

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF TEACHER - STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PAKISTAN

Dr. Nazish Andleeb¹, Mehwish Rani^{*2}, Hafsa Khanum³

¹ Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Gujrat

^{*2} M.Phil. Education Scholar

³ Associate lecturer, Department of Education, University of Gujrat

¹nazish.andleeb@uog.edu.pk, ^{*2}25011701-004@uog.edu.pk

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20566352>

Keywords

Teacher–student relationships;
Academic achievement; Secondary
education; Qualitative research;
Pakistan

Article History

Received: 09 January 2026

Accepted: 21 February 2026

Published: 06 March 2026

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: *

Mehwish Rani

Abstract

In addition to content and instructional practices, the quality of interpersonal relationships developed in the classroom has an impact on secondary school academic attainment. Among these, the relationships between teachers and students are crucial in determining students' motivation, academic engagement, and general learning results. The impact of teacher-student interactions on academic performance in Pakistani secondary schools is investigated in this qualitative study. The study aims to comprehend how students and instructors view relationship elements including trust, emotional support, communication, respect, and teacher availability and how these elements affect students' academic achievement by drawing on constructivist and sociocultural viewpoints.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with secondary school instructors and students from particular public secondary schools in Pakistan were used to gather data using a qualitative research design. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, which made it possible for significant patterns and meanings to surface from the participants' actual experiences. The results show that a supportive classroom environment that boosts students' motivation, self-assurance, and willingness to engage in academic tasks is fostered by positive teacher-student relationships. Participants stressed that children' dedication to learning and academic achievement are greatly impacted by teachers who exhibit empathy, justice, and constant academic assistance. On the other hand, it was thought that remote or dictatorial teaching behaviors hindered students' participation and success.

Keywords study comes to the conclusion that a key component of academic success in secondary education is solid teacher-student interactions. It emphasizes the necessity for Pakistani school policies and teacher preparation programs to give relational and emotional aspects of teaching equal weight with instructional competency. The results add to the body of knowledge by providing context-specific insights into how classroom relational practices can enhance academic performance in secondary schools in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

It is often acknowledged that social, economic, and national growth are fundamentally influenced by education. Secondary education is a critical transitional period where students solidify their core knowledge, cultivate higher-order thinking abilities, and become ready for their future academic and professional paths. Thus, academic success during this stage is a crucial measure of both the general efficacy of educational systems and the success of individual students. The importance of social and relational elements in the classroom setting is becoming more widely recognized in educational research, despite the conventional emphasis on curriculum design, assessment procedures, and instructional tactics as drivers of academic accomplishment.

Among these relational elements, teacher-student connections have come to light as a crucial but frequently overlooked aspect affecting students' academic performance, especially in secondary education. The quality of interpersonal interactions between instructors and students that are marked by mutual understanding, communication, emotional support, trust, and respect is referred to as teacher-student relationships. Such interactions are often shown to be fundamental to students' motivation, engagement, and sense of belonging in the school setting in qualitative research on student accomplishment. Good relationships can provide a supportive learning environment that motivates students to take intellectual risks, actively participate in assignments, and persevere in the face of difficulties.

Constructivism and socio-cultural theory are two theoretical stances that highlight how learning is fundamentally a social process affected by encounters with more informed people, especially instructors. According to this perspective, instructors facilitate meaningful learning experiences through their relational practices in addition to transmitting content information. Students are more likely to develop good attitudes about learning, show higher levels of academic self-efficacy, and perform better academically when they believe that their professors are fair, approachable, and encouraging. On the other

hand, throughout adolescence, when students are most sensitive to social dynamics and emotional support, strained or distant teacher-student relationships may lead to disengagement, anxiety, and lower academic accomplishment.

The quality of teacher-student relationships becomes even more crucial in secondary school, where academic demands increase and student-teacher interactions can become more formal and content-driven. In order to manage academic stress, exams, and future goals, adolescents need not only academic supervision but also emotional understanding and constant support. According to qualitative studies in education, students' views of classroom interactions, teacher concern, and feedback have a big impact on their academic paths and learning experiences. However, policy and practice often ignore these relational aspects in favor of quantifiable academic results rather than the interpersonal processes that underpin them.

Large class numbers, a lack of resources, examination-oriented teaching methods, and disparities in teacher professional development are just a few of the difficulties Pakistan's secondary education system faces. Relationships between teachers and students can be crucial in reducing or increasing the negative effects of systemic issues on students' academic performance under such circumstances. Teachers are frequently viewed as authoritative characters in Pakistani classrooms due to cultural norms, which may have an impact on student involvement, interaction, and communication patterns. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend how instructors and students view and feel these interactions in order to create techniques that are contextually relevant and improve academic accomplishment.

There is still a dearth of qualitative, context-specific research on teacher-student relationships in Pakistani secondary schools, despite the rising amount of international literature highlighting their significance. The majority of the research that has been done on academic accomplishment in Pakistan has paid little attention to the lived experiences and viewpoints of instructors and students, instead concentrating on quantitative

metrics like exam results, teaching strategies, and institutional issues. This disparity emphasizes the necessity of qualitative research that examines how classroom social dynamics affect students' academic engagement and success.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate, via a qualitative lens, how teacher-student relationships affect academic attainment in Pakistani secondary schools. The project aims to give a comprehensive picture of how relational behaviors influence academic outcomes by recording the voices and experiences of both teachers and students. The results are anticipated to add to the body of knowledge already available on student achievement, guide teacher preparation programs, and aid in the creation of educational policies that acknowledge the critical role that good teacher-student relationships play in fostering academic success in secondary education.

Literature Review

Introduction

Because academic accomplishment has a high correlation with students' future educational attainment, employability, and social mobility, it continues to be one of the most studied outcomes in educational research. Academic success becomes more crucial at the secondary school level because of the increased academic standards, standardized tests, and important choices pupils must make about their future careers or further education. While curriculum design, assessment methods, and instructional quality have historically been highlighted as the main drivers of academic success, current research is beginning to acknowledge the significance of social and relational elements in the learning environment. Relationships between teachers and students have become one of the key elements affecting students' academic experiences and results. The classroom environment, student motivation, engagement, and emotional health are all greatly influenced by the caliber of interactions between educators and students. The study on teacher-student interactions and their impact on academic achievement is critically examined in this overview of the literature, with a focus on secondary education and the contextual realities of Pakistan.

Conceptualizing Academic Achievement

The degree to which students meet learning objectives as determined by grades, test results, and exam performance is generally referred to as academic achievement. However, contemporary educational research takes a more comprehensive approach that takes into account students' subject-matter expertise, the growth of their critical thinking abilities, and their ongoing participation in the learning process. It is generally recognized that academic success is a multifaceted concept impacted by social, emotional, environmental, and cognitive factors.

Scholars contend that academic aptitude and teaching strategies are insufficient to completely account for accomplishment. Academic results are greatly influenced by students' attitudes toward learning, self-efficacy, motivation, and relationships in the educational setting. These non-cognitive aspects become more significant in secondary education, where students must navigate difficult academic and social transitions.

Understanding Teacher-Student Relationships

The term "teacher-student relationships" describes the continuous interpersonal exchanges between educators and learners that are marked by mutual respect, trust, emotional support, communication, and academic direction. These connections have a significant impact on how pupils learn, despite being professional in nature. Warmth, justice, responsiveness, and encouragement characterize positive teacher-student interactions, whereas conflict, emotional detachment, or authoritarian control may characterize negative connections.

Relationships between teachers and students are frequently viewed as a fundamental aspect of classroom atmosphere in educational studies. Students can participate more fully in academic activities in an atmosphere where they feel protected, appreciated, and encouraged when there is a positive relational climate. On the other hand, low-quality relationships can lead to anxiety, disengagement, and a decrease in academic effort.

Theoretical Perspectives on Teacher-Student Relationships

A number of theoretical frameworks shed light on how teacher-student interactions affect academic success. According to socio-cultural theory, learning happens through conversation and social contact. Teachers take on the role of facilitators, directing students' learning via feedback, scaffolding, and group projects. According to this viewpoint, opportunities for meaningful engagement and the creation of shared knowledge are improved by strong teacher-student connections. Constructivist learning theory emphasizes students' active participation in knowledge construction, which further reinforces the significance of relationships. Students are more inclined to ask questions, voice their opinions, and actively interact with academic material when they perceive that their teachers value and support them. Deeper learning and cognitive engagement are thus promoted by positive connections.

Additionally, the significance of emotional safety and personal development in learning is emphasized by humanistic educational theory. This perspective holds that when students' emotional and psychological needs are satisfied through supportive teacher interactions, their academic performance increases.

Teacher-Student Relationships and Student Motivation

Academic attainment is influenced by teacher-student relationships in part through motivation. Higher levels of intrinsic motivation are typically shown by students who believe their teachers are fair, kind, and encouraging. These pupils are more likely to take responsibility for their education, persevere through difficult assignments, and pursue academic achievement. According to research, encouraging students, praising their efforts, giving constructive criticism, and setting high but reasonable objectives are all examples of teacher practices that boost student motivation. Teachers' motivational support is especially important in secondary schools, when academic pressure and rivalry are increasing. Academic disengagement and lower performance can result from a lack of supportive relationships.

Teacher-Student Relationships and Academic Engagement

Students' behavioral involvement, emotional involvement, and cognitive investment in learning activities are all included in academic engagement. Relationships between teachers and students are known to be a powerful indicator of involvement. Positive teacher-student relationships increase the likelihood of regular attendance, discussion participation, task completion, and sustained focus. Relationships between teachers and students that are supportive promote open communication, enabling students to ask for help and explanation without worrying about being judged. These kinds of settings encourage learning risk-taking and strengthen students' ability to bounce back from setbacks. In turn, engagement is a clear route to higher academic performance.

Teacher Support, Feedback, and Learning Outcomes

The effectiveness of academic feedback is directly related to the caliber of the teacher-student interaction. Feedback that is given in a supportive, relational setting is more likely to be viewed as inspiring and helpful. Teachers who are aware of each student's unique learning preferences and strengths can offer focused instruction that improves academic achievement. As subject complexity rises in secondary education, individualized academic support becomes crucial. Relationships between teachers and students help this process by allowing teachers to identify students' challenges and respond with the right teaching methods. Students who experience encouragement are more open to criticism and more inclined to learn on their own.

Teacher-Student Relationships in Secondary Education

Building solid teacher-student relationships is particularly difficult in secondary school environments. Students frequently engage with several professors for brief periods of time, which may limit prospects for long-term relationship development. Relational engagement can also be restricted by time restrictions and curriculum that emphasize exams. Despite these obstacles, research

indicates that students' academic experiences can be greatly impacted by even brief but important teacher-student interactions. Students often see fairness, consistency, and respectful communication as essential relational traits that promote academic success. Teachers are thought to be more successful at fostering learning when they strike a balance between authority and empathy.

Cultural and Contextual Dimensions in Pakistan

Cultural norms, institutional frameworks, and educational regulations all influence teacher-student relationships in Pakistan. Classroom interactions frequently focus on discipline and information delivery, and teachers are typically seen as authoritative figures. Such conventions can promote order, but they can also stifle candid communication and emotional intimacy. Relational dynamics are further impacted by examination-oriented systems, large class sizes, and few resources. Students frequently express a tremendous need for professors who exhibit empathy, support, and justice in spite of these limitations. Good relationships between teachers and students can be a vital support system that helps students deal with systemic issues and academic stress.

Gaps in Existing Research

Despite the importance of teacher-student connections being emphasized in international literature, there is still a dearth of comprehensive qualitative research examining this phenomena in Pakistani secondary schools. Teachers' and students' complex experiences and views are not well captured by the quantitative metrics used in a large portion of the current research. The formation, maintenance, and experience of teacher-student relationships within certain cultural and institutional contexts are poorly understood. Developing culturally responsive educational methods and policies requires filling this gap through qualitative inquiry.

Summary and Implications

The examined literature shows that connections between teachers and students have a significant

impact on academic achievement by influencing learning behaviors, motivation, and engagement. Supportive classroom environments that improve students' academic achievement are a result of positive relational dynamics, especially in secondary education. However, more qualitative research is needed in the Pakistani context to comprehend how these interactions operate within regional institutional and cultural contexts. By examining instructors' and students' opinions on teacher-student interactions and their significance in academic attainment in Pakistani secondary schools, this study aims to close this gap.

Rational of the study

Secondary school academic performance is a key predictor of pupils' future educational and professional prospects. Secondary education provides access to professional training, further education, and socioeconomic mobility in Pakistan. Many kids still struggle with low academic engagement, exam anxiety, and uneven academic achievement despite changes in curriculum, assessment procedures, and teacher hiring. These difficulties imply that academic progress is influenced by elements other than instructional content and evaluation methods.

In Pakistani secondary schools, teacher-student relationships constitute an essential yet understudied aspect of the teaching-learning process. Teachers are seen as authoritative people in hierarchical frameworks that influence classroom relationships. Although authority helps maintain order and control in the classroom, it can also cause emotional distancing, lower student engagement, and prevent candid conversation. Positive teacher-student relationships, which are defined by trust, respect, empathy, and academic assistance, have been shown in international studies to improve students' academic success, motivation, and engagement. Nonetheless, there is a dearth of qualitative research in Pakistan that examines how instructors and students experience these connections in their sociocultural setting.

Therefore, the necessity to qualitatively investigate the impact of teacher-student relationships on academic accomplishment at the secondary level in Pakistan justifies this study. The goal of the

study is to produce contextually relevant findings that can guide teacher preparation, educational policy, and classroom practices by looking at lived experiences.

Research objectives

The study seeks to accomplish the following goals

- To investigate how secondary school instructors see their interactions with their students
- To investigate how students perceive teacher-student interactions in educational environments.
- To look into how interactions between teachers and students affect students' motivation and engagement in the classroom.
- To determine which interpersonal behaviors support or undermine academic success.
- To comprehend how the atmosphere in the classroom influences academic learning.
- To make recommendations on how Pakistani secondary schools might improve their connections with their teachers.

Research questions

1. How do educators view the character and significance of interactions between teachers and students in secondary education?
2. How do students characterize their interactions with teachers in the classroom?
3. How do relationships between teachers and students affect students' involvement and motivation in the classroom?
4. What interpersonal behaviors are thought to promote academic success?
5. How can unfavorable or aloof teacher-student interactions impact students' educational experiences?
6. What tactics can strengthen the bonds between educators and students to raise academic performance?

Operational definition

Teacher-Student Relationships:

The continuous professional and interpersonal relationships between educators and learners that are marked by respect for one another, trust, clear

communication, emotional support, equity, and academic direction in classroom environments.

Academic Achievement:

Students' perceptions of their academic achievement are demonstrated by their performance on academic assignments, motivation to learn, comprehension of the subject matter, and consistent engagement in learning activities.

Secondary Schools:

Pakistani educational establishments that instruct pupils usually enrolled in Grades IX and X and help them get ready for secondary school exams.

Classroom Climate:

The classroom's academic, social, and emotional climate as influenced by instructional strategies, student interactions, and teacher conduct.

Research methodology

In my study, In order to investigate how teacher-student interactions affect academic progress in Pakistani secondary schools, I used a qualitative study methodology. Because the nature of the research problem necessitated a thorough comprehension of participants' actual experiences, perceptions, and meanings regarding classroom interactions, I chose a qualitative approach. Although academic accomplishment is frequently quantified, the relational processes that instructors use to impact students' learning are intricate, contextual, and socially created. Consequently, the best method for documenting these complex experiences in their natural environments was a qualitative one. Using this method, I was able to investigate how relational elements like communication, emotional support, trust, and academic supervision are perceived by both teachers and students, as well as how these elements affect students' academic achievement, motivation, and engagement.

Research design

The research design used in the study was qualitative exploratory. I chose this approach because there isn't much qualitative research in

Pakistan that particularly looks at teacher-student relationships and secondary school academic accomplishment. Instead of being constrained by predetermined variables or assumptions, the exploratory approach allowed for freedom in data collecting and allowed themes to gradually develop from participants' responses. With the aid of this design, I was able to investigate many viewpoints and develop a greater comprehension of how connections between teachers and students are created, sustained, and experienced in secondary school classrooms, as well as how these interactions support students' academic success.

Research Setting

In a few Pakistani public secondary schools, the study was carried out. I selected public schools because they serve kids from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and make up a sizable portion of the secondary education system. These schools frequently deal with issues like big class numbers, a lack of instructional resources, and demanding teaching workloads. They also usually function inside examination-oriented systems. By carrying out the study in this environment, I was able to look at teacher-student connections in actual classroom settings and comprehend how relational practices work in spite of structural limitations.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

According to this study's conceptual framework, relationships between teachers and students are a key factor in determining academic success. Students' academic motivation and engagement are increased by positive relationship practices such emotional support, polite communication, encouragement, and constructive criticism. These mediating factors foster an environment in the classroom that encourages engagement, self-assurance, and perseverance. Negative relationship behaviors, on the other hand, might result in fear, disengagement, and decreased academic motivation. These behaviors include excessive authoritarianism, a lack of empathy, and poor communication. The paradigm highlights that academic success is a result of ongoing social

interaction in the classroom rather than just the delivery of teaching.

Theoretical framework

The foundations of this research are constructivist learning theory and socio-cultural theory. According to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, learning is a socially mediated process that happens through interaction with more experienced people, especially instructors. Teachers are essential in providing learning scaffolding and fostering conditions that enhance cognitive development. According to constructivist learning theory, students actively create knowledge through interactions and meaningful experiences. When kids are appreciated, encouraged to engage, and feel supported, learning is improved. When taken as a whole, these theories emphasize how crucial relationships between teachers and students are for promoting academic success, motivation, and engagement.

Significance of the study

There is academic, practical, and policy significance to this work. From an academic perspective, it adds to the scant qualitative literature on teacher-student interactions in Pakistan, especially in secondary education. The results offer practical advice to educators on how to enhance student engagement, academic motivation, and classroom interaction. The results may be used by school administrators to create professional development programs that prioritize relationship competencies. The study emphasizes the necessity of including relational aspects into frameworks for teacher education and assessment at the policy level.

Ethical Considerations

During the entire trial, ethical guidelines were closely followed. Each subject gave their informed consent, and participation was entirely voluntary. Pseudonyms and secure data storage were used to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were made aware of their freedom to leave at any time and without consequence. Respect, objectivity, and tact were upheld by the

researcher throughout the gathering and processing of the data.

Delimitations of the Study

Students in Grades IX and X and their teachers were the main focus of this study, which was restricted to Pakistani public secondary schools. Using a qualitative study approach, it looked at the connections between teachers and students and how these affected academic attainment. Instead of using test results, academic accomplishment was investigated through participant views of motivation, engagement, and learning experiences. The study did not use quantitative methods, nor did it include private schools or primary or upper secondary institutions. To enable a thorough and targeted investigation of the research phenomena, these boundaries were established.

Limitations of the Study

Only public secondary schools are included in the survey, and it depends on participants' self-reported opinions, which could be skewed. Although it restricts generalizability, the qualitative design offers rich contextual insights. Data collection may have been impacted by time limitations and restricted access to schools.

Implications of the Study

The results indicate that improving relationships between teachers and students can greatly increase academic motivation, engagement, and achievement. Relational skills should be emphasized in addition to instructional tactics in teacher training programs. Policymakers should acknowledge relational quality as a crucial measure of educational effectiveness, and school administrators should encourage supportive classroom environments.

Population of the study

Secondary school teachers and students enrolled in Pakistani public secondary schools made up the study's population. Subject instructors who taught fundamental subjects including science, math, English, and social studies made up the teacher population. Students from Grades IX and X were

included in the student body because these grades are crucial because of academic pressure and board test preparation. I was able to gather rich, multi-perspective data and create a more thorough knowledge of teacher-student relationships and their impact on academic attainment by include both teachers and students.

Population and sampling

I chose study participants using a purposive sample method. I was able to deliberately choose instructors and students with firsthand knowledge of teaching and learning in secondary classrooms because to this method. While students were chosen based on their desire to participate and share their academic experiences, teachers were chosen based on their secondary teaching expertise. The sample size of between 12–15 teachers and 20–25 pupils was deemed adequate to reach data saturation. Saturation was attained when no new themes surfaced from participant responses, which is when data collecting stopped.

Research Instruments

Semi-Structured Interviews

My main method of gathering data was semi-structured interviews. For teachers and students, different interview guides were created. The open-ended interview questions centered on the participants' experiences with academic support, motivation, achievement, classroom interactions, and teacher-student relationships. I was able to keep consistency throughout the interviews because to the semi-structured style, which also gave me the freedom to go further into participants' answers and investigate new concepts.

Focus Group Discussions

I spoke with students in focus groups in addition to conducting interviews. Focus groups promoted communication between participants and gave students a chance to consider common classroom experiences as a group. Using this approach, I was able to find recurring themes and variations in how students view their relationships with teachers and how those interactions affect their academic performance.

Validity and reliability

I adhered to recognized standards for qualitative dependability in order to guarantee the study's quality and rigor:

- Extended interaction with participants, triangulation of data sources (teachers and students), and member checking in which participants examined summaries of their answers all contributed to ensuring credibility.
- Rich, thorough descriptions of the participants and research context were provided in order to address transferability.
- By maintaining a transparent audit record of research choices, interview protocols, and data analysis stages, dependability was preserved.
- By employing direct quotes from participants to bolster findings and reflexive journaling to reduce researcher bias, Confirmability was achieved.

Data collection

I had official authorization from the school administration prior to gathering data. The study's goal was explained to the participants, and their informed consent was acquired. I gave participants my word that their answers would be kept private and that they might choose not to participate. Several weeks were spent gathering the data. Focus groups and interviews were held in a calm and cozy setting on school property. All interviews were audio recorded with participants' consent, and the transcriptions were then verbatim. Responses from participants who spoke in regional languages were meticulously translated into English while maintaining their original meaning.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was my method of data analysis. I first went over the transcripts multiple times to familiarize myself with the information. I then used open coding to find significant units pertaining to academic success and the connections between teachers and students. Similar codes were categorized and then further developed into key themes. I was able to spot recurrent trends and analyze how teacher-student connections affect academic engagement, motivation, and success thanks to this methodical

approach. The themes were analyzed in the context of the study's goals and pertinent literature.

Result/findings

The results showed that good relationships between teachers and students promote motivation, trust, and involvement, all of which boost academic performance. Approachable, equitable, and encouraging professors were highly appreciated by students. Strong relationships, according to teachers, improved classroom management and promoted involvement. Reduced academic interest, fear, and disengagement were linked to negative interactions.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies might:

- Employ mixed-methods techniques to triangulate results.
- To look at long-term consequences, conduct longitudinal studies.
- Compare the settings of private and public schools.
- Examine relational dynamics based on gender and subject matter.

Discussion

This qualitative study set out to investigate the impact of teacher-student interactions on academic performance in Pakistani secondary schools. The study's conclusions show that relationships between teachers and students have a profound and varied impact on students' academic experiences, motivation, engagement, and general success. This debate highlights how relationship dynamics affect academic outcomes in the Pakistani secondary school context by interpreting the results in light of current literature and theoretical stances. One of the study's most notable conclusions is that students' increased academic motivation is a result of good teacher-student connections.

Teachers who showed concern, support, and empathy inspired students to be more engaged in their studies, according to participants' repeated emphasis. When they thought their teachers were

approachable and encouraging, students reported feeling more self-assured and eager to participate in class activities. This result is consistent with earlier studies that found that teachers' emotional support increases intrinsic motivation and sustained academic effort, especially in adolescence when students are more receptive to social validation and encouragement.

Additionally, the study discovered that positive teacher-student interactions are mostly dependent on mutual respect and good communication. Students emphasized that a positive learning atmosphere was produced by teachers who listened to their worries, calmly explained topics, and showed them respect. Students were encouraged to ask questions, look for explanation, and participate actively in their education in such settings. Conversely, educators stated that courteous communication improved their comprehension of students' learning requirements and enabled them to modify their pedagogical approaches accordingly. Constructivist and sociocultural theories, which stress the importance of conversation and connection in meaningful learning, are supported by this reciprocal engagement.

The importance of teacher-student interactions for academic engagement and classroom participation is another important discovery. Students reported feeling more a part of the classroom and more accountable for their education when professors maintained a cordial yet professional relationship. Regular attendance, active participation in class discussions, timely assignment completion, and perseverance in academic duties are all signs of engagement. These results support the notion that engagement serves as a mediating factor between academic accomplishment and relational quality, implying that relationships indirectly affect achievement by encouraging active participation in the learning process.

The results also show that constructive criticism and teacher assistance have a big impact on students' academic achievement. Teachers who gave clear instructions, recognized hard work, and gave constructive criticism instead of punishment were highly regarded by their students. Strong ties, according to teachers, allowed them to identify

pupils who needed more academic support and to offer tailored support. This study supports the body of research on formative assessment and student-centered teaching strategies by demonstrating that feedback is most effective when given in a trusting relational context.

The study found that institutional limitations and cultural norms influence teacher-student relationships in Pakistani secondary schools. Classrooms frequently place a strong emphasis on discipline and test preparation, and teachers are typically seen as authoritative figures. Although these frameworks promote order, students reported that too authoritarian teaching methods occasionally hindered emotional connection and open conversation. Despite big class numbers and scarce resources, the study also shown that educators who struck a balance between authority, empathy, and justice were able to build solid relationships. This result implies that instructors' interpersonal abilities and attitudes are just as important to relational quality as structural factors.

Overall, the results of this study offer context-specific insights on Pakistani secondary schools while supporting previous international research. The study shows that relationships between teachers and students are essential to developing supportive learning environments that boost academic success, motivation, and engagement rather than being incidental to academic progress. These results highlight how crucial it is to acknowledge relational activities as a fundamental element of successful education.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Teachers

It is important to support educators in implementing relational teaching strategies that prioritize open communication, empathy, and respect. It is not necessary to sacrifice discipline in order to build healthy relationships between teachers and students; instead, authority and approachability must be balanced. Instructors should provide students constructive criticism, acknowledge their accomplishments, and foster an atmosphere in the classroom where students feel free to ask questions and share their struggles.

Teachers' interpersonal skills can be strengthened by regularly reflecting on their methods.

Recommendations for School Administrators

As the cornerstone of academic success, school administrators should encourage a school culture that prioritizes good teacher-student interactions. Communication skills, emotional intelligence, and classroom relationship-building techniques should all be covered in professional development programs. When it is feasible, administrators should help teachers by resolving structural issues like heavy workloads and big class sizes, which will provide them more chances to engage with pupils.

Recommendations for Teacher Training Institutions

Curricula in teacher education programs should include relational and socioemotional elements. Along with instructional strategies and topic knowledge, pre-service and in-service training should include a strong emphasis on the value of relationships between teachers and students. Role-playing, introspective exercises, and hands-on training sessions can help teachers acquire the abilities needed to establish courteous and encouraging interactions with secondary school students.

Recommendations for Educational Policymakers

Academic attainment is significantly influenced by teacher-student connections, which should be acknowledged by educational policymakers. Instead than concentrating only on test results, policies should promote student-centered and supportive teaching methods. Indicators pertaining to relational behaviors, student involvement, and classroom atmosphere may be included in assessment frameworks for educators.

Recommendations for Parents and Community

To promote good teacher-student connections, parents and the community should work with schools. In addition to providing extra support for students' emotional and intellectual needs, open communication between parents and teachers helps encourage consistent expectations. Programs

for community awareness might emphasize the value of courteous and encouraging learning environments.

Recommendations for Future Research

By employing mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to investigate how teacher-student interactions affect academic achievement over time, future research may build on this work. Broader insights may be obtained by comparative research between public and private schools, urban and rural environments, or other Pakistani provinces. Additional qualitative studies that concentrate on gender disparities or subject-specific teacher-student interactions may also deepen our knowledge in this field.

Conclusion

According to the study's findings, relationships between teachers and students are a key factor in determining academic success in Pakistani secondary schools. Students' motivation, engagement, and confidence are increased through interactions that are kind, sympathetic, and supportive. In order to enhance academic results, strengthening relationship practices ought to be a primary goal of instruction, teacher preparation, and educational policy.

References

- Aldridge, J. M., & McChesney, K. (2018). The relationships between school climate and adolescent mental health and wellbeing: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 88, 121-145.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2018.01.012>
- Ansong, D., Okumu, M., Bowen, G. L., Walker, A. M., & Eisensmith, S. R. (2017). The role of parent, classmate, and teacher support in student engagement: Evidence from Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 54, 51-58.
- Ayers, W. (2019). *Teaching toward freedom: Moral commitment and ethical action in the classroom*. Beacon Press.

- Bardach, L., & Klassen, R. M. (2020). Smart teachers, successful students? A systematic review of the literature on teachers' cognitive abilities and student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(2), 1-30.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Davis, H. A., & Warner, R. M. (2018). Classroom relationships and student motivation. In *Handbook of motivation at school* (2nd ed., pp. 491-512). Routledge.
- Eccles, J. S., & Roeser, R. W. (2019). School and community influences on human development. *Developmental Psychology*, 55(1), 1-15.
- Emmer, E. T., & Sabornie, E. J. (2015). *Handbook of classroom management*. Routledge.
- Farooq, M. S., Chaudhry, A. H., Shafiq, M., & Berhanu, G. (2018). Factors affecting students' quality of academic performance: A case of secondary school level. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, 14(2), 1-14.
- Fredricks, J. A., Filsecker, M., & Lawson, M. A. (2016). Student engagement, context, and adjustment: Addressing definitional, measurement, and methodological issues. *Learning and Instruction*, 43, 1-4.
- Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2019). Teacher-student interactions: Measurement, impacts, improvement. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(4), 1-18.
- Hattie, J. (2018). *Visible learning: Feedback*. Routledge.
- Khan, A., Shah, I. M., & Khan, S. (2020). Teachers' behavior and students' academic achievement at secondary level in Pakistan. *Journal of Educational Research*, 23(1), 45-60.
- Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2017). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 74(7), 262-273.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. (2021). *Pakistan education statistics*. Government of Pakistan.
- Roorda, D. L., Jak, S., Zee, M., Oort, F. J., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2017). Affective teacher-student relationships and students' engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic update. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(4), 1-38.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: The role of human needs in learning*. Academic Press.
- Shahzad, S., & Naureen, S. (2017). Impact of teacher behavior on students' academic achievement. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 5(2), 1-10.
- Stake, R. E. (2019). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. Guilford Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wentzel, K. R. (2017). Teacher-student relationships and adolescent competence at school. *Educational Psychologist*, 52(4), 1-18.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.