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**TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF  
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**Abstract**

*The study examined teacher-student relationship and the academic performance of public secondary school students in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population for the study was 29 public secondary schools with a total number of 19,025 students in senior secondary school two. The sample size for the study was 100 students using multistage sampling technique. 60% of the students passed the achievement test by scoring above the benchmark, while 40% of the students scored below the benchmark. The adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.2846 confirmed the stability of this prediction when applied to the wider population of public secondary school students. Teacher-student relationship  $f(1, 98) = 29.2$   $p < 0.000$  significantly influenced academic performance of students. The study recommended that teachers should cultivate friendliness, and tolerance in daily interactions with students. School authorities should provide regular workshops on emotional intelligence and relationship-building for teachers.*

**Keywords:** Academic performance, Teacher-student relationship, Public secondary school students, Oyo State

**Introduction**

Academic performance refers to the success level of secondary school students. It refers to the level at which a student achieves their educational goals, as measured by grades, test scores, class participation, and other scholastic achievements. Also, it reflects the extent to which a student has mastered the curriculum and demonstrates proficiency in various subject areas (Alzabidi, Nordin,

Saleh, 2024). This performance is typically evaluated using quantitative indicators such as standardized test results, and teacher assessments (Graham, 2006). The academic performance of secondary school students is shaped by a variety of interrelated factors, such as teacher-student relationship which together create the environment in which students learn and engage with the curriculum.

Ghosh (2014) argued that within the educational system and learning process, academic performance plays a crucial role in evaluating students' potential and capacities, it being a significant predictor of their future success. Mishra (2012) also emphasized the pivotal role of students' academic performance within the field of education. Maraichelvi and Rajan (2013), students' performance refers to the quality of their effort in fulfilling academic requirements at school. Academic performance of secondary school students is shaped by a variety of interrelated factors, which together create the environment in which students learn and engage with the curriculum (Andres, 2020). Generally, the persistent decline of academic performance of public secondary schools in Nigeria especially in English language (Mohammed, 1995), a subject vital for communication among citizens and future leaders both at local and international levels, is alarming. Murana, (2019) further explained that when secondary school students understand English language, they are proficient enough to understand the contents of other school subjects taught in English. Banjo (1989) argued that failure in other school subjects is occasioned by failure in the language of instruction, English. Today, Nigeria is a nation of nations and English a foreign and single most acceptable national language. However, Kolo, Jaafa and Ahmad (2017) traced decline in academic performance to behavioural components, arguing that intellectual academic performance is enhanced by behaviours. Nevertheless, behaviour in this study could be in areas of relationship. In this regard, academic performance could be linked to teacher-student relationship, which is the independent variable in this study. Teacher-student relationship is a major factor that determine how well students perform academically. It affects students' engagement with their studies but also play a central role in how they approach learning, overcome challenges, and achieve success (Martins and Collie, 2016). In secondary education, it is important because of the region's unique socio-economic and cultural characteristics. These characteristics

influence how students relate to the educational system and how effectively they can utilize the support structures available to them. Understanding the roles of the teacher-student relationship and motivation, and how they interact to influence students' academic trajectories, is vital in improving overall educational outcomes. Hargreaves (2000) asserts, teachers who create positive relationships with students foster both academic and emotional development, leading to improved outcomes in such contexts.

The teacher-student relationship, therefore, should be viewed as more than just a means to achieve academic success it is an integral part of shaping well-rounded individuals who are prepared to navigate the challenges of life both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers play a critical role in guiding their students' academic, emotional, and social growth, and by cultivating strong, positive relationships, they can ensure that students not only achieve their educational goals but also develop the skills and confidence needed for lifelong success.

Adeyemo (2006) underscores the importance of fostering a classroom environment rooted in open communication and mutual respect. When teachers communicate openly with their students, listen to their concerns, and respect their opinions, students are more likely to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and engaging in classroom discussions. This openness not only improves student participation but also creates a safe space for intellectual exploration. Adeyemo argues that students who feel respected and supported by their teachers are more likely to ask questions, voice their opinions, and engage with the material in a meaningful way, which in turn enhances their academic performance. However, in this study, teacher-student relationships are indicated by friendliness and tolerance which will be discussed further in this study.

Friendliness is an essential indicator of a positive student-teacher relationship. When a teacher displays warmth and approachability, it helps create an atmosphere where students feel comfortable and safe. A friendly teacher is someone who is not just knowledgeable but also empathetic and caring about students' well-being (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Friendliness in a teacher can manifest through smiling, offering help when needed, and showing genuine interest in students' lives outside of the classroom. This kind of behaviour encourages students to trust the teacher, making them more

likely to engage in class activities, ask questions, and participate in discussions (Cohen, 2006). Students who perceive their teacher as friendly tend to have a more positive attitude toward learning, which can enhance their academic performance and emotional development (Hargreaves, 2000).

Tolerance is another vital aspect of the student-teacher relationship. It refers to the teacher's ability to accept and respect differences among students, including differences in opinion, background, culture, and learning styles. A tolerant teacher creates an inclusive environment where students feel their individuality is celebrated rather than judged (O'Connor & McCartney, 2006). This means being patient with diverse students and their unique needs, whether it is a student with learning disabilities or one from a different cultural background. Tolerance also involves being open-minded and understanding that students may make mistakes or face challenges that require extra time and guidance. By demonstrating tolerance, teachers create a supportive learning environment that nurtures students' personal growth and self-esteem while allowing them to learn from one another in a diverse classroom setting (Wentzel, 2009).

Studies such as Pianta (1999) and Ryan and Deci (2017) highlighted the impact of teacher-student relationships on students' emotional well-being and engagement. However, there seems to be continuous decline in academic performance. This study therefore traced the effects of academic performance of public secondary school students to teacher-student relationship. Teacher-student relationship is observed to be important in academic performance of students. Thus, this study examined teacher-students relationship on academic performance of students

### **Statement of the Problem**

The persistent decline of academic performance of public secondary schools in Nigeria especially in English language, a subject vital for communication among citizens and future leaders both at local and international levels, is alarming. This trend manifests in low test scores, disengagement during lessons, and poor verbal skills necessary for mastering the subject. However, decline in academic performance is traced to behavioural components as teacher-student relationship which is the independent variable in this study. The problem is

exacerbated by strained teacher-student relationships, which result in students feeling unsupported and alienated. Furthermore, many students lack adequate leading to diminished effort and persistence practise. These issues imply a failure to equip students with the verbal and communication skills essential for expression, thus, limiting their potential to contribute meaningfully to societal development.

### **Scope of the study**

This study is geographically confined to public secondary schools within Akinyele local government, Oyo State, Nigeria. The conceptual scope is on academic performance with the indicators of high and low level of performance using English language achievement test and teacher-student relationship with the indicators of teachers' friendliness and tolerance. The participant scope entails all senior secondary school two students.

### **Objectives**

The objective of this study is to investigate:

1. the level of academic performance among secondary school students in Akinyele local government, Oyo State and
2. the influence of teacher-student relationship and academic performance of public secondary school students in Akinyele local government, Oyo State

### **Research Question**

What is the level of academic performance among public secondary school students in Akinyele local government, Oyo State?

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence between teacher-student relationship (Teacher friendliness and Teacher tolerance) and academic performance of public secondary school students in Akinyele local government, Oyo State

### **Literature Review**

Teacher-student relationship is an essential factor in creating a positive and effective learning environment. The components of the teacher-student relationship entail friendliness and tolerance for effective

communication, so as to work together to create a nurturing environment where students feel valued and encouraged to engage in learning. These relationships not only promote academic performance but also contribute to the broader goal of fostering holistic student development, including emotional intelligence, resilience, and social skills.

The teacher-student relationship, should therefore be viewed as more than just a means to achieve academic success is an integral part of shaping well-rounded individuals who are prepared to navigate the challenges of life both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers play a critical role in guiding their students' academic, emotional, and social growth, and by cultivating strong, positive relationships, they can ensure that students not only achieve their educational goals but also develop the skills and confidence needed for lifelong success. Building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships is therefore an essential component of effective teaching, one that has lasting implications for students' academic journeys and overall development. Teacher-student relationships are not uniform; they can vary greatly in quality and impact. These relationships can be classified into different types, each with its unique effect on student outcomes. The two most fundamental categories of teacher-student relationships are positive and negative relationships, and both types can significantly influence student performance in contrasting ways.

Positive teacher-student relationships are characterized by warmth, empathy, trust, and mutual respect. Teachers who form such relationships create a classroom environment where students feel emotionally supported, understood, and encouraged. These relationships are essential for motivating students to invest in their learning, as students are more likely to engage in academic tasks when they feel supported and valued. Positive teacher-student relationships have been linked to higher levels of academic achievement, greater participation in class, and a higher likelihood of students pursuing further education. According to Brooks and Goldstein (2001), these relationships foster intrinsic motivation, enhancing not just performance but long-term learning outcomes.

On the other hand, negative teacher-student relationships can have detrimental effects on students' academic performance. These relationships may be marked by neglect, authoritarianism, or

disrespect, and often result in students feeling alienated, unsupported, or undervalued. When students perceive their teachers as unapproachable or unempathetic, they are less likely to engage with the curriculum or seek help when needed. This disengagement can lead to poor academic performance, as students may not feel motivated to succeed in an environment where they do not feel comfortable or respected. These findings are supported by the work of Wentzel (2002), who argues that negative relationships between teachers and students can lead to disengagement and lower academic achievement.

In the context of secondary education, where students face numerous academic and social challenges, the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships becomes even more pronounced. Research by Goleman (2006) emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence in the classroom, suggesting that teachers who demonstrate empathy and emotional awareness can better connect with students, thus enhancing academic motivation and performance. Given the critical nature of this stage in students' academic careers, particularly in subjects like English language, it is crucial that teachers cultivate relationships that promote trust, respect, and collaboration. These relationships lay the foundation for students' academic success and emotional well-being, allowing them to navigate both academic and personal challenges more effectively.

The effectiveness of teacher-student relationships is influenced by a range of contextual factors, including class size, school culture, teacher training, socio-economic factors, and peer pressure. Smaller class sizes, a collaborative and respectful school culture, and well-trained teachers all contribute to stronger relationships and enhanced motivation. However, challenges such as teacher burnout, socio-economic disparities, and peer pressure can undermine these efforts, making it essential to address these issues through targeted strategies. Collaborative learning, teacher recognition programs, and the integration of technology are just a few of the strategies that can improve teacher-student relationships and motivation, ultimately leading to better academic performance, particularly in subjects like English Language.

**Challenges of Student-Teacher Relationship**

- i. **Teacher burnout:** This is as a major obstacle to effective teaching. Many teachers experience burnout due to heavy workloads, low salaries, and high levels of stress. Overworked and underpaid teachers often find it difficult to build meaningful relationships with their students or implement motivational strategies effectively (Ajayi, 2017). Burnout can lead to teacher fatigue, which affects their ability to be present, engaged, and responsive to students' needs. When teachers are overwhelmed, their capacity to nurture positive relationships on students diminishes, which negatively affects student performance. In the context of English language education, where student-teacher interaction, discussion, and personalized guidance are essential, teacher burnout can have a particularly damaging effect on students' academic outcomes.
- ii. **Students' socio-economic background.** Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often face additional stressors, such as financial instability, family challenges, or lack of access to educational resources. These students may struggle to connect with teachers or see the relevance of the subject matter, especially if they perceive it as disconnected from their immediate life experiences (Olatunji, 2018; Sanni & Raji, 2024). Additionally, students who face socio-economic hardships may feel alienated or unsupported in the classroom, which can strain their relationship with their teachers. However, without strong teacher-student relationships and a supportive classroom environment, these students may lack the intrinsic motivation needed for sustained academic success.
- iii. **Peer pressure:** This can negatively affect students' attitudes toward school, teachers, and academic work. In secondary schools, where social dynamics and peer relationships are highly influential, students may prioritize social acceptance over academic achievement. This often leads to disengagement in the classroom, as students may downplay the importance of subjects like English language in favour of socializing or conforming to the expectations of their peer group. Peer pressure can create an environment where students do not see the value in academic success or in developing positive

relationships with teachers (Adebanjo, 2019). This makes students' social lives to take precedence over their academic responsibilities, it can strain their relationships with teachers, leading to poorer academic performance.

### ***Strategies for Enhancing Teacher-Student Relationships***

One effective strategy is the use of collaborative learning techniques, as advocated by Olusola (2020). Collaborative learning encourages students to work together in groups, engage in discussions, and share their knowledge and perspectives with their peers. This approach fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility for learning, which not only improves academic performance but also strengthens the relationship between students and teachers. In the context of English language education, collaborative learning can be particularly effective, as it encourages students to engage in debates, discussions, and group projects that promote critical thinking and active participation. Teachers who facilitate collaborative learning create an environment where students feel more connected to each other and to the subject matter, leading to increased motivation and deeper engagement with the material.

Also, there is a need for implementation of teacher recognition programs, as highlighted by Owolabi (2021). Recognizing and rewarding teachers for their efforts in building strong relationships with students and motivating them to succeed can enhance teachers' commitment to their work. These recognition programs can include awards for outstanding teaching, professional development opportunities, or public acknowledgment of teachers' contributions to student success (Owolabi, 2021). By recognizing teachers' efforts, schools can foster a positive, motivated teaching staff, which in turn benefits students. When teachers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to invest time and energy in cultivating strong relationships with their students, which leads to better academic outcomes.

Finally, the integration of technology into the teaching of subjects like English language can significantly enhance teacher-student relationships. Akintoye (2022) recommends using digital tools and platforms, such as interactive learning management systems, online forums, and multimedia resources, to create a more engaging and dynamic learning environment. Technology allows teachers to present

content in creative ways, engage students through interactive quizzes, and provide real-time feedback. It also enables teachers to connect with students outside the traditional classroom setting, offering additional opportunities for communication and support. By incorporating technology, teachers can create more engaging and personalized learning experiences, which helps strengthen the relationship with students.

### **Theoretical framework**

The Expectancy-Value Theory, developed by Eccles and Allan (2020) guided this study as it provided a comprehensive framework for understanding how a student is shaped by two critical factors: expectancy of success and value. According to this theory, students are more likely to engage in and succeed at tasks when they believe that they are capable of completing them (expectancy) and when they perceive the task as valuable in some way (value). These factors are deeply influenced by the student's interactions with teachers and the educational environment. The expectancy component refers to a student's belief in their ability to succeed in a given task. This belief can be shaped by previous experiences, feedback from teachers, and the overall support provided in the classroom. Teachers play a critical role in fostering high expectations by offering positive reinforcement, providing constructive feedback, and demonstrating confidence in students' abilities (Bandura, 1986).

The stronger the student's belief in their ability to succeed, the more motivated they will be to take on challenges and persist through difficulties. Positive teacher-student relationships can also influence how students perceive the teacher's enthusiasm and commitment to the subject, which in turn motivates students to place greater value on the material (Slavin, 1994). Teachers who nurture a supportive, engaging, and challenging learning environment can significantly boost both a student's expectancy of success and the value they place on the subject, ultimately improving academic outcomes.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was 29 public secondary schools (19,025 students) in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State. The sample size consisted of

100 students from five public secondary schools using multi-stage sampling technique. Five schools were selected based on convenience random sampling based on public schools that are in closer location. Senior secondary school two students were purposively selected because they are being prepared for the final senior school certificate examination (SSCE). 20 students each were selected through simple random sampling technique.

Teacher-student relationship scale and English language achievement test were used to gather data for the study. The Cronbach alpha of teacher-student relationship was 0.84 which was sub-divided into Teacher Friendliness and Teacher Tolerance. Academic achievement test was developed to match the curriculum in English language subject offered in senior secondary school. Descriptive Statistics of: Frequency counts and simple percentage were used for analysis of demographic information and the research question, while the hypothesis was analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	55	55
	Male	45	45
Age	Total	100	100
	13 -15 years	70	70
	16 years and above	30	30
	Total	100	100

In table 1, the sampled comprised 45% male and 55% female students, indicating a slightly higher representation of females. The age distribution revealed that 70% were aged 13–15 years, and 30% were 16 years or older.

**Research Question:** What is the level of academic performance among public secondary school students in Akinyele local government, Oyo State?

**Table 2: Academic Performance in English Language (Achievement Test)**

Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Performance level
Passed ( $\geq$ 60%)	60	60	High
Failed (< 40%)	40	40	Low
Total	100	100	

Table 2 shows that 60% of the students passed the achievement test by scoring at or above the 50% benchmark. This indicates that the majority of students in the study have acquired significant competence in English language. Their success may be linked to teacher's friendliness and tolerance. The result underscores the importance student-teacher relationship to achieve academic goals in literary subjects. This is further explained by Briggs, (2014) who claimed that students may show some interest in class participation but may not always engage to the same level as top performers.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence between teacher-student relationship (Teacher friendliness and Teacher tolerance) and academic performance of public secondary school students in Akinyele Local Government Area, Oyo State

**Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of Teacher-Student Relationship on Academic Performance**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	2652.71	98	2652.71	29.2	0.000
Residual	8896.29	1	90.78		
Total	11549.0	99			

R = 0.48  
R<sup>2</sup> = 0.2304  
Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.2224  
Std. Error of the Estimate = 9.52

Table 3 presents the multiple regression analysis of the influence of Teacher-Student relationship (Teacher friendliness and tolerance) on students' academic performance in English Literature. The result shows that the teacher-student relationship significantly predicted academic performance, with an R value of 0.54 and an R<sup>2</sup> of 0.2916. This indicated that approximately 29.16% of the variance in students' academic performance in English Literature can be explained by the level of teacher-student relationship. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.2846 confirmed the stability of this prediction when applied to the wider population of secondary school students. The  $f_{(1, 98)} = 29.2$   $p < 0.000$  confirmed that the model is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Thus, teacher-student relationship plays a substantial role in predicting academic performance of students. This is supported by Darling-Hammond (2000) who explained that when students perceive their teachers as friendly, and tolerant, they are more willing to take academic risks and engage actively in classroom activities. Similarly, Cohen (2006) explained that positive relational atmosphere increase participation and reduce behavioural problems, thus fostering a classroom where learning can be enhanced.

#### Summary of the Findings

The study examined teacher-student relationship and academic performance of public secondary school students in Akinyele local government, Oyo State. The findings of the study revealed that

- i. Academic performance of students in Akinyele was high. This indicated that majority of students in the study acquired significant competence in English Language.
- ii. Teacher-student relationship significantly influenced academic performance of students in Akinyele Local Government, Oyo State.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concluded that teacher-student relationship influenced academic performance of secondary school students. Teachers who cultivate friendliness, and tolerance with students provide a learning environment where students felt encouraged and supported. Also, these results pointed to the necessity of a holistic educational approach that balances content delivery with relationship support. Improving the rapport between teachers and students are strategies for improving learning outcomes not only in English language but potentially across other subjects as well.

**Recommendations**

The study recommended that teachers should cultivate friendliness, and tolerance in daily interactions with students. This will open an avenue for students to seek counsel on challenges in classroom environment such as bullying, fear of the unknown emotional challenges from home that could affect learning activities.

Schools should provide regular workshops on emotional intelligence and relationship-building for teachers. This will expose them to avenues of creating friendship with students without any form of disrespect from the students to the teachers

Policymakers such as government should formulate and enforce policies that promote teacher-student rapport, particularly in under-resourced schools to enhance learning. This will make the teachers to understand the benefits of their relationship with students and learning outcome.

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