

**TEACHER-STUDENTS' RELATIONSHIP AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABAKALIKI
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EBONYI STATE**

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Abstract

This project was carried out in order to determine the Effects of Teacher-Students' Relationship on the Academic Performance of Students in Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Local Government Area (LGA) of Ebonyi State. The survey research design was used. The population of the study consisted of all the students and teachers in ten(10) selected secondary schools in Abakaliki LGA. The sample of the study consisted of 200 respondents. The simple random sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The simple mean score was used to analyse the questionnaire and chi-square for test of hypothesis. The findings indicated that the teachers in most of the secondary schools in the local government Area beat their students whenever they commit an offence. Some of the teachers are harsh to the students in the classroom especially when they ask questions in the course of a lesson. In line with the findings, the following recommendations were made: Teachers should try to be patient with students when they are in the class. School authorities should always emphasize on gentleness and leniency with the students. School authorities should place consequences for those teachers who beat their students in the class just because they ask questions in the class. Teachers should praise the students when they perform better in the class. Students should try not to provoke the teachers in the class so that they will not incur the punishment of the teacher.

Key words: Teacher-Students' Relationship, Academic Performance, Student, Secondary School.

Introduction

It is true that from the first day of school, a child is expected to, and must, rely on teachers to provide them with understanding and necessary support needed for them to get the most out of their classrooms daily interactions. It is also a fact that children who form strong relationship bonds with teachers enjoy school and can get along with their peers better as they are able to play and work on their own in confidence knowing well that they can turn to their teachers in the case of any difficulty.

Despite the efforts of researchers, school administrators, and educators to attest to the importance of this fact and the need to develop and maintain a good teacher-students' relationship, it cannot be denied that this has not been achieved as evidences of the poor teacher-student relationship and its effects abound. But what would have still been the militating factors against a positive teacher-student relationship? There is no doubt that certain factors are responsible for these happenings and its prevailing effects on the students' and teachers, the school, the parents and the entire education system. It is therefore the focus of this research work to fetch out some of their causes and its effects on the child's academic performance and to also find out and proffer possible ways by which the teacher-student relationship can be improved and help in the discharge of their duties smoothly in order to also help achieve the educational goals as contended in the National Policy on Education (NPE), 2004.

Background of the Study

The quality of relationship obtained between teachers and their students these days is poor (Nzeneri, 2008). This bond that fades away by the day had enormous effect on the society, family, education and institutions and the students. But what could be responsible for this breakdown of relationship line between teachers and students? A teacher is not just measured by his levels of commitment, competence and technical know-how or by knowledge but also by how much he builds and maintains relationship bonds with students. Morzano (2003) maintained that "An effective teacher-student relationship may be the keystone that allows the aspects to work well". Relationships that teachers develop with their students have an important role to play in a student's academic growth or performance. Hallinan (2008) writes that "learning is a process that involves cognitive and social psychological dimensions, and both processes should be considered if academic achievement is to be maximized". The social relationship that exists between the teacher and student is as essential as water is to life. For education to see out her aims, the corner stone is a positive teacher-students relationship.

It is surprising that so many education policy makers have been seduced to believing and thinking that simple quantitative measures like test scores can be used to hold schools accountable for achieving complex educational outcomes (Rothstein, Jacobsen, and Wilder; 2005). Other researchers discussed these findings illustrating the importance of students and teachers emotions as a major instrument during instructional interactions. Meyer and Turner

(2002) determined that “through studying student-teacher interactions, our conceptualization of what constitutes motivation to learn increasingly has involved emotions as essential to learning and teaching.” It is their study results which provide support for further study of the inclusion of interpersonal relationships in the instructional setting and to what extent or degree those relationships between a student and the teacher will result in a greater degree of learning in the classroom according to Downey, (2008). The establishment of social relationships can really impact effective teaching and learning. Mohrman (2003) asserts that “lasting change does not result from plans, blueprint, and events; rather change occurs through interaction of participants”. Baker (2006) said that strong teacher-student relationship may be one of the most important environmental factors in changing a child’s educational path.

In view of the above background, the researchers are challenged to find out the possible causes and effects of poor teacher-students relationship on academic achievement of students in secondary schools in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Statement of the Problem

Many schools in Abakaliki LGA have been associated with formation of bad gangs by students, general hatred for teachers, neglect of some subjects which then gives rise to serious problems for the realization of educational objectives. Research has shown that students who have teachers that care and joke with them do better in their academic pursuits. Therefore, it is safe to say that teacher-students relationship affects the performance of the students. This is because when a teacher is harsh to his/her students, they tend to develop hatred for the teacher and hence: poor attention in the classroom. It is unfortunate that a good number of students have lost virtues of good behaviour since their teachers no longer show the love, care and affection students crave for. It is in the light of these that the researchers therefore intend to carry out this study in order to emerge with some data on the extent to which poor teacher-students relationship has contributed to the non-effective academic performance of students in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the causes of poor teacher-students relationship and the extent to which it has affected or influenced the academic performance of children in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The researchers intends to:

Determine the causes of poor relationship among teachers and students.

To find out the effects of poor relationship between students and teachers.

To discover how cordial relationship be created between teachers and students?

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to serve as a guide to the study:

1. What are the causes of poor relationship among teachers and students?
2. What are the effects of poor relationship between students and teachers?
3. How can there be cordial relationship between teachers and students?

Hypothesis

H_a: There is a significant relationship between teacher-students relationship and academic performance of the children.

H_o: There is no significant relationship between teacher-students relationship and academic performance of the children.

Significance of the Study

The research work is carried out in order to find out the causes and effects of poor teacher-students relationship on the academic performance of children in Abakaliki. This study will go a long way to help all stakeholders of in education which include: teachers, students, parents, and the entire system of education.

The work will be of benefit to teachers as it will serve as sense of direction to them by helping them to understand and know the reasons children perform below standard in Abakaliki.

Students will also benefit as they are exposed to knowledge which thereby changes the academic performance from negative to positive based on the improvement in their relationship with them.

Scope of the Study

The study covers teacher-students' relationship and its effects on students' academic performance of students in Christian Religious Studies. The researchers limit this study to a defined geographical zone which is secondary schools in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. However, the findings of the study will be generic s it can be generalized to other parts of the country as well.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research employed the survey research design. In this design, the representative sample of the population is studied in order to determine the characteristics of the whole population. In the design, a given number of students and teachers will be drawn from the whole population for sampling in order to determine the effects of poor teacher- student relationships on the academic performance of students in the research area.

Population and Sample of the Study

All the secondary schools students and teachers of ten selected secondary schools in Abakaliki Local government Area of Ebonyi State formed the population of this study. The sample schools of this study consists of ten (10) selected secondary schools in Abakaliki Local Government Area as mentioned in chapter one of this research. These schools were randomly selected to cover the widespread area of the locality.

Sampling Technique

The method of sampling applied in this work is the random sampling technique. The main purpose of using random sampling technique is to select a sample that can be used as a representative sample generated from a larger population.

Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire was used for the data collection. The questionnaire used was a structured type using the four point Likert scale. That is: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) respectively.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Face validation was used to establish that the instrument was designed to measure what the research desired.

Method of Data Analysis

The data analysed was based on data obtained from the responses of the respondents. A total of twenty (20) respondents from each was drawn from the sampled population of ten secondary schools; making up two hundred (200) respondents. This is composed of ten teachers and ten students.

The method of data analysis was mean of ungrouped data. The formula for this mean is:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum F}$$

Thus, \bar{X} = Arithmetic Mean

$\sum fx$ = the summation of the frequency

Whereas, the formula the researchers used for testing hypothesis is chi-square.

The formula for the instrument is:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (fo - fe)^2}{fe}$$

Where:

f_o = Observed Frequency

f_e = Expected Frequency

χ^2 = Chi-square

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Information on the Sex of the Respondent

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	91	36.67
Female	104	53.33
Total	195	100

Table 1 above indicates that 91 respondents which formed 36.67% were male while 104 respondents which formed 53.33% were female. This indicates that the female respondents were more than the male.

Table 2: Information on Age of the Respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
Below 15 years	40	20.5
16-20 years	75	38.5
21 years and above	80	40.0
Total	195	100

The table 2 shows that 40 respondents representing 20.5% were within the age range of below 15 years, 75 respondents which formed 38.5% were within the age range of 16-20 years while 80 respondents which formed 40.0% were within the age range of 21 years and above. This indicates that most of the respondents were within the age range of 21 years and above.

Table 3: Information on Qualification of the Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Pre-service teachers	35	17.95
Students	89	45.64
Teachers	71	36.41
Total	195	100

Table 3 above indicates that 35 respondents representing 17.95% were Pres-service teacher, 89 respondents representing 45.64% were students while 71 respondents representing 36.41% were teachers in the schools. This indicates that majority of the respondents were students.

Table 4: What are the causes of poor relationship among teachers and students?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}
1	Teachers feel that being lenient with the students will bring disrespect to them	21	16	85	73	375	1.92
2	Students sometimes are stubborn towards their teachers	77	98	7	13	629	3.23
3	When teachers beat students unnecessarily, the students tend to misbehave in reaction to it	103	55	17	20	631	3.24
4	When children are over pampered in their homes, they are naturally are bound to have a poor relationship with other people and their teachers inclusive	83	89	10	13	632	3.24
5	Teachers beat their students whenever they commit an offence	67	91	14	23	592	3.04

Information on table 4 shows that items 2, 3, 4 and 5 are rated 3.23, 3.24, 3.24 and 3.04 above the acceptance level of 2.50 by the respondents. It is therefore, the opinion of the respondents

that the aforementioned factors are the causes of poor relationship among teachers and students. On the other hand, item 1 rated 1.92 below the acceptance level of 2.50 by the respondents. The item was rejected as true statement because teachers do not feel that being lenient with the students will bring disrespect to them.

Table 5: What are the effects of poor relationship between students and teachers?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}
6	Teachers find it difficult to understand the students	74	99	13	9	628	3.22
7	students don't like teachers they don't have good relationship with	127	49	8	11	682	3.50
8	Students develop negative attitude towards the teachers who are harsh to them	72	86	21	16	604	3.10
9	Students' negative attitudes towards the teacher affects the performance of the students	80	78	24	13	615	3.15
10	Poor teacher-students relationship makes the students to live in fear of the teacher	109	76	4	6	678	3.48

The information presented on table 5 above reveals that items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are rated with the mean score of 3.22, 3.50, 3.10, 3.15 and 3.48 respectively also above the acceptance level of 2.50 by the respondents. It therefore shows that all the above mentioned factors are effects of poor relationship between students and teachers.

Table 6: How can there be cordial relationship between teachers and students?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}
11	The principals should always emphasize on patience with the students	71	92	13	19	605	3.10
12	the school should take disciplinary actions against teachers who are hostile to students	70	74	31	20	584	2.99
13	There should be free period on the timetable which teachers can relate with their students in order to discover their weak points academically	58	98	13	26	578	2.96
14	Parents should encourage their children to respect their teachers and have a good relationship with them	66	101	17	11	612	3.14
15	Teachers should be discouraged from beating the students but give them punishments like weeding, picking pin, riding machine, etc.	103	55	17	20	631	3.24

Information on table 6 indicates that items 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are rated 3.10, 2.99, 2.96, 3.14 and 3.24 above the acceptance level of 2.50 by the respondents. It is therefore, the opinion of the respondents that all the factors are measures that can enhance cordial relationship between teachers and students in secondary schools.

Testing of Hypotheses

Table 7: There is no significant relationship between teacher-student relationship and academic performance of the students

Cells	f _o	f _e	Df	x ² _{cal}	x ² _{crit}	α
4	975	195	9	80.38	16.92	0.5

Table 8: Summary of hypothesis

Contingency table for H₀

Cells	F _o	F _e	(F _o -f _e)	(F _o -f _e) ²	$\frac{(F_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
i.	58	61.5	-35	1225	19.9
ii.	98	70.25	27.75	770.63	10.96
iii.	13	25.75	-12.75	162.56	6.31
iv.	26	37.5	-11.5	132.25	3.53

$$\sum 40.7 (x^2 \text{ cal})$$

$$X^2 \text{ cal} = 80.38 (x^2 \text{ cal})$$

$$X^2 \text{ crit} = 16.92$$

$$Df = 9$$

At 0.05 level of significance (see appendix C3 for details)

Items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were used to compute the hypothesis which reveals that the chi-square calculated value $x^2 = 80.38$ is greater than ($>$) the chi-square value critical $x^2 = 16.92$ for $df = 9$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that the $x^2 \text{ cal} = 80.38$ is in the rejection region therefore we fail to retain the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis is upheld. This means that poor relationship of teachers and students affects students academically.

Discussion of Findings

This research was carried out in order to determine teacher-student relationship and its effect on students' performance in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. It was discovered that the principals in the secondary schools are always emphasizing that the teachers should not be too hard on the students as this will create a cordial relationship with them and enhance better academic results from the students. This is indicative in the mean score of the question which is 3.5 which means that most of the teachers answered in the positive.

The researchers discovered that cordial relationships between the teachers and the students produce better performance among the students. This means that when the teachers and the students are in good terms, teaching and learning as a process will be much easier. This can be seen in the response of the teachers which has a mean score of 3.4 which is more than the criterion score of 2.5 which means that the teachers are in strong agreement that cordial relationship between teachers and students generates high performance from the students.

The researchers discovered that teachers beat the students whenever they commit an offence. This can be seen in the responses of the respondents with the mean score of 3.0 which is greater than the calculated mean.

It was interesting to the researchers to discover that most of the respondents were of opinions that the class is interesting when the teacher laughs and jokes with the students. This can be seen in light of the mean score which is 2.9. This finding is in line with that of Okafor (2003) who said that when the teacher is friendly with the students, he gets to know them better and it enhances academic performance of the students.

It is obvious that some schools are reluctant in punishing or taking disciplinary actions against teachers who are harsh to students. This is evident in the research work which proved that the schools do not take disciplinary actions against teachers who are hostile to students, this is illuminated with a mean score of 3.34.

Teachers who are lenient to their students produce better students when it comes to their performance. This can be seen from our analysis of the result which says that the students' academic achievement is determined by the attitude of the teacher. This is in agreement with a mean score of 3.2.

One of the characteristics of a teacher is patient. However, most teachers in senior secondary schools fail to be patient with their students. The researchers discovered that most teachers in the secondary schools are not patient with their children. This is in line with the responses of the children with a mean score of 3.14 which means that their teachers are not patient with them.

Teachers are advised to correct the children in love or gently. This will enable them to learn better, therefore, some teachers correct these children in love: they are patient with them. This can be seen in line with the results of the research with the empirical mean of 3.4 which means that students are encouraged when the teacher corrects them gently.

The researchers further discovered that some of the teachers do not praise or encourage the students whenever they perform better in the classroom. This is evident in the response of the respondents with a mean score of 2.9 which interprets that teachers in the school do not praise the students when they perform better in the class.

Sometimes, the attitude of students towards teachers contributes a lot when it comes to their interaction with teachers. For instance, teachers who are harsh will not make much impact on the students because the students don't like teachers who are harsh. This is seen in the response of the students. Furthermore, on teachers' harshness could cause students to retreat and hide their abilities when they find themselves in a class where the teacher is harsh. This is evident with the mean score of 2.9 which means that the students feel sad when the teacher is harsh on them. Teachers tend to make the children not to concentrate when they are harsh on them this is in agreement with the response of the students with the empirical mean of 3.1 which means that they don't concentrate when the teacher shouts and insults them in the class.

Some teachers tend to punish their students whenever they ask questions in the class. Such teachers tend to look at such students as being stubborn. This can be seen through the responses of the students. Majority of them said that some of their teachers punish them when they ask questions in their classes.

Teachers are in the habit of beating children or students whenever they go wrong. This often deters the children from concentrating because they tend to look at the teacher in the bad light. This can be concluded from the responses of the respondents that the teachers beat the students when they go wrong.

For a better teacher-students relationship, the students must be involved in the classroom activities. However, most of the teachers fail to understand this as they make the lesson a teacher-centered on instead of learner-centered. This can be seen from the responses of the respondents who said that teachers don't make the class interactive by involving the students. The researchers in line with this also discovered that students are afraid when the hostile teacher walks into the class.

Summary of Findings

This study was conducted in order to find out the causes and effects of teacher-students relationship on the academic performance of children in secondary schools in Abakaliki Local Government of Ebonyi State.

It was discovered that the teachers in most of the senior secondary schools in the local government beat their students whenever they commit an offence. In line with this, the researchers also discovered that the teachers are harsh to the students in the classroom especially when they ask questions in the course of a lesson.

It is obvious that when a cordial relationship exists between two people, there is a mutual understanding, therefore, the researchers discovered that cordial relationship between teachers and the students enhances better academic performance from the students. This is in agreement with the responses of the students when they said that the class is more interesting when the teacher jokes and make them laugh.

Conclusion

From the findings of this research, the following conclusions can be reached. Principals and school administrators always emphasize on gentleness with the students in the school. Cordial relationship between students and teachers produces better performance academically from the students. The class is interesting when teachers laugh and joke with the students. Some schools are reluctant when it comes to punishing teachers who maltreat students. Teachers who are lenient to students produce better results from the students. Some teachers do not praise their students whenever they perform better in the classroom. Teachers in the senior secondary schools in Abakaliki are fond of beating their students whenever they go wrong.

Recommendations

With the above conclusion, the researchers have brought out the following recommendations:

Teachers should try to be patient with students when they are in the class.

School authorities should always emphasis on gentleness and leniency with the students.

School of authorities should place consequences for those teachers who beat their students in the class just because they ask questions in the class.

Teachers should praise the students when they perform better in the class. This will encourage them to be better in their academics.

The students should try not to provoke the teachers in the class so that they will not incur the wrath of the teacher.

Teachers in the school should be discouraged from beating their students. This is because there are different corporal punishments that can be given to a child which will make him learn better.

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