

EFFECT OF TEACHERS - STUDENTS RELATIONSHIP ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GWAGWALADA AREA COUNCIL, FCT - ABUJA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of teachers and student's relationship on the academic achievement of junior secondary school students: A case study of Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja. The research was guided by four research hypotheses. Descriptive research design of survey type was adopted and 12 public Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) form the population of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the schools and simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 respondents in each of the school. A sample of 120 students were drawn from selected schools and questionnaire was administered to them. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage for demographic information while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistic to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. However, the findings of the study revealed that there is a medium direct positive relationship between components of teachers – students, contribution of teachers – students, challenges of teachers – students and possible measures of teachers - students on academic achievement of junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja. The study also recommends among others that school authorities should provide a synergy that could fast tract perception of teacher-student relationship in aiding academic achievement.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Effect, Teachers-Students Relationship.

Introduction

Receiving a quality education is an important cornerstone in the lives of every individual. It is imperative that students have the tools they need to be successful—tools that include motivation and engagement. For some students, however, motivation is not always intrinsic. It therefore falls to others to guide students along the path to their own education. As teachers spend an incredible amount of time with their students over the course of the year, it is a teacher's responsibility to foster an inclination for learning by building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships, a student become more academically motivated and engaged and thus successful. The nature of the teacher-student relationship is guided by perceptions of the teachers, that is, fairness, competence, caring and support.

Könings, Seidel, Brand-Gruwel & Merriënboer (2014) opine that students who have strong beliefs towards their teachers as well as positive relationship with their teachers tend to be more self-regulated and persistent in their learning, more motivated to learn and to be successful in their learning, experience less stress and good participation in class, and as a consequence have higher academic performance and better perform in college than their counterparts who are low interaction with their teachers. Pervin, Ferdowsi & Munni, (2021) reported that academic performance of students was positively affected by their level of interaction with their teachers and the level of interaction increases or become high aiding their academic performance.

According to Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs (2011); Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos (2012); Gehlbach, Brinkworth & Harris (2012) submit 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 (Varga, 2017).

Additionally, the learning environment plays a significant role in maintaining student interest and engagement. When students feel a sense of control and security in the classroom, they are more engaged because they approach learning with enthusiasm and vigor. Students become active participants in their own education (Maulana, Opdenakker, Stroet, & Bosker, 2013). Therefore, the first step to helping a student become more motivated and engaged, and thus academically successful, is building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships.

In Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos (2012), it was revealed that student perception plays an important role in incentive. In fact, research suggests that the most powerful predictor of a child's motivation is the child's perception of control. Perceived control is the belief that one can determine one's behavior, influence one's environment, and bring about desired outcomes because students already have a history of experiences with whether adults are attuned to their needs, teachers build on these experiences (Skinner & Greene, 2008 cited in Varga, 2017). Therefore, a student's perception of the teacher's behavior impacts the relationship. Students who feel their teacher is not supportive towards them have less interest in learning and are less engaged in the classroom.

Personal characteristics of both teachers and students contribute to the interactions and relationships between the two groups. The nature of teacher and student interactions shape the quality of the relationships; teachers tend to have more negative interactions with students who are peer rejected or less academically and behaviorally competent. Unfortunately, this interaction not only impacts the relationship that the teacher has with the student, but it also affects the way the student's peers view him; this negative interaction can influence other classroom relationships (Varga, 2017). In order to correct this, teachers need to be more cognizant of their interactions and the influence they have on students. Teachers should be aware that positive relationships predict school adjustment and may serve as a defensive factor for children at high risk of poor school and development outcomes (Rimm- Kaufman & Sandilos, 2012).

Aultman, Williams-Jonson & Schutz (2009) cited in Paschal & Mkulu (2020) describe the kind and worth of relationships formed by instructors and learners are key to successful teaching and learning. Paschal & Mkulu, (2020) stated that, a teacher has skills, attitude and knowledge which can play a significant role in students' academic performance and how to make a meaningful life after school. Students who have close, supportive and positive relationships with their teachers attain higher level of achievements than those students with more conflicting relationships with teachers. Dianat & Abedini (2016) describe that – to make a successful and effective learning happen, teachers need to be motivated, enthusiastic and engage students.

Hamre, Pianta, Downer, DeCoster, Mashburn, Jones, Brown, Cappella, Atkins, Rivers, Bracket & Hamagami (2013) point that lack of academic achievement among junior secondary students is ubiquitous. There are numerous reasons why students may lose interest in school, and engagement is a key factor. Considering that students spend about twenty-five percent of their waking hours in

a classroom, it is essential that students are engaged or they will not be willing to learn. This creates a problem for both the teacher and the student. Throughout an average school day, teachers frequently overhear students complaining about an assignment, a class, or even a teacher. If students have positive relationships with their teachers, they will be more engaged and thus more motivated throughout each of their classes (Varga, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

The researcher happened to be classroom teacher and developed interest in this topic based on years of personal experiences, observations of others, and both teacher and student testimonials. It was these experiences that indicated students who have positive and meaningful relationships with their teachers are more motivated to succeed in school, specifically in the classes in which they have a positive relationship with the teacher. The researcher has also taught classes over the years where the relationships have been strained, and experienced difficulty connecting with the students. These classes often had a higher number of students who were not intrinsically motivated, which resulted in an excessive number of poor grades and failures. Because the researcher wondered if the relationship, or lack thereof, contributed to each student's lack of motivation, engagement, and academic achievement, her interest in a possible correlation proliferated. Despite the fact that the government has made a number of reforms in the system of education such as improvement of curriculum, allocation of funds, training and hiring of new teachers as well as construction of infrastructure in public secondary schools, the issue of poor students' academic performance, poor teacher-student relationship continues to be a big challenge in junior secondary schools. Therefore, this study intended to bring a perspective to how the Effect of Teachers Students relationship on the Academic Achievement of Junior Secondary School Students in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT; Abuja.

Research Hypotheses

In line with the aim of the study, the following research hypotheses were utilized to guide the study:

- i. There is no significant relationship between the components and academic achievement of junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja
- ii. There is no significant relationship between the contribution and academic achievement in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja
- iii. There is no significant relationship between the challenges confronting and academic performance in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja
- iv. There is no significant relationship between the possible measures and academic performance in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja

Methods

Research design of survey type was used for this study. There are 12 junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council and with the teacher's population of 473 and students 963. The sample made up of 120 respondents selected across all the schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the twelve (12) school while simple random technique was used to select four teachers and six students each in all the school selected equal to 48 teachers and 72 students. The instrument was developed by the researchers and is titled: "Effect of Teacher-Student Relationship on Academic Achievement Questionnaire (ETSRAAQ)". The instrument is made up of twenty-five (25) items on the effect of teacher-student relationship on academic performance with section A and B respectfully. Section A focused on personal data while Section B based on identified variables. The questionnaire

was structured in four-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) – 4, Agree (A) – 3, Disagree – 2 and Strongly Disagree – 1 and it was validated by experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability and reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The researcher personally administered the instrument with the help of 2 research assistants at various schools. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage for demographic data while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistic for testing the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Components of Teachers – Students and Academic Achievement

Variables	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal r - value	p-value	Decision
Component of Teachers - Students	120	2.17	0.41	0.635	.016	Rejected
Academic Performance	120	3.16	1.21			

p-value < 0.05

Table 1 shows the calculated r- value (0.635) while the p-value (0.016) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis 1 is rejected. This means that, there exist a medium direct positive relationship between components of teachers – students and academic achievement of junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja.

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis Contribution of Teachers - Students and Academic Achievement

Variables	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal r - value	p-value	Decision
Contribution of Teachers - Students	120	2.45	0.58	0.582	0.014	Rejected
Academic Performance	120	3.16	1.21			

p-value < 0.05

Table 2 shows the calculated r-value (0.582) while the p-value (0.014) is less than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected. This means that, there exist a medium direct positive relationship between contribution of teachers - students and academic achievement in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Challenges of Teachers - Students and Academic Performance.

Variables	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal r - value	p-value	Decision
Challenges of Teacher - Student	120	2.68	0.75	0.646	0.002	Rejected
Academic Performance	120	3.16	1.21			

p-value < 0.05

Table 3 shows the calculated r- value (0.646) while the p-value (0.002) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis 3 is rejected. This means that, there exist a medium direct positive relationship between challenges of teachers - students and academic performance in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja.

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Possible measures of Teachers - Students and Academic Performance.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>$\bar{X}$</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Cal r - value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
Possible Measures of Teachers - Students	120	2.43	0.58	0.611	0.025	Rejected
Academic Performance	120	3.16	1.21			

p-value < 0.05

Table 4 shows the calculated r- value (0.611) while the p-value (0.025) is less than the significance level (0.05). Moreover, hypothesis 4 is rejected. This means that, there exist a medium direct positive relationship between possible measures of teachers - students and academic performance in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja

Discussion of Findings

The finding of hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant relationship between components of teachers – students and academic achievement of junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja. This finding is in line with findings of Richard and Rogers (2011) that learners have the responsibility to partake in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. This finding also corroborated with Larson, (2011) said that attitude and achievements that students develop inside the school have an important impact on teacher-student relationships in schools. If students feel comfortable with the teacher and the school environment, they can make more positive and professional relationship such as friendship, develop a better way to behave and improve in their social thinking.

Likewise, Macpherson (2017) reported that ‘cooperative learning is part of a group of teaching and learning techniques where students interact with each other to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter to meet common learning goals. Cooperative learning is a very formal structuring of activities in a learning context that includes specific elements intending to increase the potential for rich and deep learning. The result is supported by Nugent (2019) who revealed that to create a strong relationship, teachers need to motivate during the learning process. Relationships are formed in the social groups of both teachers and students, and especially in educational contexts. As a result, teachers and students need to play more of an active role towards achieving academic success; they have to establish a more positive and professional relationship.

The finding of hypothesis two revealed that there was a significant relationship between contribution of teachers - students and academic achievement in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja. This finding is corroborated with the findings of Fraser, Adridge and Soerjaningsih, (2010) that teachers should establish a professional relationship with their students, because the creation and maintenance of a positive classroom climate plays an important role in rendering the teaching and learning process more effective and efficiency. Hence, students in quality relationships with their teachers are helped in improving and fostering knowledge, attitude, skills and social development. Also, students with higher quality relationships take part more often and are more engaged in the learning perspectives than the students with a lower quality relationship. Also, the finding is supported with findings of O'Connor, Dearing and Collins, (2011) whose reported that personal relationships with students gives teachers internal rewards and gives meaning to their work.

In view of the above, teacher - student relationship helps teachers create a sense of trust and increase the number of opportunities to sustain a meaningful role in the learning context. Likewise, Ewnetu and Fisseha (2018) supported the finding that teachers have the basic needs for relatedness among the students in their class which can play an important role in students' self-concepts, the expectation towards scholastic achievements as well as how to make a meaningful life after school. Hence, a student's self-esteem development is the overall sense of support a student feels from the important people around them. This finding agreed with Stipek and Miles, (2018) who submitted that the type of relationship between the teacher and the student can greatly influence the behaviour of the student's sense of social acceptance in the learning contexts and academic performance. This means that teacher student relationship has long-term inferences for social and academic excellence.

The finding of hypothesis three revealed that there was a significant relationship between challenges of teachers - students and academic performance in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja. This finding is in line with the findings of Boynton and Boynton, (2015) whose reported that if the foundation for a good relationship is lacking, it will negatively impact student behaviors. Students will resist rules and procedures, and they will neither trust teachers nor listen to what they have to say if they sense teachers do not value or respect them. Furthermore, students who have positive relationships with teachers are less likely to avoid school (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2012). The nature of teacher and student interactions shape the quality of the relationships; teachers tend to have more negative interactions with students who are peer rejected or less academically and behaviorally competent. Unfortunately, this interaction not only impacts the relationship that the teacher has with the student, but it also affects the way the student's peers view him; this negative interaction can influence other classroom relationships (Jerome & Pianta, 2018).

The finding of hypothesis four revealed that there was a significant relationship between possible measures of teachers - students and academic performance in junior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT, Abuja. The finding is supported with the findings of Richard and Rodgers, (2011) buttressed the result that learners have to take part in classroom activities based on the supportive rather than individualistic approach to learning. Also, Adeyinka, Asabi and Adedotun (2013) who reported that when right quantity and quality of human resources are brought together, it may manipulate other resources towards realizing institution objectives and goals. So, this gives the direction that the relationships in school are infused by the bringing together; the quality and quantity of human resources. The finding agreed with Marzano and Marzano (2013) that in order to foster a positive relationship between teachers and students inside the classroom, the teacher needs to be aware of both academic and emotional needs of the students such as empathy, as well as how they have to be treated inside and outside classroom. This means that, caring and treating the students friendly, respecting and being sincere and professional may make the relationships stronger and more positive. This finding corroborated with Murray and Pianata (2019) that classroom structures, routines, rules and activities convey a sense of community and continuity to students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that there was high positive effect relationship between teachers-students component, teachers-students contribution, teachers-students challenges and

teachers-students possible measures of teacher-student relationship on academic achievement of Junior Secondary School Students in Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were drawn:

- i. The school authorities should provide a synergy that could fast tract perception of teacher-student relationship in aiding academic achievement.
- ii. The school administrator should compensate and appreciate the unquantifiable effort of the teacher-student relationship in enhancing academic performance.
- iii. Government should provide workable solution to all confronting challenges hindering academic performance of the students.

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