

The Role of Teacher-students Relationship in Students' Academic Growth and Performance

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Abstract



The present study is aimed to trace out the role of teacher-students relationship in academic growth and performance of the students. The main objective of the study is to see what sort of student-teacher relation is being practiced in our ELT classrooms in the universities of the South Punjab. The data was collected through questionnaire and follow up interviews from students studying English language in Public and Private Universities of South Punjab. The responses were collected from 171 male and female students of undergraduate classes. The findings of the present study reveal that 76.6% population of the students is well aware of the strong and effective impact of student-teacher on their academic growth and performance. While 23.4% population is not aware of the importance of the student- teacher's relationship and neither this population counted the role of student- teacher relationship in improving the quality and academic performance in the classrooms. Thus, the present study suggests that it is necessary for both the student and teachers to pay special attention in improving the student-teacher relationship. The student-teacher relationship functions as a bridge for carrying out the academic process effectively. The more the student-teacher relation is ignored in classroom, the more academic performance is affected one.

Keywords: Academic Bridge, Student-teacher Relationship, Academic Growth and Performance

Introduction

Relationship as a social and academic bond between teachers and students is acknowledged universally. When teachers and students become more familiar with each other, it creates a sense of community for them (Brown, 2010). Such a strong sense of community has a direct impact on the academic growth and performance of the students. In terms of statistics, we can say that the student-teacher relationship is directly proportional to the academic performance of the students. If there is a strong relationship of mutual understanding between the student and teacher in the classroom, the academic performance of the students would be of refined standard and quality. The role of teacher-student relationship is visible inside as well as outside the classrooms. Researches show that there are only two possible dimensions of teacher-students relationship: positive (strong) and negative (weak). Academically speaking, there are two teaching approaches practiced in classrooms one is teacher-centered and the other is student-centered. Research based evaluation of the results shows that teacher-centered practice denies teacher-students relationship bond and its application on students' academic growth and performance. While on the other hand, student-centered approach plays a positive role in students' academic growth and performance. It suggests that positive relationships can maintain student's interest in classrooms and active engagement in learning (Maulana, 2013). The present study is aimed to trace out the impact of teacher-student relationship on students' academic growth and performance in our ELT classrooms in South Punjab, Pakistan. Furthermore, the study is aimed to trace what sort of teacher-student relationship is being practiced in our ELT classrooms in the universities of the South Punjab, Pakistan.

Study Objectives

The main objective of the study is to investigate whether the students are well aware of the importance of the teacher- student relationship and its impact on their academic performance. Furthermore, we have investigated that what sort of teacher- student relationship is practiced in our

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Pakistani ELT classrooms. The study is also aimed to suggest the ways to abridge the prevailing gap between teacher-student relationships.

Research Questions

1. Does teacher-student relationship play a role in academic growth and performance of the students?
2. Can the role of teacher-student relationship in growth and performance of the students be ignored?
3. Does teacher-student relationship have any positive or negative impact on academic growth and performance of the students?
4. Do students know and realize the importance of role of teacher-student relationship in academic growth and performance of the students?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant as its prime focus is on investigating whether the gap between the teacher-students' relationship. This suggests the dual significance of the study for the teachers and students. By the findings and discussions of the present study teachers and students may know the importance of teacher-student relationship. By focusing and maintaining the positive relationship with students, teachers may enhance the academic performance of the students. The present study is also significant for academic administration to conduct training of the students and teachers highlighting the significance of the teacher-student relationship and its impact on the academic growth and performance of the students.

Literature Review

Though teachers are perpetually acknowledged and followed as role models for students yet the level of teacher-student relationship varies from student to student. Capern & Hammond (2014) suggests that not only do positive student-teacher relationships support students' academic achievement, but they are also an important factor in terms of the socio-emotional needs of students. Similarly, Fay and Funk (1995), opines that the students who do not enjoy positive relationship with their teachers are more disruptive in the classrooms, are less likely to be academic engaged, and are more likely to drop out. This is a wonderful concise reflection of the role of the strong and effective role of teacher-students' relationships. McGrath & Bergen (2015) are of the opinion that social relationship has a significant and positive impact on the learning and outcomes of the students. Mikk et al (2016) is of the view that positive teacher-student relationship act as soft power which boots the learning process. It positively enhances the confidence of the students.

Stronge (2018) is of the view that teacher-student relationship helps the cognitive development of the students as well. Furthermore, it enables the teachers to have a positive and encouraging feedback of teaching and learning. In simplest understanding we may say that teacher-student relationship is directly linked with the academic performance of the students. If this relationship is poor, the students may never enjoy the very process of learning. A learning activity with poor teacher-student relationship would be more boring and hectic for both the teachers and the students. While on the other hand, a learning activity with positive and refined teacher-student relationship would be more engaged, interesting and enthusiastic.

There are three types of teacher-student relationships in academic domains which can be classified as strong, weak and no relationship. These three types have diverse role in academic growth and performance of the students and have a notable impact on the academic growth and performance of the students. O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins (2011) emphasized in their study that the importance of fostering elementary school teachers' awareness of the role of their relationship with students, and provides teachers with information as to how to support high quality relationships with their students. Baker (2006) purports that strong teacher-student relationship, may be one of the most important environmental factors in changing a child's educational path as well. It also highlights that the educational path of the students' is dependent upon the teacher-students relationship as it has multidimensional impact on teaching and learning process. Cazden (2001) asserts that the establishment of social relationships can boost the effective teaching and accurate evaluation in a classroom. Downey (2008), affirms the same ideas when he opines that the quality of the relationship between a student and the teacher will result in a greater level of learning in the classroom. Thus the above studies establish and support our understanding that the quality of teaching learning is directly linked to teacher-student relationship in the classroom. Marzano (2003) studied the practices of

effective teachers and determined that an effective teacher-student relationship may be the keystone that allows the other aspects to work well.

Research Design

Data Collection Tools

The data for the present study was collected through questionnaire developed on Google forms and administered to 200 students of BS English. The data was analyzed quantitatively. Furthermore, Interview of the focused group was conducted in order to validate the data qualitatively.

Participants

The students of the following universities were the targeted population;

- The Islamia University, Bahawalpur, Pakistan
- Bahauddin Zakaria University, Multan, Pakistan
- Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan
- Institute of southern Punjab, Multan, Pakistan
- Emerson University Multan, Pakistan
- Women University Multan, Pakistan

The questionnaire was distributed among 200 students as convenient sampling. Out of 200 students, one hundred seventy one students responded the questionnaire. Out of the responding population 90 were male and 81 were female. Interview of ten male and ten female was conducted as a focused group.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire Section One

This section represents the responses of the students about the teacher- student relationship.

I have Strong Relationship with my English Teacher.

171 responses

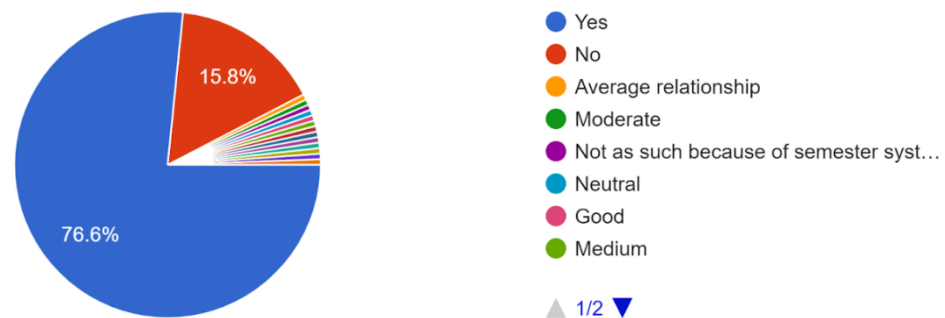


Fig.1

In response to question, I have Strong Relationship with my English Teacher, 76.6% respondents gave the response in 'Yes', 15.8% responded as 'No' while 7.6% respondents responded as 'Don't Know'.

I have Weak Relationship with my English Teacher.

171 responses

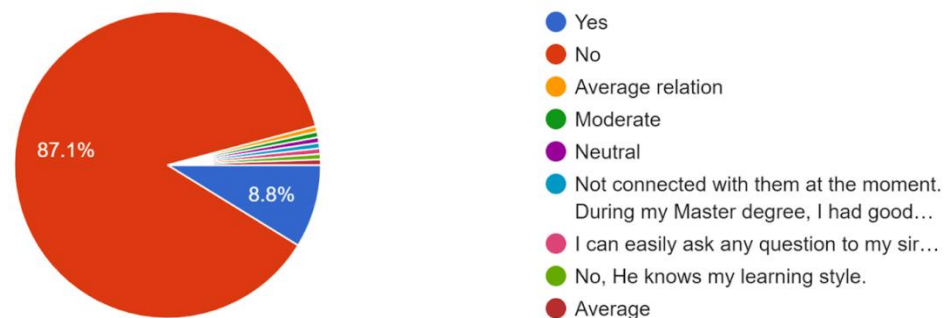


Fig.2

In response to question, I have weak relationship with my English teacher. 8.8% respondents gave the response in 'Yes', 87.1% responded as 'No' while 4.1% respondents responded as 'Don't Know'.

I have No Relationship with my English Teacher.

171 responses



Fig.3

In response to question, I have no relationship with my English teacher, 84.2% Respondents responded in 'Yes', 9.4% responded as 'No' while 6.4% respondents responded as 'Don't Know'.

I do not know about my Relationship with my English Teacher.

171 responses



Fig.4

In response to question, I do not know about my relationship with my English teacher, 14.0% respondents gave the response in 'Yes', 78.4% responded as 'No' while 7.6% respondents responded as 'Don't Know'.

Questionnaire Section Two

1. Teacher student strong relationship has positive role in students' academic growth and performance

171 responses

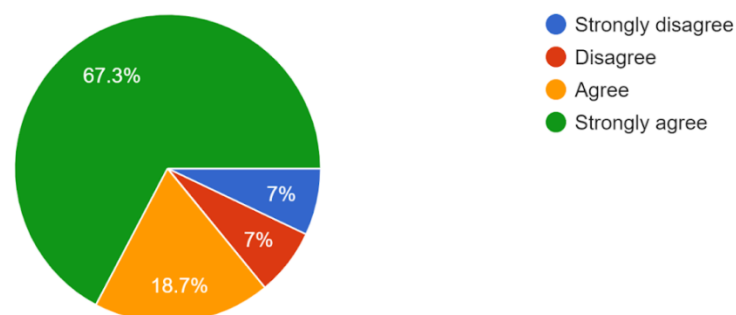


Fig.5

In response to the positive impact of the teacher student relation on the academic performance of the student 67% population strongly agreed and 18.7% agreed. While 7% population strongly disagreed and 7% population disagreed.

2. Teacher student weak relationship has negative role in students' academic growth and performance

171 responses

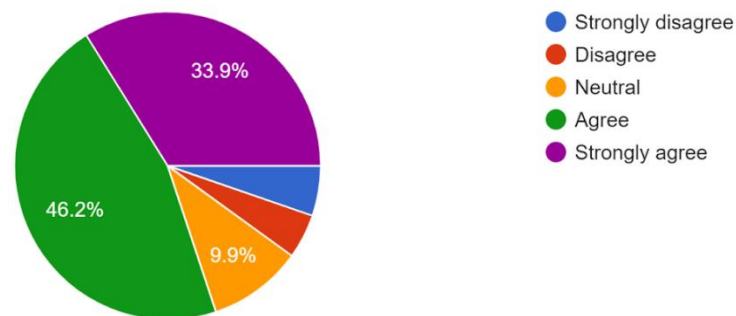


Fig.6

In response to the question that weak relationship of the teacher and student affect the academic growth and performance of the students 33.9% population strongly agreed while 46.2% population agreed. While 9.9% population remain neutral.

Discussion

In view of the quantitatively analysis of the 171 responses it is concluded that the students are well aware of the importance and impact of the role of teacher-students' relationship in academic growth and performance of the students. The positive responses indicate the level of understanding of the students about the significance of the high degree (strong and positive) teacher-students' relationship and as a result it determines that strong and positive teacher-students' relationship cannot be ignored in any academic setting for better academic growth and performance of the students. But what the most significant of this study is that 15% population of the student does not have a strong and positive relationship with the teachers. It means that our teachers are not maintaining an "all inclusive" teacher- student relationship in our ELT classrooms. 15% population gets bored and remains inactive in the classroom. Such population also create disturbance in teaching learning process of the teachers and students. Similarly, 8% population responded that they have weak relationship with their academic mentors. 9.9% population responded that they do not have any relationship with their teachers. The results show that this is a significant population which is not having any positive relationship with their teachers. Thus this ratio of students is unable to enjoy the academic activity. Thus teachers are required to create an equal and friendly fabric of relationship with their students in the academic domains.

Interview Responses Discussion & Analysis

There were the following interview questions regarding the role of teacher students' relationship in academic growth and performance of students.

- Q. No. 1** Do you agree /disagree that the role of strong teacher student relationship has positive role in academic growth and performance of students?
- Q. No. 2** What type of relationship do you have with your English teacher strong, weak or no? Give reasons?
- Q. No. 3** What is your opinion about the point that the role of teacher student relationship can or cannot be ignored? Give reasons.
- Q. No. 4** How can the role of teacher student relationship be positive or negative in academic growth and performance of student give reasons?

In response to Question No. 1 all the students agreed that of strong teacher student relationship has positive role in academic growth and performance of students. The response leads to the conclusion that the students are well informed about the degree of the role of teacher student relationship in academic growth and performance of students as well as the impact of having the weak or no bond with their English teachers.

In response to Question No. 2 the majority of the students responded that they enjoyed strong relationship with their English teacher while some had weak relationship. The responses helped the researchers to reach the conclusion that both the strong and weak teacher student relationship exist.

In response to Question No. 3 all the students responded in the affirmative that the role of

teacher student relationship in academic growth and performance of students cannot be ignored in anyway. The responses show that the bond of teacher student relationship has universal appeal and effect. The students cannot afford to ignore this bond as it has notable impact on academic growth and performance of students. They confirmed it.

In response to Question No. 4 large number of students responded that the role of teacher student relationship in academic growth and performance of students is very significant, positive and effective in their personal growth and performance. Some opined that negative teacher student relationship created barriers in academic growth and performance of students. The responses lead to the conclusion that academic growth and performance of students is largely dependent upon the role of teacher student relationship.

Findings and Conclusion

The above data analysis and the results show that majority of the students are well aware of not only having strong teacher-students' relationship but they also agree to the fact that strong teacher-students' relationship have a strong impact on the academic growth and performance of the students. This is a dependable guideline for those students who have weak or no teacher- students' relationship. The majority of responses to the data questions stressed the need to use teacher-students' relationship as the source to resolve their academic issues and also as a way to grow and perform academically. The objective of the study to trace the degree of teacher- student relationship and its effect on the academic growth and performance of the students is served by the responses of the students as they confirm the strong role of strong teacher- students' relationship in the academic growth and performance of the students.

The results of the current study lead to the following findings:

1. A strong teacher-students' relationship exists in academic worlds.
2. Majority of the students are well aware of importance and impact of strong teacher- students' relationship and its role in their academic growth and performance.
3. A small number of students are not aware of importance and impact of strong teacher-students' relationship and its role in their academic growth and performance.
4. There is a visible difference in the level of teacher-students' relationship in the classrooms.
5. Students with strong teacher-students' relationship show better academic growth and performance.
6. Students with weak or no teacher-students' relationship show lower academic growth and performance.
7. The role of strong teacher-students' relationship in their academic growth and performance cannot be ignored.

Recommendations

The following recommendations can be suggested in light of this research.

1. Awareness among students about the role of strong teacher-students' relationship in their academic growth and performance in highly significant and not ignorable.
2. Both the teachers and the students should play their respective effective roles in acknowledging as well as develop strong teacher-students' relationship.
3. Weak or No teacher-students' relationship should be replaced with strong teacher- students' relationship.

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