

The Effect of Teacher-Student Reciprocal Relationships on Academic Performance in Bangladeshi Primary Schools

Robel Ahmed¹; Sourav Adhikary² & Muhammed Mahbubur Rahaman¹

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of teacher-student interactions on academic success in Bangladeshi primary schools. The study employed a mixed-methods methodology and gathered data from 320 primary students and 64 instructors/teachers across sixteen elementary schools. The data collection involved the administration of survey questionnaires for both teachers and students, and focused group interviews of students and conducting semi-structured interviews with teachers. The results revealed a strong association between positive teacher-student connections and enhanced academic performance, improved student behaviour, and increased motivation. Students who reported having positive relationships with their instructors exhibited higher levels of academic success compared to those who reported negative or neutral relationships. Moreover, instructors who fostered excellent rapport with their students demonstrated higher levels of engagement and motivation, leading to improved academic achievements among their students. These findings carry significant implications for education policy and practice, emphasizing the importance of investing in teacher training and providing support to develop positive relationships with students in Bangladeshi primary schools. By prioritizing the cultivation of teacher-student bonds, educational stakeholders can potentially yield substantial improvements in student academic achievement and overall educational outcomes.

Key Words: Teacher-Student Relationships, Reciprocal Relationships, Academic Achievement, Bangladeshi Primary School

Corresponding Author stawal@du.ac.bd robelier@du.ac.bd

Article History

Received 04/11/2023 **Revised** 05/05/2023 **Accepted** 24/12/2023

Ahmed, R., Adhikary, S. & Rahaman, M.M (2024). The effect of teacher-student reciprocal relationships on academic performance in Bangladeshi primary schools. *Teacher's World: Journal of Education and Research*, 50(1): 43-60. <https://doi.org/10.3329/twj.v50i1.74903>

Note: This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-SA 4.0) license. Published by the Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka

Introduction

Teacher-student relationships play a vital role in shaping the educational experience and



¹ Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

² Government Teachers' Training College, Khulna, Bangladesh

academic outcomes of students. In the context of Bangladeshi primary schools, the impact of these relationships on academic achievement is an area of significant interest and importance. This research aims to explore and understand the influence of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools. By examining the nature of these relationships and their effects, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on educational practices and provide insights for improving educational outcomes in Bangladesh.

The quality of teacher-student relationships has been recognized as a crucial factor in educational settings worldwide. The interactions and connections between teachers and students can greatly influence student engagement, motivation, and overall academic success. In Bangladeshi primary schools, where the educational landscape faces various challenges, understanding the impact of teacher-student relationships becomes particularly important. By examining these relationships, we can gain valuable insights into effective teaching practices and identify areas where interventions can be implemented to enhance academic achievement.

Bangladesh has made significant strides in expanding access to primary education. However, ensuring quality education and improving academic achievement remain critical objectives. Teacher-student relationships have been found to have a profound impact on student learning outcomes, as well as social and emotional development. In Bangladeshi primary schools, where resources may be limited and classrooms overcrowded, the role of teacher-student relationships becomes even more crucial in creating a conducive learning environment. By understanding the significance of these relationships, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders can make informed decisions to promote positive interactions and improve academic outcomes.

Research has shown that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with a range of benefits for students. Students who have positive connections with their teachers tend to be more engaged in the learning process, exhibit higher levels of motivation, and demonstrate improved academic achievement (Hughes et al., 2008; Roorda et al., 2011; Wang & Eccles, 2013). Conversely, negative or strained relationships can lead to disengagement, decreased motivation, and lower academic performance (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Therefore, investigating teacher-student relationships in the context of Bangladeshi primary schools is crucial for understanding the factors that contribute to academic achievement and identifying strategies to improve educational outcomes.

Rational of the Study

Relationships between teachers and students in primary schools have a critical role in determining students' academic success as well as their entire educational experiences. The importance of teacher-student interactions has been emphasized by a large body of literature (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Roorda et al., 2011), but there is still a significant research gap regarding the reciprocal nature of these relationships and how they directly affect academic performance, particularly

in the particular context of Bangladeshi primary schools. By examining the reciprocal nature of teacher-student relationships and their impact on academic achievements in Bangladesh, this study seeks to close this gap.

Understanding Reciprocal Relationships

Mutual respect, trust, support, and communication are all part of reciprocal relationships between instructors and students, which provide a supportive and stimulating learning environment. These dynamic interactions have the potential to have a big impact on students' general development and academic success (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). But more research is needed to fully understand the complex dynamics of these interactions, including how they develop and how they affect academic achievement. In order to offer a more comprehensive knowledge of teacher-student reciprocity in the Bangladeshi educational system, this study aims to explore these interactions.

Contextual Factors in Bangladeshi Primary Schools

Primary schools in Bangladesh offer a distinctive environment that is defined by a range of sociocultural origins, different educational resources, and unique pedagogical techniques. The relationship between teachers and students is made more complex by these elements, which is why it is crucial to examine these exchanges in this particular setting. It is important to comprehend the functioning of reciprocal connections in this specific scenario in order to formulate customized educational techniques that improve student achievement (Ahsan & Islam, 2017). The purpose of this research is to investigate these contextual subtleties to provide culturally and contextually appropriate solutions.

Contribution to Existing Literature

The benefits of having a positive teacher-student connection have been well-documented in the literature. However, these interactions have frequently been viewed unidirectional, with the majority of the attention being on the teacher's influence over the student (Hughes et al., 2008). This study sets itself apart by highlighting the reciprocal nature of these relationships and acknowledging that students have a major influence on instructors' attitudes and actions, which in turn have an impact on the learning environment and results (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003). This research provides a more comprehensive perspective by looking at both sides of the connection, which can help us understand how to develop successful teaching strategies.

Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The study's conclusions have a significant impact on educational practice and policy. By emphasizing the significance of mutually beneficial teacher-student relationships, the research

offers practical advice for educators and interested parties. It emphasizes the importance of professional development initiatives which give educators the tools they need to establish and maintain a strong, mutually beneficial connection with their pupils. Furthermore, it promotes laws that encourage reduced class sizes, sufficient funding, and a positive learning environment that fosters these connections (Wang & Eccles, 2013).

In conclusion, this study seeks to shed light on the impact of teacher-student reciprocal relationships on academic performance in Bangladeshi primary schools, thereby contributing to the advancement of knowledge in educational psychology and informing evidence-based practices aimed at fostering optimal learning experiences and outcomes for students.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are as follows:

- a. To examine the nature of teacher-student relationships in Bangladeshi primary schools.
- b. To investigate the effect of positive teacher-student relationships on academic achievement.
- c. To explore the role of teacher-student relationships in student engagement and motivation.
- d. To identify the challenges and barriers that may hinder the development of positive teacher-student relationships in the context of Bangladeshi primary schools.

By addressing these objectives, this study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge base on the significance of teacher-student relationships and their impact on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools. The findings of this research can inform educational policies, teacher training programs, and school practices, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes and fostering a positive learning environment for students in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

The quality of teacher-student relationships has been recognized as a critical factor in shaping students' academic achievement and overall educational outcomes. In Bangladeshi primary schools, where students spend a significant portion of their formative years, understanding the impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement becomes crucial. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive synthesis of research studies conducted on this topic, examining the significance of teacher-student relationships and their influence on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools.

Theoretical Perspectives on Teacher-Student Relationships

1.1 Social-Cognitive Theory

According to social-cognitive theory, teacher-student relationships are seen as important determinants of students' academic achievement. The literature suggests that positive relationships characterized by trust, support, and mutual respect contribute to increased student engagement, motivation, and self-efficacy, which, in turn, enhance academic outcomes (Birch & Ladd, 1997).

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory emphasizes the emotional bond between teachers and students. Research indicates that secure teacher-student attachments promote a safe and nurturing learning environment, leading to improved academic achievement, self-regulation, and socio-emotional development (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Empirical Research on Teacher-Student Relationships and Academic Achievement

Academic Engagement and Motivation

Several studies have shown that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher levels of academic engagement and motivation. Students who experience supportive relationships with their teachers are more likely to actively participate in class, show enthusiasm for learning, and exhibit higher levels of effort and persistence (Roorda et al., 2011).

Academic Performance and Achievement

The impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement has been consistently documented. Research suggests that students who have positive relationships with their teachers tend to perform better academically, as evidenced by higher grades, test scores, and overall achievement levels (Wang & Eccles, 2013).

Importance of Teacher-Student Relationships for Academic Achievement, Student Behaviour, and Motivation

The literature underscores the significance of teacher-student relationships, highlighting their association with enhanced academic achievement, improved student behaviour, and increased motivation (Pekrun et al., 2017; Roorda et al., 2011). Positive relationships, characterized by mutual respect, trust, and care, are fostered through clear communication and high expectations (Roorda et al., 2011). Conversely, negative relationships marked by conflict or distance are linked to lower academic achievement and heightened behavioural challenges (Pekrun et al., 2017).

Teacher-Student Relationships in Bangladeshi Primary Schools Perceptions and Challenges

In the specific context of Bangladeshi primary schools, studies indicate an overall positive perception of teacher-student relationships, with teachers being seen as caring and supportive (Ahsan & Islam, 2017). However, various obstacles hinder the establishment and maintenance of such relationships, including large class sizes, limited resources, and cultural factors that impede communication and interaction (Ahsan & Islam, 2017; Rahman et al., 2020). Consequently, examining the impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement within the Bangladeshi primary school setting becomes essential.

Cultural Context of Teacher-Student Relationships in Bangladeshi Primary Schools

Respect for Authority and Teacher-Student Interactions

In the cultural context of Bangladeshi primary schools, where respect for authority is valued, teacher-student relationships are often characterized by a hierarchical dynamic. However, research indicates that fostering positive teacher-student relationships within this context is crucial for academic success, as it enhances students' motivation, self-esteem, and sense of belonging (Birch & Ladd, 1997).

Role of Educational Policies and Practices

Educational policies and practices in Bangladesh play a significant role in shaping teacher-student relationships. Studies highlight the importance of supportive professional development programs for teachers, emphasizing the development of effective communication skills, empathy, and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

The literature reviewed demonstrates the significant impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools. Positive relationships characterized by trust, support, and respect have been consistently associated with increased academic engagement, motivation, and achievement. While the cultural context and educational policies in Bangladesh shape these relationships, it is evident that investing in professional development programs for teachers and creating supportive classroom environments can yield positive outcomes for students' academic success.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is anchored in the social learning theory, which asserts that learning is a social process that transpires through observation and interaction (Bandura, 1977). This theory serves as a foundation for understanding the influence of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement and motivation. The framework suggests that positive

teacher-student relationships contribute to the creation of a supportive and engaging learning environment, facilitating the learning process.

According to the social learning theory, individuals acquire knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes by observing and imitating others. In the context of education, students learn not only from formal instruction but also through the observation and interaction with their teachers. Positive teacher-student relationships provide an environment where students can observe and learn from their teachers' instructional practices, behaviour, and attitudes.

In the proposed framework, positive teacher-student relationships are regarded as a crucial component of the learning process. These relationships are characterized by mutual respect, trust, and care, fostering a sense of psychological safety and belongingness within the classroom. Students feel supported and valued, which promotes their engagement in the learning process.

The conceptual framework suggests that positive teacher-student relationships have a direct impact on academic achievement. When students feel connected to their teachers and perceive them as caring and supportive, they are more likely to be motivated to learn, actively participate in classroom activities, and persist in the face of challenges. This heightened motivation and engagement translate into improved academic performance and achievement.

The framework also recognizes the reciprocal nature of teacher-student relationships. As teachers develop positive relationships with their students, they become more attuned to their students' individual needs, preferences, and learning styles. This understanding allows teachers to tailor their instructional approaches and strategies, further enhancing student learning and achievement.

In summary, the conceptual framework posits that positive teacher-student relationships, based on the principles of social learning theory, create a supportive and engaging learning environment. This environment promotes academic achievement and motivation by facilitating the observation and imitation of effective teaching practices, fostering a sense of belongingness, and nurturing students' intrinsic motivation to learn. By employing this framework, the study seeks to explore the impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement in the specific context of Bangladeshi primary schools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used the QUAL-quant mixed-approaches research design, which includes both quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analytic methods. Using this method, a complete knowledge of the influence of teacher-student interactions on academic attainment in Bangladeshi primary schools was obtained. The combination of qualitative data, such as interviews and thematic analysis, with quantitative data acquired through surveys allowed for

a more in-depth investigation of the research issue. Qualitative approaches provided in-depth insights and participant views, while quantitative data supported and confirmed the qualitative findings, ensuring the study was robust and triangulated (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2019), mixed-method designs combine the strengths of qualitative and quantitative research to provide a more complete understanding of complex phenomena.

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size

This study's sample included 320 pupils and 64 teachers/instructors from sixteen primary schools in Bangladesh. The pupils were in grades 3-5 and varied in age from eight to twelve years. A purposive sample technique was used to choose schools and participants, taking into account criteria such as regional representation and school diversity. We collected data from eight administrative divisions in Bangladesh, each with one government primary school and one non-government school chosen for their representation across various areas. The research included a total of 20 students from each institution. Similarly, four instructors from each school were invited to participate in our study. Our collected data guaranteed that the sample covered a diverse variety of backgrounds and experiences, which added to the findings' validity and generalizability. In this aspect, the study followed Patton's (2015) methodology, since purposeful sampling enabled the selection of participants who could give rich and different viewpoints on the research issue.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection process employed a combination of surveys, focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive and diverse insights from both students and teachers. Surveys were administered to students and teachers to obtain quantitative data on teacher-student relationships, academic achievement, and student motivation. These surveys were carefully designed, incorporating validated scales and items from previous studies to ensure reliability and validity (Cohen et al., 2013; Roorda et al., 2011).

In addition to surveys, focus group interviews were conducted with students to gather qualitative data. The focus group interviews provided a platform for students to express their perspectives, experiences, and perceptions related to teacher-student relationships. Moreover, the semi-structured interview with the teachers were provided additional qualitative data, which ensured depth and richness to the study, capturing nuances and personal narratives that quantitative measures alone may not reveal (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data underwent rigorous analysis to derive meaningful insights. Quantitative

data from the surveys were analysed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analysis. These analyses allowed for the examination of relationships between variables, assessing the influence of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement and student motivation (Field, 2013).

Qualitative data from the focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, following established procedures of coding, categorization, and interpretation. This approach facilitated the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and narratives related to teacher-student relationships and their impact on academic achievement (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

By utilizing a mixed-methods approach and employing appropriate data analysis techniques, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools.

Results Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools. The results of the study are presented in a clear and organized manner, highlighting the relationship between teacher-student interactions and academic achievement. Additionally, the impact of positive relationships on student conduct and motivation is discussed.

Nature of teacher-student relationships in Bangladeshi primary schools

The examination of teacher-student relationships within Bangladeshi primary schools revealed nuanced insights into the nature and dynamics of these crucial interactions. Through quantitative analysis of data collected from a sample comprising 320 students and 64 primary teachers, this section delves into key findings pertaining to the quality and characteristics of teacher-student relationships in the context of Bangladeshi primary education.

Perceived Quality of Teacher-Student Relationships

Analysis of survey responses from students indicated a generally positive perception of teacher-student relationships within Bangladeshi primary schools. A majority of students (approximately 75%) reported feeling respected and valued by their teachers, indicating a supportive and nurturing environment conducive to learning. Furthermore, over 80% of students expressed satisfaction with the level of communication and interaction with their teachers, highlighting a sense of trust and rapport between students and educators.

Teacher Perspectives on Relationship Dynamics

Insights gleaned from teacher surveys provided valuable perspectives on the nature of teacher-student relationships from the educator's standpoint. A significant proportion of teachers (approximately 70%) expressed a strong commitment to fostering positive relationships with their students, emphasizing the importance of empathy, understanding, and mutual respect in facilitating academic success. Additionally, qualitative feedback from teachers underscored the role of personalized attention and individualized support in cultivating meaningful connections with students, transcending beyond the traditional role of instruction to encompass mentorship and guidance.

Factors Influencing Teacher-Student Relationships

Quantitative analysis revealed several factors influencing the nature of teacher-student relationships in Bangladeshi primary schools. Among these, class size emerged as a significant predictor, with smaller class sizes associated with more favourable perceptions of teacher-student interactions. Additionally, teacher experience and pedagogical approach were found to impact relationship dynamics, with experienced teachers and those employing student-centred instructional methods demonstrating greater efficacy in fostering positive relationships with students.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings of this study have important implications for educational practice and policy in Bangladesh. The emphasis on nurturing positive teacher-student relationships underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive school climate that prioritizes interpersonal connections and emotional well-being alongside academic achievement. Moreover, the identification of factors influencing relationship dynamics provides actionable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to optimize learning environments and promote student engagement and success.

In conclusion, the quantitative analysis of teacher-student relationships in Bangladeshi primary schools highlights the critical role of interpersonal connections in shaping educational experiences and outcomes. By fostering positive relationships characterized by mutual respect, trust, and communication, educators can create nurturing learning environments that support the holistic development and academic success of all students.

The Effect of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships on Academic Achievement

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between positive teacher-student relationships and academic achievement scores among the 320 students in the study sample.

Descriptive statistics revealed a mean academic achievement score of 70% with a standard deviation of 12%, indicating the variability in academic performance across the sample.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between perceived teacher-student relationship quality and academic achievement scores across different subject areas. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between relationship quality and academic achievement, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.50 to 0.70 across subjects ($p < 0.05$).

Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to further examine the predictive power of positive teacher-student relationships on academic achievement, while controlling for relevant covariates such as socioeconomic status and prior academic performance. The regression model revealed a significant positive association between relationship quality and academic achievement scores, with students reporting higher relationship satisfaction achieving higher academic scores even after adjusting for covariates ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$).

Subgroup Analysis

Subgroup analyses were conducted to explore potential variations in the relationship between teacher-student relationships and academic achievement based on demographic factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and grade level. While the overall pattern of results remained consistent across subgroups, there were slight variations in the strength of the relationship, suggesting potential moderating effects of demographic variables on the association between relationship quality and academic achievement.

Discussion of Findings

The quantitative analysis provides robust evidence supporting the hypothesis that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher academic achievement scores among primary school students in Bangladesh. The significant positive correlation and regression coefficients underscore the importance of fostering supportive, nurturing relationships within the classroom as a means of enhancing student learning outcomes, which also supports Hamre & Pianta (2001)'s statements on this account.

These findings align with previous research highlighting the critical role of teacher-student relationships in academic achievement and emphasize the need for educators to prioritize relationship-building strategies as part of their instructional practices. By investing in the

cultivation of positive relationships characterized by trust, respect, and support, educators can create inclusive, supportive learning environments that promote student success and well-being.

Qualitative Insights

In addition to quantitative findings, qualitative insights gleaned from interviews with 50 primary teachers provided nuanced perspectives on the mechanisms underlying the effect of positive teacher-student relationships on academic achievement. Teachers consistently emphasized the role of supportive, nurturing relationships in fostering student engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes.

Qualitative data revealed instances where strong teacher-student bonds facilitated enhanced communication, personalized instruction, and individualized support, thereby addressing students' diverse learning needs and promoting academic success. Teachers highlighted the importance of empathy, encouragement, and trust in cultivating positive relationships with students, fostering a conducive learning environment where students feel valued, respected, and empowered to excel academically.

Integrated Analysis

Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings offers a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impact of positive teacher-student relationships on academic achievement. The quantitative data underscore the statistical significance of relationship quality as a predictor of academic performance, while qualitative insights provide rich context and depth to the underlying processes and mechanisms at play.

By triangulating quantitative and qualitative evidence, this study elucidates the reciprocal nature of teacher-student relationships and their transformative effect on student learning outcomes. The findings underscore the importance of nurturing positive relationships characterized by trust, respect, and support as a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning practices in primary education settings.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings of this study have profound implications for educational practice and policy, emphasizing the critical role of positive teacher-student relationships in promoting academic achievement and fostering holistic student development. Educators and policymakers are urged to prioritize strategies aimed at cultivating supportive, nurturing relationships within the classroom, recognizing the intrinsic value of interpersonal connections in enhancing educational experiences and outcomes.

Furthermore, professional development programs and teacher training initiatives should incorporate modules on relationship-building strategies and socio-emotional competencies to empower educators with the knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain positive connections with students. By investing in the cultivation of positive teacher-student relationships, schools can create inclusive, supportive learning environments conducive to academic success and overall well-being.

The findings of the study revealed a strong association between positive teacher-student relationships and greater academic success. Students who reported having positive ties with their instructors outperformed those who reported having negative or neutral relationships in terms of academic achievement. These results align with previous research emphasizing the importance of positive teacher-student relationships for academic outcomes.

Role of teacher-student relationships in student engagement and motivation

Qualitative Insights: Qualitative data collected from interviews with 64 primary teachers and surveys from 320 students provided valuable insights into the critical role of teacher-student relationships in fostering student engagement and motivation within Bangladeshi primary schools. Thematic analysis revealed recurring themes highlighting the multifaceted ways in which positive relationships between teachers and students contribute to student engagement and motivation.

- **Emotional Support and Validation:** Teachers emphasized the importance of providing emotional support and validation to students as a means of promoting engagement and motivation. Qualitative data revealed instances where students expressed feelings of connection and belonging when teachers demonstrated empathy, understanding, and encouragement. Teachers, in turn, recognized the impact of positive affirmation and validation on students' self-esteem and intrinsic motivation to succeed academically.
- **Personalized Attention and Individualized Support:** Teachers underscored the significance of personalized attention and individualized support in fostering student engagement and motivation. Qualitative data highlighted instances where teachers went above and beyond their instructional duties to address students' unique learning needs and interests. By tailoring instruction, providing constructive feedback, and offering additional support where needed, teachers were able to cultivate a sense of agency and ownership among students, fuelling their motivation to learn and succeed.
- **Trust and Rapport:** The establishment of trust and rapport emerged as a cornerstone of positive teacher-student relationships, with both teachers and students emphasizing its impact on student engagement and motivation. Qualitative data revealed that students were more likely to actively participate in classroom activities and take academic risks when they felt valued, respected, and trusted by

their teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, acknowledged the reciprocal nature of trust-building, noting that open communication, consistency, and authenticity were essential for fostering trusting relationships with students.

- **Role Modelling and Mentorship:** Teachers played a pivotal role as mentors and role models in shaping student engagement and motivation. Qualitative data highlighted instances where teachers served as positive influences on students' attitudes, behaviours, and aspirations. By modelling enthusiasm for learning, perseverance in the face of challenges, and a growth mind-set, teachers inspired students to take ownership of their education, set ambitious goals, and strive for excellence.
- **Cultivating a Supportive Learning Environment:** Both teachers and students recognized the importance of cultivating a supportive learning environment characterized by mutual respect, collaboration, and inclusivity. Qualitative data revealed that positive teacher-student relationships fostered a sense of belonging and community within the classroom, where students felt safe to express themselves, take risks, and engage in meaningful learning experiences. Teachers emphasized the role of classroom culture and norms in promoting student engagement and motivation, highlighting the importance of creating a conducive atmosphere that celebrates diversity and fosters mutual respect.

Challenges and Barriers to Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

Qualitative Insights: Qualitative data collected from interviews with 64 primary teachers and surveys from 320 students provided valuable insights into the challenges and barriers that may hinder the development of positive teacher-student relationships within Bangladeshi primary schools. The thematic analysis revealed several recurring themes, shedding light on the complex dynamics and contextual factors influencing relationship dynamics in the classroom.

- **Large Class Sizes:** One of the most commonly cited challenges identified by both teachers and students was the issue of large class sizes. Teachers expressed concerns about managing classrooms with a high student-to-teacher ratio, noting that larger class sizes often limited their ability to provide individualized attention and support to students. Students, in turn, expressed feelings of anonymity and disconnection in overcrowded classrooms, highlighting the need for smaller class sizes to facilitate meaningful teacher-student interactions.
- **Resource Constraints:** Resource constraints emerged as another significant barrier to positive teacher-student relationships within Bangladeshi primary schools. Teachers reported limited access to educational materials, insufficient classroom space, and inadequate teaching aids, which hindered their ability to create engaging and interactive learning environments. Students echoed these sentiments, expressing frustration with outdated textbooks, lack of technological resources, and inadequate facilities, which impeded their engagement and participation in classroom activities.

- **Socioeconomic Factors:** Socioeconomic factors were identified as key determinants of teacher-student relationships, with both teachers and students acknowledging the impact of poverty, parental involvement, and community support on relationship dynamics. Teachers highlighted the challenges faced by students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including limited access to basic necessities, unstable home environments, and financial pressures, which often manifested as behavioural issues or academic struggles in the classroom.
- **Cultural Norms and Expectations:** Cultural norms and societal expectations were cited as influential factors shaping teacher-student relationships within Bangladeshi primary schools. Teachers discussed the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in navigating diverse cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs among students. However, they also noted instances where cultural norms, such as gender roles or hierarchical structures, posed challenges to establishing egalitarian relationships with students, particularly among marginalized groups.
- **Communication Barriers:** Communication barriers emerged as a recurring theme affecting teacher-student relationships, particularly in multilingual or ethnically diverse classrooms. Teachers highlighted the challenges of effectively communicating with students who spoke different languages or dialects, as well as those with limited literacy skills. Students, on the other hand, expressed frustration with language barriers and perceived misunderstandings, which hindered their ability to connect with teachers and seek academic support.
- **Professional Challenges:** Teachers also identified professional challenges, such as heavy workloads, administrative pressures, and lack of professional development opportunities, as barriers to fostering positive teacher-student relationships. These challenges often resulted in burnout, stress, and reduced job satisfaction among educators, impacting their ability to engage with students on a personal level and invest in relationship-building efforts.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The identification of challenges and barriers to positive teacher-student relationships has important implications for educational practice and policy in Bangladesh. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that addresses structural inequalities, allocates resources effectively, and promotes cultural competence and sensitivity among educators. Moreover, efforts to reduce class sizes, enhance teacher training programs, and foster greater community involvement can contribute to creating a supportive, inclusive learning environment conducive to positive teacher-student relationships.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be made to foster positive teacher-student relationships in Bangladeshi primary schools and incorporate these

recommendations into educational policies and practices. These recommendations aim to enhance academic achievement, improve student conduct, and promote a supportive learning environment.

- 1. *Teacher Training and Professional Development:*** Invest in comprehensive teacher training programs that emphasize the importance of building positive relationships with students. Provide teachers with the necessary skills and strategies to establish and maintain positive connections, such as effective communication, active listening, and empathy. Regular professional development workshops and mentorship programs can further support teachers in developing their relationship-building skills.
- 2. *Promote Small Class Sizes and Supportive Classrooms:*** Reduce class sizes to allow for more personalized interactions between teachers and students. Smaller class sizes create opportunities for individualized attention, fostering stronger relationships. Additionally, create supportive classroom environments that encourage collaboration, respect, and open communication. Provide resources and materials that promote a positive learning atmosphere.
- 3. *Implement Student Support Systems:*** Establish student support systems within schools to address the socio-emotional needs of students. These systems can include counselling services, peer support groups, and mentoring programs. By providing additional support, students will feel valued and supported, leading to stronger teacher-student relationships.
- 4. *Encourage Parent-Teacher Collaboration:*** Promote active collaboration between parents and teachers to strengthen the teacher-student relationship. Regular parent-teacher conferences and open communication channels can facilitate a better understanding of each student's needs and progress. Involving parents in their child's education creates a supportive network that reinforces positive relationships.
- 5. *Foster a Positive School Culture:*** Create a positive school culture that values and promotes positive teacher-student relationships. This can be achieved through school-wide initiatives, such as implementing recognition programs for teachers who excel in relationship-building, organizing school events that celebrate positive interactions, and incorporating social-emotional learning into the curriculum.
- 6. *Allocate Resources for Supportive Interventions:*** Allocate resources to support interventions that focus on fostering positive teacher-student relationships. This may include funding for professional development programs, class materials, and extracurricular activities that facilitate relationship-building. Investing in these resources demonstrates the commitment to creating an environment conducive to positive interactions.
- 7. *Incorporate Relationship-Building Strategies in Curriculum:*** Integrate relationship-building strategies into the curriculum to enhance students' social skills and promote positive interactions. Teach students conflict resolution techniques, empathy, and effective communication skills. By explicitly teaching and reinforcing these skills, students can develop healthy relationships with their teachers and peers.

8. **Continuously Evaluate and Assess:** Regularly evaluate and assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies and interventions in fostering positive teacher-student relationships. Collect feedback from teachers, students, and parents to identify areas for improvement and refine approaches accordingly. This feedback loop ensures that efforts to enhance relationships are continuously informed by the needs and experiences of those involved.

By implementing these recommendations, primary schools in Bangladesh can create a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters positive teacher-student relationships. These strategies not only contribute to improved academic achievement but also promote students' socio-emotional development. It is crucial for educational policies and practices to prioritize and incorporate these recommendations to create a foundation for successful educational experiences and outcomes.

Conclusion

This study has shed light on the significant impact of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools. The findings have highlighted the importance of fostering positive relationships characterized by mutual respect, trust, and care. By summarizing the key findings, reinforcing the importance of these relationships, and discussing the need for further research, this conclusion aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implications and policy implications of this study. The potential benefits of investing in teacher training and support go beyond academic achievement. Positive teacher-student relationships contribute to the holistic development of students, nurturing their socio-emotional well-being and promoting positive attitudes towards learning. By prioritizing the development of these relationships, schools can create a positive and supportive school culture that enhances student engagement and overall educational experience.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence supporting the significant effect of teacher-student relationships on academic achievement in Bangladeshi primary schools. The findings highlight the importance of positive relationships in fostering academic success, improving student conduct, and enhancing motivation. These results contribute to the existing body of literature and align with the social learning theory. The implications of these findings for educational policy and practice emphasize the value of investing in teacher training and support to develop positive relationships. By doing so, schools can create an optimal learning environment that promotes student achievement and overall well-being.

References

- Ahsan, N., & Islam, M. M. (2017). Teacher-student relationship in primary schools of Bangladesh: A qualitative study. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(4), 106-116.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(4), 589-597.
- Birch, S. H., & Ladd, G. W. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children's early school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology, 35*(1), 61-79.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage Publications.
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. Sage Publications.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. W. (2019). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (12th ed.). Pearson.
- Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2001). Early teacher-child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade. *Child Development, 72*(2), 625-638.
- Hughes, J. N., Cavell, T. A., & Jackson, T. (2008). Influence of the teacher-student relationship in childhood conduct problems: A prospective study. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 37*(3), 651-661.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage Publications.
- Mustary, M. (2018). Theoretical Considerations Regarding the Connection between Teacher-Student Relationship and Students' Academic Performance in Bangladesh. *Sophia University Studies in Education, 103*, 93-106.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.
- Pekrun, R., Lichtenfeld, S., Marsh, H. W., Murayama, K., & Goetz, T. (2017). Achievement emotions and academic performance: Longitudinal models of reciprocal effects. *Child Development, 88*(5), 1653-1670.
- Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Stuhlman, M. W. (2003). Relationships between teachers and children. In W. M. Reynolds & G. E. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of Psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 199-234). John Wiley & Sons.
- Rahman, M. M., Alam, M. M., & Khan, M. M. (2020). Challenges to education in Bangladesh: A qualitative study on quality of primary education in rural areas. *Journal of Education and Practice, 11*(5), 48-58.
- Raychaudhuri, A., Debnath, M., Sen, S., & Majumder, B. G. (2010). Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance: A case study in Agartala Municipal Council Area. *Bangladesh e-journal of Sociology, 7*(2).
- Roorda, D. L., Koomen, H. M., Spilt, J. L., & Oort, F. J. (2011). The influence of affective teacher-student relationships on students' school engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic approach. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(4), 493-529.
- Wang, M. T., & Eccles, J. S. (2013). School context, achievement motivation, and academic engagement: A longitudinal study of school engagement using a multidimensional perspective. *Learning and Instruction, 28*, 12-23.