

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

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examined teacher-student relationship as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was a correlational research design. The population of the study was 21,272 students in the 267 public secondary schools from the six Education Zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 students (that is, 5% of students' population) was used for the study. Multistage sampling techniques comprising of proportionate stratified and simple random sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument Teacher-Student Relationship Rating Scale (TSRRS) was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instrument (TSRRS) was subjected to content and construct validation. Content validation was done by three experts while construct validation was carried out with Principal Component Analysis approach. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha technique and the average coefficient values of 0.81 for TSRRS was obtained and considered highly reliable and suitable for the study. Simple regression analysis was used for the study. The study revealed that teacher-student classroom interaction and teacher-student classroom conflict positively and significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationship is essential for students' academic success in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that teachers should visit the classroom on a regular basis to interact with their students because teacher-student interaction has a positive and significant prediction on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Anambra State and students with positive relationships with their teachers are more likely to do well academically.*

**Keywords:** Teacher-Student Relationship and Students' Academic Performance

### Introduction

Students' academic performance is how the students deal with their studies through their abilities to learn and how they accomplish different task or assignment given to them by their teachers in the classroom or outside of their classroom that resulted in excellent performance. Students' academic performance could also be the result derived from assessment of test and promotion examinations done by students in the school system or external examinations such as West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) and Senior School Certificate



Examination (SSCE) among others. Positive academic performance is one of the most important goals of the educational process but most often than not this expected positive performance is not achieved as a result of mass failure of students in both internal and external examination. It also means all effort of the students to accomplish better outcome in their internal and external examination (Onyejekwe et al 2025b). A student who consistently attends classes, actively participate in the teaching learning process, maintains good discipline, complete assignment and dedicated time to studying is likely to perform in examination. Akulue et al (2025) submitted that student who are frequently absent from school may feel anxious about falling behind or fitting in when they return to school

In the school, academic performance influences the students' concept by telling them how other judges them and how they are rated in relation to others. They also affect the amount of time and energy he can spend on social activities which reflects the students' social life. Nwachukwu and Uzoife (2022) indicated many ways in which academic performance influenced achievement outcome of students. They reported that marks earned in the examination make a tremendous difference to a student. Marks influence his estimate of himself, serve as a sign to him that he was liked or disliked, and determined whether he has to remain with classmates or instead to become (what he considers) an outcast and forced to join a group of strange students in another class. Marks help to determine whether a student thought of himself as successful, smart or as a failure, an outcast, stupid or a nitwit.

Students attend school to learn content that is conveyed to them by their instructors. Some students are more successful at attaining academic performance than others. This can be due to several factors, some of which are out of the student's control. Assimonye *et al.* (2023) asserted that academic performance is the amount of academic content a student learns in a specific period. This can be any way a student has achieved short-term or long-term academic goals within an academic setting. Academic performance must be measurable, which is why distinct goals are used as a defining characteristic. Onyejekwe et al (2025a) sees academic performance as a student's success in meeting academic expectations, such as getting good grades, participating in class and understand the material. It is a measure of student's ability to apply knowledge, engage with their studies and master subject matter. There is a time parameter that measures the amount of academic success a student has garnered. Testing and assessments are usually performed to gauge a students' academic achievement. Academic performance varies based on the lesson plan and is identified based on the students' ability to complete testing and assessments.

Contextually, academic performance is the measurement of students' success across various academic subjects. It is students' achievement and success in their educational pursuits such as overall grade point average (GPA), standardized test scores, and educational aspirations and attainment. It can be the attainment or success of students in knowledge, skill and appreciations taught in schools. It can also be the percentage of scores obtained in their subjects. Operating as socializing agents, teachers can influence students' social, intellectual and academic experiences via their abilities to instill values in them such as the motivation to learn; by providing classroom contexts that stimulate students' motivation and learning; and by serving a regulatory function for the development of emotional, behavioral and academic skills. However, teachers developing



relationships with students in the classroom may lead to positive influence on teachers' job performance and also, students' academic performance.

A teacher-student relationship in the classroom is a positive relationship between the teacher and the student in efforts to gain trust and respect from each other. This relationship may consist of getting to know the students better, providing choice and encouraging the students to become stronger learners every day. By doing this, teachers are showing respect to their students, valuing their individuality and being polite. Having a positive relationship with the students helps them become more successful in the classroom as well as makes the classroom a safe and welcoming environment for all. Enoch and Asogwa (2021) defined teacher-student relationship as a caring connection between a student and a teacher in the classroom. Continuing, Enoch and Asogwa opined that these relationships have been shown to be a protective factor for students at-risk for failure by helping them to build resiliency and self-regulation skills. However, the type of relationship that should exist between teachers and students should be warm and friendly so as to bring about effective transfer of learning among them and consequently students improved academic performance

Surely, the teacher-student relationship can help the teacher in many ways. Having a healthy teacher and student relationship can make students free from tensions and worries. If students are so close with a teacher, they will indeed discuss their problems with the teacher for solution. This will motivate them and equally build that confidence in them that the teacher is their friend and always ready to guide and direct them on the right path. Onafowo *et al.* (2024) supported teachers having qualities which will make them acceptable to the students, and enumerated these qualities as wholesome personality characteristics; leadership qualities, democratic attitude; expressive qualities of kindness, patience, good humour, consideration and sympathy; a sense of justice and fairness in dealing with children, sensitivity to the needs of children and their reactions in different situation, professional insight into the growth pattern of children showing understanding and respect, and the ability to establish good social relationship with children. In this study, two indices of teacher-student relationship such as: teacher-student classroom conflict and teacher-student classroom environment was examined.

Teacher-student conflicting relationship consists of interventions designed to reduce excessive conflict or in some instances to increase insufficient conflict. This means that conflict management is essential in order to trim down conflict where they are too much and to ensure that they are moderately present where they are absent so as to prevent stagnation, stimulate creativity and cause change to occur in social relations. Classroom conflict management therefore entails ensuring a minimum level of conflict in the classroom, so as to keep it viable, innovative and creative. This is in keeping with the advice that the teacher-student relationship be improved in order to improve the learning process and develop mutual assistance and interaction in diverse activities (Ekwelunde *et al.*, 2023). Teacher-student classroom conflict is critical to students' healthy growth in school, particularly in terms of self-esteem. Chikendu (2023) opined that the trust that develops in teacher-student relationship might influence students' academic performance. Thus, it can influence students' future paths towards academic excellence. As a result, as Akuezilo and Egenti (2024) pointed out, a positive and professional relationship



between teachers and students is critical in providing a safe environment in which students may work without feeling rushed and become motivated to learn. Okafor et al (2021) maintained that students taught in conducive environment with motivated teachers and adequate facilities will always have a good academic performance without external help or getting involved in outside WAEC or examination mal practice. Classroom should be conducive for good interaction between the teacher and student because the quality of the interaction between them could predict student's academic success (Onyekazi et al 2022).

Poor teacher-student relationships may result from the teachers' poor application of classroom management skills. Some students require tailored educational approaches since they do not respond to learning in the same way as others. When a teacher fails to regard an individual student's educational needs, relationship problems between teachers and students arise. Each student's ability to learn and interact with teachers is influenced by their personality, family backgrounds, mental processes, learning styles, priorities, maturity levels, and academic ambitions. Generally, studies by Asiegbu *et al.* (2022) and Ekwelunde *et al.* (2023) have been done on the falling standard and quality of education in Nigeria but very little research work has been carried out on teacher-student relationship in public secondary schools on students' academic performance.

The present and future implication of the academic performance of students in the senior school certificate examination (SSCE) has been a source of worry to the public and stakeholders in the education sector. Also, there is a growing concern of the society about the realization of secondary education objectives due to the personal observation of the researcher that some teachers do not have good teacher-student relationship either do they apply proper classroom management practices that could facilitate better performance of students in public secondary education in Anambra State. The attitude of some teachers to their job is reflected in their poor attendance to their lessons, lateness to school and unsavory comments about student's ability that could damage their ego, poor method of teaching and the likes as they have great effect on students' academic performance. The researcher as a secondary school teacher in Anambra State observed that the state of teacher-student relationship and poorly managed classrooms are usually characterized by disruptive behaviours such as sleeping, late coming, noise making, miscopying of notes, eating, calling of nicknames, verbal or physical threat to fellow students or the teacher. These disruptive behaviours seem to disorganize learning processes and hamper academic performance of students. Thus, the researcher deemed it necessary to examine teacher-student relationship as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

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

1. Determine the predicative value of teacher-student classroom interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Ascertain the predicative value of teacher-student classroom conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.



## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

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

## Hypotheses

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

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

## Methods

The study examined teacher-student relationship as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was a correlational research design. The population of the study was 21,272 students in the 267 public secondary schools from the six Education Zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 students (that is, 5% of students' population) was used for the study. Multistage sampling techniques comprising of proportionate stratified and simple random sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument Teacher-Student Relationship Rating Scale (TSRRS) was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instrument (TSRRS) was subjected to content and construct validation. Content validation was done by three experts while construct validation was carried out with Principal Component Analysis approach. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha technique and the average coefficient values of 0.81 for TSRRS was obtained and considered highly reliable and suitable for the study. Out of 1,064 copies of the instrument administered, 825(78%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Simple regression analysis was used for the study.

## Results

### Analysis of Research Questions

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

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

Unstandardized $\beta$	Std. Dev. $\beta$	Standardized $\beta$
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Constant	27.457	4.135	
<b>Classroom Interaction</b>	0.586	0.351	0.542
R	0.542		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.437		
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.401		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 1 indicated that teacher-student classroom interaction positively predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ( $R = 0.542$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.437 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 44% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teacher-student classroom interaction. The adjusted  $R^2$  supported the claim of the  $R^2$  with a value of 0.401 indicating that 40% of the total variation in the dependent variable (students' academic performance) was explained by the independent variable (teacher-student classroom interaction). Thus, adjusted  $R^2$  supports the statement that the explanatory power of teacher-student classroom interaction is moderately strong in determining the students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Nevertheless, the standardized beta weight ( $\beta = 0.542$ ) showed that teacher-student classroom interaction is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in teacher-student classroom interaction led to 0.542(54%) increase in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Thus, the positive prediction of teacher-student classroom interaction on students' academic performance means that students' academic performance moderately depends on teacher-student classroom interaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

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

**Table 2:** Summary of simple regression analysis on the predicative value of teacher-student classroom conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized B	Std. Dev. $\beta$	Standardized $\beta$
Constant	19.123	6.217	
<b>Classroom Conflict</b>	0.421	0.395	0.403
R	0.403		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.362		
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.317		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 2 indicated that teacher-student classroom conflict positively predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ( $R = 0.403$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.362 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was



moderately strong. This implies that 36% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teacher-student classroom conflict. The adjusted  $R^2$  supported the claim of the  $R^2$  with a value of 0.317 indicating that 32% of the total variation in the dependent variable (students' academic performance) was explained by the independent variable (teacher-student classroom conflict). Thus, adjusted  $R^2$  supports the statement that the explanatory power of teacher-student classroom conflict is moderately strong in determining the students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. However, the standardized beta weight ( $\beta = 0.403$ ) showed that teacher-student classroom conflict is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in teacher-student classroom interaction led to 0.403(40%) increase in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Thus, the positive prediction of teacher-student classroom conflict on students' academic performance means that students' academic performance moderately depends on teacher-student classroom conflict in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Test of Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Teacher-student classroom interaction does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

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

	Unstandardized B	Std. Dev. $\beta$	Standardized B	t- value	p- value
Constant	27.457	4.135		23.291	0.000
<b>Classroom Interaction</b>	0.586	0.351	0.542	19.452	0.000
R	0.542				
$R^2$	0.437				
Adj. $R^2$	0.401				
F	34.642				0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.542 while the  $R^2$  is 0.437 and Adjust  $R^2$  is 0.401. The F-ratio associated with regression is 34.642, the t-test is 19.452 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that teacher-student classroom interaction does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that teacher-student classroom interaction significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Teacher-student classroom conflict does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

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



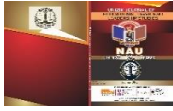
	Unstandardized <i>B</i>	Std. Dev. $\beta$	Standardized <i>B</i>	t- value	p- value
Constant	19.123	6.217		20.531	0.000
<b>Classroom Conflict</b>	0.421	0.395	0.403	17.232	0.000
R	0.403				
R <sup>2</sup>	0.362				
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.317				
F	25.384				0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 4 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.403 while the R<sup>2</sup> is 0.362 and Adjust R<sup>2</sup> is 0.317. The F-ratio associated with regression is 25.384, the t-test is 17.232 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that teacher-student classroom conflict does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that teacher-student classroom conflict significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Discussion of the Findings

Findings on the predictive value of teacher-student classroom interaction on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that teacher-student classroom interaction has a positive predictive value of 0.542(54%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that increase in teacher-student classroom interaction would bring about 54% increases in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that teacher-student classroom interaction significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The positive and significant findings are as a result of the students accepting the fact that their teachers exhibit a positive relationship with their students in the classroom that breed a good classroom interaction. This outcome is a fact that students accepted that their teachers; make the classroom learning to be fun, help them to know how to work together with others, make them want to come to class regularly, help them to develop social skills, help them to improve on their communication skills, promote their self-assigned roles in groups, help them learn from others, make them to actively participate more in classroom activities, help them become confident in themselves and help them to produce more ideas and be creative in the classroom activities in the school. This finding agrees with Asiegbu *et al.* (2022) findings that teachers actively interact with their students for learning to occur which are pivotal and play a significant role in developing the mental ability of the students. Onafowope *et al.* (2024) agreed that teachers have a fundamental quest for relatedness with the students in their class, which can play a significant role in students' self-concept and expectations regarding scholastic achievements and how to make meaningful life after school. The finding is also in line with the findings of Anakwue (2024) that an effective teacher-student relationship is the keystone that allows the other aspects to work well for improved students' performance in schools. Nwikipo *et al.* (2024) also corroborated that students' academic performance is affected by study methods and the





relationships established with teachers. Nwikipo *et al.* added that for this reason, relationship management is becoming increasingly important in schools as it help students to learn from others and make them to actively participate more in classroom activities for improved academic performance.

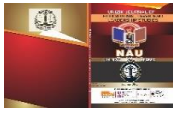
Findings on the predictive value of teacher-student classroom conflict on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that teacher-student classroom conflict has a positive predictive value of 0.403(40%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that improvement in teacher-student classroom conflict would bring about 40% improvements in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that teacher-student classroom conflict significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is as a result of the students accepting the fact that teachers; settle disputes amongst students using interaction method; try to bring a third party to help to solve classroom problems; constantly seek others opinion while solving students' crisis above his power; explore issues with conflicting students to find solution; bring students in conflict face-to-face to express their views; give listening ear to conflicting students; encourage both parties in conflict to listen to others' views concerning the matter; seek solutions in staff meetings to resolve students' conflict; ensure that both parties in conflict apologize to each other after the dialogue process; and try to bring everyone involved together in order to settle disputes amongst students. The finding is in consonance with the findings of Chikendu (2023) that students who have negative conflicting relationships with their teachers have feelings of distress and insecurity, which restrict their ability to concentrate on learning. This is also supported by Rabo (2024) findings that teachers' relationships with students are not only beneficial to students but equally significant to students' academic performance. Good student-teacher relationship is positively correlated to students' academic performance. Since there is a correlation between the student-teacher relationships, it has justified the argument of Ekwelunde *et al.* (2023) that when emotional support is consistently provided by a teacher in a safe environment, it helps children to be more self-reliant. They also learn better because they are sure that their teachers will guide and help them. This may be the reason why Onafowope *et al.* (2024) acknowledged that when children feel safe and comfortable; their willingness to explore is encouraged and activated.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships and applying good teachers' classroom management is essential for students' academic success in the classroom in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Therefore, students' classroom behaviour can be improved through an enhancement in the relationships between teachers and students.

## **Educational Implications of the Findings**

The findings of this study have far reaching educational implications. The outcome of the findings indicated that teacher-student relationship positively and significantly predicted students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that significant improvement in teacher-student relationship would significantly improve students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is an indication that students'



happiness, well-being and academic outcome in the school depends on the good relationship that exist between them and their teachers in the school. Although the effects of teacher-student relationships can be positive or negative on academic performance of students in school; positive teacher-student relationships are described as high intimacy and low conflict. Conversely, negative relationships are described as low intimacy and high conflict. Establishing positive relationships becomes easier when teachers' pay close attention to their students; while negative relationships are developed when they do not take care of their students properly.

### Recommendations

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

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

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