

Teacher-taught Relationship and Academic Achievement of Elementary Schools in Himachal Pradesh

HEM RAJ* AND FATMA GAUSIYA**

Abstract

An effective teacher-taught relationship is the keystone that allows the other aspect of academics to work well. The teacher-taught relationship serves as an important support for students for achieving better academic performance. This study is designed to assess the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement of elementary school students. The population of study consisted of three districts of Himachal Pradesh, and a sample of 223 students was drawn from the population using multistage random sampling. A self-developed questionnaire on the teacher-taught relationship was used for collecting data. The questionnaire had 30 items related to various dimensions of the teacher-taught relationship. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test were used for the analysis of data. Research finding shows that there is a significant positive relationship between the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement. Results also show that there is a significant difference in the teacher-taught relationship on the basis of gender and there exists no significant difference in the teacher-taught relationship in relation to their locale.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching-learning process revolves around three main components—the

teacher, student and the teaching-learning environment. It is in the school that a child develops an

* Assistant Professor, Himachal Institute of Education, Solan, Himachal Pradesh 173 212, India

** Research Scholar, Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh 160 014, India

important relationship with the teacher. The relationship with the teacher is crucial as it determines the academic outcomes of the students (Jones & Jones 1981; Murdock 1999; Ryan, Stiller & Lynch 1994).

Student-teacher relationships have been described as relationships that are 'mutually respectful and supportive' (Pendegast & Bahr 2006). Also, it involves an open communication as well as emotional and academic support that exist between students and teachers. It is a form of relationship that is characterized by mutual acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care and cooperation (Pianta 2004; Leitao & Waugh 2007). Hence, the teacher-taught relationship is more than just an interaction between the teacher and students; it also involves humanistic values to learn about life.

Academic achievement has been found to be related with the teacher-taught relationship. Teachers taking out time for the students, expressing positive feelings towards the students, being open and flexible to their needs, affects the performance of the students. Various researches have shown the power of the teacher-taught relationship to determine the success of the students. Jones and Jones (1981) found that the relationship between the teacher and the taught affects the academic achievement and also the students' behaviour. The Theory of Self Determination emphasises that the need to relate with others is affected by the teachers'

involvement. Fay and Funk (1995) found that students who feel they do not share positive relationships with their teachers are more disruptive, less likely to be engaged academically, and have higher tendency to dropout. Other researchers have found significant behavioural and academic improvement (Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele 1993; Baker, Terry, Bridger & Winsor 1997) and motivation to learn (Steinberg, Brown & Dornbusch 1996) when students enjoy caring and supportive relationships with teachers. Studies have shown that a positive, warm and supportive relationship with the teacher helps the child to develop the adaptability for the social and the academic environment (Birch & Ladd 1998; Hamre & Pianta 2001; Pianta 1999). Pianta and Steinberg (1992) found that the teacher-taught relationship is cohesively related to the academics as well as adjustment of the students. Also, Skinner and Belmont (1993) found that the students' classroom experiences are highly affected by the teachers' warmth and affection.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The relationships that teachers develop with their students have an important role in a student's academic growth. Hallinan (2008) writes, 'Learning is a process that involves cognitive and social psychological dimensions, and both processes should be considered if academic achievement is to be maximised'. Hamre and Pianta (2001) report that positive student-

teacher relationships are a valuable resource for students. They suggest that having a positive relationship with a teacher allows students to be able to work on their own because they know they can count on their teacher. If problems arise, the teacher will recognise and respond to the problem. Teachers also exist as a bridge between the students and the school. They play a major role in helping the students learn positive, caring attitudes towards their school, and including their sense of caring towards their school community (Ellerbrock & Kiefer 2010).

Teachers are bestowed with the power to provide varying experiences to the students—positive or negative, which ultimately affect the academic performance of the students. The important part that a teacher plays in the life of the student formed the basis for conducting the study on the teacher-taught relationship. Hence, the present study was conducted to assess the relationship between the teacher and the taught. It also finds how the teacher-taught relationship of elementary school students in Himachal Pradesh is affected by gender and locale.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the teacher-taught relationship
- To study the relationship between the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement
- To study the differences between the teacher-taught relationship in relation to gender
- To study the difference among the various dimensions of the teacher-taught relationship in relation to gender
- To study the differences between the teacher-taught relationship in relation to locale

HYPOTHESES

H₀₁ There exists no significant relationship between the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement.

H_{A1} There exists a significant relationship between the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement.

H₀₂ There exists no significant difference between the male and female students in relation to the teacher-taught relationship.

H_{A2} There exists a significant difference between the male and female students in relation to the teacher-taught relationship.

H₀₃ There exists no significant difference between the male and female students among the various dimensions of the teacher-taught relationship.

H_{A3} There exists a significant difference between the male and female students among the various dimensions of the teacher-taught relationship.

H₀₄ There exists no significant difference between the urban and

rural students in relation to the teacher-taught relationship.

H_{A4} There exists a significant difference between the urban and rural students in relation to the teacher-taught relationship.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey method was used to conduct the present study. In the present study, stratified random sampling technique was used to collect the data. Out of twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh, the investigator selected three districts by lottery method. Again by using the same method, five government elementary schools were selected each from these three districts. In total, fifteen upper primary schools were selected from the three districts.

The sample of students constituted all the students studying in Class VIII in the fifteen elementary schools. A sample of 223 students from the selected elementary schools situated in Himachal Pradesh from district Hamirpur, Kangra and Chamba was selected by employing multistage random sampling.

A self-developed questionnaire on the teacher-taught relationship was used for collecting data for the study. The questionnaire contained 30 items related to various dimensions of the teacher-taught relationship. These dimensions include classroom interactions, motivation and guidance, freedom of expression, intimacy of trust and respect for individual dignity. The academic

achievement of the students was taken as the scores obtained by the students in the final examinations in Class VIII at the end of the year.

For the administration of the research instrument, the researchers personally visited all the sampled schools and briefed the students about the purpose and importance of study. To get authentic and high response rate, each item was read out for the students and they were asked to tick in one response option column out of three, of their own choice in the questionnaire. During the whole process, the students were assured that their views will not be disclosed to anyone. The collected data was tabulated and analysed by using SPSS (version 21) according to the demand of the objectives using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) and t-test methods. The 0.05 level of significance was selected for making inferences about the population.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited to the views of students in the elementary schools situated in Himachal Pradesh.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The teaching-learning process involves teachers, students and interaction between them. It is very important for both to have a healthy relationship in order to carry out the teaching-learning process smoothly. The child's relationship with the teacher greatly determines the performance of the student. Teachers

can influence the destiny of the students for more than two decades. From the tender age of 5 years, a child remains with the teacher, who is one of the most critical factors in shaping the destiny of the child. Establishing a positive teacher-student relationship helps to yield a beautiful environment in the classroom.

Classroom Interaction

Positive classroom interaction is the key factor that promotes a healthy teacher-taught relationship. Fifty-five per cent students confirmed equal participation of the teacher and taught, with 92 per cent students admitting that the teacher gave proper attention to all students and also made use of entertainment (56 per cent) to break the monotony of the class. 77 per cent students said that they were given equal opportunities to express their viewpoint and 22 per cent expressed the teacher dominated during the classroom interaction. 73 per cent students were of the view that the teacher made them aware of various activities and also helped them to organise the various co-curricular activities (77 per cent).

Motivation and Guidance

90 per cent students admitted that their teachers encouraged them to improve their bad habits and guide them (70 per cent) to elicit positive behaviour. 87 per cent students confirmed that the teachers helped them in solving their problems and appreciated them for their

achievement (81 per cent). 19 per cent students felt their teachers mostly pointed out their mistakes and 67 per cent students considered their teachers as their role models.

Freedom of Expression

55 per cent students were of the view that they felt comfortable and 58 per cent could talk openly with their teachers. Only 16 per cent students felt that they were afraid to express themselves before their teachers. 56 per cent students admitted that they could share and talk openly with the teacher even if they had not understood what had already been explained.

Intimacy of Trust

85 per cent students confessed that their teacher trusted them, 70 per cent stated that the teacher stood by them in the time of need, 36 per cent felt that their teachers understood them when they were facing a problem while 33 per cent students admitted that teachers do not pay attention to them. Fifty-nine per cent students also shared that their teachers gave them extra time, when needed.

Respect for Individual Dignity

Eighty per cent students believed that their teachers treated them with care and respect, 45 per cent stated that they never hurt their self-esteem whereas 9 per cent shared their views against this, stating that teachers treated them with disrespect

(23 per cent) and only paid attention to the intelligent students (16 per cent). Bandura & Martinez-Pons 1992). Motivational theorists suggest

Table 1
Relationship between Teacher-taught Relationship and Academic Achievement

Teacher-taught Relationship and Academic Achievement	N	r	Remarks
Total	223	.449*	Significant

**Significant at .05 level of significance*

The coefficient of correlation ($r = .449$) as shown in Table 1 conveys that there is a significant positive relationship between the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement. It can be concluded that a healthy teacher-taught relationship has more positive impact on academic achievement. This seems to be related with the study of Hughes, Cavell and Jackson (1999) in which students who perceive their relationship with their teacher as positive, warm and close are motivated to be more engaged in school and to improve their academic achievement. Motivation may play a key role in the relationship between the teacher-student relationships and academic outcomes (Bandura 1997; Fan & Willams 2010; Pajares & Graham 1996; Ryan, Stiller & Lynch 1994; Wentzel 2003; Zimmerman,

that students' perception of their relationship with their teacher is essential in motivating students to perform well (Bandura 1997; Fan & Willams 2010; Pajares & Graham 1996; Ryan, Stiller & Lynch 1994; Wentzel 2003; Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons 1992). Students' motivation to learn is impacted positively by having a caring and supportive relationship with the teacher (Wentzel 1998). Hence, the first hypothesis (H_{01}) that there exists no significant relationship between teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement is rejected. The value of t-ratio calculated in Table 2 for teacher-taught relationship was found to be 2.134 which is higher than the table value (1.96) at .05 level of significance showing significant difference in the

Table 2
Significance of Difference in Teacher-taught Relationship on the Basis of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Result
Male	114	74.62	8.13	.762	1.08	2.134*	Significant
Female	109	72.32	7.97	.763			

**Significant at .05 level of significance*

teacher-taught relationship on the basis of gender. The mean for the male student (74.62) is higher than the mean for female students (72.30) on the teacher-taught relationship, indicating male students have better teacher-taught relation as compared to female students. Hence, the second hypothesis (H_{02}) that there exists no significance between the male and female students in relation to the teacher-taught relationship is rejected.

of significance. The results, therefore, indicate that on the basis of gender, there is a significant difference in the teacher-taught relationship on the dimensions of classroom interaction and freedom of expression. The t-value on the dimension of teacher-taught relationship on motivation and guidance (1.65), intimacy of trust (.388) and respect for individual dignity (1.25) were found to be insignificant that is, the male and female students do not differ on

Table 3
Significance of Difference in Teacher-taught Relationship on the Basis of Gender

	Locale	N	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Result
Classroom interaction	Male	114	18.22	2.49	.233	.348	2.53*	Significant
	Female	109	17.34	2.71	.259			
Motivation and Guidance	Male	114	18.46	2.30	.215	.304	1.65	Insignificant
	Female	109	17.95	2.24	.215			
Freedom of Expression	Male	114	9.76	1.43	.134	.205	2.25*	Significant
	Female	109	9.30	1.62	.156			
Intimacy of Trust	Male	114	12.03	1.83	.171	.257	.388	Insignificant
	Female	109	11.93	2.01	.192			
Respect for Individual Dignity	Male	114	15.97	3.09	.290	.382	1.27	Insignificant
	Female	109	15.49	2.58	.247			

*Significant at .05 level of significance

The value of t-ratio calculated in Table 3 was found to be 2.53 for classroom interaction and 2.25 for freedom of expression, which is higher than the table value 1.96. Hence, it is significant at 0.05 level

the above-mentioned dimensions of teacher-taught relationship.

Classroom interaction and freedom of expression in classroom are found to play more important role in a healthy teacher-taught

relationship, having a direct impact on the academic performance of the students. When teachers form positive bonds with students, classrooms become supportive spaces in which students can engage, in academically and socially productive ways. Positive teacher-student relationships are classified as those having closeness,

Table 4 shows that the calculated value was .063, which is smaller than the table value (1.96) at .05 level of significance, therefore, it is insignificant at .05 level. Hence, the fourth hypothesis (H_{04}) that there exists no significant difference in the teacher-taught relationship in relation to their locale is accepted.

Table 4
Significance of Difference in Teacher-taught Relationship on the Basis of Locale

Gender	N	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Result
Rural	131	73.53	7.57	.661	1.11	.063	Insignificant
Urban	92	73.46	8.88	.925			

*Significant at .05 level

warmth, and positivity. Students who have positive relationships with their teachers use them as a secure base from which they can explore the classroom and school setting both academically and socially, to take on academic challenges and work on social-emotional development (Hamre & Pianta 2001).

The results of the present study are in contrast to the results of the previous studies where a possible reason for the association between academic improvement and positive teacher-student relationships is students' motivation and desire to learn (Wentzel 1998). Based on the above results, the third hypothesis (H_{A3}) that there exists no significant difference between the male and female students among the various dimensions of the teacher-taught relationship is partially accepted.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present research show the following.

- There is a significant positive correlation between the teacher-taught relationship and academic achievement.
- There exists a significant difference in the teacher-taught relationship in relation to gender.
- There exists significant difference in the various dimensions of the teacher-taught relationship (classroom interaction and freedom of expression) in relation to gender, but no significant differences were found on motivation and guidance, intimacy of trust and respect for individual dignity.
- There exists no significant difference in the teacher-taught relationship in relation to locale.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Positive relationships between the student and teacher serve as a resource to the students, as it helps maintain their engagement in academic pursuits (Hamre & Pianta 2006). This demands responsibility on the part of the school authority and teachers to improve the intimacy of trust, respect for the individual and motivation and guidance. To increase the intimacy of trust among girls, the teacher should trust them and stand by them and also understand them when they are facing a problem. Teachers should also pay attention to their students and give them extra time when needed. The respect for

the individual needs to be improved. Teachers should neither hurt students' self-esteem nor treat them with disrespect.

Teachers have to implement a few simple strategies like teaching with enthusiasm and passion, using student interest for implementing teaching strategies, show an interest in their lives outside of school, treat them with respect, incorporate humour into lessons, have a positive attitude and go an extra mile for their students to develop a healthy classroom environment and build a positive student-teacher relationship which directly affects the students' performance.

REFERENCES

- BAKER, J.A., T. TERRY, R. BRIDGERAND AND A. WINSOR. 1997. School as Caring Communities: A Relational Approach to School Reform. *School Psychology Review*. Vol. 26. pp. 586–602.
- BANDURA, A. 1997. *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. W.H. Freeman/Times Books/Henry Holt & Co., New York, NY, US.
- BIRCH, S. AND G. LADD. 1998. Children's Interpersonal Behaviors and the Teacher-child Relationship. *Developmental Psychology*. Vol. 34. pp. 934–936.
- ECCLES, J.S., A. WIGFIELD AND U. SCHIEFELE. 1998. Motivation to Succeed. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Social and Personality Development*, pp. 1017–1095. Wiley, New York.
- ELLERBROCK, C.R. AND S.M. KIEFER. 2010. Creating a Ninth-grade Community of Care. *The Journal of Educational Research*. Vol. 103, No. 6. pp. 393–406. doi: 10.1080/00220670903383085
- FAN, W. AND C.M. WILLIAMS. 2010. The Effects of Parental Involvement on Students' Academic Self-efficacy, Engagement and Intrinsic Motivation. *Educational Psychology*. Vol. 30, No. 1. pp. 53–74.
- FAY, J. AND D. FUNK. 1995. *Teaching with Love and Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom*. The Love and Logic Press Inc. Golden, CO.
- HALLINAN, M.T. 2008. Teacher Influences on Students' Attachment to School. *Sociology of Education*. Vol. 81, No. 3. pp. 271–283.
- HAMRE, B. AND R. PIANTA. 2001. Early Teacher-child Relationships and the Trajectory of Children's School Outcomes through the Eighth Grade. *Child Development*. Vol. 72, No. 2. pp. 625–638.

- . 2006. Student-teacher Relationships. In G.C. Bear and K.M. Minke (eds), *Children's Needs III: Development, Prevention and Intervention*. pp. 59–71. National Association of School Psychologists, Washington, DC.
- HARCOURT BRACE JANOVICH. 1986. *Metropolitan Readiness Tests: Level One*. CA, San Diego.
- HUGHES, J.N., T.A. CAVELL AND T. JACKSON. 1999. Influence of the Teacher-student Relationship on Childhood Conduct Problems: A Prospective Study. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*. Vol. 28. pp. 173–184.
- JONES, V.F. AND L. JONES. 1981. *Responsible Classroom Discipline*. Allyn & Bacon, Inc, Boston, MA.
- LEITAO, N. AND R. WAUGH. 2007. *Students' Views of Teacher-student Relationships in the Primary School*. A paper presented at the 37th Annual International Educational Research Conference, held by the Australian Association for Research in Education at Fremantle, Western Australia.
- MURDOCK, T.B. 1999. The Social Context of Risk: Status and Motivational Predictors of Alienation in Middle School. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Vol. 91, No. 1. pp. 62–75.
- PAJARES, FRANK AND GRAHAM. 1996. Self-efficacy Beliefs in Academic Settings. *Review of Educational Research*. Vol. 66, No. 4. pp. 543–578.
- PENDERGAST, D. AND N. BAHR. 2006. *Teaching Middle Years: Rethinking Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment*. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.
- PIANTA, R. 2004. Teacher-child Relationship and Children's Success in the First Years of School. *School Psychology Review*. Vol. 33, No. 3. pp. 444–458.
- PIANTA, R.C. AND M. STEINBERG. 1992. Teacher-child Relationships and the Process of Adjusting to School. In Pianta (ed.), *Beyond the Parent: The Role of Other Adults in Children's Lives*. pp. 61–80. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- PIANTA, R.C. 1999. *Enhancing Relationships between Children and Teachers*. American Psychological Association, Washington DC.
- RYAN, R.M., J.D. STILLER AND J.H. LYNCH. 1994. Representations of Relationships to Teachers, Parents and Friends as Predictors of Academic Motivation and Self-esteem. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*. Vol. 14, No. 2. pp. 226–249.
- SKINNER, E. AND M. BELMONT. 1993. Motivation in the Classroom: Reciprocal Effects of Teacher Behavior and Student Engagement across the School Year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Vol. 85. pp. 571–581.
- STEINBERG, L.D., B.B. BROWN AND S.M. DORNBUSCH. 1996. *Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform has Failed and What Parents Need to do*. Simon and Schuster, New York, NY.
- WENTZEL, K. 2003. School Adjustment. In W. Reynolds & G. Miller (eds), *Handbook of Psychology: Educational Psychology*. Vol. 7. pp. 235–258. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ.
- WENTZEL, K.R. 1998. Social Relationships and Motivation in Middle School: The role of Parents, Teachers, and Peers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Vol. 90. pp. 202–209.
- ZIMMERMAN, B.J., A. BANDURA AND M. MARTINEZ-PONS. 1992. Self-motivation for Academic Attainment: The Role of Self-efficacy Beliefs and Personal Goal Setting. *American Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 29, No. 3. pp. 663–676.