Teacher-Student Relationship: Influence on Secondary School Students' Learning Outcome

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ABSTRACT

This study looked into the influence of the teacher-student relationship on secondary school economics students' learning outcomes. The study population comprised of 678 senior secondary two (SS2) students from the Awka-south LGA in Anambra state, Nigeria who were studying economics. A total of 110 SS2 students from public secondary schools served as the study's sample. Five research questions led the study, which were examined using descriptive and inferential statistics. The SS2 students showed higher levels of teacher-student relationship in economics, and, both male and female students establish excellent relationships with their teachers. Learning outcome in economics was quite high, as 92 students scored between 69 and 100 percent. The teacher-student relationship and learning outcomes are found to be related. Based on their findings, the researchers suggested that only teachers with a valid teaching qualification in economics and have passion for teaching be hired to teach the subject in secondary schools.

1. Introduction

Education has been shown to be a prerequisite for the growth of high-quality personnel and the creation of global wealth. There are various levels of education in Nigeria, including pre-primary, primary, secondary, and postsecondary education. At age 15-18, students are expected to have completed the third year of secondary education (Eleje, 2019). To prepare secondary school students with the requisite skills needed for the transformation of the economy, economics as a subject was introduced in the senior secondary school education system. Suffice it to say therefore that the learning of economics could be felt when there is a thriving teacher-student relationship.

The teacher-student relationship is the bond that exists between teachers and their students with the goal of improving the learning outcomes of students. It is the type of relationship

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between a teacher and a student that acts as a link between them, allowing for either a conducive or non-conducive learning environment (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2018). Despite the fact that the association between the teacher–student relationship, learning behaviors, and learning outcomes is complex, Lihong et al.(2017) argued that the quality of the teacher–student relationship is linked to students' enthusiasm to study. The major aim of the student-teacher relationship has shifted in recent years, with the teacher's job transitioning from "a sage on the stage" to "a mentor on the side" (Forkosh et al., 2019). Although it is obvious that the relationship between teachers and students is at the centre of teaching and learning, Brinkworth et al. (2019) argue that it is still difficult to define and quantify the relationship from the perspectives of teachers, students, or both.

Secondary school students spend an average of six and a half hours every day in school for two hundred and twenty-five (225) days per academic session. It should come as no surprise that teachers have a significant impact on their students. This power, or influence, can have a substantial impact on students' learning outcomes, which is a measure of how far a student has accomplished specific academic goals. Based on the researchers' observation as teachers, the learning outcome of students as reflected in their academic records at secondary schools in Awka-South LGA indicates that after admission, some students continue to either absent themselves from classes, come late to classes or do not pay attention during lessons. There are numerous reasons why students may not take learning seriously in schools. Could teacher-student relationship be one of the reasons? To help students learn, it is vital to identify their perceived relationship with their teachers; how the relationship influences their learning outcome and; whether gender plays a pivotal role in determining this vital relationship between teachers and their students.

Many studies have looked at the correlation between teacher-student relationships and academic achievement, but the results have been mixed, with various degrees of association. For example, some researchers (Gunuc, 2014; Krstic, 2015; Lihong et al., 2017) discovered that teacher-student relationships and students' academic perfomance are related significantly, while others (Clark, 2014; Mabin, 2016; & Mohamed et al., 2018) discovered no such relationship. The previous studies focused on how teacher-student relationship is related to students' academic achievement in various subjects, but none of them was conducted in economics; thus, the need for the current study, which aims to determine the impact of the teacher-student relationship on secondary school students' economic learning outcomes in Awka South LGA, Anambra State, Nigeria.

1.1. Statistical Tools Used

Analysis of the data obtained was through the use of descriptive statistics while the hypotheses were tested at p-value.

1.2. Research Objectives

The aims of the study are:

1. To determine the extent of the teacher-student relationships in teaching and learning of economics
2. To determine the extent of the teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of economics based on gender.
3. To see if there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the teacher-student relationship.
4. To find out the levels of students' learning outcome in economics

5. To find out if there is a correlation between the teacher-student relationship and learning outcome

2. Research Methodology

The research design was adopted in the conduct of the study was survey. This was considered appropriate because it was used to determine the opinion of students regarding their teacher-student relationship. This study was carried out on secondary school students in Awka South LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 678 senior secondary two (SS2) students offering economics in 18 public secondary schools in Awka South LGA. (The Post Primary School Service Commission, Awka, (2022). A sample of 110 SS2 economics' students was drawn from five public secondary schools in Awka South LGA through simple random sampling.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by researchers tagged ''Level of Teacher-Student Relationship in Teaching and Learning of Economics'' (LETSRETLES) and; an existing document – records of students' economics exam scores. There were two parts to the LETSRETLES: 1 and 2. Part 1 of the survey inquired about the respondents' personal information. Part 2 was a 12-item questionnaire that asked students about their perceptions of the teacher-student relationship in economics teaching and learning. Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2), and Strongly Disagree (SD=1) were four-point rating scales used in the questionnaire. The instrument was tested on a different group of students to ensure its reliability. The coefficient got was 0.84 which was high enough for the instrument to be considered reliable. The researchers collected data for the study by handing out 110 questionnaires to students on the spot with the help of three research assistants, as well as collecting students' economics, exam scores from the two schools' vice principals. After that, all of the questionnaire copies were recovered.

Because of the four-point scale utilized in the study, the mean of 2.50 was used as the cut-off point for decision making in the analysis of the research questions. As a result, any mean score of 2.50 or higher was considered "agreed," whereas mean scores of less than 2.50 were considered "disagreed." If a weighted mean score was below 2.50, it was considered "low extent," 2.50 – 3.50 was considered "moderate extent", and 3.50 and above was considered "very high extent." Students with exam scores ranging from 70% to 100% were considered to have a "High learning outcome," while those with scores ranging from 50% to 69 percent were considered to have an "Average learning outcome," and those with scores ranging from 0% to 49% were considered to have a "Low learning outcome."

3. Results

Data was analyzed in this section using the research questions as guide.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of economics as perceived by SS2 students?

Table 1.
Mean Rating of the Teacher-Student Relationship in Teaching and Learning of Economics (N= 110)

S/N	I perceive that my relationship with my teacher	SA	A	D	SD	X	REMARKS
1	Encourages me to pay close attention throughout teaching and learning.	62	38	6	2	3.42	Agreed
2	Allows me to remain at ease during lessons	74	36	-	-	3.7	Agreed
3	Makes it easier for me to go to economics class on a daily basis.	52	50	4	4	3.36	Agreed
4	Makes me feel at ease to ask questions throughout lessons.	78	28	2	2	3.65	Agreed
5	Makes me have keen interest in economics as a subject.	50	48	6	6	3.29	Agreed
6	Makes it a lot easier to approach him	75	28	3	4	3.58	Agreed
7	Has a positive impact on my economics performance	43	56	6	5	3.25	Agreed
8	Has a negative impact on my economics performance	3	7	25	75	1.44	Disagreed
9	Assists me in putting ideas into action to solve economic challenges.	65	40	2	3	3.52	Agreed
10	Encourages me to pursue economics as a subject of study.	62	36	7	5	3.39	Agreed
11	Facilitates my understanding of the lesson contents in economics	48	46	9	7	3.23	Agreed
12	Helps me make value judgment of topics taught in economics	51	55	2	2	3.41	Agreed
	Total					**3.27**	

Table 1 showed mean ratings of the teacher-student relationship as evaluated by SS 2 students. The respondents agreed on 11 out of 12 items and disagreed on only one item (*The relationship with my teacher have a negative impact on my performance in Economics)*. The total mean rating of 3.27 also revealed that there was a high extent of the teacher-student relationship.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of the teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of Economics of SS2 students based on gender?

Table 2.
Mean Rating of the Teacher-Student Relationship in Teaching and Learning of Economics as perceived by SS2 Students with Respect to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Mean Response:				
Male	40	3.26	0.3412	0.054
Female	70	3.28	0.3912	0.047

Table 2 shows the extent to which male and female SS2 students perceive the teacher-student connection in economics teaching and learning. Male and female students had total mean ratings of 3.26 and 3.28, respectively. This indicates that both genders have a high extent of the teacher-student relationship**.** The low standard deviations (0.3412, 0.3912) means that the

students' mean responses were near the group mean and that the students were not far from each other in their ratings.

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female SS 2 students on the teacher-student relationship responses?

Table 3.
t-Test of the Difference in Mean Ratings of the Teacher-Student Relationship Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean (X)	Standard deviation	df	t-Test	P-value	Decision
Male	40	3.26	.3412				
Female	70	3.28	.3912	108	-.775	.440	NS

Table 3 showed the t-test result of the difference in the mean ratings of the teacher-student relationship of male and female students. Looking at the table, t-test value of .775 was not significant at 0.440. This was because 0.440 was greater than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis was upheld.

Research Question 4: What are the levels of SS2 students' learning outcome in economics?

Table 4.
Level of SS II students' learning outcome in Economics

Scores	No of students	Percentage of Students	Grade Level
70-100	44	40%	High Learning outcome
50- 69	48	43.6%	Average Learning outcome
0 – 49	18	16.4%	Low Learning outcome
Total	**110**	**100**	

Table 4 presented the learning outcomes of students in economics in Awka South LGA. The result showed that 44 (40%) students out of the total sample size of 110 scored 70-100 in economics. They were regarded as having a high learning outcome. It was also observed based on the result that 48 (43.6%) students out of the total sample size of 110 scored 50-69 in economics. They were regarded as having an average learning outcome. Finally, 18 (16.4%) students out of the total sampled size of 110 scored 0-49 in economics which translated to "low learning outcome". Therefore, the high extent of teacher-student relationship influenced students' learning outcome positively to the extent that 92 (83.6%) students had high performance in economics.

Research question 5: Is there a correlation between teacher-student relationship and learning outcome?

Table 5.
Pearson r of the Correlation of Teacher-Student Relationship and Learning Outcome

		Mean responses	Test scores
Mean Response	Pearson Correlation	1	.495**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	110	110
Test Scores	Pearson Correlation	.495**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	110	110

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2-tailed)

Table 5 showed that the correlation between teacher-student relationship and learning outcome was .495. This implies that there was a positive but moderate relationship between the two variables.
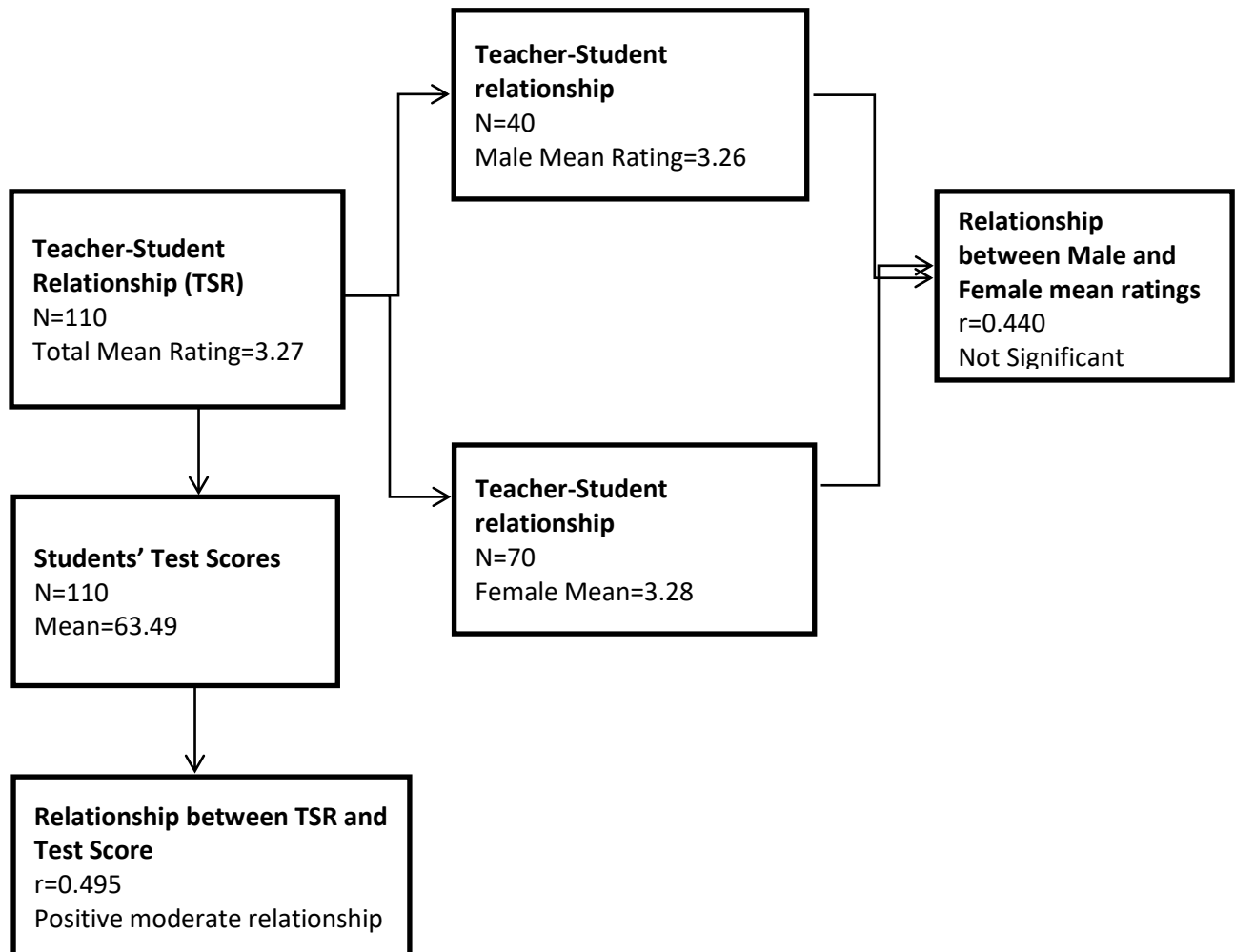

Figure 1: Summary of the results

The above figure is the summary of the results obtained from the study. With a sample of 110 students, the total mean ratings stood at 3.27(male: 3.26 and female: 3.28). The result of t-test for male and female students' mean ratings gave a p-value of 0.440 which means, *not significant.* With the total mean ratings of the sample being 3.27, and students' total mean on learning outcome as 63.49, the result of the correlation (r=0.495) means that there is a positive but moderate relationship between the two variables.

4. Discussion

The major objective of teaching and learning is to achieve positive change in the behavior of students. The results in Table 1 represented opinion of students on the level of students' relationship with their teachers in teaching and learning of economics which revealed that there were higher levels of teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of economics as perceived by the students. This was in line with prior research (Maulana, 2013; Roorda et al., 2017), which revealed that classrooms with a better teacher–student interaction performed better academically. That is, students in classrooms with a better teacher-student relationship

performed better academically than students in classes with a poor teacher-student relationship. According to Noddings (2013), if the foundation for a successful relationship is missing, it will significantly affect students' behavior. Noddings went on to say that for a healthy teacher-student connection to emerge, the student must respond in some way to the teacher, such as by "asking questions", "showing effort," or simply "cooperating." This study however disagreed with that of Mohamed et al. (2018) whose study revealed low and negative relationships between the teacher-student relationship and academic achievement.

The result in Table 2 represented opinion of male and female SS 2 students on the degree of the teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of economics. The result showed that both male and female SS2 students have a high extent of the teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of economics, although the mean rating for female students was slightly higher. This result negates that of Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2015) who asserted that most male students are amiably in a good relationship with their teachers because most of the male students reported a more cognitive and emotional engagement with their teachers as against girls that reported a lower social engagement. This result was also in contradiction with that of Hajosky et al. (2017) that discovered a reduced heterogeneity in the teacher-student relationship quality of female students as against an increase in the males. A look at the t-test of the difference in the mean teacher-student relationship ratings showed no significant difference. The non-significant difference also obtained supports the findings of Eleja et al. (2021) that there was no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement in quantitative economics. This means that both genders have a high relationship quality with their economics teachers.

The result in Table 4 presented the level of SS 2 students' learning outcome in economics in Awka South LGA. The results vividly showed that the level of SS 2 students' learning outcome in economics was very high. A higher number of students scored within 50-100 in economics. Therefore, the number of students with "high learning outcome" and "average learning outcome" was higher than the students with "low learning outcome". Simply put, the level of SS 2 students' learning outcome in economics in Awka south LGA was very high. This may be due to the fact that there was a very high extent of teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of economics in Awka south LGA.

To check whether the teacher-student relationship is related to learning outcome, the result in Table 5 revealed a positive but moderate relationship between the two variables. That is, the students' high performance in economics could be attributed to the good relationship they have with their teachers.

5. Conclusion

The relationship between teachers and their students is at the core of the teaching learning pedagogy. This research study assessed the influence of the teacher-student relationship on secondary school students' learning outcome in economics in Awka south LGA of Anambra State. The teacher-student relationship was very high and; the number of students with "high learning outcome" and "average learning outcome" was higher than the number of students with "low learning outcome". Based on study findings, the researchers concluded that the higher levels of the teacher-student relationship in teaching and learning of economics as perceived by SS2 students in Awka-south LGA influenced positively on the level of SS 2 students' learning outcome in economics.

6. Recommendations

The following suggestions were made based on findings of the study:

1. Teachers, particularly those who teach economics, should be properly compensated and provided with appropriate incentives in order to foster strong teacher-student relationships.
2. Education sector stakeholders should provide more regular seminars and workshops for teachers on the importance of creating a positive school environment that fosters positive classroom attitudes and interpersonal interactions.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to foster positive classroom attitudes and relationships with their students.

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