"Exploring The Perceptions of Teachers About Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset and Impact on Students Learning"

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ABSTRACT

It's a big challenge for the teachers to recognize the abilities of the students in the classroom and basically this recognition means a lot both to students as well as teachers. The current study is about the perceptions of teachers about the mindsets of students whether they have growth mindsets and fixed mindset. The objectives of the study were to explore the perceptions of teachers about the concepts of growth mindset and fixed mindset at higher secondary level. 10 teachers who were serving at a higher secondary level were taken as samples. Semi structured interview was used for data collection and purposive sampling technique was used. Data analysis done through thematic analysis. Data analysis revealed that the teachers were not well aware about the terms "fixed mindset" and "growth mindset". However, on the basis of class participation and results, they are well aware about the abilities of the students, they often used similar teaching strategies to foster the growth mindset of the students. Findings regarding teacher's feedback and praise on student's learning revealed that most of the respondents provide students with verbal, written and oral feedback in the classroom.

Introduction

There is much evidence that the behavior of the teachers contributes to the performance of their students. The teachers' expectations about their students' academic performance are generally influenced by their beliefs about human intelligence and their past academic performance in academic tests. Teachers often make their mindsets according to the student's previous result or the result of a subject that is related to his/her class. It is not important that a student who performs well in one exam or test, will perform well in the second exam.

There is no doubt that the classroom facilitator/ teacher is the most important component of student's learning context in a specified classroom. Research shows that there has been great amount of studies conducted on whether teacher qualities like amount and quality of education, years of experience and different certification gained by the teacher impact students and their learning in the classroom settings. (Harris & Sass, 2011 and Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004). So, it can be said that classroom teacher impact student's learning and this impact can predict the progress of student learning in the future.

According to Dweck, teachers may be encouraging pupils to adopt a fixed attitude that could limit their capacity to learn when they complement them on their intelligence, which is something they frequently do to boost their self-esteem and encourage them. However, if the teacher commends the students for their efforts and the process they have followed, it helps them to enhance their own potential for progress.

The most important factor in learning and education activities is the educator. A teacher in the broad sense, is a individual employed in educational organizations who facilitates students to achieve intellectual, sensory and behavior aims and outcomes within the range designed by the educational system in the community or society (Gundogdu, Silman, 2007).

It is the reality that student success is influenced by a variety of elements, the first of which is the teacher's conduct, and is not solely dependent on the outcome of their work. The student's motivation, attitude toward schoolwork and the school environment, self-confidence, and ultimately the student's personality development are all directly impacted by the teacher's positive attitude (Stronge,2013)

Review of Literature

It is evident that learners are not altogether similar, that means their mindsets also are not similar to each other. Jones, Byrd, and Lusk (2009) conducted research on high school students' beliefs about intelligence and found that learners have a variety of theories about the explanation of intelligence. From the above discussion it can be concluded that all students have different mindsets and do not have the similar intelligence. They have different IQ level and different approaches toward learning things in the classroom.

The idea that is start in educational organizations at the moment is the concept of growth mindset and fixed mindsets, and how they influence to learners and their learning. This idea is going to be popular day by day in the educational settings. Basically this idea is based upon the work of a Psychologist Carol Dweck, who was working in the Stanford University. She studies about the personality and development promoted her philosophy in her book "Mindset" which was published in

2007. According to Dweck, the idea or notion about the mindset is related to our understanding towards different things and from where ability comes. It is newly invented idea grasped by teachers as a tool to discover the knowledge of learner achievements and processes that such achievement could be enhanced (Heggrat, 2015).

What is Mindset?

The term "mindset" has defined in general and specifically by psychologist Carol Dweck and many others. In general meaning, a mindset is the way or state of individual's thinking, inclinations and attitude. In 2006, Dweck summarizes that a person normally have either a fixed or a growth mindset. Persons or individuals with a growth mindset trust that personal abilities can be cultivated through struggle. Persons with a fixed mindset think that they have a particular personality, level of intelligence and character. Learners can achieve more when they have a growth mindset and that attitude supports driving forth effort. It also greatly contributes to the skill to overcome problems/ difficulties in life.

Mindsets about the capacity themselves are malleable. Youngsters' mindsets are expected to be formed by reaction from parents/caregivers. Response or feedback actually play important role in students learning because the students think they are important to teacher. Admiring a child and assigning his/her success to aptitude, as opposed to struggle or process lead to encourages the development of a fixed mindset (Pomerantz & Kempner, 2013). Children can do best if they are praised positively or in a right way.

Dweck's social-cognitive theory assumes that mindsets about intelligence are vital personality variables that inspire motivational dynamics in accomplishment situations, such as when learners engage in educational tasks (Dweck, 1986).

Types of Mindsets

Dweck described learners' mindsets the way they recognize their skills fall somewhere between two opposites:

Fixed Mindset

Learners believe that their abilities, skills and whole intelligence are fixed qualities. They might struggle for the learning and trying to progress, usually feel ashamed or embarrassed when they do not understand something.

Growth Mindset

Learners know that they can improve their talents and capacities by constant struggle and determination, as well as being ready to accept instructions and feedback given by the facilitator. They usually believe they can be progress through the hard work and by practicing new learning methods and techniques. (Marcus Guido, 2016)

Growth mindsets can be developed and change according the need and requirements of the learner. A growth mindset learner/individual considers that his/her aptitude can be developed, either negatively or positively, depends upon the education and effort (Blazer, 2011). Basically education is the most important element to develop the capabilities of the learner. By applying different techniques in the educational settings, the learners can be progressed and the results would be good.

Difference between Growth Mindset and Fixed Mindset

Crowley offers the following differences between students with a fixed mindset and students with a growth mindset. These are as follows:

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Fixed Mindset

Students with fixed mindsets have these qualities in nature:

o   Their goal is to look smart.
o   They tend to avoid challenges.
o   They give up easily.
o   They do not see the point of effort.
o   They ignore feedback.
o   They feel threatened by the success of others.

From above characteristics of students with fixed mindset, it can be said that they may be afraid from challenges, effort, aimless in nature. They think that effort is not necessary to change the fate of their life and problems faced in the routine life.

Growth mindset

Students who have growth mindset have these qualities in nature.

o   Their goal is to learn.
o   They embrace challenges.
o   They persist when there are setbacks.
o   They see effort as the path to mastery.
o   They learn from feedback.
o   They find inspiration in the success of others.

As contrast to the fixed mindset, the students with growth mindset think that they could change their life by struggle and hard work. They embrace challenges, learn new things and learn by feedback.

Mindsets and Role of Teachers

Carol Dweck's study about mindset is applicable to all individuals, not just students. So, school management authorities could ask themselves what outcome developing a growth mindset among staff/teachers might have upon learning activities in a school. Luckily, a number of teachers and educators have now started to discover what this might look like for

educators. These are the few techniques that can be used to develop the growth mindset among the students in the classroom settings:

i.   Modelling

Jackie Gerstein suggested that the teachers, like the learners they impart, can easily learn to develop growth mindset, but this involves vigilant arrangement by the school management authorities. The common observable way of applying a growth mindset in teaching process is modelling. Gerstein introduced many courses and also run many professional development courses that aims to train teachers in in what way to model a growth mindset among students and one of her important principles is boosting instructors to see themselves as learners and, just like pupils are all capable of improving themselves and learning, so too are teachers (Gerstein 2014).

i.   Create space for new ideas

The second principle is that schools should offer opportunities for instructors to attempt new projects and make many mistakes. This could be intimidating for educators, but it is indispensable for the development of a growth mindset. One of the key characteristics of such a mindset is the readiness to apply new approaches and methods. For the creation of this space, it is necessary to begin with the learning objective in mind that is what would facilitators/teachers and the school administration learn as part of the practice. The administration should focus whether the new project/idea is going to be an achievement or a failure. For this space, the educational organizations should consider and

focus on the new ideas and techniques and always welcome the change for the development of growth mindset.

ii. Build time for self-reflection

Although making space for the new ideas/techniques is essential, it is only part of the process for the development of growth mindset. It is equally important to provide a chance for facilitators/teachers to reflect on their new ideas/techniques and consider what they have learned from the procedure. Preferably, these reflections must focus merely on whether the new idea was a failure or a success, but focus on what the teacher has learnt from the procedures. Self-reflection provides a chance to teachers to write about their learning and what they want to improve in the future for the development of growth mindset.

iii. Formative Feedback

Teacher's performance managing procedure can often be relatively difficult and tough experiences though, by viewing the procedure as part of a growth mindset. It involves teachers and making it formative not summative, and encourage the involvement of the teacher in the whole process. The feedback provided by the school administration could be expressive and related to the teachers regarding daily practice. By formative feedback the end results would be better and good.

Development of a Growth Mindset among students is not an immediate procedure and it can take a concentrated struggle on the behalf of educators and rest of the education community. Similarly, encouraging educators to see themselves in the similar way will equally take a long

period of time; however, there are important benefits to be had from leveraging these thoughts. (Dweck, 2006)

Learn how to implement a growth mindset in the classroom?

Crowley proposed a few strategies that can assist educators in creating classes that capitalize on the principles of a development mindset. The strategies include the following:

Praise the process, not just the result.

The teachers can foster the growth mindset in the classroom by giving feedback to students about the whole process and to praise them in positive way. In this way, the students recognize that they are very special to teachers as he/she has knowledge about the whole process.

Communicate realistic expectations of outcomes.

Teacher should talk about the objectives and expectations that the students can attain in the future. These objectives or expectations should not be superficial or artificial that the students cannot achieve.

Establish a culture that promotes effort, learning and resilience.

This is very important to establish the culture of hard working, helping others in the classroom. Once the teacher establish this culture, the students easily act upon the rules and work according to the learning culture promoted by the teacher in the classroom.

Facilitate positive self-talk

Teachers can promote the ability of taking decisions individually by students through self-projects and assignments. (https://content.acsa.org/articles/adopting-classroom-growth-mindset)

The theoretical construct that describes our implicit assumptions about the stability of ability is referred to as our "mindset" by Carol Dweck in 2007. She contends that mindset may be measured on a continuum that ranges from fixed, or wholly stable, to growth, or completely adaptable. Numerous interventions that help teach young people to embrace a growth mindset have been developed and assessed. For instance, students' performance on academic and social activities has been successfully enhanced by growth mindset interventions (Blackwell, Trześniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Yeager, 2014).

Growth mindset interventions can be especially helpful for students who experience negative racial or gender stereotypes about their performance (Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003) or who feel that they are not expected to succeed (Davis, Burnette, Allison, & Stone, 2011).

Methodology

For the current study, the researcher employed qualitative research methodology as it gives an in-depth explanation of the views and opinions of the respondents. Qualitative Research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem (DeFranzo, 2011).

Research Design

The design used for the current study was qualitative in nature. The data were collected from the participant through individual interviews.

Sample and Sampling technique

Purposive sampling technique was used for the current study. It is one type of the non-probability sampling technique that is selected on the basis of the characteristics of the target population and objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling (Crossman, 2018). 10 teachers who were serving at a higher secondary level were taken as samples. The participants had five to seven years' experience of teaching at college level and all participants had Masters level qualification. There was no restriction of age, gender and subjects they are teaching in the classrooms.

Research instrument

As a research tool, semi-structured interviews were employed. Bernard (1988) asserts that semi-structured interviewing works best when you will be sending multiple interviewers out into the field to gather data and when you will not have multiple opportunities to interview someone. In addition to offering interviewers a clear set of guidelines, the semi-structured interview guide can yield trustworthy, comparable qualitative data.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis of data obtained from interviews entails manually coding the data transcript and then extracting different themes and categories.

Results

Following themes emerged from the interviews conducted:

Views about fixed mindset

When the teachers were asked about what they know about the fixed mindset? The teachers were not well aware about this term "fixed mindset" however; they had sufficient knowledge about the mindset of

students. They had knowledge about the learning abilities of the students; how they learn? How do they behave in the classroom?

One of the respondents replied that the students with a fixed mindset show little interest in their studies because they know what they can do in a limited context.
The students with a fixed mindset do not want to work hard. Sometimes the students who are intelligent; they feel that they can perform very well in the classroom and get good results in the exams, but this kind of over confidence sometimes leads them to the failure position and do not perform well in the exams.

One of the respondents added that they can easily recognize the students in the classroom who have the growth mindset and who have the fixed mindset in their classroom on the basis of the class participation and responses during the delivery of lectures in the classroom.

Views about growth mindset

When the respondents were asked about the concept of growth mindset; most of them were not aware about this particular term "growth mindset" but they know about the characteristics of students who have the growth mindset in their classroom. They believe that the students who have the ability to do well in the classroom actually have the growth mindset. Most students in the school have a growth mindset and few students are with a fixed mindset. They were in the favor that the students mostly want to perform well in the classroom and want to learn more related to their syllabus and other important concepts.

One of the respondents added that the students who have the growth mindset prove themselves successful in the future and the students who have a fixed mindset even though they are intelligent do not

perform well in the future and become failures due to overconfidence. The students who have a growth mindset, with their hard work and struggle achieve success and get good grades in the exams.

Teaching strategies used by the teachers in fostering growth mindset

Most of the respondents responded that they often used the similar teaching strategies to foster the growth mindset of the students like: Assignments, Projects and Field notes.

One of the participants added that he used micro-teaching in the classroom to foster a growth mindset as it provides opportunities to the students to know about their own mistakes and the areas where improvement is needed.

Impact of teacher's feedback and praise on student's learning

Findings regarding teacher's feedback and praise on student's learning revealed that most of the respondents provide students with verbal, written and oral feedback in the form of these comments:

Good, Excellent, Keep it up, you can do it, you have done, you have achieved, you are wonderful
These types of comments frequently provide to the students in front of the other classmates.

One of the participants added that he often takes the student who did not perform well in the class in his office and discusses the learning problems and encourages him.

He added that this type of strategy proves good in developing the growth mindset of the students.

One of the respondents added that there are some other factors related to discouraging the students to develop their growth mindset like, lack of parent's interest

in their studies, peer involvement, social contacts etc.

Discussions

Aim of this current study was to explore the perceptions of teachers toward growth mindset and fixed mindset and impact on the students learning at college level. As the participants had no specific information related to the terms fixed mindset and growth mindset, yet they had information about the characteristics of students who have a growth mindset and fixed mindset.

The findings related to the characteristics of growth mindset follow the past researches like a report about the "Mindset in the Classroom" A National study of K-12 Teachers that was published in 2016 with the help of Raikes foundation. The aim of this project was to learn about the teacher's experiences and their opinions regarding learning mindsets of the students in the classroom. With the help of Education Week Research Center, the experts developed an original survey tool and administered it to a national sample of more than 600 K-12 educators in May 2016 for getting original results.

Findings of the report shows that near to half of respondents (45%) were in the opinion that personally they are "very familiar" with the growth mindset and they know about the term growth mindset. 4 percent respondents of the study stated that they are "not at all familiar" with the concept of growth mindset. On average teachers donated themselves a score of 4.1 (out of 5) for awareness with the concept of growth mindset. In contrast, about one-quarter of respondents of the study reported that administrative authorities in their schools have sound knowledge about the growth mindset and only 13 percent believed other teachers who are teaching at

any level in their schools have that understanding with the concept . (https://www.edweek.org/media/ewrc_mind setintheclassroom_sept2016.pdf)

Teachers have a very important role in fostering the growth mindset of the students. Current research shows that teacher's positive feedback and praise can develop the growth mindset of the students and stop the students from becoming upset and discouraged in learning something in the classroom. The literature that is now available identifies the learning strategies teachers can employ to support students' long-term performance and the implications for fostering a growth mindset in classroom settings (Dweck, 2010). Teachers now have the flexibility to design learning objectives, contexts, and situations that help students understand that struggle is more significant than relying just on aptitude (Hong et al., 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998; Resnick, 1995). The results of the three studies lend credence to this notion by indicating that teachers must foster a development mindset in their classrooms in order to best equip pupils to profit from meaningful work.

dents who perceive their instructors to endorse growth (vs. fixed) mindset beliefs report better classroom experiences (e.g., greater belonging, fewer evaluative concerns) and, in

turn, engage in more behaviors that promote academic success (e.g., class attendance and engagement). Although many instructors personally endorse growth (vs. fixed) mindset beliefs,

their students often perceive their beliefs quite differently. And, to date, little is known about

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Conclusions

Based upon the findings of the current research, the researcher concluded that:

The college teachers had no particular information related to the fixed mindset and growth mindset however, they had knowledge about the characteristics of their students who had the ability to do something well in the classroom and those who can't do well in their classroom. Teachers used different strategies to foster growth mindsets of the students in their classrooms and these strategies prove good in the development of growth mindset. Teacher's positive feedback and praise also encourage the students to learn difficult concepts in the classroom and it also

provides opportunities to develop the growth mindset of the students.

Recommendations

1. Teachers who are teaching at any level should be provided an equal opportunity to get training about the psychology of the learners.

2. Educational organizations whether that are working on private basis or government basis should be fully trained about teaching strategies to foster learning abilities of the students before induction into the classroom.

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