

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined teacher-student relationship as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study was 21,272 SS2 students in 267 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 SS2 students was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. The instrument 'Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire (TSRQ)' was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instrument was subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts. On the other hand, construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS v.26 which indicated that the instrument is suitable for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method and the average coefficient of 0.80 for TSRQ was obtained. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with five research assistants. Out of 1,064 copies of the instrument administered, 935(88%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Simple linear regression statistical tool was used for the study. The findings of the study revealed that teacher-student conflict and social interaction positively and significantly predicted students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that teacher-student relationship is good driving forces that predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that teachers should build a strong relationship with their students by always apply good conflict management styles in managing students' conflicts by encouraging students to respect and appreciate those who disagree with their opinions because learning through a crisis can be beneficial as new ideas are been generated.

Keywords: Teacher-student relationship, students' academic performance

Introduction

The desire to achieve something of excellence is inherent in all human beings. Academic performance is seen as the measure of the students' level of knowledge, skills and achievement. It is an important parameter in measuring students' learning outcome in various school disciplines. Academic performance is based on the degree of intellectual stimulation that the child could receive from learning situations. It is the outcome of general and specific learning. Academic performance is the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. This is measured either by examination or continuous assessment scores.

Academic performance of students is the focus of attention of parents, teachers, heads of institution and society at large (Chukwu & Deba, 2023). Academic means persuasive sense of urgency to learn all those things which are related or prescribed by the school. From very first day, when a child enters the school, throughout his schooling, parents, teacher and others are concerned about their academic performance. The basic objective of schooling is to impart knowledge of all those things to a student which are essential for his cognitive, emotional and social development. In an academic oriented society, success is related with gaining respect. It is apparent therefore, that schools occupy an important place in shaping destiny of students as well as country. It is a common experience that one who fails in annual examination, is supposed to be retarded academically although he can be highly advance in the development of other aspects. Obidinnu (2022) noted that a student's poor performance can be attributed to a variety of psychological factors including de-motivation, discouragement, depression, hopelessness, doubtfulness and anxiety are all important psychological factors that contribute to a student's poor academic performance in school.

Contextually, academic performance is the amount of academic content a student learns in a specific time period. This can be any way a student has achieved short-term or long-term academic goals within an academic setting. Academic performance is almost entirely measured with grades (by course or assignment) and Grade Point Average (GPA). Testing and assessment scores are usually performed to gauge a students' academic performance. However, since the understanding of concepts is a prerequisite for good academic performance, it, therefore, requires that teacher-student relationship should not be an oversight in the teaching and learning process for the academic performance of students in senior secondary schools.

Teacher-student relationship is the interactions between a student and teacher in a classroom with the content that is before them. A teacher-student relationship is a caring connection between a student and a teacher in the classroom (Obidinnu, 2022). Continuing, Obidinnu noted that these relationships have been shown to be a protective factor for students at-risk for failure by helping them to build resiliency and self-regulation skills. However, the type of relationship that should exist between teachers and students should be warm and friendly so as to bring about effective transfer of learning among them and consequently students' improved academic performance. Ayesha et al. (2023) supported teachers having qualities which will make them acceptable to the students. Ayesha et al. enumerated these qualities as including: wholesome personality characteristics; leadership qualities and democratic attitude; expressive qualities of kindness, patience, good humour, consideration and sympathy; a sense of justice and fairness in dealing with children, sensitivity to the needs of children and their reactions in different situation, professional insight into the growth pattern of children showing understanding and respect, and the ability to establish good social relationship with children.

The indices of teacher-student relationship are numerous. Adam (2019) mentioned the indices of teacher-student relationship to include supervision, classroom organisation, classroom management, leadership in the classroom, classroom interaction, and discipline among others. In the words of Obilor (2021), indices of teacher-student relationship are those attributes that contribute to easy teaching and learning that exists between teachers and students in the school. They listed some of the indices to include communication skills, social interaction, discipline and collaboration. The importance of building teacher-student relationship is for students to learn more, student-teacher cooperation, to enhance students' academic performance and to motivate students (Cristine et al., 2022). In addition, teachers need to reduce negative emotions among the students such as anger, sadness, dissatisfaction, boredom, fear, and always encouraging, positive emotions such as confidence, happiness, appreciation and safety (Rabo, 2024). This is visible in the activities incorporated in the indices of teacher-student relationship.

Contextually, teacher-student relationship in the classroom is a positive relationship between the teacher and the student in efforts to gain trust and respect from each other. This relationship may consist of getting to know the students better, providing choice and encouraging the students to become stronger learners every day. By doing this, teachers are showing respect to their students, valuing their individuality and being polite. Having a positive relationship with the students help them become more successful in the classroom as well as make the classroom a safe and welcoming environment for all. In this study, three indices of teacher-student relationship was considered, they include; teacher-student communication, teacher-student conflict and teacher-student social interaction.

The student-teacher conflicting relationship is one index that predicts with students' academic achievement. In the school setting, student-teacher conflicting relationship is any kind of disagreement, including an argument, or an ongoing series of disagreements between the teachers and students in the school. It is any situation faced between teachers and students causing them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions that may interfere with their ability to perform at the scene or later (Rabo, 2024).

Student-teacher conflicting relationship will entail ending conflict by ways of addressing the remote cause of the issue(s) and finding resolutions that are just and acceptable by teachers and students (Onafowo *et al.*, 2024). If conflict is resolved well, it brings about harmonious working relationship between teachers and students in the school. Otherwise it leads to disunity among teachers and other staff, between teachers and students and among students in the school. Student-teacher conflicting relationships in the school facilitate conflict resolution between teachers and students. They enable school administrators resolve conflict by involving teachers and students affected by the conflict to change their view, gain from the conflict and be effective in teachers' job performance in terms of their classroom communication, maintenance of classroom discipline and supervision of students' academic activities (Okpanku, 2022). It is important to note that teachers are therefore, open to various conflict resolutions with students in any given conflict situation in their school to create room for social interaction among students.

Student-teacher social interactions are reciprocal relationships which not only influence the interacting individuals but also the quality of relationships. Obidinnu (2022) noted that social interaction refer to social relations of all sorts in functions, dynamic social relations of all kinds, whether such relations exist between individual and individual, between group and group and group and individual, as the case may be. Shaibu *et al.* (2024) inferred that social interaction is the general process whereby two or more persons are in meaningful contact, as a result of which their behaviour is modified, however, slightly. The mere placing of individuals in physical proximity, although it usually results in at least a medium of interaction, does not weld them into a social unit or group. Student-teacher social interaction plays an important role in learning. Interacting with other people has proven to be quite effective in assisting the learner to organize their thoughts, reflect on their understanding, and find gaps in their reasoning. Underneath the broad umbrella of social interactions, variants can range from peer learning, reciprocal teaching, learning by teaching, learning by observation, learning by doing and self-other monitoring (Nwike *et al.*, 2024).

Students learn in diverse ways and one of them is by bringing together experience with what they can see. When it comes to learning, it is believed that children learn faster than the adult. Children find it easier to grab and learn because there is nothing that takes away their attention or focus from it such as thoughts, worries, etc. For teaching and learning of students to be more effective, it demands more of interaction rather than just listening to the instruction. Hence, effective social interaction is very essential in today's act of teaching and learning. Social interaction is the relations that exist between the teacher and to students in the classroom in the course of teaching and learning. Through social interaction, Anakwue (2024) argued that the learners would be able to get themselves involved with concepts, ideas and various other devices and products for language and culture learning. Social interactions in the classroom help the students to identify their own learning methods and guide them to communicate with their peers easily. Thus, teachers play a great role in building good social interaction in school.

The school system generally in Anambra State has been associated with daily conflicts in the school, hatred speech from students to teachers, bad gangs by students and neglect of some subjects which gave rise to serious problems for the realization of educational objectives. Some students and teachers fail to click right from the start and other student-teacher relationships take time to develop. Unfortunately, there are occasions when teachers and students have long-lasting relationship problems. A poor relationship could be the result of a broken bond between them or an ongoing unresolved conflict that keeps the two from connecting. Undoubtedly, accumulation of these challenges can make students to become low achiever, depressed and misbehave. It stands to reason that a study like this need to be conducted so as to ascertain empirically whether teacher-student relationship predict students' academic performance. In the light of the above, the researcher therefore, determined teacher-student relationship as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine teacher-student relationship as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the predictive value of teacher-student conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. determine the predictive value of teacher-student social interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of teacher-student conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of teacher-student social interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Teacher-student conflict does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Teacher-student social interaction does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Method

The area of the study is Anambra State, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study was 21,272 SS2 students which comprised 9,550 males and 11,722 females in 267 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 SS2 students was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. The instrument 'Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire (TSRQ)' was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instrument was subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts. On the other hand, construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS v.26 which indicated that the instrument is suitable for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method and the average coefficient of 0.80 for TSRQ was obtained. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with five research assistants. Out of 1,064 copies of the instrument administered, 935(88%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Simple linear regression statistical tool was used for the study.

Data Analysis

Research Question One: What is the predictive value of teacher-student conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of teacher-student conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. B	Standardized β
Constant	25.273	6.035	
Teacher-Student Conflict	0.458	0.396	0.442
R	0.442		
R ²	0.417		
Adj. R ²	0.381		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 1 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 25.273. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of teacher-student conflict, students' academic performance will be valued at 25%. The analysis showed that teacher-student conflict positively predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.442$). However, the standardized beta is also values at $\beta = 0.442$ which revealed that teacher-student conflict is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit improvement in teacher-student conflict led to 0.442(44%) improvement in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.417 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 42% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teacher-student conflict. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.381 indicating that 38% of the total variation in students' academic performance was explained by teacher-student conflict. Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of students' academic performance moderately depends on teacher-student conflict in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Two: What is the predictive value of teacher-student social interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of teacher-student social interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. B	Standardized β
Constant	32.148	4.275	
Teacher-Student Social Interaction	0.652	0.237	0.647
R	0.647		
R ²	0.538		
Adj. R ²	0.496		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 2 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 32.148. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of teacher-student social interaction, students' academic performance will be valued at 32%. The analysis showed that teacher-student social interaction positively predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.647$). Furthermore, the standardized beta is also values at $\beta = 0.647$ which revealed that teacher-student social interaction is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in teacher-student social interaction led to 0.647(65%) improvement in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.538 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 54% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teacher-student social interaction. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.496 indicating that 50% of the total variation in students' academic performance was explained by teacher-student social interaction. Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of students' academic performance moderately depends on teacher-student social interaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Teacher-student conflict does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of significance on the simple regression analysis on significant predication of teacher-student conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β	t-value	p-value
Constant	25.273	6.035		19.452	0.000
Teacher-Student Conflict	0.458	0.396	0.442	17.291	0.000
R	0.442				
R ²	0.417				
Adj. R ²	0.381				
F	30.642				0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.442 while the R^2 is 0.417 and Adjust R^2 is 0.381. The F-ratio associated with regression is 30.642, the t-test is 17.291 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that teacher-student conflict does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that teacher-student conflict significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Teacher-student social interaction does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of significance on the simple regression analysis on significant predication of teacher-student social interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β	t- value	p- value
Constant	32.148	4.275		26.532	0.000
Teacher-Student Social Interaction	0.652	0.237	0.647	23.486	0.000
R	0.647				
R ²	0.538				
Adj. R ²	0.496				
F	43.375				0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 4 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.647 while the R² is 0.538 and Adjust R² is 0.496. The F-ratio associated with regression is 43.375, the t-test is 23.486 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that teacher-student social interaction does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that teacher-student social interaction significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

Findings on the predictive value of teacher-student conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that teacher-student conflict has a positive predictive value of 0.442(44%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that improvement in teacher-student conflict will bring about 44% improvements in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that teacher-student conflict significantly predicted students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding is in consonance with the findings of Chukwu and Deba (2023), who argued that students who have negative conflicting relationships with their teachers have feelings of distress and insecurity, which restrict their ability to concentrate on learning. This is also supported by Okpanku (2022) who found that teachers' relationship with students are not only beneficial to students but equally significant to teachers' job performance. Good student-teacher relationship is positively correlated to students' academic achievement. Since there is a correlation between the student-teacher relationships, it has justified the argument of Onafowope et al. (2024) that when emotional support is consistently provided by a teacher in a safe environment, it helps children to be more self-reliant. They also learn better because they are sure that their teachers will guide and help them. This may be the reason why Rabo (2024) concluded that when children feel safe and comfortable; their willingness to explore is encouraged and activated.

Findings on the predictive value of teacher-student social interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that teacher-student social interaction has a positive predictive value of 0.647(65%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that increase in teacher-student social interaction will bring about 65% increases in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that teacher-student social interaction significantly predicted students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding of the study is in line with the findings of Obidinnu (2022) who asserted that classroom social interactions are essential aspects of social relationships that positively impact on students' academic success. This is in consonance with the findings of Nwike et al. (2024) that classroom social interactions among students positively and significantly contribute to students' high academic achievement in schools. Cooperation, accommodation, conflict and social exchange among students in classroom are components of social interaction according to Shaibu et al. (2024) that significantly impact on academic success of students.

Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrated that teacher-student relationship is good driving forces that predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded

that teacher-student relationship is positive and significant predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should build a strong relationship with their students by always apply good conflict management styles in managing students' conflicts by encouraging students to respect and appreciate those who disagree with their opinions because learning through a crisis can be beneficial as new ideas are been generated.
2. Teachers should visit the classroom on a regular basis to interact with their students because teacher-student interaction has a positive and significant prediction on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Anambra State and students with positive relationships with their teachers are more likely to do well academically.

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