



STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *This study examined student-teacher relationship and academic achievement of secondary school students in Cross River State. One research question and one null hypothesis was used in the study. Literature was reviewed based on the variable under study. The ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 15,080 SS2 students, in all the 272 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A sample of 1, 029 students was used for the study. An instrument named “Student-teacher relationship and academic achievement questionnaire was` used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability method at .79. The study equally involved data from school administrative records which were students’ academic achievement records for 2018 promotion examinations in English language, Mathematics and Biology obtained from school authorities. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and One way Analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings from the results revealed that students-teacher relationship had positive significant influence on students’ academic achievement. It is therefore concluded that student-teachers relationship influences academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Cross River State. Based on the above finding, it was recommended that positive teacher – student relationship can bring about better academic achievement. Teachers should establish rapport and trustworthiness with students by being fair, caring, respectful and enthusiastic.*

Keywords: *Student-teacher relationship, Academic achievement, Students, examination, Secondary schools.*

Introduction

The problem of poor academic achievement among secondary school students has become a serious social problem for the entire social and economic system. For example, students’ school and national performances have always been judged by having a credit pass in the core and compulsory subjects (English Language, Mathematics) and one other subject critical for Arts, Science or Social science studies streams respectively. English language is regarded as a core and compulsory subject because it is the *Lingua Franca* or the means of communication in Nigeria. Mathematics, on the other hand, helps us have better problem solving skills, think

analytically and have better reasoning skills. English language and Mathematics are part of compulsory subjects required to gain admission into Nigerian Universities. For some schools, Biology is compulsory.

The present study perceives that this recurring event for years have caused apprehension among learners in the secondary school system and some education stakeholders. For example, some educators are worried about poor academic achievement of students in the core subjects despite the much importance attached to them as a prerequisite for admission into higher education and even as minimum job qualification for secondary school learners by many employers. The issue of poor academic

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achievement has become a big problem that even education policy makers were left with only one choice to lower the cut off mark for 2017 Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination just to allow a reasonable number of school learners have access to tertiary institution's admission. For instance cut off mark was brought down to as low as 120 for university admission and 100 for admission into colleges and polytechnics out of 400. This development surely underscores the present study's observed trend of promotion on trial in the schools system and in the study area.

Research has indicated that the relationship between teachers and students is an important predictor of academic engagement and achievement. In fact, the most powerful weapon teachers have, when trying to foster a favorable learning climate, is positive relationships with their students. Students who perceive their teachers as more supportive have better achievement outcomes (Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Harris, 2012). It cannot go without mentioning the place of teacher /student relationship in academic achievement of students. Teachers are those who teach and students are those who learn. The relationship between them makes much difference in the academic achievement of students.

In view of the foregoing, the researcher therefore wishes to investigate the influence of students-teacher relationships on academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Cross River State.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine student'-teachers relationship and academic achievement in Cross River State.

Research questions

What is the relationship between student'- teachers relationship and academic achievement?

Literature review

Teacher-student relationship concerns the quality of interaction between the teacher and the students that could lead to achievement outcome. Relationship between the two sometimes, is largely provided by the teacher. The teacher determines the quality of relationship and this usually would depend to a large extent on the teachers' personality. For instance, relationship could be constructive, helpful, friendly, attractive or even inhibitive to students' learning outcome. For instance, according to Jones, cited in Ayaz, Shah and Khan (2013) poorly prepared and managed classroom instruction can lead to students' disruption, this happens when students are not provided with appropriate and attractive instructional tasks; hence difficulties in understanding what the teacher is teaching could lead to poor outcome. The researcher observed that educational attainment and students' achievement are subjective by the value of the teacher and student connection. They also belief that the more the teacher connects or communicates with his or her students, the more probable they will be clever to assist students study at an elevated level and achieve rapidly.

Children have dissimilar strategies for knowledge and achieving their goals (Ayaz, Shah,& Khan, 2013). According to Peleg, Biderman, Polaceck, Tandeler and Scvartzman (2005), there is no guarantee that the teaching styles of teachers with excellent academic skills will harmonize with the preferred learning styles of their students. Therefore, teachers instructional technique could appeal to some and cause them to study hard and to others may cause them to be inattentive having perceived the teachers lesson delivery as unattractive, could slow their study and impact their achievement negatively. Shadbolt as cited in Ayaz, Shah and Khan (2013) opined that teachers may have to use a dissimilar instruction strategy which stresses individual communication, flexibility and naturalness in instruction, in other to cater



for both the introvert and extrovert learner in the classroom. This implies that the teacher in his or her instructional relationship with the learner has to be adaptive in order to help the difficult learners achieve well.

Ayaz, Shah and Khan (2013) study on the impact of student-teacher relationship on student's academic achievement at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa utilized a descriptive type research with survey method. The objectives of the study were; (1) to compare teachers and students perceptions regarding their relationship. (2) to explore correlation between teacher-student relationship and students academic achievement. (3) to identify dimensions of relationship between teachers-students. (4) to recommend strategies for improvement of teacher-students relationship. The population of the study comprised all the male teachers and students of government secondary schools located at southern district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Using a simple random sampling method three hundred (150 teachers and 150 students) were sampled in the study. Self developed questionnaires were used as research instrument to gather data on the impact of teachers-student relationship on students' academic achievement. The questionnaire was subjected to reliability estimation, the Cronbach alpha value of .863 was found. The researcher personally visited all the sampled schools for the data collection then procedure took almost about three months. Hundred percent response rate was achieved. The collected data was entered into SPSS 17 and results of the study were generated according to the demand of the objectives using Chi-square spearman rho correlation methods. The level of significance selected for making inferences about population was .01.

The findings reveal that teachers seem to be agreeing while students seem to be less agreeing with the statement "teacher demonstrates personal knowledge to the students". Moderate significant differences were found

between teacher and students' views regarding the statement. There is significant correlation between students' marks and availability dimension, while there is slight correlation between students' marks and connectivity, communication and total score dimensions. There is significant correlation between connectivity, availability, communication and total score, while there is low correlation between connectivity and communication, moderate correlation between connectivity and availability and high correlation between connectivity and total score.

A descriptive correlational study by Mohammed, Wok and Mohammed (2018) examined the impact of student-teacher rapport in relation to student academic achievement and post-graduation plans and was modelled after a study by Clack (2014). The student-teacher relationship scale (STRS) developed by Dc. Robert C. Pianta was completed by ninety-seven Malaysian polytechnic business students from three academic programs. The STRS inventory consists of 28 items that measure aspects of the relationship between the student and teacher and has three subscales (conflict, closeness and dependence). Students self-reported Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGP) was used as the measure of academic achievement. The analysis of data was done using descriptive and correlational analyses to determine whether or not student-teacher rapport significantly affected academic achievement. Pearson correlation analyses showed that the effect of student-teacher rapport on students' academic achievement was not statistically significant. The result showed low negative relationship between student-teacher rapport and academic achievement. It was recommended that teachers should develop a good rapport with students for effective academic achievement.

Methodology

The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. The study was carried out in Cross River State, which is one



of the thirty six states in Nigeria. Cross River State, as presently constituted, is located within the tropical rain forest belt of Nigeria. It lies between latitude 5°32` and 4°27` North of the Equator and longitude 7°50` and 9°28` East of the Greenwich Meridian. The population of the study consisted of all the 15,080 SS2 students, in all the 272 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A total of 7,142 of the students are males, while 7,938 are females.

The stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the study. The sample for the study comprised 1,037 SS2 students randomly selected from 30 public schools. Data for the study were collected in two phases. Phase one involved the use of a questionnaire titled “Students-teacher relationship and Academic Achievement Questionnaire” (STRAQ). Phase two involved the extraction from school records students’ score in 2018 promotion examination in (English Language, Mathematics and Biology). The questionnaire had four parts: Parts A, B, C and D. Part A elicited from the respondents information about their demographic such as sex and age. The reliability of the instrument (SRASRQ) was established using Cronbach alpha reliability method to obtain the reliability coefficient of .74. Descriptive statistics (simple percentages and bar graphs) were used in responding to the research questions.

Result/finding

This study was aimed at determining the extent to which students-teacher relationship influence students’ academic achievement. In answering research the question, simple percentages were used in matching levels of students’ academic achievement against their student teacher relationship in order to estimate the extent

to which academic achievement was influenced by student teacher relationship.

The results as presented in Table 1 showed that, out of the 288 subjects who had low relationship with their teachers, 19.1 per cent, 53.1 per cent and 27.8 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in English Language, while out of the 529 subjects who had moderate relationship with their teachers, 12.1 per cent, 82.4 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in English Language, and out of the 212 subjects who had high relationship with their teachers, 16.5 per cent, 47.2 per cent and 36.3 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in English Language. Apparently, the results showed that healthy student-teacher relationship promotes academic performance in English Language.

The results also showed that, out of the 288 subjects who had low relationship with their teachers, 33.3 per cent, 51.4 per cent and 15.3 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Mathematics, while out of the 529 subjects who had moderate relationship with their teachers, 8.5 per cent, 74.3 per cent and 17.2 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Mathematics, and out of the 212 subjects who had high relationship with their teachers, 11.8 per cent, 67.5 per cent and 20.8 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high levels of achievement in Mathematics. Apparently, the results also indicated that healthy student-teacher relationship promotes academic achievement in Mathematics.



TABLE 1

Proportions of subjects who were low, average and high in academic achievement across levels of student-teacher relationship

Variables	Student-teacher relationship	N	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Total (%)
English Language	Low	288	19.1	53.1	27.8	100
	Moderate	529	12.1	82.4	5.5	100
	High	212	16.5	47.2	36.3	100
	Total	1029	15.0	67.0	18.1	100
Mathematics	Low	288	33.3	51.4	15.3	100
	Moderate	529	8.5	74.3	17.2	100
	High	212	11.8	67.5	20.8	100
	Total	1029	16.1	66.5	17.4	100
Biology	Low	288	20.8	64.2	14.9	100
	Moderate	529	11.7	74.3	14.0	100
	High	212	2.8	68.9	28.3	100
	Total	1029	12.4	70.4	17.2	100
Overall academic achievement	Low	288	30.2	64.9	4.9	100
	Moderate	529	20.2	71.3	8.5	100
	High	212	17.0	58.0	25.0	100
	Total	1029	22.4	66.8	10.9	100

The results in Table 1 further showed that, out of the 288 subjects who had low relationship with their teachers, 20.8 per cent, 64.2 per cent and 14.9 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Biology, while out of the 529 subjects who had moderate relationship with their teachers, 11.7 per cent, 74.3 per cent and 14.0 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Biology, and out of the 212 subjects who had high relationship with their teachers, 2.8 per cent, 68.9 per cent and 28.3 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Biology. Apparently, the results also indicated that healthy student-teacher relationship promotes academic achievement in Biology.

The results finally showed that, out of the 288 subjects who had low relationship with their teachers, 30.2 per

cent, 64.9 per cent and 4.9 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of overall academic achievement, while out of the 529 subjects who had moderate relationship with their teachers, 20.2 per cent, 71.3 per cent and 8.5 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of overall academic achievement, and out of the 212 subjects who had high relationship with their teachers, 17.0 per cent, 58.0 per cent and 25.0 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of overall academic achievement. Apparently, the results also indicated that students' relationship with their teachers as being important promotes overall academic achievement.

As presented in Table 2, the results of the One-way Analysis of Variance showed that students' relationship with their teachers had significant influence on their



English Language achievement ($F=7.301$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$); Mathematics ($F=36.353$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$); Biology ($F=46.925$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$) and overall academic achievement ($F=31.271$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$). By implication, the null hypothesis that student-teacher relationship does not significantly influence their academic achievement is therefore rejected for achievement in English Language, Mathematics, Biology and overall academic achievement. These results imply that, student-teacher relationship significantly influences students' academic achievement.

Given the significant F-ratios, a post hoc analysis was conducted using the Fishers Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test to check for the source of the difference. The results as presented in Table 3 showed that, the subjects who had low level of student-teacher relationship had a higher mean achievement in English Language when compared with those who had moderate level of student-teacher relationship but the mean difference was not statistically significant ($MD=1.18$;

$p>.05$), but they had a significant lower mean when compared with those who had moderate level of student-teacher relationship ($MD=-1.81$; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that subjects who had moderate level of student-teacher relationship had a significant lower mean score in English Language when compared with those that had high level of student-teacher relationship ($MD=-2.99$; $p<.05$).

For academic achievement in Biology, the subjects who had low level of student-teacher relationship had significant lower mean score when compared with those who had moderate level of student-teacher relationship ($MD=-4.13$; $p<.05$), and those who had high level of student-teacher relationship ($MD=-8.36$; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that the subjects who had moderate level of student-teacher relationship had significant lower mean score when compared with those who had high level of student-teacher relationship ($MD=-4.23$; $p<.05$).

TABLE 2

One-way Analysis of Variance for student-teacher relationship and students' academic achievement

Variable	Level of student-teacher relationship	N	Mean	SD
English Language	Low	288	50.38	10.71
	Moderate	529	49.20	8.10
	High	212	52.19	11.77
	Total	1029	50.15	9.77
Mathematics	Low	288	46.09	9.91
	Moderate	529	51.69	9.23
	High	212	51.90	9.86
	Total	1029	50.17	9.88
Biology	Low	288	46.09	9.66
	Moderate	529	50.22	9.50
	High	212	54.45	9.69
	Total	1029	49.94	10.01



Overall academic achievement	Low	288	142.57	24.31		
	Moderate	529	151.11	20.04		
	High	212	158.55	26.03		
	Total	1029	150.25	23.27		
Source of variance		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-ratio	p-level
English Language	Between groups	1376.887	2	688.443	7.301*	.001
	Within groups	96751.569	1026	94.300		
	Total	98128.455	1028			
Mathematic	Between groups	6638.512	2	3319.256	36.353*	.000
	Within groups	93679.995	1026	91.306		
	Total	100318.506	1028			
Biology	Between groups	8624.985	2	4312.492	46.925*	.000
	Within groups	94290.737	1026	91.901		
	Total	102915.721	1028			
Overall academic achievement	Between groups	31980.942	2	15990.471	31.271*	.000
	Within groups	524646.249	1026	511.351		
	Total	556627.190	1028			

*Significant at .05 alpha level; $p < .05$.

TABLE 3

Fishers Least Significant Difference Post Hoc Test for student-teacher relationship and students' academic achievement

Variable	Student-teacher relationship	N	Mean	Mean difference	p-level
English Language	Low	288	50.38	1.18	.097
	Moderate	529	49.20		
	Low	288	50.38	-1.81*	.039
	High	212	52.19		
Mathematics	Moderate	529	49.20	-2.99*	.000
	High	212	52.19		
	Low	288	46.09	-5.60*	.000



	Moderate	529	51.69		
	Low	288	46.09	-5.80*	.000
	High	212	51.90		
	Moderate	529	51.69	-.209	.788
	High	212	51.90		
Biology	Low	288	46.09	-4.13*	.000
	Moderate	529	50.22		
	Low	288	46.09	-8.13*	.000
	High	212	54.45		
	Moderate	529	50.22	-4.23*	.000
	High	212	54.45		
Overall	Low	288	142.57	-8.55*	.000
academic	Moderate	529	151.11		
achievement	Low	288	142.57	-15.98*	.000
	High	212	158.55		
	Moderate	529	151.11	-7.43*	.000
	High	212	158.55		

*Significant at .05 level; $p < .05$.

For overall academic achievement, the subjects who had low level of relationship with their teachers, had significantly lower mean score when compared with those who had moderate level of relationship with their teachers ($MD = -8.55$; $p < .05$), and those who had high level of relationship with their teachers ($MD = -15.98$; $p < .05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that the subjects who had moderate level of relationship with their teachers had a significantly lower mean score in overall academic achievement when compared with those who had high level of relationship with their teachers ($MD = -7.43$; $p < .05$).

Discussion of findings

The findings of research question one showed that healthy student-teacher relationship promotes academic achievement. The finding also showed that student-teacher relationship had significant influence on students' academic achievement. In support of the findings above, a pair-wise comparison of student's level of students –

teacher relationship with their level of achievement revealed that, for example, students who are low on students – teacher relationship had a significantly higher mean performance in English Language. This further confirmed the result mentioned earlier that students who are low on student – teacher relationship achieved higher than the mean score in English Language but this was not the case for such students in Mathematics and Biology. Students who are low on student- teacher relationship achieved significantly lower than their counterparts who were moderate and high in Mathematics and Biology.

Similarly, the findings of this study find support in the work of Ayaz, Shah and Khan (2013) who found a significant correlation between student- teacher connectivity and total score. This is supported by Cataldi, Kewali and Ramani (2009) that discovered that positive teacher- student relationships are associated with positive academic and social outcomes for high school students. The present study discovered that students who are



moderate and high on student- teacher relationship achieved higher above the mean score in mathematics as supported by the findings of Midghey, Feldanfer and Eccles cited in Gadaghar (n.d) who found that students who went from low teacher closeness to high teacher closeness significantly increased in Mathematics skills over the transition year from elementary school to middle school.

Contrary to the findings of this study, Gordon (2009) in a study on impact of a teacher training program on student engagement discovered that there is no significant correlation between engagement/quality of teaching and reported grades of the secondary school students in the study. The observation of Peleg, Biderman, Polaceck, Tandeler and Scvarmqe (2005) that teachers instructional technique could appeal to some and cause them to study hard and to others may cause them to be inattentive having perceived the teachers lesson delivery as unattractive, could slow their study and impact their achievement negatively. This could explain the reason why in this study, students who are low in student-teacher interaction achieved significantly higher than the mean score in English Language. This shows a positive direction against a perceived negative impact on achievement.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, it was concluded that students-teachers relationship significantly influenced students' academic achievement. In summation, building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships is essential for success in the classroom. These results suggest that classroom behaviour can be improved through an enhancement in the relationships between teachers and students.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended that Positive teacher – student relationship can bring about better academic achievement. Teachers should

establish rapport and trustworthiness with students by being fair, caring, respectful and enthusiastic.

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