

Students' Perceptions of Head Teacher Leadership Roles for Student Engagement at Secondary Schools in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The active involvement of students in the educational process is of utmost importance in guaranteeing the provision of high-quality education. Headteachers have the capacity to assume a substantial role in fostering student engagement in various school activities. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the perspectives of students regarding the role of the head teacher in promoting student engagement within secondary schools in Bangladesh. The research was conducted utilizing a qualitative approach. In order to accommodate the convenience of eight schools representing eight divisions in Bangladesh, a total of eight Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted. The findings of this study indicate that the leadership exhibited by head teachers has a discernible influence on the level of student engagement. The head teachers' leadership positions encompassed several important responsibilities, such as overseeing and assessing the academic activities and progress of students, offering guidance and motivation, fostering active participation in teaching and learning, as well as involving students in extracurricular pursuits and decision-making processes within the school context. This study also unveiled specific detrimental characteristics exhibited by head teachers that served as demotivating factors for student engagement in school activities. In order to enhance the quality of education, it has been recommended that secondary level head teachers in Bangladesh should augment the range of activities aimed at fostering student engagement within the school setting.

Keywords: *Student engagement, head teacher leadership, student activities, decision making, head teachers super vision, teaching-learning activities*

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Introduction

Student engagement is the term used to describe the degree of interest, enthusiasm, and commitment that a student demonstrates towards their academic and educational pursuits. Students who are driven to learn, actively participate in school activities, and take responsibility for their academic development are said to be engaged (Groccia, 2018). Student engagement refers to the level of motivation and involvement exhibited by students in their learning

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process, as well as their sense of connection to their classrooms, educational institutions, and peers (Axelson, & Flick, 2010). Enhancing teaching and learning is of utmost importance. The degree of student engagement plays a crucial role in guaranteeing the provision of high-quality education. There is a positive correlation between student engagement and motivation, attentiveness, and involvement in the learning process. This relationship has been found to have a significant impact on academic performance, overall success, and school efficiency (Wang & Eccles, 2013). Student engagement is a crucial indicator of cognitive growth resulting from regular contact. It facilitates the development of students' ability to generate their own knowledge, hence enhancing their prospects for future success (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). The acquisition of knowledge is maximized and efficient when students actively participate in the learning process with enthusiasm and possess a deep commitment to effectively use the many educational materials and classroom settings available to them. Furthermore, educational institutions that facilitate student engagement in decision-making processes and cultivate constructive connections between students and teachers enhance academic achievement (Egbert 2020).

When students engage fully in their educational pursuits, they are allowed to cultivate their social and emotional competencies. Through engagement in various activities such as assuming additional responsibilities, engaging in social interactions with classmates and educators, and involvement in extracurricular pursuits, students have the opportunity to cultivate resilience, bolster their self-assurance, and foster a sense of inclusion (Zepke et al., 2014). Enhanced student engagement has the potential to mitigate the likelihood of experiencing mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and other related conditions (Thomas et al., 2021). Furthermore, it is worth noting that students who exhibit higher levels of engagement are more likely to acquire essential life skills such as leadership, cooperation, and communication. Individuals in this group exhibit enhanced social connections, elevated levels of self-worth, and a heightened sense of belongingness within their educational institution. The active involvement of students contributes to the enhancement of critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and cooperation skills, which are essential for achieving academic and personal success (Tang et al., 2020). Nevertheless, a crucial determinant in fostering and sustaining student engagement in educational institutions is the leadership position assumed by the head teacher. Headteachers are responsible for the leadership and management of educational institutions, and their leadership positions significantly impact the achievements of their schools and the level of student engagement. The essentiality of head teachers' leadership roles in enhancing student engagement inside classrooms is evident. The establishment of a school's culture and atmosphere is attributed to the leadership of the head teacher, who actively fosters student engagement. In order to facilitate the engagement of students in extracurricular activities, enrichment programs, and other opportunities to actively participate in their academic pursuits and school community, educational administrators allocate resources (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

Headteachers have a pivotal role in cultivating the overall school culture, facilitating student engagement through various non-academic activities, and actively contributing to the establishment of a pleasant and conducive learning environment. Head teachers play a crucial role in supporting instructors in their efforts to promote student engagement inside the classroom (Wang et al., 2020). Head teachers monitor and evaluate student engagement levels in order to measure the effectiveness of engagement techniques and identify areas for improvement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). The head teacher's role inherently holds significant influence over the efficacy of teachers and the instructional approaches employed inside the classroom, consequently impacting students' academic performance (Fredricks et al., 2011). The leadership responsibilities of the head teacher encompass the formulation of school administrative policies and practices that foster a student-centered learning environment, facilitate active participation of students in extracurricular activities, facilitate the cultivation of positive teacher-student relationships, and enhance student academic performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

The role of head teachers in Bangladesh is of utmost significance in the management and administration of educational institutions. The responsibilities encompassed by their role entail the administration of the educational institution's financial resources, the recruitment and management of faculty members, the supervision of daily operations, and the establishment of partnerships with parents and the surrounding community to ensure the fulfillment of the students' needs and expectations (Salahuddin, 2011). Headteachers possess objectives aimed at improving their educational institutions. The institutions are guided by the utilization of management and democratic leadership styles. Educators endeavor to achieve professional development within the educational environment to augment the pedagogical and learning experience. The primary goal of the pupils is to achieve success. They possess the capability to effectively navigate through a diverse range of complex circumstances, including bureaucratic obstacles, political influence, and limited financial and human resources (Ali, 2011). While there have been some studies conducted on the leadership of head teachers in Bangladesh, there is currently a lack of research specifically examining the role of head teachers' leadership on students' engagement in school. In order to address this knowledge gap, it is imperative to research this issue. The investigation of the role of head teachers' leadership on student engagement in Bangladesh is of utmost importance, as it has implications for the development of head teachers' leadership skills, the establishment of training frameworks, policy formulation, and the assurance of educational quality.

As a result, researchers aimed to explore the head teacher's role in student engagement in secondary schools in Bangladesh through the lens of students. Students are one of the major stakeholders under the head teacher's leadership who can perceive the role of the head teacher towards student engagement initiatives (Shirley-Brown, 2018), and as secondary school is vital to prepare students for tertiary education (Rahman, 2019), the researchers considered

secondary school students perspectives. The primary objective of this study is to explore the student's perception of the head teacher's role in student engagement in secondary schools in Bangladesh. The study will help head teachers to become more effective leaders in terms of student involvement. This research will support the development of an effective training framework for school head teachers' professional development regarding student engagement in classroom teaching and learning and other school activities. It will contribute to making education policy, planning, laws, and rules, considering the head teacher's leadership role, and instruct the way to implement these policies and plans for quality education in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

The concept of student engagement has evolved over the course of time and can be traced back to its roots in the field of educational psychology. Historically, educational psychologists in the early stages of the field accorded significant importance to the concept of motivation. This concept pertains to the various elements that exert an influence on students' level of involvement and participation in educational endeavors. Ralph Tyler, an American psychologist, emerged as one of the pioneering figures in the field of engagement during the early stages of its development. Tyler's research conducted in the 1930s provided pioneering evidence showcasing the advantageous impact of student engagement on the process of learning (Groccia, 2018). During the 1980s and 1990s, scholars began to focus their attention on the concept of "engagement," highlighting the importance of active participation in educational endeavors. During the early 2000s, the phrase "student engagement" emerged as a significant notion within the realm of educational research and application. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which was developed in 2000, has played a significant role in promoting the concept of student involvement within academic settings by providing a dependable measure of this phenomenon (Ewell, 2010).

In their study, Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) identified a noteworthy correlation between the leadership of head teachers and the level of engagement exhibited by students. The survey conducted in this study garnered responses from a total of 1,500 students, representing a diverse sample from 59 educational institutions within the province of Ontario, Canada. According to the researchers, it is argued that the role of school leadership holds significant influence over student involvement, a factor that has been found to be closely associated with improved academic achievement and general welfare. Furthermore, it has been found that the influence of head teachers' leadership on students' engagement surpasses that of teacher leadership. Although the advantages of teacher leadership were not readily apparent, the leadership exhibited by head teachers yielded modest yet discernible outcomes. In addition, in a study done by Katyal (2005), the focus was on investigating the influence of teacher leadership on student engagement within the classroom. Based on the findings of the study, it was observed that teacher leadership exerted a significant influence on the level of student engagement and

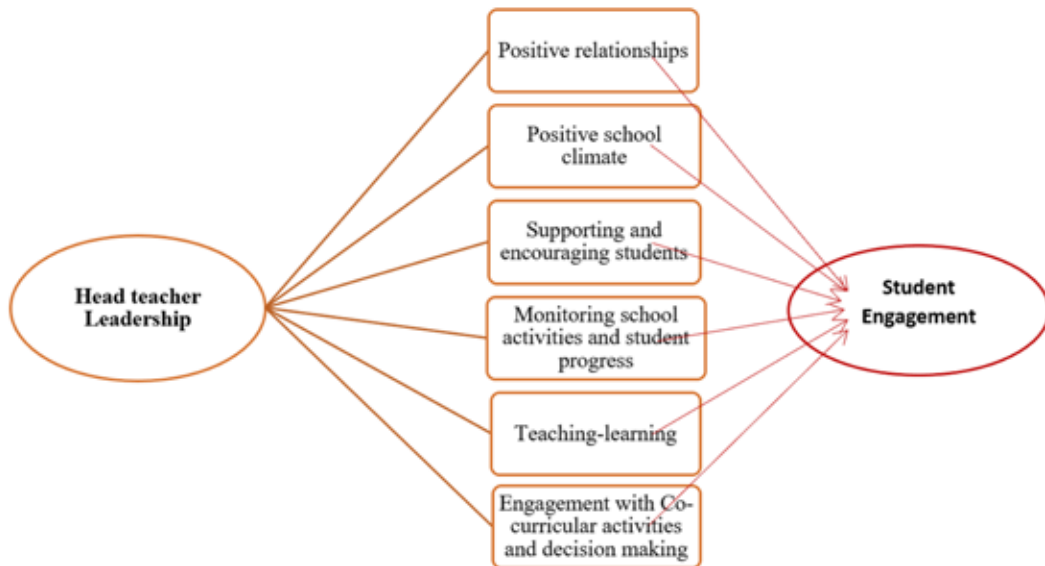
interest in educational institutions. Further conceptualization is required for three essential components, namely teacher leadership, student participation, and the interrelation between the home and school.

In a study conducted by Nelson (2018), the focus was on examining the capacity of the head teacher to enhance student engagement. The primary objective of this research endeavor was to enhance comprehension of how head teachers exert their effect on student engagement inside the classroom setting. Based on the findings of the research, it can be inferred that possessing a robust sense of responsibility has a positive impact on the level of student engagement. The findings also demonstrated the importance of designing customized assistance to address the cognitive and affective needs of children, intending to foster engagement from them. Moreover, Trowler (2013) conducted a study that examined leadership strategies aimed at engaging pupils in challenging situations. The research revealed that the leadership methods employed by head teachers effectively fostered a safe atmosphere, adequate allocation of resources, transparent communication, and shared values. Furthermore, these tactics were found to enhance student engagement and participation. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Price (2015), an examination was made about the correlation between social interactions between principals and teachers, and the perspectives held by instructors on student engagement. This study establishes a correlation between the interactions occurring between principals and teachers and the perceptions held by teachers on student engagement. The majority of the direct interaction is mediated by latent trust and support beliefs. In addition, in a study, Skinner et al. (2008) investigated the perspectives of school principals on student engagement. The findings of the study indicate that to establish optimal educational environments for the entire school community, head teachers must possess a shared comprehension of diverse perspectives.

According to Stefanou et al. (2004), the role of head teachers can facilitate student engagement in decision-making processes and foster a sense of ownership. Moreover, Conner et al. (2014), indicate the head teacher's support for stimulating students' interest in learning. Furthermore, In the study conducted by Glanz et al. (2007), it was found that head teachers who exhibited high levels of engagement implemented assignment completion requirements for their students and employed a diverse range of potentially engaging instructional strategies inside their classrooms. The motivation of school leaders prompted the enhancement of instructors' knowledge as a result of their pupils' involvement in the daily operations of the school. The implementation of monitoring and supervision by the head teacher serves to promote the accurate execution of instructors' tasks and foster active student engagement in learning activities. In addition, Hulpia et al. (2009), focus on a crucial aspect of effective leadership in promoting students' school engagement involves the provision of mentorship to students and the diligent monitoring of their academic development. Furthermore, a favorable association between monitoring and overall school engagement was identified by Too et al. (2012). Additionally, Ayeni (2012) indicates that a head teacher must provide students with access to educational materials that

serve as sources of motivation, hence encouraging their active engagement in classroom activities. Besides, Marais (2011) posits that the principal's principal responsibility entails devising supplementary activities aimed at enhancing student engagement. Moreover, Khan and Iqbal (2014) emphasize students' engagement in co-curricular activities where the head teacher plays a crucial role in coordinating such events. In light of the discussion mentioned above, this study created a conceptual framework that guides to conduct of this study.

Figure-1: Conceptual Framework of head teachers' role in students' engagement



Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative approach in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of the head teacher in fostering student involvement. Focus group discussions (FGDs) are considered to be the most suitable method for gathering data in this study, since it specifically aims to explore the human viewpoints on the comprehensive evaluation of the impact of leadership practices on student engagement (Flick, 2018). Eight schools from eight divisions in Bangladesh were selected for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) based on their convenience. The Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in an online format utilizing the Zoom platform as a result of insufficient financial resources. Each focus group discussion (FGD) consisted of five participants who were purposively picked from classes six to ten. On average, the duration of each Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is approximately 50 to 55 minutes. The necessary ethical principles and practices were adhered to rigorously.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants in each study subject. Additionally, it was noted that participants have the option to withdraw from the study at any given point. To ensure the protection of participants' identities, all names mentioned in transcriptions, field notes, publications, and even those cited in focus group discussions (FGDs) are intentionally altered. FGDs were conducted based on the conceptual framework established by the researchers. The focus group discussions (FGDs) were subsequently subjected to coding and ultimately transcribed. The study employed a thematic analysis methodology. To provide a logical basis for the findings, analytical narratives are constructed for each distinct set of topics.

Results interpretation

Building positive relationships

A positive relationship between the head teacher and students is crucial to create a good academic atmosphere. The majority of students in FGDs expressed that they do not have a positive connection with the head teacher. They used to be afraid of the head teacher for nothing. They think that the head teacher is a busy person who not only supervises and monitors everything but also takes punitive action if anyone makes a mistake. The majority of students in FGD also indicated that the room of the head teacher is not available to them and that they cannot communicate with the head teacher easily. They have to wait a long time to meet with head teachers, and obviously, they have to show valid reasons to meet with head teachers. Some students complained that the head teacher interacts only with the talented students of the school and not with other students. It makes them frustrated. A student in FGD said,

"I have been studying with this school for two years. I can hardly speak to the headmaster. Sometimes he comes to our class to monitor classroom activities. But he often speaks only with first and second boys. Only once did I speak with him, but he humiliated me for a silly mistake. From then on, I always try not to meet with him."

On the other hand, few school students express that they have good relationships with their head teachers. These school head teachers take regular classes, which helps them develop a rapport with the students and regularly inquire about their well-being. Among these school students, one said that their school head teacher communicated with them regularly and told them life stories to inspire them. He engages with the students frequently to ensure their academic progress and safe transport to school. They can communicate with the head teacher for any personal or school-related issues. One student of this school narrated that,

"Our head teacher is a very nice man. He strives to do the right thing for everyone. He is very compassionate towards the students. One day, after I sliced my hand, the head teacher arranged treatment, and after sending me home with one teacher, he phoned my father for an update on my injuries."

Creating a positive school climate

A positive school culture is essential to motivating students towards learning. The majority of students from FGDs admitted that their school's head teachers cannot ensure a positive school climate. School campus security is vulnerable. Sometimes outsiders intrude upon schools and ruin the teaching-learning environment. Some students said that their school campus and toilets are dirty and messy, and some of the doors are broken. Female students often experience insecurity, mainly due to teasing, but head teachers do not take any initiative to solve these issues. Most of the students think that head teachers can engage them in a clean campus or motivate them to protest outside disturbances because they believe that unity is strength. One of them mentioned in a FGD,

“A few days ago, as I and my friend were taking water from a tubewell, a boy was making a video. We informed the head teacher of the situation, but the head teacher did not take any action. Even when we plan to protest, head teachers scold us and send us to the classroom forcefully.”

In FGDs, a few school students said that head teachers are aware of school safety and a positive learning environment. Guards are deployed at the school gates to control outsiders. These schools have a CCTV system that creates a safe atmosphere for students. If students fight on campus, the head teacher can observe it on the school's CCTV camera and manage the situation. Besides, head teachers instruct students to communicate with him immediately if any unpleasant incident occurs. Head teachers establish a discipline committee, of which some students are also members. One female student stated in FGD,

“One day a senior did something unpleasant with me, and I shared it with my friend, who is a member of the discipline committee. She and I went to the head teacher and complained about that senior. The head teacher took it seriously and built a fact-finding committee quickly. After the proof, that senior was suspended from the school for sexual harassment.”

One school student in FGD said that their head teacher is conscious of students' truancy and declared that if anyone tries to truant, he or she has to sweep the whole school campus. As a result, students do not try to truant. This school's students also said that they clean their classroom and school campus by rotation under the supervision of the head teacher. Their head teacher is strict about discipline and cleanliness. One student mentioned,

“Our school environment is very good. The school campus is very clean here. The head teacher has arranged a separate basket for keeping the garbage on the side of the field. He always motivates us to use bins and keep campus clean. He, along with us, cleans the whole campus every week.”

Supporting and encouraging students

Support and encouragement from head teachers are blessings for students. The majority of school students in FGDs mentioned that their head teachers were supportive of academic purposes. Head teachers take various steps to provide motivation and encouragement for the student's improvement. Head teachers inspire them to study more and provide incentives for good results. Sometimes head teachers arrange quizzes and essay competitions that motivate students to learn. Besides, head teachers used to appraise them for their good performance in any event. However, head teachers of some schools support poor but meritorious students by providing free books, dresses, scholarships, and exemptions from fees. Even if any student stops attending school due to a financial crisis, they are financially assisted by the head teachers. All these initiatives support students' studies and increase their spontaneous engagement in learning. One student in FGD stated,

“Due to my father's job loss in COVID-19, I could not pay school fees for six months. Head teacher exempted me from all the tuition fees and provided me with a scholarship to continue my studies. As a result, I get the opportunity to study, and I am making more effort to get good results.”

Head teachers motivation and appraisal inspire students to study attentively, and it helps to increase students' engagement with school activities. A student opined in FGD,

“Last year, I topped my class in terms of school attendance. The headmaster commended me in front of the whole school during the assembly. This appraisal not only inspired me but also motivated my friends to attend class every day.”

Some female students welcomed the initiative of the head teachers. They said the school's head teacher has arranged a supply of sanitary pads for the adult female students of the school to reduce absenteeism. One of the female students mentioned,

“One day, suddenly, my menstruation started in school. It was a weird situation. I felt shy but discussed it with our class, madam. After the madam discussed the issue with the head teacher, the head teacher instructed the madam to collect sanitary pads. He assured the madam to provide the necessary funds from the school to supply sanitary pads at all times.”

On the other hand, a few school students indicated that they did not get enough support from the head teachers. Head teachers just do their routine work and do not take any actions to increase student engagement. One student indicated in FGD,

“Our school's principal is not sufficiently supportive of us. If we face any problem, head teachers show reluctance to solve it. If any student drops out for financial or any other reason, the head teacher does not take that issue seriously. Even so, he is not eager to engage students in different school activities.”

Monitoring school activities and student progress

The majority of the students in FGDs admitted that head teachers used to monitor and supervise school activities and student progress. At least once every day, head teachers monitor the whole school. If an issue arises, the head teacher attempts to resolve it. Most of the head teachers regularly checked their attendance sheets. If they find any irregular students, then call the guardian. Head teachers also engage students to find out the reasons for the absenteeism of their peers. In addition to overseeing the classroom, head teachers also monitor the class test results. Head teachers provide feedback based on the results and inspire students to eradicate their weaknesses in learning and engage them in different learning activities. One student said in FGD,

“Some of our friends are weak in English and have failed in that subject. So, the head teacher has taken the initiative to conduct extra classes after school. Our English teacher conducts that extra class, and sometimes the head teacher comes and takes the class.”

Head teachers also consult with guardians if students' progress is not satisfactory. They provide suggestions to the guardians on how to take extra care. One student informed in FGD,

“I used to get good results, but last year I could not achieve a good score because I was addicted to video games. The head teacher called me into his office, and for his cross-examination, I admitted my addiction. He advised me to control my video game addiction and called my guardian. Though I was afraid, he just suggested to my parents that they give me more time.”

On the contrary, few school students had a negative view of the head teacher's monitoring and supervision. These schools' head teachers do not monitor students learning progress and do not take any initiative to engage students in learning. Even then, they do not supervise regular school activities. One of the students at this school said in a harsh tone in FGD,

“The head teacher of our school does not come to the school regularly. He is a local politician and is busy with politics most days. When he comes, most of the time he gossips with teachers and signs documents but doesn't care how the school is going on.”

Teaching-learning

The majority of students in FGD admitted that head teachers instructed class teachers to engage students in the teaching-learning process. Head teachers discourage one-way teaching. They visited classrooms and suggested teachers conduct classes using group work, peer work, and question-answer techniques, but teachers hardly followed the head teacher's instructions due to large class sizes and time constraints. Sometimes head teachers take participatory classes. Head teachers ask questions of the students and try to get answers from them through brainstorming.

Sometimes they divide the class into groups and conduct classes through presentations. Students enjoy participatory classes, but they rarely get head teacher classes, except for two school students who mentioned that they get the opportunity to attend head teacher classes regularly. One of the students at this school opined in FGD,

“Our head teacher takes very enjoyable classes. He always gives priority to our opinions. He follows diversified methods in which we, the students, play a vital role. He engages all students in his classes. We learn a lot of things with fun in his classes.”

Hands-on activities and practical classes are effective ways to engage students, but the majority of the students informed me that the hands-on activities and practical classes were not held continuously. Students who take agriculture and home economics just attend practical examinations without getting any practical classes. Students from humanities and business studies do not get any opportunity to do any hands-on activities or practical classes. Head teachers do not take any initiative to increase practical-based learning for humanities and business studies students. However, science students get the opportunity to do practical classes regularly. Head teachers arrange the necessary learning materials for them. One of the students opined

“I am studying science. To say that for a science class, the head teacher has arranged all the materials required in the practical class It helps us understand science topics with hands-on experience.”

Engagement with co-curricular activities and decision-making

For the development of the overall system of school, the head teachers of almost every school attempt to foster a collaborative atmosphere among students through co-curricular activities. The majority of the students said that head teachers organize extracurricular activities at the school where students work together. The school’s head teachers plan various events on different days. Head teachers arrange quiz competitions, art competitions, debate competitions, and essay competitions on various school days. Some students said that head teachers held different events at the school to mark the day on February 21, December 16, March 26, August 15, etc. All of these programs’ tasks are split among the students. One of them said in FGD,

“On March 26 of last year, our school hosted a cultural program. I was the prime responsibility of the event’s management committee. The headmaster gave me the freedom to take all the decisions to conduct the program properly “.

Additionally, several schools have BNCC, scouts, girl guides, and yellow bird groups. In each of them, the head teacher selects students and assigns them various tasks. Most of the students indicated that the head teacher gives a lot of importance to the decisions of the students in problem-solving. Also, the school has different days or events, and the head teacher asks the

students what kind of competitions they would like to see at those events. Some students at a school also said that they told the head teacher about the essay competition and poetry recitation competition at their school. The head teacher prioritized their opinions and organized the essay competition every year. Students at some schools mentioned that their head teacher informs them in advance of any event what the competition will be and what the students want to do. If the students need anything outside of the head teacher's list, the head teacher tries to implement it. One student mentioned,

“All the cultural programs are organized into one event, but the essay competition was not organized. I am not very good at sports, so I requested that sir organize an essay competition along with sports. Later, he organized an essay competition with my opinion.”

Discussion

This study found according to the student perceptions that most head teachers did not do enough to foster positive interactions with pupils that would raise engagement levels. According to the school's students' voices in this study, head teachers don't regularly attend classes to foster good relationships with students. The majority of students in this study felt that the head teachers were unfriendly. This finding conflicts with that of Supovitz et al. (2010). Supovitz et al. (2010) claim that strong relationships act as a bridge between educational leadership and student learning. The results of this study show that head teachers in the United States participate in sports with children on the playground, sing in some shows, and share meals at some events. Students are encouraged to participate in school by their head teachers' strong relationships with them.

A positive climate at school is crucial for student participation. The leadership of the school head teacher is crucial to the success of the school. According to this study, the majority of head teachers are unable to guarantee a pleasant learning environment for students. The majority of head teachers are unable to make schools safe. Outsiders disturb students in a variety of ways, such as by teasing, invading the school grounds, and disrupting the learning environment, yet head teachers fail to take the necessary steps to stop these disturbances. This research contrasts with that of Bergmark (2008), who found that students do better in school when they are learning in surroundings that prioritize politeness, well-being, and gratitude. In this study, some head teachers installed CCTV cameras throughout the campus to safeguard the pupils. Similar findings were published by Riaz & Sultan (2017), who found that head teachers focus on school safety environments such as building repair, CCTV installation, instructional construction, and boundary barriers. However, this study shows that head teachers are unable to give female students protection, but according to Abrahams et al. (2006), the school head takes every precaution to ensure the safety of female students.

The results of the study also show that the head teachers have taken various actions to inspire and motivate children to learn. In front of the entire class, head instructors encourage students and recognize them for their academic success. Different actions are taken by head teachers to address students' weaknesses in any topic. These results are consistent with those of Leech et al. (2003), who showed that head teachers motivate their students to work hard and make creative, important efforts to raise students' performance. However, this study showed based on student perceptions that some head teachers went above and beyond to inspire underachievers. The head teachers exempt fees from the meritorious, poor kids; instead, they give them free books also. Norviewu-Mortty's (2012)'s findings, which said that competent head teachers try to solve problems in underprivileged rural schools in Ghana by providing books and other essential teaching and learning resources,

The future growth of the student engagement with a school depends on the monitoring of the educational system (Kabeta, 2020). The present study shows that head teachers are very active in adequately monitoring the overall system of the students learning. According to this study, head teachers constantly check on teachers' classes, students' attendance, and academic progress and take appropriate action if they discover any irregularities. Head teachers keep an eye on students' development. If students don't perform well, the head teacher works to find out why and takes the appropriate action. These findings are comparable to those of Riaz & Sultan (2017), who discovered that head teachers routinely oversee and monitor classroom activities and student learning outcomes.

According to the student perceptions in this research, head teachers place a strong emphasis on students participating in the teaching-learning process. They use group work, peer work, question-answer strategies, brainstorming, and presentations in their lessons. They encourage teachers to use a participatory approach in the classroom, although many do not due to the large class sizes and limited class periods. These results are consistent with a study by Fessehatsion, P. W. (2017), which shows that head teachers work to ensure a participatory classroom through their supervisory roles. However, this study shows that head teachers do not prioritize practical classes and hands-on learning, which are better for engaging students. However, head teachers organize all instructional materials, including the tools used in practical lessons. These results are in line with those of Gil-Flores et al. (2017), who claim that head teachers provide all educational materials, including cutting-edge technology, for instructors and pupils.

According to student perception in this study, head teachers encourage students to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities and value their feedback on these activities. Head teachers plan a variety of extracurricular events where students, assistant teachers, and parents work together. With the full participation of the students, head teachers organize various quiz competitions, art competitions, debate competitions, essay competitions, sports, and commemorate many national and international events. Similar findings were made by Leech et al. (2003), who found that empowering and engaging students to take initiative is crucial to creating a collaborative culture

through extracurricular activities. This study also emphasizes the need to involve students in the decision-making process for cultural events that benefit their growth as leaders.

Limitation

Due to the qualitative nature of this research and the selective selection of participants, the generalizability of the findings from this study is limited. There exists a greater potential for further investigation.

Acknowledgment

Students who participated in the study and volunteered their time and experiences are thanked on the researcher's behalf.

Conclusion

This study indicated based on the students' perception that head teacher leadership responsibility plays a crucial role in students' engagement in school. The study expressed that the head teachers have taken various actions to develop the students' engagement with school such as head teachers inspire and motivating children to learn properly, head teachers exempt fees from the meritorious, poor students; instead, they give them free books. According to student perceptions, head teachers constantly check on teachers' classes, students' attendance, and academic progress and take appropriate action for students' better engagement with school. Moreover, head teachers place a strong emphasis on students participating in the teaching-learning process. Head teachers encourage students to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities and value their feedback on these activities. They use group work, peer work, question-answer strategies, brainstorming, and presentations in their lessons. This study also indicated some negative aspects of head teachers based on student's perceptions which demotivated students with school engagements. The majority of the head teachers did not do enough to foster positive interactions with pupils; head teachers are unable to a pleasant learning environment for students; head teachers are fail to take the necessary steps to make school safe for the students. This study findings will help to develop an effective training framework for school head teachers' professional development regarding student engagements in classroom teaching and learning and other school activities.

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