 4.6 and 4.7 we made a comparison of the data obtained from the initial and the final evaluation regarding the SAMRS Questionnaire for teachers and for students. The purpose of these figures is to capture the students' opinion of themselves regarding the 5 dimensions, compared to the teachers' opinion. As we can see, in the initial assessment students tended to overestimate themselves. Their opinion of them was better than that of the teacher. In the final evaluation, however, we can see that the opinions are almost similar.

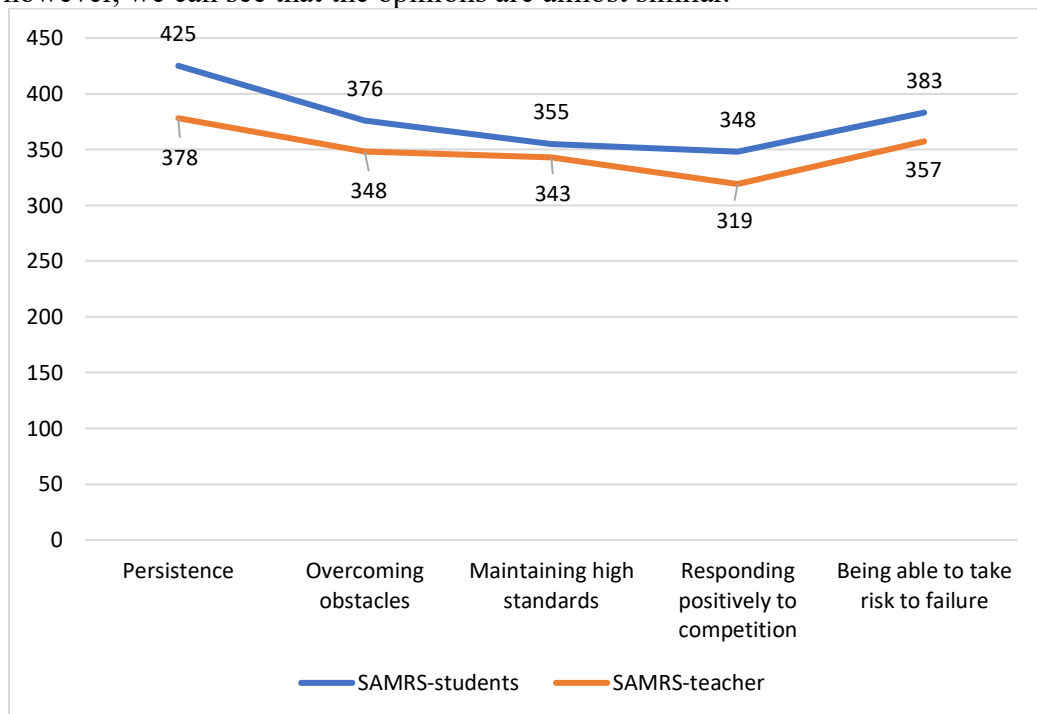


Figure 6. Total score dimensions. Comparing SAMRS-students vs SAMRS-teacher. Initial

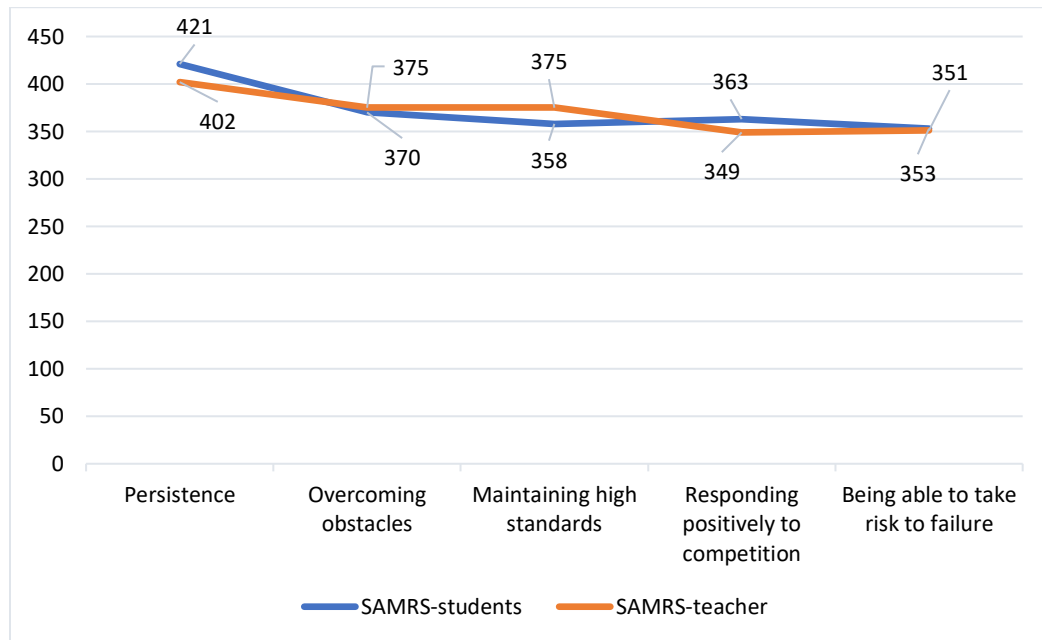


Figure 7. Total score dimensions. Comparing SAMRS-students vs SAMRS-teacher. Final

Results

The results confirm that the data obtained following the application of the tools indicate amplifications at the level of some of the specific aspects of the dependent variable, sufficient argument to consider the hypothesis confirmed.

Discussions

This research aimed to study the impact of the delegator teaching style on the achievement motivation of primary school students. Numerous studies have investigated how a teacher's teaching style influences student motivation. To this end, Anthony Grasha developed the Inventory of Teaching Styles, which was later administered to 381 faculty members representing 200 public and private universities in the US. 275 teachers who took part in the national and regional workshops participated in this inventory. The remaining 106 teachers were randomly selected from two large Universities. Participants were less likely to adopt expert and formal authority styles in undergraduate and graduate courses. In contrast, they were likely to use the facilitator and delegator style in more advanced courses.

Differences in teaching styles were noted between male and female teachers. Compared to their male counterparts, women reported slightly lower Inventory of Teaching Styles scores on expert and formal authority teaching styles and higher on facilitative and delegating teaching styles. These findings are consistent with other research (Eagly, Johnson 1990; Eagly, Karau 1991) which has shown that women in positions of authority are more likely to have minimized expertise and authority and are highly likely to be democratic (collaborative and participative), the latter qualities being very much a part of the facilitator and delegator teaching styles.



Conclusions

The delegator teaching style has a positive impact on student motivation because everything is learned more easily when students are involved in the action, as opposed to the role of a passive spectator, watching from the sidelines. This teaching style stimulates initiative and independence in activities, develops teamwork skills, adaptation to various roles and responsibilities, also develops creative writing ability and encourages debates. All these aspects cause students to be much more involved in their own learning, which leads to a significant increase in the motivation to achieve.

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