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Teachers' instructional practices in neoliberal era: Impact on students' achievement motivation in the classroom

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Abstract

Neoliberalism has re-engineered education into a market-driven, performance-oriented system that prioritizes standardised metrics over a spirit of inquiry. This article explores how this shift undermines teachers' teaching abilities, highly impacts their self-efficacy and compromises students' achievement motivation. To counteract this rigid framework, the following article argues that educators must cultivate symbiotic classroom relationships and prioritize social-emotional learning. Doing so, it is essential to liberate cognitive engagement and rescue holistic academic outcomes from corporate constraints. While it is necessary to prepare individuals for jobs and realistic challenges, it is also crucial to focus on the achievement motivation of the students keeping in mind the individual differences and tempering their responsiveness to demanding situations. It also highlights the need to take a critical approach towards the academic performance of the students in the academic settings by looking at it from the psychological lens.

Keywords:

Teachers' instructional practices, students' achievement motivation, neoliberalism, goal orientation, teachers' support, teachers' self-efficacy.

1. Introduction

Motivation involves different elements like dynamism and determination which implies strong inclination towards certain objectives aiming towards success. Personal desires, self-improvement and the will to avoid castigation from external actors are key drivers for motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Since its inception, there has been a proliferation of varied terms and theories related to psychological construct of motivation. Among all the models, Dweck's theory, Achievement Goal Theory is used in understanding the existing relationship in academic settings among students and teachers. This theory was developed to provide an understanding of the achievement behaviour of students and how they cope with setbacks in the context of achievement (Taylor et al., 2015). As children often exhibit different kind of achievement behavior in the classroom that affects their task choices and beliefs about the causes of their academic performances (success and failure), the notion of motivation is considered as the central part of educational activity (Covington, 2000).

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Expanding this, Butler in 2007 highlighted that the Goal Orientation Theory is also crucial to explicate teachers' motivation with regards to the academic context which comprises both teachers and students (Nitsche et. al.; 2013). Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that the neoliberal education system puts lot of pressure on the teachers as it focuses mostly on the students' performances and not much on their psychological well-being. In an attempt to cater to the demands of the job market, this system fails to realize that the most essential aspect of achieving success in any field is an individual's motivation to learn. Moreover, the neoliberal system views students merely as workers in the market system, while disregarding their mental health and emotional well-being. Also, it compromises on the quality of education as it mainly centres around performances and neglects the critical thinking, analytical skills and cognitive engagement of the students (Morley, 2024). As rightly pointed out by Desierto & Maio (2020) that although neoliberalism promotes free market system globally, yet it leads to a situation where teachers and the academic institution function as a seller and students as consumers. This tends to put teachers under lot of stress in the academic context who are expected to focus merely on performances and learning outcomes of the students, hampering critical mind in the process. Hence, it is argued that teachers have a great role to play in the academic settings and contribute a lot towards development of critical thinking and prioritizing common good that benefits both learning and job market (Melanson, 2023). It may therefore seem wise to say that the classroom goal structures and the environment created by the teachers can have great impact on students' achievement motivation and learning outcomes.

Many studies have been conducted on the classroom goal structures and students' achievement motivation and attempt has been made to link with different variables such as classroom environment (Roeser et al., 1996), Praise on intelligence, Motivation process (Ames & Archer, 1988; Mueller & Dweck, 1998), Assessment practices (Alkharusi, 2008) etc. Previous researchers reported from their study that students' motivation is positively related to the level of persistence, engagement/disengagement, and academic performance of the students (Ames, 1992; Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Linnenbrink & Pintrinch, 2002; Furrer & Skinner, 2003 etc.). Additionally, Hong et al.'s (1999) study provided evidence that individuals expressed their capabilities in different ways. Nevertheless, researches on motivational framework do not provide comprehensive picture and thus need further investigation. Also, research on neoliberalism affecting the achievement motivation of the students in the academic setting is very limited. Therefore, this paper critically analyzes the effect of neoliberal market system on teaching and learning and also attempt to highlight the significant role teachers can play to contribute towards the achievement motivation and learning outcomes of the students.

1.1. Theoretical framework

1.1.1. Achievement Goal Theory

Research on motivation is an evolving process with different theorists adopting diverse terms to conceptualize and understand the achievement behaviour of the students and how it affects their academic output. The most widely used theory was developed by Dweck and Nicholls named as the *Achievement Goal Theory* in the late 70s and early 80s. Dweck has dedicated many years of her research in understanding how individuals evaluate their performances and intellectual abilities that eventually affect their achievement behaviour. On her attempt to define individuals' behaviour, two types of goals were identified such as mastery goal (an adaptive behaviour) and performance goal (helpless and maladaptive behaviour). Borrowing from the conception given by Anderman & Midgely (1997), one can say that achievement behaviour is defined in terms of effort, persistence, choice and performance.

1.1.2. Implicit theory

In addition to that, the *Implicit Theory* developed by Dweck and Leggett (1988) has received significant attention, furthering research built upon these two theories. According to this theory, when people believe that their intelligence is a fixed entity, their achievement will be lower than those who believe that their intelligence or abilities are changeable or incremental. Dweck describes that the pattern emerging from research shows that children's beliefs on intelligence steer them towards the two goals, mastery and performance goals (Shaughnessy & Moore, 2012). In this regard, students' entity vs. incremental notion of intelligence has a definite impact on cognition and behaviour in the academic settings. In other words, those students who hold an incremental view tend to put in more effort while facing difficulty and challenging task and this ultimately helps in the enhancement of knowledge. In contrast, those students holding the entity view are more concerned with their performance that they often avoid challenging task which involve a high degree of risk as they might result in poor performance and an evaluation of incompetence.

1.1.3. Self Determination Theory

Bringing in a new angle, some studies have used the *Self Determination Theory*, developed by Deci & Ryan in 1985 that differentiates between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Thus, in the process of conducting studies on students' achievement goal some researchers like Butler, (2007) pointed out that the Achievement Goal Theory is also applicable to understand teachers' goal orientation. As such, studies were conducted by a plethora of researchers on teachers' achievement goal, their instructional practices and how it influences students' motivation. It can be argued that motivation activates goal-oriented behaviour. It can either be intrinsic or extrinsic (Singh, K., 2011). As Dan et al., (2015), mentions in their study that students' motivation is very critical towards the learning and achievement of school goals. It is goals that influence cognition, affect and behaviour towards instant tasks/activities and long-term desires (Mansfield et al., 2012).

In the classroom settings, the motivational atmosphere reveals itself on two foundations; the instructional practices of the teachers including their attitude and behaviour towards students, coupled with the dynamics of student-teacher relationships. The study conducted by Furrer & Skinner (2003) also provides evidence that students' engagement, especially their sense of relatedness can be a mediator between the motivation and academic achievement of the students. Furthermore, various models on the achievement motivation unequivocally and correctly pointed out that that every humans need to feel associated with one another (Baumister and Leary, 1995; as cited in Furrer & Skinner, 2003). It also highly involves self-efficacy of the teachers as it has a strong impact on their teaching practices and hence, further affecting the motivation of the students. Teachers having high self-efficacy develop a positive outlook, consequently encouraging students to have a meticulous approach towards achieving their goals (Devi et al., 2017). The pattern is clearly visible as how teacher-student relations are intricate, shaped by multiple factors and how motivation plays a key role in delivering outcomes and addressing achievements of students.

2. Prior Studies

Many studies have been conducted based on Dweck's theory as it provides an extensive understanding of the achievement behavior of the students and how they respond towards failures in the academic settings. Most of these studies reveals the impact of teachers, parents and peers on the achievement motivation of the students , for example; Ames & Archer, 1992; Alkharusi, 2010; Bieg et al., 2011; Dan et al., 2015 etc. The ongoing researches on motivation

of both teachers as well as learners in the academic context especially, classroom has helped many researchers in identifying and understanding the various factors that might have a great influence on the motivation of not only students but teachers as well.

Some researchers (e.g. Blackwell, L.S., Trzesniewski, K.H., & Dweck, C.S., 2007) contested that in the face of challenges many students (including able students) suffer declining grades, and some never recover from such effects. In short, negative experiences may have longer effects when they affect an individual's beliefs. Timmermans et al., (2018) contested that the negative biasness of the teachers in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status (SES) is one of the main factors that affect students' achievement behavior and their academic performances. Others found from the study that the implicit beliefs that teachers hold (regarding their abilities) have a great impact on their teaching practices which further affects students' achievement motivation (Rissanen et al., 2018; Leroy et al., 2007). This includes the attitude and their behavioral aspects in the classroom when they teach. It may be mentioned that students gain so much in a classroom situation where teachers are supportive and encouraging. However, given a limited study, the association between implicit beliefs of the teachers and their instructional practices remains unclear.

Many researches have been conducted on students' achievement motivation and its effects on their learning outcome. Some researchers conducted study on students' perception of the classroom environment (for example; Patrick & Ryan, 2008; Radovan & Makovec, 2015; Shim et al., 2013; Raufelder & Lazarides, 2017 etc.). While other researchers like Wigfield & Wentzel (1998), Furrer & Skinner (2003), Retelsdorf et al., (2010), Nitsche et al., (2013) focused on teachers' goal orientation and its relationship with their teaching practices and its further impact on students' achievement motivation. Ames & Archer (1988) cited that the extent to which classroom environment emphasizes mastery over performance goal could determine how students approach towards task and engage themselves in learning. In their opinion, it is the mastery goal structure that might encourage students a way of thinking that is crucial for pursuing tasks that further their increments in learning. Blackwell et.al., (2007) in their study showed that when teachers promote an incremental belief it helped in developing intrinsic motivation among the students which confirms the fact that students' belief about their intelligence is strongly associated with their achievement goals.

Research reveals that those who hold incremental theory often respond in a mastery-oriented manner, exerting efforts and persistence. On the contrary, those holding an entity theory tend to demonstrate a helpless reaction and ultimately withdraw from the task (Taylor et al., 2015). Previous researchers, (for e.g. Radovan & Makovec, 2015; Patrick & Ryan, 2008; Raufelder & Lazarides, 2017 etc.) found from their study that students' perception of the classroom context such as, teacher autonomy support, encouragement for developing competence and a feeling of belongingness contributes positively towards the development of intrinsic motivation of the students. Shim et al., (2013) found on their study that teachers who are oriented towards mastery goal are supportive towards the students and they create an environment that encourages development of competence and improvement in their learning. Contrary to that, teachers who hold performance goal orientation tries to show their superiority over other teachers tend to focus more on competition among the students and result oriented.

The findings from this study shows that the teaching practices of the teachers, such as their behavior towards the students in the classroom are determined by the type of achievement goals they orient to. As neoliberalism is mostly performance based, it can be related to teachers

focusing more on performance goal and not on mastery goal. Past researchers have revealed that mastery goal structures lead to adaptive where as performance goal structures lead to maladaptive outcomes among the students in the academic settings. (Anderman, E.M., & Patrick, H., 2012; Berkovits, 2014; Ames & Archer, 1988; Ames, 1992). It is therefore assumed that the relationship between classroom goal structure and students' goal orientation have strong affect on their adaptive and maladaptive learning patterns and is thus crucial at present context (see Meece et al., 2006).

One can argue that the neoliberal system play a significant role in determining teachers' behaviors, especially in regard to the classroom environment they create, their goal orientation and their behavioral engagements. Besides, in the classroom settings, the motivational atmosphere reveals in the instructional practices of the teachers whether they are promoting personal progress and task mastery (mastery goals), supportive teaching or controlling environment (performance goals). As Anderman, E.M., & Patrick, H. (2012), opined that students' motivation is not only influenced by their personal characteristics and beliefs but also the environment where they learn and the motivational strategies of the teachers in the classroom. As such, teachers' achievement goals are equally as important field of study as students' achievement goals. Nonetheless, not much study has been conducted on teachers' achievement goals and how they personally endorse achievement goals in the classroom (Mascret et al., 2017).

In the study conducted by Hardre et al., (2006), it was demonstrated that individual differences have a direct influence on the perception of the students based on the response, attitude and how teachers behave towards them in the classroom. It was also exhibited from their study that the classroom environment has a great impact on the students. In other words, students who oriented towards learning goals had high motivation, while those who tried to avoid looking incapable had lower motivation. Besides, female students were found to be more motivated in contrast to male students who were less motivated. Hence, focussing on the individual's differences in regard to their intellectual ability can have a negative impact on their motivation. On the contrary, if more focus is put on the potential and the improvement of the intellectual capacity of the individuals it can provide a horde of motivational benefits.

3. Critical Analysis

3.1. The Neoliberal Infringement Upon Education and the Discourse

While speaking of external factors, neoliberalism as a politico-economic theory needs to be brought into the discussion. Neoliberalism in this context would encompass the State ceding space to private entities, corporations, and substituting critical thinking and enquiry with a free-market driven education sector (Grieco, 1998). Indeed, since the collapse of the former U.S.S.R, neoliberalism has been on an upward trajectory, with global institutions goading its adoption at various levels. At a fundamental level, it espouses relaxed State intervention, switching over to free-market enterprises and privatization of every sector (Baldwin, 1993). Education, which has been a hotly debated scenario in various countries, has since a long period been subjected to free-marketism, thus influencing even core specifics such as the teaching-learning process. This highly affects the quality of education as it emphasises mainly on the performances and ignores the fundamental aspects which involve human relationships, critical thinking, and emotional wellbeing of the students (Morley, 2024). It doesn't take into consideration the huge impact it has on teachers as well as students, particularly their motivational aspects.

While neoliberalism focuses on maintaining profit and sale of products within a given timeframe, education focuses on supportive teaching and learning, cognitive engagement, and values both teachers and students Desierto & Maio (2020). Given such a situation, it can be argued that teachers are not only driven towards performance goals but also lead to job stress that has an impact on their self-efficacy. This argument is supported by the study conducted by Klassen et al., in 2010 where they established that teachers' self-efficacy is directly related to job stress and job satisfaction. This may influence their instructional practices and further affect students' motivation and learning.

The study conducted by Tastan et al., (2018) found that the motivation and self-efficacy of the teachers have a great influence on the academic achievement of the students at high school and secondary levels. They also added that self-efficacy have an influence on the work or task related to academics at school for both teachers and students. Others like Klassen & Chiu (2010) also provide evidence that it is the teaching experiences which influence their self-efficacy and this further affects their teaching practices. Their study also showed that self-efficacy of the teachers changes according to the teaching experiences at schools where they teach. In continuation, it was found that the teaching experiences and job stress of the teachers have a direct impact on their self-efficacy which further effects their job satisfaction.
It can be argued that the teaching experiences of the teachers play a very central role in influencing the instructional practices of the teachers and in turn have an impact on the academic achievement of the students. From their study it is clear that the teachers' teaching experiences at schools is an important factor that often effect their self-efficacy and also the mindset (implicit beliefs regarding students' intellectual abilities) which might have a great impact on the classroom goal structure of the teachers and this in turn effects students' achievement behavior (Klassen & Chiu; 2010).

3.1.1. Result oriented and psychological impact

Neoliberal proliferation in education has led to more focus on cognitive abilities in place of spirit of enquiry and the emotional well-being of students. In this case, since education is dependent on the market forces, greater emphasis are laid on immediate results, quicker execution of ideas and methods which completely alter the trajectory of teaching (Ball, 2003). The results are evident; teachers' self-efficacy is affected leading to issues in judgement and demotivation of students. The studies conducted by Klassen et al., (2010) reveal that teachers' efficacy beliefs were directly associated to the job stress of the teachers. Nitsche et al., (2013) argues that, if teachers have low self-efficacy they have fear of exhibiting inferior teaching, and they often tend to emphasis on performance goal structure. However, high self-efficacy can determine autonomy support teaching practices which can further affect students' academic performances and learning outcomes (Berger et al., 2018). It may be mentioned that in an open, critical atmosphere, there is a free-flow of ideas and discussions. In a neoliberal model, such critical enquiries give way to enforced teaching, which adopt a more mechanical methodology.

Critics of the neoliberal education model argue, that the core goal is to feed the market and hence students are trained to become performers and not thinkers. Hence, scientific temper, innovations, innovative ideas and addressing glaring social issues are dismissed, while orientating them towards industries, serving corporate interests and working in various private sectors receive a higher share of attention (Giroux, 2002). As such, the gap between science and humanities is widened further. It is rather unfortunate, that certain societies tend to prefer natural sciences over the study of humanities or liberal arts, conjuring beliefs that the former has better opportunities. Consequently, there is also an unsaid belief that students who opt for

natural sciences are better disposed in terms of academic calibre. One may safely ascertain that the neoliberal penetration in education has propelled such thoughts, that on one hand promotes the study of natural sciences and tabling it for those who are higher on the matrix of education, while those opting for the study of humanities are deemed, unfortunately as lesser beings (Holmwood, 2011).

3.1.2. The need to look beyond students' performance

Diving into the ancient period one may witness various periods such as the Enlightenment, the heights of the Greek and Roman period as well as the old Indic civilization where focus was laid on a wider variety of subjects and thoughts such as arts, performing arts, scientific thought and reason. Reason was the founding pedestal of education coupled with scientific temperament. On observing those periods, it can be safely concluded that the spirit of enquiry did lead to multitude of innovations, inventions and new thoughts which passed down to the later civilizations.

The role of teachers during those ages was to encourage students to think, and engage in discovery. Innovation was also important. Teachers hinged on motivating students and even those who were inadept or incapable of accomplishing certain tasks were motivated teachers in the academic context. Regrettably, under neoliberalism, since it is performance and free-market oriented, students who are able to cope up and excel are valued, while those who struggle are often ignored. This model, has an approach of one size fits all, where the vast array of talent and predisposition towards certain fields are conveniently ignored. This unfortunately overshadows talent resulting in students being demotivated and further affecting their academic outcome. As schooling under such circumstances is often based on a constricted view of the human capacity and a uniformed understanding of human diversity; intelligence of a person is defined in terms of one's performance on particular pre-set parameters and not as the unique and creative accomplishments one is capable of across varieties.

As such, it is essential for teachers and educators to understand that the most crucial factor in the teaching-learning context to engage students at the cognitive level is their motivation to learn. In the words of Wang et al., (2010) *"One of the most critical influences on students' level of cognitive engagement in school work or their choice of cognitive strategies is their motivation to learn".* Therefore, focusing on how students and teachers view each other's' needs (in terms of academics and emotional stability) regarding teaching and its impact on students' motivation and learning is deemed essential.

4. Achievement Motivation and the role of teachers

4.1. Teaching practices and motivation

In a classroom situation, a symbiotic relationship develops where teachers and students are interdependent and engage in reciprocal contribution. It can be added that a strong and positive relationship between teachers and students enhances academic engagements of the students through class participation, developing interests in academics, and working towards their achievement goal. Additionally, teachers' personality such as, emotional stability and openness is critical to their teaching practices and this further has an impact on students' academic performance. Wood, (2019) opined that the ability to understand and engage with students in the classroom is regarded as very critical towards the achievement outcome of the students. Also, support from teachers and illuminating student-teacher relationships highly influence the

academic engagement of the students. Hence, the type of classroom structure in practice, and its management by teachers in engaging students is unquestionably significant, as this directly affects students' achievement and learning outcomes (Berger et. al., 2018).

It is argued that teachers' support is crucial in a learning context, especially with regard to those who are considered below par as compared to others and identify the talent and motivate them. Therefore, teachers' contribution goes beyond basic classroom teaching. It involves developing cordial relationship with students, addressing their psychological needs, and assisting them in their endeavours which can accelerate students' achievement motivation and learning (Grace et al., 2018). In a classroom context, it is the teacher who plays the most significant role, as such they have great responsibilities, not just in terms of teaching but how they are able to relate them to students as they teach. In order to make one's teaching effective, teachers need to improve one's teaching strategies which can develop the will and motivation to learn among the students. It can be argued that providing conducive social environment for learning such as, teacher support in terms of expressing one's opinions, learning new skills and concepts etc can motivate the students. However, in a controlled environment student tend to get demotivated. Previous researchers' (Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Nenthien & Loima, 2016) study provides evidence that teachers' behavioral aspect, especially their support, encouragement and unbiased conduct in the classroom could highly motivate the students. This kind of attitude and behavior of the teachers in the classroom develop a sense of belongingness among the students and they tend to orient towards mastery goal. Some researchers like Roeser et al., 1996; Wang et al., 2018; Furrer et al., 2014 revealed from their study that in controlled environment students tend to develop self-doubts and orient towards performance goals leading towards demotivation. This clearly indicates that teachers' behavioral engagements like helping those students who perform well in the class and ignoring others, making comparisons, developing fear through coercing and punishments etc. demotivates them.

Teachers being the pivot in teaching-learning process need to be aware that both personal and contextual factors can have an effect on students' perception of classroom teaching. Besides, they need to understand the different class dynamics that exists and try to enhance the capacity of behavioural and cognitive development. In doing so they might be able to assist students in the development of achievement motivation and learning, especially in regard to those who were considered incapable. Hence, it is imperative for teachers and educators to understand that the most critical influences on students' level of cognitive engagement or their choice of cognitive strategies in the academic settings is their motivation to learn. Finally, it is essential to mention that promoting quality instructions that cultivate not only cognitive development but also the social and emotional development of the students greatly influence their academic performances. Thus, emphasizing on the endorsement of quality teaching programmes, efficient educators and effective planning is essential to promote accountability and enhance achievement motivation of students. (Durlak et al., 2011).

4.1.1. Motivation-key aspect to learning

As academic settings are often based on a constricted view of the human capacity and a standardized understanding of human diversity, an individual's level of intelligence is defined in terms of his\her performance on a particular parameter and not as the unique and creative accomplishments one is capable of in different situations and contexts, while ignoring on multitudes. It is therefore, essential for teachers and educators to understand that the most vital influences on the cognitive engagement of the students or their preference of cognitive

strategies in the classroom or any academic settings is their motivation to learn. Moreover, there is a need for educators to understand the different class dynamics and try to develop the capacity to learn alternative models of cognitive development from students who are considered incapable of completing a particular task or test.

Vibulphol (2016), argues that teachers' instructional practices such as autonomy-support and autonomy-control highly affect the motivation and learning of the students. This argument is supported by the study conducted by Wong et al., (2018) where it was found that the instrumental support of the teachers have a positive impact on the achievement motivation of the students. Leroy et al., (2007), opined that an autonomy supportive teacher will try to recognize students' motivational needs and construct a favorable environment in order to meet students' needs that enhance intrinsic motivation. Autonomy support involves interpersonal behavior of a person to meet the psychological needs of another. In the academic setting, it includes support from the teacher and providing help to enhance students' inner endorsement of the activities in the classroom. Nenthien and Loima (2016) also highlighted on the importance of teacher support instructional practices by encouraging and guiding the students through challenging tasks, expressing their views and in that way providing them the psychological needs in the classroom. Their study also underlined the fact that the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students often act as a great motivating aspect in determining the learning outcome of the students.

Thus, one can argue that teachers' instructional practices (in regard to classroom environment) highly effects students' motivation both positively (high motivation) and negatively (amotivation) depending on the type of classroom environment and their behavioral engagement with students which further affect learning outcomes of the students. In addition, teachers in the class should be both aware of personal and contextual factors that might have an effect on students' perceptions of the teaching practices as these perceptions may further influence students' motivation and learning. Besides, teachers need to be flexible during classes which have students from different socio-economic backgrounds, especially with regard to their orientation, teaching methods and attitude. A teachers' impact on students' lives is not impermanent. As pointed out by some past researchers (like Kunter, M., Baumert, J., Voss, T., Klusmann, U., Richter, D., & Hachfeld, A., 2013), that the qualities of teachers are considered the important determinants of students' academic achievement based on their performances on given set of tests or exams. They further contested that this kind of assumptions only explains that the cognitive skills obtained during teacher education and their selection into teaching profession remains critical.

Furthermore, a strong positive intervention and support of the school organizational factor, that is, the leaders or administration is necessary to make the teacher community strong and in turn they can make the classroom management and practices highly effective and this may result in the high achievement of the students. As Sebastian and Reinke (2019) argues that just like the students, teachers as a community play a major role when they consider themselves connected to the schools where they teach. In other words, when the students feel connected to the school or classroom they get encouraged and develop intrinsic motivation, likewise, the teachers makes their teaching effective using different teaching strategies to make learning meaningful for the students when they feel that they belong to the schools depending on the facilities and aid provided by the administrations or leaders of the schools.

5. Conclusion

This paper presents a critical approach towards the impact of neoliberalism on the achievement motivation of the students in the educational settings. As teachers play a major role in the teaching and learning process, there is a need to focus on the impact of their teaching practices especially their behavioural aspects and its effect on the learning outcomes of the students. In doing so, an emphasis on support of the teachers in the class and their motivational orientation (which include motives, goals and values that teachers attribute to their teaching skills) is essential as it influences teachers' attitudes and behaviours towards their teaching activities (Bender et al., 2015). This paper provides a new direction in regard to neoliberalism and students' learning outcomes to take factors like teachers' instructional practices, especially in regard to their self-efficacy and supportive classroom teaching, and students' motivation into consideration for future research. It also highlights the significance of taking a critical approach towards the academic performance of the students in the educational settings by looking at it from the psychological lens.

Furthermore, given a limited study on the impact of neoliberalism and its impact on teachers and students' motivation and learning outcomes, it would be enriching to explore the existing relationships among these variables by looking at neoliberalism as the moderator. Besides, this will have great implications on the educational policy as it might confer a wider perspectives about the importance of recognizing that the significant influences on students' level of cognitive engagement is their motivation to learn. The proliferation of neoliberal interests in education has channelized towards serving free-market interests, rather than encouraging the spirit of enquiry. This shift has impacted the self-efficacy of teachers and constricted the understanding of intelligence. A few parameters, rigid framework for learning and standardisation of teaching methods unfortunately does not serve all. Hence, students' achievement motivation ends up as a footnote, while mechanical learning is promoted. In conclusion, one can say that teachers in the classroom should define success in terms of learning goals and not as performance goals as this may have negative impact on students' academic achievement. In fact, higher academic achievement can better be facilitated if teachers and educators endeavor to provide students with assigned learning rather than assigned performance goals (Berkovits, 2014). Also, cultivating amicable and symbiotic teacher-student relationship, encouraging curiosity and questioning and maintain socio-emotional health are necessary to encourage cognitive engagement.

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