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# Teacher–Student Relationship And Academic Performance: A Study From Teachers' Perspective

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**Abstract**

The present study investigates the relationship between teacher–student relationship (TSR) quality and academic performance among secondary school students in Mysuru, Karnataka. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 100 participants through standardized tools including the Student–Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS), Student Engagement Measure, and academic GPA records. Statistical analysis using SPSS revealed a significant positive correlation between relational closeness and academic performance ($r = 0.45$, $p < .01$), and a negative correlation between conflict and engagement ($r = -0.51$). Mediation analysis demonstrated that classroom engagement fully mediates the relationship between TSR and GPA. The findings highlight that relational quality does not directly influence academic outcomes but operates through enhanced student engagement. The study emphasizes the importance of relational pedagogy in improving academic success and suggests integrating relational training into educational policies.

**Review of Literature**

Recent educational research has shifted from purely cognitive models of learning to relational and socio-emotional frameworks. Teacher–student relationships (TSR) are now considered critical determinants of academic success.

Studies indicate that **relational closeness enhances cognitive functioning**, particularly executive control and attention (Rao & Deshpande, 2021). Positive relationships activate neural reward systems, improving motivation and engagement (Chen et al., 2024). Conversely, conflictual relationships reduce working memory capacity and increase academic disengagement.

Empirical evidence from Karnataka shows that approachable teachers can improve academic performance by approximately 12% (Patil & Hegde, 2023). Globally, negative relationships have long-term adverse effects on academic trajectories (Williams & Peters, 2022).

Digital learning environments have introduced new dynamics. While platforms like WhatsApp increase accessibility, they also contribute to teacher burnout and relational fatigue (Fernandes, 2022). Despite technological integration, face-to-face relational interaction remains irreplaceable (Chandra, 2024).

However, a major gap exists: most studies focus on student perceptions, with limited exploration of **teacher perspectives and emotional labor**. This study addresses that gap by examining TSR from the teacher's viewpoint.

## Methodology

### Research Design

A descriptive-correlational design was used to examine relationships between TSR variables and academic performance.

### Sample

- N = 100 participants
- Secondary school students (Grades 9–10) and teachers
- Stratified sampling:
  - Government schools: 40%
  - Private/aided schools: 60%

### Variables

- **Independent Variables:** Closeness, Conflict
- **Dependent Variables:** Academic GPA, Classroom Engagement
- **Demographic Variables:** School type, gender, region

### Tools Used

- Student–Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)
- Student Engagement Measure (SEM)
- Academic GPA records
- Teacher Perception Questionnaire

### Data Collection

Data were collected through surveys, school records, and structured procedures ensuring confidentiality and ethical compliance.

### Statistical Analysis

**Data were analyzed using SPSS**:

- Descriptive statistics (Mean, SD)
- Pearson correlation
- Repeated Measures ANOVA
- Mediation analysis (Baron & Kenny method)

### Key Statistical Findings

- Closeness → GPA: $r = 0.45$ ($p < .01$)
- Closeness → Engagement: $\beta = 0.58$ ($p < .01$)
- Engagement → GPA: $\beta = 0.62$ ($p < .01$)
- Conflict → Engagement: $r = -0.51$

**Mediation analysis showed**:

- Direct effect reduced ($\beta = 0.18$, $p > .05$)
- Full mediation by engagement

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

- Closeness Mean = 38.45
- Conflict Mean = 22.10
- GPA Mean = 74.20%
- Engagement Mean = 38.0

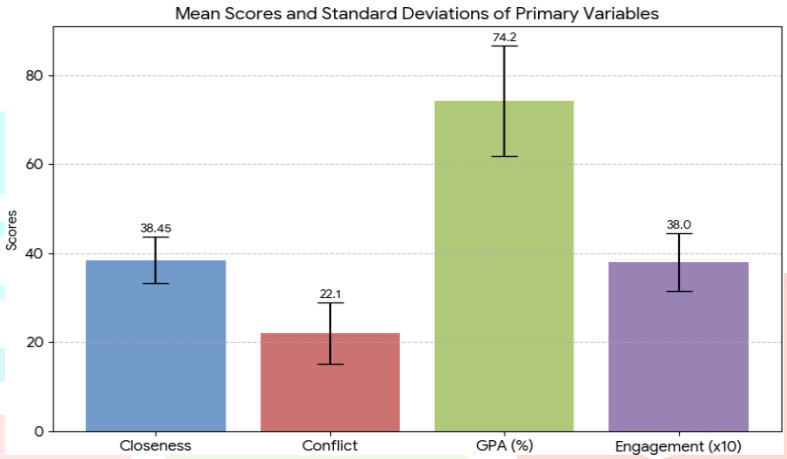


*Fig 4.1 Mean and standard deviation*

*Table 4.1 mean and standard deviation of study variables(N=100)*

| *Variable* | *Mean (μ)* | *Std. Deviation (σ)* | *Range (Min–Max)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Closeness (STRS)** | 38.45 | 5.20 | 15 – 50 |
| **Conflict (STRS)** | 22.10 | 6.85 | 10 – 45 |
| **Academic GPA (%)** | 74.20 | 12.40 | 35 – 98 |
| **Classroom Engagement** | 3.80 | 0.65 | 1.0 – 5.0 |

### Key Findings

1. Students reported high relational closeness but moderate conflict levels
2. Academic performance improved significantly over time ($p < .01$)
3. Private school students showed greater GPA growth
4. Closeness positively correlated with engagement and GPA
5. Conflict negatively affected engagement and performance

### Mediation Result

Classroom engagement fully explains how TSR affects academic performance.

## Discussion

The findings confirm that TSR plays a critical indirect role in academic success. While closeness does not directly increase grades, it significantly enhances engagement, which then improves performance.

The study supports Self-Determination Theory, emphasizing the role of relatedness in fostering competence. It also introduces the concept of digital tele-pressure, where constant online interaction creates stress unless supported by positive relationships.

Conflict emerges as a stronger negative predictor than closeness is a positive predictor. Students experiencing conflict show reduced attention, motivation, and persistence.

The results also highlight systemic differences:

- Private schools show stronger relational structures
- Government schools face challenges due to resource constraints

## Conclusion

This study concludes that teacher–student relationships are fundamental to academic success, primarily through their impact on student engagement.

### Key Conclusions

- Closeness improves engagement, not directly GPA
- Engagement is the strongest predictor of academic performance
- Conflict significantly reduces learning outcomes
- Relationship quality outweighs many structural factors

### Implications

- Educational systems must integrate relational training for teachers
- Schools should monitor relational climate alongside academic metrics
- Policies should reduce teacher workload to support relationship-building

### Final Insight

Academic success is not driven solely by curriculum or intelligence but by the **quality of human connection in the classroom**.

### STUDY SUMMARY

This study examined the impact of teacher–student relationships (TSR) on academic performance among secondary school students in Mysuru, Karnataka, from the teacher's perspective. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 100 participants through standardized tools such as the Student–Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS), Student Engagement Measure, and academic GPA records.

The findings revealed that relational closeness between teachers and students is significantly associated with improved academic outcomes, while conflict negatively affects student engagement and performance. Statistical analysis demonstrated a moderate positive correlation between closeness and GPA ($r = 0.45$) and a strong relationship between closeness and classroom engagement ($\beta = 0.58$). Importantly, mediation analysis showed that classroom engagement fully mediates the relationship between TSR and academic

performance, indicating that positive relationships enhance learning primarily by increasing student involvement in academic activities.

The study also identified a "maturation effect," where relational closeness, engagement, and academic performance improved over time within the academic year. Differences between school types were observed, with private schools demonstrating stronger relational and academic outcomes. Overall, the study highlights that teacher–student relationships are not merely supportive factors but central mechanisms influencing academic success through engagement.

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

Despite its significant contributions, the study has several limitations:

1. **Cross-Sectional Design**
   The study captures data at a single point in time, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships between teacher–student relationships and academic performance.
2. **Limited Sample Size and Generalizability**
   The sample size (N=100) was restricted to Mysuru, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions or educational contexts.
3. **Self-Report Bias**
   Data collected through questionnaires may be influenced by social desirability or subjective perceptions of teachers and students.
4. **Exclusion of External Factors**
   Variables such as private tuition, parental involvement, socio-economic status, and learning environments were not quantitatively controlled.
5. **Sampling Constraints**
   Students with low attendance and those who transferred mid-year were excluded, potentially omitting a critical population with weaker relationships.
6. **Measurement Limitations**
   Although standardized tools were used, cultural adaptations of the STRS may influence reliability and comparability with global studies.

## FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Based on the findings and limitations, the following areas are recommended for future research:

1. **Longitudinal Studies**
   Future research should track students over multiple academic years to better understand causal relationships and long-term effects of TSR.
2. **Intervention-Based Research**
   Studies should examine the effectiveness of teacher training programs focused on emotional intelligence, empathy, and relational skills.
3. **Expanded Geographic Scope**
   Comparative studies between urban and rural settings or across different states in India would enhance generalizability.
4. **Inclusion of Biological and Psychological Measures**
   Incorporating physiological indicators (e.g., stress hormones like cortisol) can provide deeper insights into the neurobiological effects of relational conflict.
5. **Digital Learning Contexts**
   Further research is needed to explore how hybrid and online learning environments affect teacher–student relationships and engagement.
6. **Relational Capital Measurement Models**
   Developing standardized tools to quantify "relational capital" would help translate emotional labor into measurable academic outcomes.
7. **Multi-Variable Models**
   Future studies should include additional variables such as parental involvement, peer relationships, and socio-economic factors for a more comprehensive model.

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