

## **Intersectionality of Teacher-Student Relationship and Academic Motivation Among Nigerian Secondary Schools Students.**

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### **Abstract:**

*This study delved into the complex interplay between teacher-student relationships and academic motivation in Nigerian secondary schools. Despite the recognized importance of positive relationships in fostering motivation, many students experience disconnection and disengagement, hindering their academic success. This research explored students' lived experiences and perspectives on teacher-student relationships, shedding light on how these interactions shape their motivation to learn. Through an analytical approach, the researchers examined students' perceptions of teacher support, classroom climate, and feedback, uncovering the ways in which these factors intersect to influence academic motivation. The findings revealed that empathetic teachers, constructive feedback, and a positive classroom environment are crucial in motivating students to learn. It is argued that schools must prioritize building positive teacher-student relationships through targeted teacher training and support programs, enabling teachers to create inclusive classrooms and provide feedback that inspires students to reach their full potential. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that there should be the tendency to unlock the potential of Nigerian students and foster a love of learning that extends beyond the classroom.*

**Keywords:** *teacher-student relationship, academic motivation, secondary school students, classroom climate, teacher support.*

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### **1.0 Introduction**

The teacher-student relationship is a critical factor in shaping students' academic experiences and outcomes, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools (Onyegegbu, 2017). Despite the recognized importance of positive relationships, many students experience disconnection and disengagement, hindering their academic success. This study explores the intersectionality of teacher-student relationships and academic motivation among Nigerian secondary school students, shedding light on the ways in which these interactions influence students' motivation to learn. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educational policies and practices that promote positive teacher-student relationships, ultimately enhancing academic motivation and achievement among Nigerian secondary school students.

Research suggests that teacher-student relationships are a significant predictor of students' academic motivation, with positive relationships fostering a sense of belonging and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, many teachers struggle to establish supportive relationships with their students, particularly in large classroom settings. This study examines the role of teacher empathy in shaping students' perceptions of teacher-student relationships and academic motivation. Teacher empathy is a crucial variable in this context, as it enables teachers to understand and respond to students' emotional and academic needs, promoting a sense of connection and motivation. By exploring the impact of teacher empathy on academic motivation, this study aims to provide insights into strategies for promoting positive teacher-student relationships.

The classroom climate is another critical factor influencing teacher-student relationships and academic motivation (Fraser, 2015). A positive classroom climate can foster a sense of community and promote students' motivation to learn, while a negative climate can lead to disengagement and decreased motivation. This study

explores the ways in which teachers can create a supportive classroom climate that promotes positive teacher-student relationships and academic motivation. The classroom climate variable is significant in this context, as it encompasses the social, emotional, and physical aspects of the learning environment. By examining the impact of classroom climate on academic motivation, this study aims to provide recommendations for creating learning environments that support students' academic and personal growth.

Feedback is a crucial aspect of teacher-student relationships, influencing students' perceptions of their abilities and motivation to learn (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, many teachers struggle to provide effective feedback that promotes students' motivation and engagement. This study examines the role of feedback in shaping students' academic motivation and explores strategies for providing feedback that promotes positive teacher-student relationships. The feedback variable is significant in this context, as it provides students with information about their performance and helps them develop a growth mindset. By exploring the impact of feedback on academic motivation, this study aims to provide insights into strategies for promoting students' self-efficacy and motivation.

Teacher-student relationships are also influenced by cultural and contextual factors, including societal expectations and school policies (Iwata, 2016). In Nigerian secondary schools, cultural norms and expectations can create challenges for teachers in establishing supportive relationships with their students. This study explores the ways in which cultural and contextual factors influence teacher-student relationships and academic motivation. The cultural context variable is significant in this context, as it shapes teachers' and students' expectations and behaviors. By examining the impact of cultural context on teacher-student relationships, this study aims to provide insights into strategies for promoting cultural sensitivity and awareness in Nigerian secondary schools.

The current study aims to contribute to the literature on teacher-student relationships and academic motivation by exploring the intersectionality of these factors among Nigerian secondary school students. By examining the role of teacher empathy, classroom climate, feedback, and cultural and contextual factors, this study provides insights into the ways in which teachers can promote positive teacher-student relationships and academic motivation. The findings of this study have implications for educational policies and practices, highlighting the need for targeted teacher training and support programs that promote positive teacher-student relationships and academic motivation.

## **2.0 Teacher-Student Relationships**

The teacher-student relationship is a vital component of the educational experience, playing a critical role in shaping students' academic outcomes and personal growth. In Nigerian secondary schools, the quality of teacher-student relationships can have a profound impact on students' motivation to learn, their academic achievement, and their overall well-being. When teachers establish positive relationships with their students, they create a supportive learning environment that fosters academic engagement, promotes social-emotional development, and encourages students to reach their full potential. Moreover, positive teacher-student relationships can help to mitigate the challenges faced by Nigerian students, such as limited access to resources, inadequate infrastructure, and societal pressures.

The benefits of positive teacher-student relationships extend beyond the classroom, influencing students' personal and professional lives. When students feel seen, heard, and valued by their teachers, they develop a sense of self-worth and confidence that serves them well in all aspects of life. They are more likely to develop positive relationships with peers, family members, and community leaders, and to become active contributors to their communities. Furthermore, positive teacher-student relationships can help to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage, providing students with the support and guidance they need to pursue their goals and aspirations.

In light of these benefits, it is essential that Nigerian schools prioritize the development of positive teacher-student relationships. This can be achieved through targeted teacher training and support programs, as well as initiatives that promote student voice and agency. By recognizing the importance of teacher-student relationships and taking steps to foster positive relationships, Nigerian schools can create a supportive learning environment that promotes academic achievement, social-emotional development, and personal growth. Ultimately, the quality of teacher-student relationships has the power to transform the educational experience for Nigerian students, unlocking their potential and enabling them to reach their full potential.

Effective teacher-student relationships are built on a foundation of mutual respect, trust, and care. Teachers who establish positive relationships with their students are approachable, empathetic, and supportive, creating a safe and

inclusive learning environment that encourages students to take risks and explore new ideas. They are also knowledgeable about their subject matter, providing students with accurate and relevant information that promotes academic achievement. Furthermore, effective teachers are flexible and adaptable, recognizing that students learn in different ways and at different rates. By tailoring their instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students, teachers can promote academic engagement and motivation.

In addition to these characteristics, effective teacher-student relationships involve a high degree of emotional intelligence and social-emotional competence. Teachers who are emotionally intelligent are able to recognize and regulate their own emotions, creating a positive and supportive learning environment that promotes social-emotional development. They are also able to empathize with their students, understanding their perspectives and experiences, and providing support and guidance when needed. By modeling emotional intelligence and social-emotional competence, teachers can promote positive relationships with their students and create a supportive learning environment.

The characteristics of effective teacher-student relationships have implications for teacher education and professional development. Teachers need opportunities to develop their emotional intelligence, social-emotional competence, and cultural awareness, as well as their knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies. By providing teachers with the support and training they need to establish positive relationships with their students, schools can promote academic achievement, social-emotional development, and personal growth.

Despite the importance of positive teacher-student relationships, many Nigerian secondary schools face challenges in establishing supportive relationships between teachers and students. Large class sizes, limited resources, and inadequate infrastructure can create barriers to positive relationships, making it difficult for teachers to provide individualized support and attention to their students. Furthermore, societal pressures and cultural norms can create power imbalances between teachers and students, making it challenging for students to speak up and express their needs. Additionally, some teachers may lack the training and support they need to establish positive relationships with their students, particularly in diverse and inclusive classrooms.

To address these challenges, Nigerian schools need to prioritize the development of positive teacher-student relationships, recognizing the importance of these relationships in promoting academic achievement and social-emotional development. This can be achieved through targeted teacher training and support programs, as well as initiatives that promote student voice and agency. By working together to establish positive teacher-student relationships, Nigerian schools can create a supportive learning environment that promotes academic achievement, social-emotional development, and personal growth. Ultimately, the quality of teacher-student relationships has the power to transform the educational experience for Nigerian students, unlocking their potential and enabling them to reach their full potential.

### **3.0 Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Support.**

Students' perceptions of teachers' support play a critical role in shaping their academic experiences and outcomes. When students feel supported by their teachers, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards learning, engage in academic activities, and persist in the face of challenges. Moreover, students' perceptions of teachers' support influence their sense of belonging and connection to the school community, which is essential for their social-emotional development and academic success. In the Nigerian context, where students often face significant challenges in accessing quality education, teachers' support can be a powerful tool for promoting student engagement and motivation.

Students' perceptions of teachers' support are influenced by a range of factors, including the quality of teacher-student interactions, the level of emotional support provided, and the extent to which teachers demonstrate an interest in students' lives and well-being. When teachers demonstrate empathy, understanding, and a genuine interest in students' learning, students are more likely to feel supported and valued. Furthermore, teachers' support can take many forms, including academic guidance, emotional support, and advocacy, all of which contribute to students' perceptions of support and care.

The benefits of students' perceptions of teachers' support are multifaceted, influencing not only students' academic outcomes but also their personal and social development. When students feel supported by their teachers,

they are more likely to develop a positive self-image, build resilience, and cultivate a growth mindset. They are also more likely to engage in positive relationships with peers and teachers, contributing to a positive school climate and culture. Moreover, students' perceptions of teachers' support can have a lasting impact, influencing their future academic and career aspirations and shaping their overall well-being.

In light of the significance of students' perceptions of teachers' support, it is essential that Nigerian schools prioritize the development of supportive teacher-student relationships. This can be achieved through initiatives such as teacher training programs, mentorship schemes, and extracurricular activities that promote teacher-student interaction and engagement. By fostering a culture of support and care, Nigerian schools can empower students to take ownership of their learning, develop a positive attitude towards school, and achieve their full potential. Ultimately, the quality of teacher-student relationships has the power to transform the educational experience for Nigerian students, unlocking their potential and enabling them to succeed in all aspects of life.

Supportive teachers are characterized by a range of positive attributes, including empathy, understanding, and a genuine interest in students' learning and well-being. They are approachable, available, and responsive, creating a safe and inclusive learning environment that encourages students to take risks and explore new ideas. Supportive teachers are also flexible and adaptable, recognizing that students learn in different ways and at different rates. By tailoring their instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students, supportive teachers promote academic engagement and motivation.

In addition to these characteristics, supportive teachers are also effective communicators, able to convey high expectations and provide feedback that fosters a growth mindset. They are skilled at building relationships with students, creating a sense of belonging and connection that promotes academic engagement and motivation. Furthermore, supportive teachers are aware of the social-emotional needs of their students, providing emotional support and guidance when needed.

The characteristics of supportive teachers have implications for teacher education and professional development. Teachers need opportunities to develop their emotional intelligence, social-emotional competence, and cultural awareness, as well as their knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies. By providing teachers with the support and training they need to establish positive relationships with their students, schools can promote academic engagement, motivation, and achievement.

Supportive teachers can make a significant difference in the lives of their students, influencing not only their academic outcomes but also their personal and social development. By prioritizing the development of supportive teacher-student relationships, Nigerian schools can create a culture of care and support, empowering students to succeed and reach their full potential. Teachers' support has a significant impact on student outcomes, influencing academic achievement, social-emotional development, and overall well-being. When students feel supported by their teachers, they are more likely to engage in academic activities, persist in the face of challenges, and develop a positive attitude towards learning. Moreover, teachers' support can mitigate the effects of adversity, providing students with a buffer against stress, anxiety, and other forms of emotional distress.

The impact of teachers' support on student outcomes is particularly significant in the Nigerian context, where students often face significant challenges in accessing quality education. By providing emotional support, academic guidance, and advocacy, teachers can help students overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential. Furthermore, teachers' support can contribute to a positive school climate and culture, promoting social-emotional development and academic achievement. In addition to its impact on student outcomes, teachers' support can also influence teachers' own professional development and job satisfaction. When teachers feel supported by their colleagues and school administrators, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction, remain in the profession, and continue to develop their practice. By prioritizing the development of supportive teacher-student relationships, Nigerian schools can create a positive and productive learning environment that benefits both students and teachers.

The impact of teachers' support on student outcomes highlights the importance of investing in teacher education and professional development. By providing teachers with the training and support they need to establish positive relationships with their students, schools can promote academic achievement, social-emotional development, and overall well-being. Fostering teachers' support in Nigerian schools can be challenging, due to factors such as limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and societal pressures. Many teachers face significant barriers in providing support to their students, including large class sizes, limited access to resources, and inadequate administrative

support. Furthermore, some teachers may struggle to establish positive relationships with their students, particularly in diverse and inclusive classrooms.

Despite these challenges, there are also opportunities for fostering teachers' support in Nigerian schools. By prioritizing teacher education and professional development, schools can provide teachers with the training and support they need to establish positive relationships with their students. Furthermore, initiatives such as mentorship schemes, extracurricular activities, and community partnerships can provide opportunities for teachers to engage with students and provide support outside of the classroom. By working together to foster a culture of support and care, Nigerian schools can empower students to succeed and reach their full potential.

#### **4.0 Classroom Climate in Fostering Academic Motivation**

The classroom climate plays a pivotal and multifaceted role in shaping students' academic motivation and engagement, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools (Fraser, 2015). A positive classroom climate can foster a sense of belonging, promote social-emotional development, and encourage students to take ownership of their learning. When teachers create a supportive and inclusive learning environment, students are more likely to develop a growth mindset, build resilience, and cultivate a love of learning that extends beyond the classroom. Moreover, a positive classroom climate can help to mitigate the challenges faced by Nigerian students, such as limited access to resources and inadequate infrastructure, which can often lead to feelings of isolation and disengagement. By prioritizing the development of a positive classroom climate, Nigerian schools can empower students to achieve academic success and develop a love of learning that lasts a lifetime.

Teacher-student relationships are a critical factor in shaping the classroom climate, with research suggesting that positive relationships can promote a sense of community and support (Onyegegbu, 2017). When teachers establish positive relationships with their students, they create a safe and inclusive learning environment that encourages students to take risks, share their ideas, and engage in academic activities. Moreover, positive teacher-student relationships can help to promote social-emotional development, reduce conflict, and increase student motivation. By prioritizing the development of positive teacher-student relationships, Nigerian schools can create a positive classroom climate that supports student learning and achievement. Furthermore, positive teacher-student relationships can also help to promote a sense of belonging and connection to the school community, which is essential for students' social-emotional development and academic success.

Feedback is a critical component of the learning process, with research suggesting that timely, specific, and constructive feedback can promote student learning and motivation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). When teachers provide feedback that is focused on the learning process rather than the student's ability, they can promote a growth mindset and encourage students to take ownership of their learning. Moreover, feedback can provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, identify areas for improvement, and develop strategies for self-improvement. By prioritizing the development of effective feedback practices, Nigerian schools can empower students to achieve academic success and develop a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. Furthermore, feedback can also help to promote a sense of agency and autonomy among students, which is essential for their social-emotional development and academic success.

Effective feedback is characterized by several key features, including specificity, timeliness, and constructiveness (Shute, 2008). When teachers provide feedback that is specific, focused on the task rather than the student, and provides guidance for improvement, they can promote student learning and motivation. Moreover, feedback should be provided in a way that is supportive and non-threatening, promoting a growth mindset and encouraging students to take risks and engage in challenging tasks. By prioritizing the development of effective feedback practices, Nigerian schools can empower students to achieve academic success and develop a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. Furthermore, effective feedback can also help to promote a sense of self-efficacy and confidence among students, which is essential for their social-emotional development and academic success.

The classroom climate can have a significant impact on student engagement, with research suggesting that a positive climate can promote student motivation and participation (Wang & Degol, 2016). When students feel supported, valued, and respected in the classroom, they are more likely to engage in academic activities, share their ideas, and develop a love of learning. Moreover, a positive classroom climate can help to reduce conflict, promote social-emotional development, and increase student achievement. By prioritizing the development of a positive classroom climate, Nigerian schools can empower students to achieve academic success and develop a love of

learning that lasts a lifetime. Furthermore, a positive classroom climate can also help to promote a sense of community and belonging among students, which is essential for their social-emotional development and academic success.

Technology can play a critical role in promoting feedback and classroom climate, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools (Adeyinka & Adedeji, 2017). When teachers use technology to provide feedback, they can promote student learning and motivation, particularly when feedback is timely, specific, and constructive. Moreover, technology can provide opportunities for students to engage in peer feedback, self-assessment, and reflection, promoting a growth mindset and encouraging students to take ownership of their learning. By prioritizing the development of technology-enhanced feedback practices, Nigerian schools can empower students to achieve academic success and develop a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. Furthermore, technology can also help to promote a sense of agency and autonomy among students, which is essential for their social-emotional development and academic success.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

The classroom climate plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic motivation and engagement, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools. A positive classroom climate can foster a sense of belonging, promote social-emotional development, and encourage students to take ownership of their learning. When teachers create a supportive and inclusive learning environment, students are more likely to develop a growth mindset, build resilience, and cultivate a love of learning that extends beyond the classroom.

Teacher-student relationships are a critical factor in shaping the classroom climate, and positive relationships can promote a sense of community and support. Feedback is also a critical component of the learning process, and timely, specific, and constructive feedback can promote student learning and motivation. The characteristics of effective feedback, including specificity, timeliness, and constructiveness, are essential for promoting student learning and motivation.

Moreover, technology can play a critical role in promoting feedback and classroom climate, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools. When teachers use technology to provide feedback, they can promote student learning and motivation, particularly when feedback is timely, specific, and constructive. Additionally, technology can provide opportunities for students to engage in peer feedback, self-assessment, and reflection, promoting a growth mindset and encouraging students to take ownership of their learning.

In light of these findings, it is essential for Nigerian schools to prioritize the development of a positive classroom climate, foster positive teacher-student relationships, and provide effective feedback to students. By doing so, Nigerian schools can empower students to achieve academic success and develop a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. Furthermore, Nigerian schools should also invest in technology that can help promote feedback and classroom climate, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools.

### **6.0 Recommendations**

The researchers recommended as follows:

1. Nigerian schools should prioritize the development of a positive classroom climate by fostering positive teacher-student relationships and providing effective feedback to students.
2. Teachers should be trained on how to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes social-emotional development and encourages students to take ownership of their learning.
3. Schools should invest in technology that can help promote feedback and classroom climate, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools.
4. Schools should also provide opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development activities that can help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to create a positive classroom climate.
5. Nigerian schools should also prioritize the development of a positive school culture that promotes academic motivation and engagement among students.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigerian schools can promote academic motivation and engagement among students, and help them achieve academic success. Ultimately, the development of a positive classroom

climate, positive teacher-student relationships, and effective feedback practices can have a lasting impact on the academic success and personal development of Nigerian students.

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