

The Influence of Positive Self-affirmation towards Malaysian ESL Students at Tertiary Level of Education

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Abstract

Positive self-affirmation when identified as value affirmation helps alleviate negative self threat among students' when practiced in the right way which in turn boosts their self-esteem and thus motivation which eventually enables them to achieve an excellent result in their academic performance especially in the context of this study, the ESL reading classroom. Therefore, this study will be looking at the direct effect between positive self-affirmation, motivation and self-esteem towards ESL students' academic performance in the ESL classroom and based on a review of several studies that was done previously on self-affirmation, motivation and self-esteem towards Malaysian ESL students' academic performance, it was found out through a review on the results and discussion of previous studies that there is a positive significance between positive self-affirmation, self-esteem and motivation towards Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the ESL classroom.

Keywords— self affirmation, self-esteem, motivation, ESL students, higher learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Positive affirmations are utterances that assert the truth of something. To put it another way, positive affirmations are statements that a person repeats to themselves to express how they wish to be. Positive affirmations are words or statements that are intended to challenge and eliminate negative or harmful beliefs (Betsi Sites & Tchiki Davis, 2022).

To begin with, the use of positive affirmation in an individual's daily life will help uplift an individual's mood and therefore helps them to be able to focus on the task that they are going to attempt in their everyday lifestyle. Hence, in regards to the use of positive self affirmations, there are several benefits that an individual can gain especially in the context of this study which are Malaysian ESL students in the ESL classroom. To further elaborate, the first benefit of positive self-affirmation towards ESL students in the Malaysian ESL classroom is that it motivates them to act based on their goals and the more positive their goals are, the more it enables them to act in a positive way. For instance, if their goal is to achieve an A grade for an English lesson and gained it, the more they would practice positive self-affirmation in their life because their positive goals enables them to want to acquire more positive results

at the end of the day through positive self affirmation (Richard de Souza, n.d).

In addition, the second benefit of positive self-affirmation is that it helps them to concentrate or pay attention to their goals in order to achieve a positive goal result at the end of the day which enables them to improve their self-esteem and confidence in the ESL classroom. Furthermore, the third benefit that Malaysian ESL students' can benefit through the use of positive self-affirmation in the ESL classroom is that it enables them to change a negative thought into a positive thought which eventually would boost their self-esteem and makes them feel good about themselves and finally, the last benefit that Malaysian ESL students' can gain from using a positive self-affirmation in the ESL classroom is that through the use of positive self-affirmation it helps boost students' subconscious mind into a new belief that enables them to stay positive all the time through the use of positive thoughts and affirmations (Richard de Souza, n.d)

Therefore, this study aims to explore and identify the influence of positive self-affirmation towards Malaysian ESL students at Tertiary level of Education by looking at the effect of positive self-affirmation towards Malaysian ESL students' self-esteem and academic performance in the

ESL reading classroom which will be fully elaborated in this study.

In regards to the use of positive self-affirmations among tertiary levels of education in Malaysia, there are a few research gaps that can be identified through the use of positive self-affirmation in the Malaysian ESL classroom which answers the statement of the problem of this current research study. To begin with, the first research gap that will be discussed in this study is educational inequality among Malaysian ESL students which receives much attention in academic research and policy formation whereby there is an increasing amount of educational inequality among the minority students' in Malaysia in the ESL classroom due to their poor socioeconomic background. This is further proven through a study done by Boskey (2017) who states that the socioeconomic status does really have a significant impact on the mastery of English language among Malaysian ESL students as it is based on the level of parental education which are usually maternal and occupation which is usually paternal and the family income (Hoff, 2013; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Considine & Zappalà, 2002). In addition, there have been other definitions that have used the term "economic deprivation" to refer to general living conditions such as home type, medical treatment, and income level (Völkel, Seabi, Cockcroft & Goldschagg, 2016; Ginsborg, 2014). SES can alternatively be defined as "one's access to financial, educational, and social resources, as well as the social positions, advantages, and prestige that these resources confer" (Pace, Luo, Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2017, p. 287).

Furthermore, many studies have shown that people from low socioeconomic origins are more likely to be subjected to hazards such as neglect, abuse, and limited educational possibilities (Pace et al., 2017) whereby when compared to students from higher socioeconomic situations, students from such backgrounds are more likely to struggle with the English language. In addition, according to existing research, students from low-income families are more likely to have poor literacy abilities due to a lack of access to literacy materials and having parents who are not highly educated (Frechette, 2013). Similarly, many pupils from low socioeconomic origins have lower levels of English language abilities than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Hoff, 2013; Phon, 2017).

Moreover, according to existing research, students from low-income families are more likely to have poor literacy abilities due to a lack of access to literacy materials and having parents who are not highly educated (Frechette, 2013). Similarly, many pupils from low socioeconomic origins have lower levels of English language abilities than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Hoff, 2013; Phon, 2017). These students are considered to be exposed

to greater "risks" as a result of their poor family poverty, which can harm their English language development. These dangers include a lack of parental education, a lack of supportive learning tools, and unfavourable learning conditions at home. Parental education is a critical component in a child's literacy development as the quality of an individual literacy in the English language depends on the quality of the English literacy among the parents of the individuals.

Therefore, poor socioeconomic status of these students encourages them to have a negative thinking pattern which would not aid them in learning the English language especially in the Malaysian ESL classroom. Hence, in order to curb these students' negative thinking patterns, it is essential for ESL teachers to practice and use positive self-affirmation in the ESL classroom so that it would aid and motivate them to learn the English language and thus become a proficient English language learner in the ESL classroom.

In addition, the second research gap that could be identified through the use of positive self-affirmation among Malaysian ESL students' in the tertiary level of education is stereotype threat. To begin with, stereotype threat refers to the threat that people experience in a given situation when they believe they are at risk of conforming to a negative stereotype about a group to which they belong is known as stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The threat of stereotypes decreases performance in a variety of situations, including academic achievement. According to a meta-analysis (Walton & Spencer, 2009), negatively stereotyped students who were under stereotype threat performed on average better than 0.5 points higher.

Additionally, the fear of stereotypes, in particular, has been found to lower kids' academic performance. A rigorous verbal test was administered to French undergraduate students in one research (Croizet & Claire, 1998) where low-SES students who were told that the test was a measure of verbal intelligence fared worse than those who were told it was an investigative tool for investigating lexical hypotheses, whereas higher-SES students performed equally well regardless of what they were told. Other research (Browman, Destin, Carswell, & Svoboda, 2017; Désert, Préaux, & Jund, 2009; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003; Spencer & Castano, 2007) have found similar impacts in low-SES kids ranging from 6-year-olds to college students.

Furthermore, the maladaptive responses which are aimed at defending a persons' self-integrity, as a sense of themselves for being a 'good and adequate' person are thought to cause the detrimental impacts of stereotype threat (Cohen & Sherman, 2014) which are denial of the threat

(Epton, Harris, Kane, Koningsbruggen, & Sheeran, 2015), concretization of construal levels (Sherman et al., 2013), increased vigilance (Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007), increased stress (Creswell, Dutcher, Klein, Harris, & Levine, 2013), and allocation of executive function, thus reducing its availability for other tasks are examples of these maladaptive responses (Hall, Zhao, & Shafir, 2014; Johns, Inzlicht, & Schmader, 2008).

Therefore in order to avoid these maladaptive responses, it is essential for an individual to strengthen their self-integrity in domains that are unrelated to the threat, a process known as 'self-affirmation'. This is because many studies have indicated that self-affirmation does act as an effective buffer against psychological threat in many situations, including in educational settings such as colleges (see e.g. Harackiewicz et al., 2013; Kinias & Sim, 2016; Martens, Johns, Greenberg, & Schimel, 2006; Miyake et al., 2010; Shapiro, Williams, & Hambarchyan, 2013; Silverman, Logel, & Cohen, 2013; Tibbetts et al., 2016) which eventually would boost their self confidence and esteem when learning the English language in the Malaysian ESL classroom amongst their peers.

In addition, the purpose of this study aims to explore the use of positive self-affirmation among Malaysian ESL undergraduate students at a tertiary level of education towards their self-esteem and academic performance in the ESL reading classroom.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To identify the use of positive self-affirmation towards Malaysian ESL students' self-esteem in the Malaysian ESL reading classroom.
2. To identify the use of positive self-affirmation towards Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the Malaysian ESL reading classroom.
3. To identify the use of positive self-affirmation through motivation as the mediator towards Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the ESL reading classroom.
4. To identify the use of self-esteem towards Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the ESL reading classroom
5. To identify the use of self-esteem through motivation as the mediator towards Malaysian ESL students academic performance in the ESL reading classroom.
6. To identify the use of self-esteem through positive self-affirmation in the ESL reading classroom

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does the use of positive self-affirmation in the Malaysian ESL reading classroom affects Malaysian ESL students self-esteem in the ESL reading classroom ?
2. How does the use of positive self-affirmation in the Malaysian ESL classroom affect Malaysian ESL students academic performance in the ESL reading classroom?
3. How does the use of positive self-affirmation through motivation as the mediator affects Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the ESL reading classroom?
4. How does self-esteem affect Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the ESL reading classroom?
5. How does self-esteem through motivation as the mediator affect Malaysian ESL students academic performance in the ESL classroom?
6. How does self-esteem affect the use of positive self-affirmation among Malaysian ESL students' in the ESL reading classroom towards their academic reading performance in the ESL classroom?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the use of positive self-affirmation and Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the ESL reading classroom.
2. There is no significant difference between the use of self-esteem and Malaysian ESL students academic reading performance in the ESL classroom.
3. There is no significant difference between the use of positive self-affirmation and motivation as the mediator towards Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the Malaysian ESL classroom
4. There is no significant difference between self-esteem and motivation as the mediator towards Malaysian ESL students' academic performance in the Malaysian ESL classroom.

II. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0.1 The Influence of Positive Self-affirmation towards Malaysian ESL Students Self-esteem in the ESL classroom

To begin with, according to the APA Journal of Psychology, self-affirmation refers to any behavior that

confirms the moral and adaptive adequacy of the self while self-esteem based on the Sociology Department of the University of Maryland refers to a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one's worth or value. Therefore, based on the existing literature review on previous studies on the relationship between positive self-affirmation and the self-esteem of students' in the ESL classroom, it was found out that the two previous studies in regards to self-esteem resulted in a negative result between self-esteem and the pleasure at the misfortunes of others or better known as schafreunde.

Additionally, when there are no positive self-affirmation included, it allows students' to have a low self-esteem due to the negative self threat imposed by those high achiever students in the ESL classroom. In addition, in another study conducted by Rogers, 1951 as cited by Maxwell & Bachkirova, 2010 reveals that spontaneous positive self-affirmation have been regarded with a greater level of happiness among individuals especially Malaysian ESL students' in the context of this study (Emmanuel,2018). Furthermore, in a recent study that was conducted among participants in sending virtual positive self-affirmation through mobile apps showed an increasing level of self-esteem among those participants through pre and post experimental study (Lynelle Arquiza,2020). Hence this indicates that positive self affirmations when being self imposed on students' benefits them in the long run and helps them to feel confident when learning especially in the Malaysian ESL tertiary classroom.

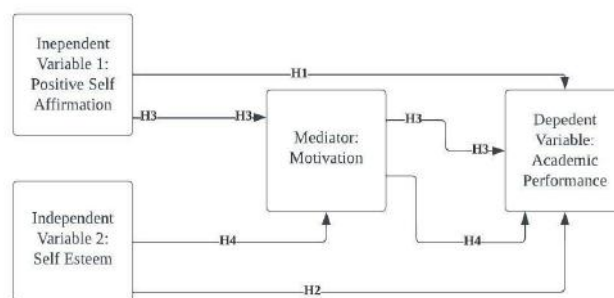
2.0.2 The Influence of Positive Self-affirmation towards Malaysian ESL Students Academic Performance in the ESL Classroom

To begin with, the use of positive self-affirmation among ESL students does largely impact their grades in the ESL classroom which especially in the context of this study, the ESL reading classroom. This is due to the stereotype threat which threatened especially weaker students in the ESL reading classroom and thus make them to not be able to achieve positive grades in their ESL reading classroom when compared to the high achiever ESL students. Additionally, based on 330 studies that have been conducted previously, it was found out that negative stereotypes among ESL students in the ESL classroom impaired their cognitive performance in the ESL classroom specifically in the context of this study, the ESL reading classroom (Hayes et.al,2019)

Additionally, the achievement difference between underrepresented ethnic minority students and majority students, first-generation college students and continuing-generation college students, and men and women in science and math classes could possibly be attributed to stereotype

threat (Walton and Spencer,2009) which in the end causes these underrepresented minority students when being affected with the negative stereotypes are unable to perform well in the ESL classroom. Therefore, in order to avoid these negative stereotypes, especially among underrepresented minorities in the ESL classroom, it is essential for the educators to practice positive self affirmations among their students' particularly in the ESL classroom so that the ritual of imposing negative self threat towards the minority students could be avoided.

2.0.3 Conceptual Framework of Positive Self-affirmation and Self-esteem towards Malaysian ESL Students Academic Performance in the ESL Classroom.



III. METHODOLOGY

3.0.1 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative quasi experimental research design where participants of this study would need to answer an open ended survey pertaining to their self-esteem and positive self-affirmation as well as observation by the researcher when this study is being conducted.

3.0.2 Data Collection

The method in which the data of this study will be collected is through a review of various data based on similar studies that is related to the present study on positive self affirmation, self-esteem and academic performance in the reading classroom.

3.0.3 Analysis of Data

The data collected in this study will be analyzed manually through a qualitative research design by reviewing the results and discussion section of each research study that is similar to the current study conducted by the researcher of this study that relates to positive self affirmation, self-esteem and academic performance in the ESL reading classroom with regards to the effect of positive self-affirmation and self-esteem in the ESL classroom among Malaysian ESL students'.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this study will be based on a review of various results and discussion that have been conducted previously that is in line with the first research hypothesis of this current research study. The research study by Wilco W. Dijk, Guido M. Van Koningsburgen, Joap W. Duwerkkek, and Toka M. Wesseling (2020) on the effect of positive self-affirmation towards ESL students' self-esteem in the ESL classroom is the first review of the result and discussion section that will be analysed in this current research study that answers the first research hypothesis on self-affirmation and self esteem. Additionally, people with low self-esteem experienced greater self-threat than than high self-esteem participants with a $B=-0.86$, $t=-5.00$, $p<.001$. Finally, the link between self-esteem and schadenfreude was not significant after controlling for self threat ($B=-0.05$, $t1$, $p=.82$). Participants who felt self threatened reported greater schadenfreude than those who felt self threatened with a $B=0.38$, $t=2.96$, and $p=.004$ respectively. The researcher's research on stereotype threat, self-esteem, schadenfreude, and self-affirmation revealed an indirect relationship that is estimated to lie between -0.62 and -0.09 with a 95% confidence interval. Because zero is not within the 95% confidence interval, it can be inferred that the indirect relationship is statistically significant, which means that the indirect relationship is statistically significant.

In addition, with regards to the present research of this study that contributes to the existing research of this study which is on schadenfreude indicates in the first findings that individual differences in self-esteem affects the experience of schadenfreude whereby two earlier studies on schadenfreude and self-esteem yielded inconsistent results.

Feather (1994) also found that those with low self-esteem had more positive opinions concerning the failure of high achievers. Additionally, Smith et al. (1996) showed that self-confidence had nothing to do with schadenfreude in yet another study.

But by demonstrating both mediating and moderating variables in the relationship between variables, the current study adds to the body of literature by demonstrating a strong inverse association between self-esteem and schadenfreude.

Furthermore, the second finding of this study on scahadenfreude and self-esteem shows that scadenfreude can be a reaction to self-threat, which supports earlier research in which self-threat was manipulated and was found to increase scahdenfreude. Thirdly, the findings of this study, which is related to the research being conducted by the researcher of this study, offer a novel demonstration

that self-affirmation reduces schade. Therefore, the current research offers compelling evidence in favour of the idea that schadenfreude can be driven by a desire for self-improvement and protection.

Additionally, Camilla During and Donna C. Jeosop (2014) found that the results of their study examining the relationship between positive self-affirmation and self-esteem support the hypothesis that self-esteem eventually moderates the impact of self-affirmation manipulation based on responses that are pertinent to health risk information. Additionally, based on the results, it was shown that participants with poor self-esteem who were subjected to self-affirmation manipulation showed a more positive attitude and intention toward exercise in addition to less derogation of health risk information. High self-esteem individuals had no effect on the results of the self-affirmation manipulation, on the other hand (Camilla During and Donna C. Jeosop, 2014).

Additionally, Camilla During and Donna C. Jeosop (2014) found that the results of their study examining the relationship between positive self-affirmation and self-esteem support the hypothesis that self-esteem eventually moderates the impact of self-affirmation manipulation based on responses that are pertinent to health risk information. Additionally, based on the results, it was shown that participants with poor self-esteem who were subjected to self-affirmation manipulation showed a more positive attitude and intention toward exercise in addition to less derogation of health risk information. High self-esteem individuals had no effect on the results of the self-affirmation manipulation, on the other hand (Camilla During and Donna C. Jeosop, 2014).

Additionally, a study by Darmawati, Dewi Mufidatul Ummah, and Andi Augusten Arrifin (2020) on the impact of positive self-affirmation techniques on students at the PGPAUD FKIP at Khairun University will be examined in this study as a third study related to self-affirmation and self-esteem based on its findings and discussion. Based on the experimental study carried out by these three researchers as mentioned above in this study, it was discovered that before the affirmation technique was imposed on the study participants, their level of confidence was very low, with 70% of them having very low self-esteem and 16.66% being in the depressive disorder category. In addition, the level of confidence or self-esteem of the respondents rose after these participants received treatment in the three sessions of the affirmation technique, which brings us to the definition of the affirmation technique, which refers to the method to change an illogical or irrational message that is altered through positive statements or affirmations that are made and expressed repeatedly by oneself, or in other words, it refers to the

ability of a subject to successfully use positive statements or affirmations.

In light of these three findings, it is possible to draw the following conclusion: The technique of self-affirmation has demonstrated its effectiveness to many people, especially on those who have problems with themselves to feel good about themselves after using the positive self-affirmation technique as this method technically affects the imagination of the participants in their subconscious mind and if the subconscious mind is strong, the results obtained from self-affirmation will be optimal to balance between the negative and the positive thoughts.

Additionally, the researcher's current research study, which is based on self-affirmation, self-esteem, and ESL students' academic performance in the ESL reading classroom, included three reviews of the findings and discussion sections from earlier studies that had a similar theme. These studies were related to the second research hypothesis of this research study, which was concerned with self-affirmation and ESL students' academic performance in the ESL classroom.

The first review on the result and discussion section for the second research hypothesis based on the prior study that will be reviewed in this study is by Cheng Hong Liu et al. (2018), which states that the results obtained through the research conducted by Cheng Hong Liu et al. (2018) were primarily close with their prediction whereby participants who received a neutral personality feedback were predicted by the OACSW, which stands for others approval contingency of self worth as to have a stronger tendency to confront on the task and have better performance in the academic performance.

However, because it was unrelated to their performance, the OACSW tended to make negative predictions about the individuals who received favourable personality feedback when the task was presented to them. Additionally, the results showed that attribute affirmation is not helpful for students' motivation and performance for a difficult learning task in students with a high OACSW, despite the fact that, in accordance with the self-affirmation theory, self-affirmation may be useful in boosting students' performance and motivating them to approach a difficult learning task.

Based on the results of the two experiments done on the respondents, it was determined that participants who did not receive self-affirmation had a positive correlation between their propensity to approach the task and their performance. The positive correlation between OACSW and individuals' propensities to confront the task and performance, on the other hand, flattened and even turned

adversely for participants who felt confident in themselves. Thus, it can be concluded that self-affirmation may not be helpful in enhancing motivation and performance among high OACSW students, which translates literally as an increase in their eagerness for approval. The less effective self-affirmation is in inspiring these students to take on a difficult task and improving their performance because the performance of these students is dependent on their self-efficacy.

Thus, it might be said in a nutshell that self-affirmation would make high OACSW participants sense less relevance and value in completing the difficult work and is therefore ineffective in improving their dispositions to complete the task and performance. Consequently, this demonstrates that self-affirmation may be ineffective and even harmful for students' motivation and performance because it has certain traits that would cause them to concentrate on getting positive feedback instead of negative feedback from others, which is in line with the positive self-affirmation theory.

Furthermore, Beng Huat Se et al study 's from 2022 indicated that stereotype threat is one of the key factors contributing to students' low self-esteem, which in turn affects how well they perform academically in the ESL classroom. Additionally, the SES background of these children may potentially be a factor in their subpar academic performance, particularly in the setting of the study's ESL classroom (Fell and Hewstone,2015). As a result, one of the main causes of the decline in academic achievement in ESL classrooms is stereotype threat and low SES background.

Another study by Cheng Hong Liu in 2021 discovered that participants with positive personality feedback have a larger propensity to take on difficult tasks than participants with neutral personality feedback. But when it comes to individuals who are credited, affirm participants show a lesser propensity to take on the difficult task associated with non affirmed participants. As a result, this demonstrates that having an attribute that is affirmative may lessen the propensity to confront a difficult task. This conclusion can be drawn from the fact that some participants are positively motivated to complete a difficult task while others are not, which is in contrast to the first review of the results and discussion section in this study. Therefore, it can be inferred that using an intervention like motivation will help students' urge to engage in the ESL classroom by increasing their self-esteem, which in turn benefits their academic achievement.

Additionally, recent research by academics shown that stereotype threat and students' socioeconomic backgrounds do play a significant role in enhancing ESL students' academic performance in ESL classrooms.

Therefore, in order to prevent negative stereotype threat, educators must adopt a fundamental approach to motivating and disciplining their students by establishing a set of rules among their students. This can be done through positive self-affirmation techniques that can be taught to students and internalised daily until it becomes a habit among students. As a result, students' aspirations would be boosted.

Therefore, as a conclusion, internalising positive self-affirmation and promoting kindness among students in the educational setting would help foster self-esteem through the emergence of citizens with a vast amount of E.Q, such as empathy, and thus allow for the creation of a society that stands for kindness and togetherness, which in turn allows every individual to be in harmony with themselves.

A study by Stein Mayr et al. (2019) found a positive relationship between students' academic performance and motivation as the catalyst towards students' academic performance in a positive way in the ESL classroom, which forms the basis for the third research hypothesis that will be tested to demonstrate the effect of motivation towards Malaysian ESL students' self-esteem and academic performance. In addition, a different study by Sevgi Topcu and Mavilena Z. Leana Tascilar (2016) found that both motivation and self-esteem have been seen as important characteristics in identifying a positive academic results as researchers have found that there is a positive correlation between motivation and self-esteem (Harlen and Deakin Crick, 2003; Zolabi, 2012), as well as between self-esteem and academic achievement (Harter, 1983; Johnson and Kanoy, 1980), as an important character in identifying a positive academic results as researchers have found that there is a positive correlation between motivation and self-esteem (Harlen and Deakin Crick, 2003; Zolabi, 2012) and also self-esteem and academic achievement (Harter, 1983; Johnson and Kanoy, 1980) and also between motivation and academic achievement.

Additionally, a study by Aryana (2010) that examined the relationship between motivation, self-esteem, and academic success among ESL students found that there was a significant relationship between these factors. These findings are consistent with research by Fathi Astianiet al. (2007), who also conducted a study with Aryana (2010) that is similar to the current research study. Therefore, it can be concluded that through a review of findings and discussions of prior studies, it is discovered that there is a significant difference in academic performance, motivation, and self-esteem among ESL learners in the ESL classroom, proving the third research hypothesis of this current study.

Additionally, prior studies on the connection between positive self-affirmation, motivation, and

academic achievement have been undertaken and will be examined in order to demonstrate the significance of the fourth research hypothesis. First, a study by Sherman et al. (2013) will be reviewed in accordance with the fourth research hypothesis of this study. Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it was determined that the intervention of positive self-affirmation through motivation does, in fact, increase students' grades in the classroom (Cohen et al., 2006, 2009). Further research by Sherman and Cohen from 2006 revealed that positive self-affirmation lowers defensiveness and enhances students' academic performance. The motivation of students, and consequently their performance in the classroom, declines when they are threatened with identity. Therefore, in order to boost students' motivation and consequently their performance in the ESL classroom, instructors must instil in them the habit of using positive self-affirmation.

Additionally, a study by CH Liu in the year 2021 found that the intervention of self-affirmation would boost students' motivation to take on difficult tasks. According to the study, those who received positive feedback tended to show a stronger tendency to take on the difficult task than those who didn't. Therefore, it could be argued that students' poor academic performance does serve as a catalyst for achieving high grade performance in the ESL classroom so they can overcome the challenge through motivation and positive self-affirmation, which proves the fourth research hypothesis of this current study, which demonstrates the positive significance between positive self-affirmation, motivation, and academic performance among ESL learners in the study.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of numerous studies on self-affirmation, self-esteem, and academic performance of ESL students that have been conducted in the past, it can be concluded that stereotype threat and the SES background of the students are the primary factors that affect their self-esteem and, as a result, affect their academic performance in the ESL classroom. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to foster positive self-affirmation among their students as well as students among their peers in order to cultivate a caring and harmonious society in this world, which would also improve especially ESL students' academic performance in the ESL classroom. This will help prevent the use of stereotypical threat among ESL students, specifically at tertiary institutions.

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