Teachers' Caring Behavior and Students' General Achievement Goal Orientation

Jingle S. Navarez, MAEd

Guidance Counselor, Integrated Basic Education Department, Cor Jesu College

ABSTRACT

The study determined the significant relationship of teachers' caring behavior and students' general achievement goal orientation. The standardized instrument Teachers' Caring Behavior Survey measured the caring behaviors that teachers manifest to students, while the survey of Students General Achievement Goal Orientation measured the educational goals of high school students. Results revealed that the level of the high school teachers' caring behavior were rated moderate in terms of anxiety reduction, willingness to listen, rewarding good behavior, and appropriate use of criticism while only the category being a friend showed low rating. Students exhibited highly motivated goals in the categories mastery goal, performance goal, and social goal. Per year level analysis reveals insignificant difference on teachers' caring behavior to students' general achievement goal orientation.

Keywords: *achievement, goal orientation, high school, teachers' caring behavior*

INTRODUCTION

Caring in school influences academic progress. Researches on the influence of caring in academic achievement suggest positive relationships between caring teachers and the academic motivation and achievement of students (McCaughtry, 2004). Bartley (2007) defines a caring relationship as a connection or encounter between two human beings. In school, when care is manifested by teachers, students feel they belong and are motivated to do well in their academics and are likely to become concerned for others.

Goal Orientation assumes that students' perceptions of the goal structures in their classrooms influence their adoption of personal goal orientation as well as other important educational outcomes (Anderman & Anderman, 1999). Achievement goals are construed in purposeful commitment of students (Eliot & Murayama, 2008) such as orientations toward academic competence (Shim, Ryan & Anderson, 2008). Achievement goal is one of the active areas of research and is used to understand students' academic motivation (Pintrich, 2003; 2000). Achievement goals predispose individuals to find value in educational activities and educators are challenged to develop sustainable learning strategies which focus on strengths and assets of all students especially those deemed at risk (Hulleman, Durik, Schweigert, & Harackiewicz, 2008). In relation to these goals, students exhibit mastery goals when they want to develop competence by acquiring new knowledge and skills, while it is in performance goals where students demonstrate competence relative to others. Social goals are exhibited when students grab the opportunity of doing a task with others.

A private Catholic high school in Digos City obtained an appalling low mastery level in the National Achievement Test (NAT) in 2009 suggesting their students did not acquire the necessary skills needed in their respective levels. Furthermore, in the anecdotal records and counseling notation data, teachers are one of the factors to which students attribute their poor achievement.

In John Bowlby's (1982) Attachment Theory, he shares that warm, intimate, and continuous caring relationship provided by teachers provides satisfaction and enjoyment to students thus, children who are secure and happy are more likely to progress academically. The 2009 NAT results which provided unpleasant sketches of the teachers' caring behavior in the school propelled this study to determine the relationship of teachers' caring behavior with the following dimensions: anxiety reduction, willingness to listen, rewarding good behavior, being a friend, and appropriate use of criticism to students' general achievement goals orientation with indicators such as mastery goal, performance goal, and social goal by year level.

Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on John Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Dennis McInerny's Goal Theory. For Bowlby, a warm, intimate, and continuous caring relationship provided by teachers or a counselor provides satisfaction and enjoyment to its receiver (students). This theory focuses on the attention of care receivers (students) to care givers (teachers). Bowlby defined care givers in multiple roles but most of his researches defined more on the care receivers. He believed that children who are securely attached to mothers (caregivers) grow happy and well-adjusted while the less attached children would likely become socially and emotionally maladjusted (Geldard & Geldard, 2008).

Goal Theory has two primary categories for achievement goals: mastery goals and performance goals which focus on the individual's learning and competence (Witkow & Fuligni, 2007; Pintrich, 2000; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997) while social goals focus on purposes for achieving.

Conceptual framework

Bowlby (1982) believed that the bond formed by students with their teachers creates an impact on their behavior. Thus, this study determined the significant relationship between the teachers' caring behavior and the students' general achievement goal orientation. The variables of the study are Teachers' Caring Behavior with five (5) categories or indicators, namely: anxiety reduction, willingness to listen, rewarding good behavior, being a friend, and appropriate use of criticism; and the Students' General Achievement Goal Orientation in terms of mastery goals, performance goals, and social goals. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework used in the study.
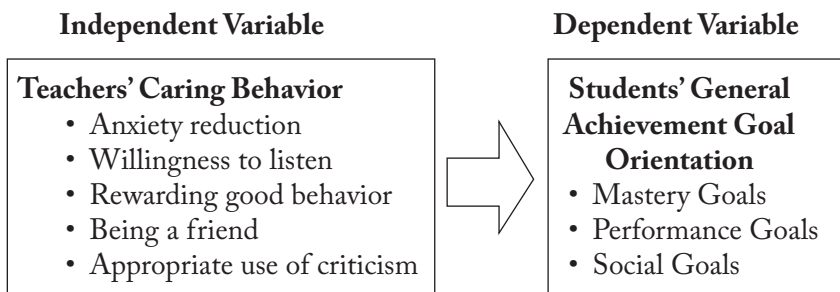
Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

Teachers' Caring Behavior	Students' General Achievement Goal Orientation
• Anxiety reduction • Willingness to listen • Rewarding good behavior • Being a friend • Appropriate use of criticism	• Mastery Goals • Performance Goals • Social Goals

FIGURE 1. Conceptual Paradigm Showing the Relationship of Teachers' Caring Behavior to Students' General Goal Orientation

METHODS

Using descriptive correlational and comparative research design, the significant difference and influence between teachers' caring behavior dimensions and students' general achievement goal orientation were determined through 202 students and 16 teacher respondents of Cor Jesu College's High School Department from school year 2009-2010. The sample population was obtained using stratified sampling technique where possible respondents were identified per stratum while fishbowl technique identified the individual respondents. Purposive and universal sampling techniques, respectively identified the student and teacher Focus Group Discussion respondents.

The study made use of the Teachers' Caring Behavior Survey developed by Dr. Clete Bulach while Focus Group Discussions were conducted to validate survey results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of the high school teachers' caring behavior

The caring behavior as per indicator is summarized in Table 1. The overall mean score rating is 2.69 and interpreted as sometimes done. The categories obtaining moderate rating are anxiety reduction, willingness to listen, rewarding good behavior and appropriate use of criticism, while only the category being a friend obtained a low rating, interpreted as rarely done.

T A B L E 1. *Computed Level of the High School Teachers' Caring Behavior to Caring Behavior Categories*

Caring Behavior Categories	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
Anxiety Reduction	3.33	Moderate	Sometimes Done
Willingness to Listen	2.76	Moderate	Sometimes done
Rewarding Good Behavior	2.71	Moderate	Sometimes Done
Being a Friend	1.93	Low	Rarely Done
Appropriate Use of Criticism	2.74	Moderate	Sometimes Done
Overall Mean Score	2.69	Moderate	Sometimes Done

The categories with moderate ratings suggest that such behaviors were occasionally felt by students from their teachers. The results are in contrast with the ideal caring teacher defined by Chin (2009) and Gordon (2002), a teacher who extends quality time for conversation and emotional support. In Rogers and Spitzmueller (2009), willingness to listen and being a friend were the categories highly rated by their student respondents. The category being a friend which received the lowest rating suggest that this behavior was rarely extended by their teachers.

In the focus group discussions, students also agree that their teachers failed to exhibit the caring behavior being a friend. For the teachers, such behavior was exhibited when they tapped their students' shoulders and when they laugh with them.

Level of the high school students' general achievement goal orientation

The general achievement goal orientation of students received a mean rating of high interpreted as highly motivated (see Table 2). Each indicator was rated suggesting that the high school students were highly motivated to achieve in school and finish school-related tasks.

TABLE 2. *Computed Level of the High School Students' General Achievement Goal Orientation to Achievement Goal Orientation Indicators*

General Achievement Goal Orientation Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
Mastery Goal	4.28	High	Highly Motivated
Performance Goal	3.83	High	Highly Motivated
Social Goal	4.29	High	Highly Motivated
Overall Mean Score	4.13	High	Highly Motivated

Differences in the teachers' caring behavior to teachers' caring behavior categories

Using One-way ANOVA, teachers' caring behavior in terms of the five indicators was not significant across year levels (see Table 3). Data suggests that students do not generally see their teachers as caring, specifically suggesting teachers' efforts to be overall helpful in their academic and non-academic life were not felt. The students' perception on their teacher's caring behavior is alarmingly contrary to

what education advocates suggests on how teachers should be in and out of the classroom which is to foster a caring relationship. The teacher and student relationship completes the total package to promote reform and improvement in school (Berger, 2007).

TABLE 3. *Test of Difference on the Teachers' Caring Behavior by Year Level to Categories of Teachers' Caring Behavior*

TEACHERS' CARING BEHAVIOR CATEGORIES	YEAR LEVEL							
	MEAN SCORES				F-Value	P-Value	Remark	Decision
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year				
Anxiety Reduction	2.97	3.44	3.52	3.39	1.004	0.408	NS	Accept
Willingness To Listen	2.41	2.82	2.95	2.85	0.641	0.603	NS	Accept
Rewarding Good Behavior	2.56	2.69	2.73	2.88	0.526	0.673	NS	Accept
Being a Friend	1.77	1.88	2.13	2.11	0.464	0.761	NS	Accept
Appropriate Use of Criticism	2.71	3.09	2.77	2.79	0.638	0.597	NS	Accept

*p–value<.05, * Significant (S); p–value>.05, Not Significant (NS)*

Difference on the students' general achievement goal orientation by year level

Using One-way ANOVA, students' general achievement goal orientation for all year levels revealed not significant for mastery and performance goals while significant for social goal (see Table 4). This means that a student does not consider mastery goal as important to be successful in school and to impress others through performance goal was also not important. The social goal which the student valued meant friends and classmates were important to finish school tasks.

TABLE 4. *Test of Difference on the Students' General Achievement Goal Orientation by Year Level*

STUDENTS' GENERAL ACHIEVEMENT GOAL ORIENTATION	YEAR LEVEL							
	MEAN SCORES				F-value	P-value	Remark	Decision
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year				
Mastery Goal	4.12	4.32	4.30	4.39	1.769	0.194	NS	Accept
Performance Goal	3.75	3.93	3.79	3.87	0.327	0.806	NS	Accept
Social Goal	4.40	4.18	4.16	4.43	4.122	0.024*	S	Reject

*p–value <.05, * Significant (S); p–value >.05, Not Significant (NS)*

Results of the NAT 2009 affirm the students' lack of enthusiasm for mastery efforts. Since Mastery Goals provide remediation for academic deficits, failure to value such goal ceased to develop the students' critical thinking skills.

Post hoc analysis is presented in Table 5 to show the significant difference on the students' general achievement goal orientation in terms of social goal when grouped according to year level.

TABLE 5. *Post Hoc Comparison on the Students' General Achievement Goal Orientation among the Four Year Levels in terms of Social Goal*

Indicator	(I) Year Levels	(J) Year Levels	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Social Goal	First Year	Second Year	.2120400*	.0978995	0.046
		Third Year	.2332600*	.0978995	0.030
		Fourth Year	-.0377000	.0978995	0.705
	Second Year	First Year	-.2120400*	.0978995	0.046
		Third Year	.0212200	.0978995	0.831
		Fourth Year	-.2497400*	.0978995	0.021
	Third Year	First Year	-.2332600*	.0978995	0.030
		Second Year	-.0212200	.0978995	0.831
		Fourth Year	-.2709600*	.0978997	0.014
	Fourth Year	First Year	.0377000	.0978997	0.705
		Second Year	.2497400*	.0978997	0.021
		Third Year	.2709600*	.0978997	0.014

* – with significant mean difference at the 0.05 level

The first year level has significantly higher mean difference value than both second year and third year levels while the second year level is significantly lower in mean difference value than both first year and fourth year levels. When grouped by year level, there exists a significant difference only in the social goals of the students. First year and fourth year high school levels have significantly higher positive description on how they are socially motivated for school work.

Relationship between students' general achievement goal orientation to categories of teachers' caring behavior

With Pearson product-moment correlation, the data for the teachers' caring behavior categories to students' general achievement goal orientation were not significantly related, the computed r-values were either low or very low (see Table 6).

TABLE 6. *Computed Relationship between Students' General Achievement Goal to Categories of the Teachers' Caring Behavior*

TEACHERS' CARING BEHAVIOR CATEGORIES	STUDENTS' GENERAL ACHIEVEMENT GOAL ORIENTATION				
	r-value	Degree	p-value	Level of Significance	Decision
H_o3a Anxiety Reduction	-0.054	Very Low	0.785	0.05	Accept
H_o3b Willingness to Listen	-0.207	Low	0.441	0.05	Accept
H_o3c Rewarding Good Behavior	-0.218	Low	0.417	0.05	Accept
H_o3d Being a Friend	-0.317	Low	0.316	0.05	Accept
H_o3e Appropriate Use of Criticism	-0.024	Very Low	0.898	0.05	Accept

p-value > 0.05, Not Significant

Since the results fail to reject the null hypothesis of non-relationship, there is no significant relationship between categories of teachers' caring behavior and general achievement goal orientation. The results further

indicate that teachers' caring behavior in terms of anxiety reduction, willingness to listen, rewarding good behavior, being a friend, and appropriate use of criticism do not significantly relate to students' general achievement goal orientation. The result implies that teachers' caring behaviors were not perceived by students as significant to their achievement goal orientation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students of the private Catholic high school consider their teachers moderately caring and not so friendly while also failing to see the consistency of caring behavior in their teachers. As for their goal orientation, they are highly motivated to achieve in school work but they do not recognize mastery goals as important to succeed in school. However, they put value on social goals and therefore, consider their friends and classmates important to finish school work. For them group work and involvement support academic achievement. Lastly, the students do not consider their teachers' caring behavior as significant to their achievement goal orientation.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Teacher-advisers must consistently show caring behavior especially to those who are at risk of failing so they may experience genuine concern and feel secured.

2. The school counselor should develop a curriculum where students get to be aware of the importance of mastery and performance goals to be successful in school.

3. The school counselor should conduct an evaluation on the mastery and performance goals of freshmen students in their Math, English and Science subjects. The results can suggest the types of intervention needed by the students in their major subjects.

4. The Homeroom Guidance Program of the first year students should integrate the value of mastery goals and increasing mastery skills.

5. An in-service training for teachers should be conducted to emphasize the role of teachers' caring behavior in the classroom.

REFERENCES

Anderman, L. H., & Anderman, E. M. (1999). Social predictors of changes in students' achievement goal orientations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *25*, 21-37.

Bartley, A.Y. (2007). *Teacher conception of care and the impact on elementary school students.* Retrieved July 3, 2009, from http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/theses/available/etd-10312007-143657/unrestricted/etd.pdf

Berger, P. (2007). *Some thoughts on Qallunaat teacher caring in Nunavut*. Retrieved July 3, 2009, from http://www.phaenex.uwindsor.ca/ojs/leddy/index.php/JTL/article/viewArticle/120

Bowlby, J. (1982). *Attachment and loss.* New York: Basic Books.

Chin, J. H. (2009). Qualities of a good teacher. *Theosophical Digest*, *82*, *21 (2)*.

Dowson, M. & McInerny, D.M. (2003). What do students say about their motivational goals?; Towards a more complex and dynamic perspective on student motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *28*, 91-113.

Elliot, A. J. & Murayama, K. (2008). On the measurement of achievement goals: Critique, illustration, and application. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *100, 3,* 613-628.

Geldard, K., & Geldard, D. (2008). *Counseling Children (3rd Ed.)*. London: Sage Publication Ltd.

Gordon, G. (2002). *Best teachers in a class of their own*. Retrieved October 20, 2009 from http://www.psychrochester.edu/SDT/documents/2006Hardre_et_al_APJE.pdf.

Hulleman, C. S., Durik, A. M., Schweigert, S. A., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2008). Task values, achievement goals, and interest: An integrative analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100 (2),* 398-416.

McCaughtry, N. (2004). The emotional dimensions of a teachers' pedagogical content knowledge: Influences on content, curriculum, and pedagogy. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 23,* 30-47.

Pintrich, P.R. (2000). Multiple goals, multiple pathways: The role of goal orientation in learning components and classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *80,* 260-267.

Pintrich, P.R. (2003). A motivational science perspective on the role of student motivation in learning and teaching contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95,* 667-686.

Rogers, A. and Spitzmueller, C. (2009). Individualism-collectivism and the role of goal orientation in organizational training. *International Journal of Training and Development, 13, 3.*

Ryan, A. M. & Pintrich, P. R. (1997). "Should I ask for help?" the role of motivation and attitudes in adolescents' help seeking in math class. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *89 (2),* 329-341.

Shim, S. S., Ryan, M. R., & Anderson, C.J. (2008). Achievement goals and achievement during early adolescence: Examining time-varying predictor and outcome variables in growth-curve analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100 (3),* 655-671.

Witkow, M. R., & Fuligni, A. J. (2007). Achievement goals and daily school experiences among adolescents with Asian, Latino, and European American Backgrounds. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *99 (3),* 584-596.