

MOTIVATING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE STUDENT MOTIVATION IN LEARNING SOCIAL STUDIES OF GRADE FIVE STUDENTS*

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Abstract

This study investigated motivating strategies used by some primary teachers to enhance Grade five students' motivation towards social studies. A total of 196 Grade five students and four primary teachers of four classes from four primary schools of Amarapura Township, one of the project areas for child-centered approach, in Mandalay Region, participated in this study. Descriptive research design and survey method were used. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study. Firstly, Student Motivation on Social Studies Questionnaire (SMSSQ) (30 items) was developed to explore student motivation on social studies. And then, a qualitative follow up study was conducted through classroom observation and teacher interview. To observe the classroom and motivating strategies used by teachers, Motivating Strategies Observation Checklist based on Keller's ARCS model was used. Regarding the findings of data, ANOVA results showed that there were significant differences in student motivation due to different motivating strategies. Students from School C had the highest learning motivation ($\bar{X} = 73.88$) among four primary schools. Similarly, it was found that teacher of that school most frequently used four motivating strategies than others highest learning motivation ($\bar{X} = 73.88$) among four primary schools. Similarly, it was found that teacher of that school most frequently used four motivating strategies than others ($\bar{X} = 49$). Moreover, the results also indicated that student motivation in learning social studies was significantly related to teacher's motivating strategies ($r=0.39$). It is, therefore, suggested that social studies teachers should use motivating strategies in their classroom to enhance their students' motivation towards social studies since primary level.

Keywords: motivating strategies, student motivation, attention, relevance, confidence, satisfaction.

Introduction

Without willingness or compulsion to do his task, one cannot pass through obstacles and achieve in it. Achievement outcomes have been regarded as a function of two characteristics, "skill" and "will" and these must be considered

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separately because possessing the skill alone may not insure success if the will is lacking (McCombs and Marzano, 1990).

One of the most prominent academic problems plaguing today's teenage youth is a lack of motivation toward academic activities. Indubitably, the absence of academic motivation can lead to feelings of frustration and discontentment and can encumber productivity and well-being. Many psychologists have defined motivation from various points of views. One sample definition put forward by Frith (1997) is that "motivation can be defined as the internal derive directing behavior towards some end".

In fact, motivation influences how and why people learn as well as how they perform. Motivation was found to be the best predictor of student achievement in the two studies that investigated factors influencing student achievement and effects of the factors on students' achievement in learning the Japanese language through the medium of satellite television (Oxford, Park- Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993, cited in Shih & Gamon, 2001).

This concept should be related with today's social studies learning. That is why, nowadays, most of the students are not interested and they have negative attitudes towards the subject, social studies. They view social studies as boring and irrelevant ones. They may think that social studies cannot be certain and guarantee for their future success. They have low learning motivation towards social studies.

When investigating the focus of most standardized tests at the elementary level, significance is placed on math and the basics of reading and writing. According to Passe (2006), "at the elementary level ... the entire subject area of social studies is disappearing from the school day". To be able to change this situation, the role of social studies teachers is becoming crucial. In fact, the social studies are, as the name suggests, studies of society and their chief aim is to help people to understand world in which they have to live and how it came to be, so that they may become responsible citizens (Forrester, 1948, cited in Mangal, 2011).

In Myanmar, primary children study social studies subject as a compulsory subject at Grade 5, but they have learned materials related with the field since Grade 1. This subject aims to cultivate students' aesthetic and intellectual interests, to respect all races and ethnic groups, to understand the interdependence of people and nation, and to develop patriotism. Naturally, children possess a very keen, active and inquisitive spirit. The curiosity to

learn about all they see is an all-powerful drive for them. So, when children learn social studies, they should be encouraged and motivated to increase the desire to learn since primary level.

In motivating students, effective learning in the classroom depends on strategies that teachers use to create supportive classroom experience. For above reasons, teachers' practices play an important role in motivating students to learn social studies.

Therefore, the present study emphasizes to investigate whether primary teachers' motivating strategies can enhance students' motivation towards social studies learning or not. Hence, it is hoped this study will be able to highlight the ways and means of how to motivate students to be interested, have positive attitude and value on the subject-social studies since primary level.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate motivating strategies used by some primary teachers to enhance Grade five students' motivation towards social studies. The three specific objectives are as follows:

- (1) To explore Grade five students' learning motivation on social studies.
- (2) To examine the differences in the use of motivating strategies among social studies teachers.
- (3) To find out the influences of each motivating strategy on students' learning motivation towards social studies.

Related Literature

Covington (2000) stated that the quality of student learning as well as the will to continue learning depends closely on an interaction between the kinds of social and academic goals students bring to the classroom, the motivating properties of these goals and prevailing classroom reward structures.

Student Motivation. Pintrich's social cognitive model proposes three motivational components that may be related to academic achievement, namely: (a) an expectancy component, which refers to students' beliefs about their expected success in performing a task, (b) a value component, which concerns students appreciation of and beliefs about the importance of the task

for them and (c) an affective component which is comprised of students' emotional reactions to the task (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). This study emphasized on this model for primary students' motivation.

Expectancy itself is defined as “the measurement of the likelihood that positive or negative outcomes will be associated with or follow from a particular act”. Thus, the individual's outcome expectations affect one's attitudes towards the behavior. In addition to the expected outcome, the value the individual places on the outcome influences the individual's intentions.

The value component of student motivation involves students' goals for engaging in a task as well as their beliefs about the importance, utility, or interest of a task. For example, a student may believe that success in a particular course is very important (or unimportant) regardless of his or her intrinsic or extrinsic goals—that is, the student may see success in the course as learning the material or getting a good grade, but he or she still may attach differential importance to these goals.

Affect concerns students' affective or emotional reactions to the task. There are a variety of affective reactions that might be relevant (e.g., anger, pride, guilt), but in a school learning context, one of the most important factors seems to be test anxiety (Wigfield & Eccles, 1989). Learning can be a highly emotional experience. Feelings of frustration can occur and lead to anger, inappropriate behavior or dropout. Fear of failure can lead to task avoidance or deliberately not making an effort. Learning itself, when interesting and successful, is intrinsically rewarding. If so, how can the teacher enhance students' learning motivation?

Teachers' Motivating Strategies. Children's motivation to learn can be influenced by external factors, but in school, especially by the classroom climate as well as teacher's attitudes and behaviors.

Keller (1983, cited in Frith, 1997) proposed ARCS model for promoting student motivation. It consists of attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction. Teachers first should gain the attention of the learner, and then provide relevance of what they are teaching to their personal goals and needs. The learner will gain confidence as the learning process unfolds. The satisfaction of obtaining the new knowledge will provide motivation to continue learning.

Attention can be maintained by providing variety in presentation through media, demonstrations, small group discussions, or whole class

debates. Instruction is relevant to the learner if it is related to concrete examples with learners' experience. For developing confidence, it is necessary to create a positive expectation for success by making it clear just what is expected of students and provide success opportunities for students. Satisfaction of the learner can be enhanced by celebrating success. The present study is based on this ARCS model for teachers' motivating strategies.

According to the results of the study, classroom teachers will be able to get good ideas of how to motivate their students' desire, goal, value, beliefs, etc. In addition, these ideas can bear a practical usefulness in social studies teaching-learning process for teachers.

Design and Procedure

Sampling. Sample chosen for the present study consisted of 196 Grade five students: male (n=104) and female (n=92) and 4 primary teachers of their classes in 2012-2013 academic year. A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting students and teachers for the study. The participants for the study were chosen from four primary schools of Amarapura Township, one of the project areas for the child-centered approach, in Mandalay Region.

Research Method. In this study, descriptive research design was used. Both quantitative and qualitative mixed research approaches were used.

Student Motivation on Social Studies Questionnaire (SMSSQ). Student Motivation on Social Studies Questionnaire (SMSSQ) was developed based on Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) designed by Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & Keachie (1991). This scale consisted of 30 items that are designed by three components (expectancy, value and affect) to assess students' motivation to learn social studies. The scales of items in the questionnaire were five point Likert-scales. To be easy for children, each scale was described with representative figures. The internal consistency was 0.78 for the whole scale.

Classroom Observation Checklist. Classroom observation checklist (24 items) for teachers' motivating strategies towards students' learning motivation was prepared and items were constructed based on Keller's (1983) ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction) model.

Interview. For the qualitative research, an interview protocol for social studies teachers was designed to explore their lesson preparation, experiences, feelings on social studies teaching, opinions and suggestions for motivating strategies to enhance students' learning motivation. This protocol aimed to

validate responses to motivating strategies used by teachers in their social studies classroom.

Data Collection. Students had to complete Student Motivation on Social Studies Questionnaire (SMSSQ) during approximately 30 minutes. After administering the questionnaire, observations were made once a week, beginning from second week of January, 2013. Each teacher's class was observed for approximately 40 minutes per section and his/her monitoring strategies were documented by classroom observation checklist. Then, the teachers were asked to answer brief questions during instructional breaks. Each classroom was observed at least three weeks during one month.

Data Analysis and Findings

An Analysis of Students' Learning Motivation by SMSSQ. Based on the descriptive statistics shown in Table (1), the mean score of value component was the highest for Grade five students ($\bar{X}=4.305$). This finding revealed that students think social studies subject is important and useful key to success in daily life. Meanwhile, the mean score of expectancy, affect and overall motivation were above average point 3. So, it was found that they had high motivation to learn social studies.

Table (1) Descriptive Statistics for Student Motivation by Component

	Expectancy	Value	Affect	Overall Motivation
Mean	3.823	4.305	3.502	3.875
Standard Deviation	.3003	.3111	.3924	.8106

Table (2) showed that School C had the highest mean value for learning motivation towards social studies. But, the lowest learning motivation was found in School D.

Table (2) Comparison of Mean and Standard Deviation for Student Motivation by Schools

	School A		School B		School C		School D	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Student Motivation	65.87	9.614	69.66	7.280	73.88	5.740	65.50	6.750
<i>Expectancy</i>	22.33	3.418	23.12	2.523	24.82	2.347	21.82	2.928
<i>Value</i>	24.84	3.464	24.59	2.891	26.76	2.421	23.82	2.959
<i>Affect</i>	18.69	4.507	21.95	3.570	22.29	2.893	19.86	3.619

Note: M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

So, to be clearer the difference of students’ motivation among schools, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The F-ratio obtained in Table (3) indicated that at least one significant difference exist somewhere among schools ($F_{(3, 192)}=13.417, p<.001$).

Table (3) ANOVA Results in the Differences among Schools

Student Motivation	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	3	740.180	13.417	.000
Within Groups	192	55.167		

To obtain more detailed information of which particular school had the differences, Post-Hoc test was executed by Tukey HSD method and it became apparent that the students’ motivation in school which four motivating strategies were highly used (i.e., school C) was significantly different from that of other three schools at 0.05 level (see Table-4).

Table (4) The Result of Tukey for Student Motivation among Schools

Categories	(I) Schools	(J) Schools	Mean Difference (I-J)	<i>p</i>
Student		School B	-3.794	.055
	School A	School C	-8.016*	.000
		School D	.367	.996
		School A	3.794	.055
	School B	School C	-4.222*	.019
		School D	4.161*	.030
Motivation		School A	8.016*	.000
	School C	School B	4.222*	.019
		School D	8.382*	.000
		School A	-.367	.996
	School D	School B	-4.161*	.030
		School C	-8.382*	.000

An Analysis of Classroom Observation Checklist. Classroom Observation Checklist is composed of 24 items. For doing each item, the researcher scored “1” for one time. Based on the descriptive statistics shown in Table (5), the total score of attention is the highest for teachers ($X = 11.5$) and confidence is the lowest ($X = 8.5$). This finding revealed that the primary social studies teachers highly used attention strategy to promote their students’ learning motivation but they rarely motivated to develop students’ confidence.

According to the Table (5), it can be seen that School C is the highest in the use of four motivating strategies ($X = 49$). Specifically, among the schools, School C had the highest use of attention, confidence and satisfaction strategies.

Table (5) Descriptive Statistics for Teachers’ Motivating Strategies by Four Strategies

Schools	Attention	Relevance	Confidence	Satisfaction	Overall Strategies
School A	10	6	8	8	32
School B	11	11	10	13	45
School C	15	10	10	14	49
School D	10	8	6	8	32
Mean	11.5	8.75	8.5	10.75	39.5

To find out the influences of each motivating strategy on students’ learning motivation towards social studies, inter-correlation was also calculated among these variables as shown in Table (6).

Table (6) Relationship between Teachers’ Motivating Strategies and Student Motivation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Expectancy	1	.444**	.583**	.823**	.370**	.191**	.305**	.370**	.363**
2 Value		1	.392**	.738**	.301**	.067	.234**	.301**	.305**
3 Affective			1	.851**	.338**	.334**	.288**	.338**	.302**
4 Overall Motivation				1	.416**	.263**	.342**	.416**	.398**
5 Attention					1	.654**	.814**	1	.947**
6 Relevance						1	.693**	.654**	.598**
7 Confidence							1	.814**	.938**
8 Satisfaction								1	.947**
9 Overall Strategies									1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It can be seen that teachers' motivating strategies were significantly correlated to the student motivation ($r = .398, p < .01$). According to Cohen (1988), the effect size of motivating strategies was typical on student motivation. Specifically, the results of this study suggest that attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction strategies were all positively intercorrelated with student motivation to learn social studies. But, only one relevance strategy was not correlated with value component of student motivation.

However, correlations do not indicate prediction of one variable from another variable. Thus, multiple regression analysis was conducted to find out the effect of motivating strategies on predicting students' learning motivation towards social studies.

Table (7) Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Four Motivating Strategies Scales as Predictors of Student Motivation

	B	β	F	R ² Change	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
(Constant)	61.547					1.626
Attention (A)	4.064	.413***	40.591***	.173	.169	.642
Relevance (R)	-.159	-.022**	14.396***	.069	.064	.497
Confidence (C)	.208	.021**	25.728***	.117	.113	.668
Satisfaction (S)	4.064	.413***	40.591***	.173	.169	.642

Note: R² = .160, F(3,192) = 13.417, *** p < .001, ** p < .05

The beta weight, presented in Table (7), suggested that attention, confidence and satisfaction were positive and significant predictors of student motivation. Multiple regression analysis indicated that teachers' gaining and sustaining attention (16%), enhancing relevance (6%), building confidence (11%) and generating satisfaction (16%) played an important role in student motivation towards social studies learning with the total explanation power 16%. According to Cohen (1988), this is a medium effect. So, the remaining percentages of student motivation can be due to other factors such as learning environment, parental supports, intelligence and so on. Then, the model can be defined according to the following equation:

$$\text{Student Motivation} = 61.547 + 4.064A - 0.159R + 0.208C + 4.064S$$

A pictorial summary for the results of the regression analyses were reported in Figure(1).

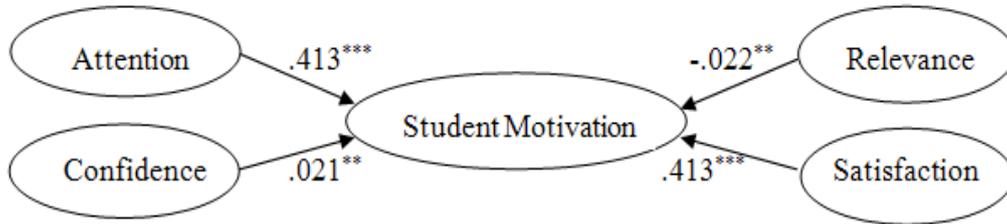


Figure (1) A Summary of the Results from the Regression Analyses. Path values are standardized regression coefficients. *** $p < .001$, ** $p > .05$.

An Analysis of Interview with Teachers. All teachers from four schools attended child-centered approach training courses. The following brief excerpts were taken from transcriptions of interviews with four teachers.

Teacher (A) - Her total teaching service is about 23 years. Before teaching, she read teacher’s guide for CCA. Her headmaster actively cooperates but she still needs to have collaboration of colleagues. She does not have enough time to provide students hands on activities.

Teacher (B) - Her class size is very large. The student-teacher ratio was 62:1. She dislikes social studies teaching. She had difficulties to prepare teaching-aids and so she rarely used teaching-aids in every lesson. But, her headmistress always helps her in teaching.

Teacher (C) - She likes social studies because it gives her a wide range of knowledge. She prepared her lessons based on guideline of CCA teacher’s guide. She often uses teaching-aids relevant with lessons. She tries to encourage students to make inquiry and think reasonably variety of information.

Teacher (D) - She likes CCA but accepted that rote memorization is also important in social studies learning. She prepared lessons and teaching-aids before teaching. But, it is difficult for her to prepare teaching aids. She prefers Mathematics and English to social studies.

The interview results revealed that all four teachers have CCA knowledge for social studies teaching. But, they gain different supports from their school environment. So, their efforts and results to be able to enhance

student motivation are different. Moreover, their interest on social studies encourages them to use different motivating strategies.

Discussion

Students' Learning Motivation on Social Studies. The results from analysis of students' learning motivation revealed that students had high learning motivation towards social studies. Among the schools, students from School C were highly motivated to learn social studies. They highly expected about their capacities towards social studies, valued it and so they were never anxious to study it. Moreover, according to ANOVA results, learning motivation of students from School C was also higher than others. So, it can be concluded that students from School C had high intrinsic motivation towards social studies.

Again, it was found that students from School D possessed lowest motivation to learn social studies among four schools. It can be assumed that they thought that social studies cannot offer any benefit for them and so they were not interested in it. But, students from all schools had higher mean score in value component than others. So, it can be said that students from all schools possessed concrete value and good sense in social studies and accepted this subject is very important in daily life. If so, to have clearer causes of these effects, the results of classroom observation checklist can be evaluated.

Primary Teachers' Motivating Strategies. According to the results, four primary teachers of all schools most frequently used a strategy of gaining and maintaining attention of their students by providing variety in presentation through media, demonstrations and group discussions. But they less used a strategy of developing confidence. There was less possibility to provide success opportunities for students and to make their expectation clear.

Again, among the schools, School C was the highest in the use of motivating strategies. Moreover, according to interview results, the teacher of this school was interested and had right attitudes on social studies teaching. She could teach and guide correctly her students towards social studies based on CCA teacher's guide. Because of this, it can be remarked that students from School C had high intrinsic motivation to learn social studies.

Relationship between Teachers' Motivating Strategies and Student Motivation. The correlation of teachers' motivating strategies and student motivation was typical or medium. Moreover, each strategy also positively

intercorrelated with each subscale of student motivation except relevance and value subscale. So, it showed that students' motivation to learn social studies depends on these four motivating strategies.

Furthermore, the results of multiple regression indicated that overall motivating strategies can predict about 16% to the students' learning motivation. Specifically, the results also showed that each strategy was a good predictor of student motivation. Thus, all primary teachers should note that it is necessary to use in harmony these four motivating strategies to be able to motivate their students' learning towards social studies.

Conclusion

Nowadays, most students get less interest in social studies. In fact, it is necessary to generate qualified educators in both arts and science. So, teachers need to cultivate their students to become interest and value on social studies since elementary level. This study suggested the teachers to use four motivating strategies in teaching social studies. These strategies can certainly support and enhance students' expected success in performing a task, appreciation of the importance of the task for them and emotional reactions to the task on social studies.

Based on the findings and all views discussed in the literature review, the following suggestions and recommendations were given as some ways to improve student motivation to learn social studies of Grade five students.

1. To enhance students' learning motivation, the teacher first needs to gain and sustain attention of the learner, enhance relevance, build confidence and generate satisfaction.
2. To gain and sustain attention, teachers should use novel or unexpected approaches to instruction, stimulate students' curiosity by posing questions or problems and incorporate a range of media to meet varying needs of the students.
3. To enhance relevance, teachers should increase familiarity by building on learners' previous experiences and then they should be applied in the instruction.
4. To build confidence, it is advisable for teachers to make their instructional goals and objectives clear in order to create a positive expectation for success and give opportunities to students to perform tasks on their own.

5. To generate satisfaction, teachers can celebrate students' successes and point out to students that their learning outcomes are consistent with their own expectations.
6. To enhance students' learning motivation, teachers also need to fulfill themselves with high motivation on social studies.

The findings reported in this study justify the importance of motivation to academic performance. It is, therefore, hoped that these findings will serve as resource materials for social studies educators, school authorities, counselors, parents, teachers and other responsible personnel who are concerned with the academic progress of the students in order to promote their interest and value on Arts.

To sum up, further examination of how students' learning motivation towards social studies relate to other psychosocial factors is needed. It is hoped that more research on learning motivation in social studies should be conducted, some valid and valuable ways revealed by them will be implemented and then only the role of Arts will be able to be upgraded and maintained.

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