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Teacher-Student Relationships and Students' Learning Experiences: A Narrative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the teacher-student relationship and its influence on students' learning experiences and academic performance. The authors acknowledge the limited research conducted in this specific domain and emphasize the need to delve into the impact of this relationship on students' learning activities. Employing interpretivism and narrative inquiry as the chosen research methodology, the authors explore the experiences of six participants, encompassing students from diverse educational institutions. By drawing upon cognitive constructivist theory, social constructivist theory, and attachment theory, the article systematically investigates whether the teacher-student relationship fosters the development of students' curiosity and passion for learning. The research findings reveal the multifaceted nature of this relationship, identifying key dimensions that significantly enhance students' learning experiences, including qualities such as love, care, responsibility, empowerment, and motivation. Conversely, negative aspects such as humiliation, irresponsibility, misbehavior, and punishment were found to detrimentally impact students' learning outcomes and academic performance. Moreover, the study highlights the instrumental role of a positive teacher-student relationship as a motivational catalyst for students, fostering their genuine interest in learning and substantially improving their academic achievements. Overall, the research sheds light on the prevailing dynamics and practices of teacher-student relationships within the context of public schools, with the ultimate goal of enhancing student learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

I, the first author of this paper, was born and raised in a middle-class family, and my primary education took place in my hometown in Nepal. During my time as a student, I had limited autonomy in making choices regarding my learning, as these decisions were largely guided by my teachers. Upon graduating from college, I embarked on a career as a teacher. During my tenure as an educator, I maintained a certain distance, refrained from engaging in extensive conversations, and focused solely on fulfilling the instructions provided by my superiors. In contrast, my fellow teachers and students actively exchanged their ideas and concerns while engaged in the learning process. However, after the results of the initial term examination were released, it became apparent that students performed relatively poorly in my subject compared to others. Through a conversation with one of my colleagues, I became aware that students did not find my classes enjoyable and were reluctant to express their difficulties due to a lack of open discussion. This experience served as a turning point for me, leading me to realize the vital importance of fostering positive relationships between teachers and students in facilitating effective learning. In 2019, I identified the agenda for my MPhil in Education research, which served as the foundation for the study conducted. The agenda was to explore students' experiential narratives concerning the teacher-student relationship and the ways in which it shapes their learning. The present paper represents the

culmination of the research endeavor undertaken. As a research facilitator, and learning psychologist (see Wagle, 2016), the second author has played an active role in theoretical discussion of the research findings.

Contextualizing the Agenda

The teacher-student relationship encompasses a connection between an educator and a student, creating an enriched environment that promotes learning. It also assumes characteristics similar to a friendship, where one individual seeks to understand and alleviate the challenges faced by the other. Pianta *et al.* (2012) define this relationship as one built on trust, facilitating students' comfort in interacting with teachers and peers to express inquiries and share concerns. Additionally, the relationship is established through frequent and meaningful interactions over a significant period, indicating a sense of interdependence (Knoell, 2012). Similarly, it arises from teachers' ongoing engagement within a positive environment (Hamre *et al.*, 2012), fostering a sense of belongingness in students that ultimately contributes to enhanced academic performance (Sabol & Pianta, 2012). Mitra (2003) also supports the idea that cultivating a personal level of interaction, where teachers and students exchange hobbies, aspirations, learning difficulties, and concerns in a familiar environment, yields positive outcomes. In this line, Clark (2003) argues that poor attendance and subpar academic achievement can be attributed to a lack of personal connection between

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teachers and students. Considering this background, drawing upon the authors' personal/ professional experiences and previous research, our interest lies in exploring the role of emotions and interactions as influential factors within this relationship. We uncover the multifaceted (emotional) dynamics of student learning experiences in the context of schools in Nepal.

Many previous studies in this area have predominantly focused on the teacher-student relationship and its impact on higher academic achievement in Western-European contexts. These studies advocate for the importance of establishing a friendly rapport between teachers and students, as it cultivates joy, respect, and care, thereby enhancing students' learning outcomes (Mitra, 2003; Lee *et al.*, 2019). However, in the Nepali context, studies conducted by Awasthi (2004), Khadka (2020), Rawal (2020), Sharma (2013), and Wagle (2016, 2019) presented a traditional view of teachers as authoritative figures, contributing to a teacher-centered environment prevalent in Nepali schools and communities. To make contextual meaning, we looked for field narratives from the actual Nepali context. However, in our preliminary review of the literature, we did not encounter any studies that provided lived perspectives from students. Addressing this gap, the present study aimed to explore students' experiential narratives regarding the teacher-student relationship and its influence on their learning. To conduct a focused exploration, the following research question served as a guiding framework: How do students articulate their learning experiences and academic performance in relation to the teacher-student relationship?

Theorizing the Agenda

In this research study, we explored the students' learning experiences, incorporating Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory and drawing upon the foundational principles of cognitive constructivist theory and social constructivist theory, which are closely interconnected. These theories perceive human relationships as being socially and culturally constructed through interactions. Within the context of this study, these theories mutually reinforced one another. Cognitive constructivism provided insights into the individual learning processes of students, while social constructivism facilitated an exploration of broader social interactions and their influence. From this perspective, learning is primarily understood as a cognitive phenomenon, where experiences arise from the interactions between individuals and objects within specific contexts.

Attachment, as defined by Bowlby (1988), refers to the bond between an adult and a child, wherein the child seeks closeness and security from the adult when experiencing distress or fear. This deep connection between both parties fosters proximity, security, and a sense of closeness. Also, Bowlby's attachment theory posits that attachments are crucial for establishing healthy relationships, evolving as individuals progress through life, and forming functional and meaningful connections

from birth to death. To create a secure and safe learning environment for students, it is necessary to consider the attachment between students and teachers. Numerous studies have provided evidence supporting Bowlby's idea that the teacher-student relationship plays a vital role in promoting healthy academic development and enhancing students' learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Gablinske, 2014; Roodra *et al.*, 2011; Spilt *et al.*, 2012). This relationship fosters a caring environment and cultivates a sense of joy in learning, thereby increasing students' interest and engagement in academic activities (Lee *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the teacher-student relationship offers opportunities for student interaction, the development of communication skills, self-awareness, and collaborative engagement with both teachers and peers, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes and academic performance (Chu *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, it plays a pivotal role in delivering high-quality assessments within higher education (Harvey & Knight, 1996).

Conversely, some educators believe that maintaining a certain level of distance from students is necessary to establish disciplinary boundaries, ultimately benefiting the teacher-student relationship (Old Father & Thomas, 1998 as cited in Lee, 2012). But if the distance is maintained for positive intention or not seems very important. For example, a review of the literature revealed that students' emotional engagement and active participation in learning activities are positively influenced by perceiving positive relationships with their teachers (Hughes *et al.*, 2008). Negative interactions, on the other hand, result in negative emotions and stress among teachers. These teachers may internalize these emotions as disrespect or detachment when faced with negative interactions from their students (Spilt *et al.*, 2011). Spilt *et al.* (2012) suggest that problematic relationships serve as predictors of ongoing conflicts that gradually impede learning activities. Hamre and Pianta (2001) also explored attachment theory in their work, aiming to establish connections between early childhood experiences and subsequent learning opportunities. They emphasized the significance of relationships formed between students and their teachers, noting that once a child enters school, relationships with non-parental adults, specifically student-teacher relationships, become increasingly important (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). This may explain why a study conducted by Moreira *et al.* (2019) recommended fostering positive teacher-student relationships to enhance the quality of education and student engagement in learning activities. Weaker relationships were found to have a negative impact on students' academic performance, leading to increased dropout rates when students lacked engagement in their learning activities (Fredricks *et al.*, 2004). Respectful, caring, and inclusive joyful learning experiences were shown to increase student engagement in learning activities and improve their academic outcomes (Lee *et al.*, 2019). Similar to the findings of Brookhart (2008), our literature review revealed that feedback, as information provided to students, plays a crucial role in enhancing their learning

performance. In similar vein, Mashburn *et al.* (2008) emphasized the importance of open communication and presenting queries, as they foster a supportive and comfortable learning environment between teachers and students, ultimately strengthening student learning and academic performance. Therefore, maintaining positive teacher-student relationships is essential.

Study Method

This study used narrative inquiry as a qualitative approach (within an interpretative research paradigm) to explore the learning experience of the students based on the teacher-student relationship in Nepali Schools. Also, this research focused to explore if this has any meaningful contribution in supporting, especially in areas of enriching their learning and academic performance of the students. As there exists no objective reality on the topic, following the suggestions from Lincoln and Guba (2000), the research design was guided to explore multiple realities through an interpretative paradigm. Since the prime objective of this research was to unfold students' stories about their learning experiences based on their response to interview questions, the study collected the experience of participants through the storytelling of students' learning and academic performance based on the teacher-student relationship. Participants included both male and female students, six in total from the two public schools of Palpa District. To reveal the depth of a participants' experiences, we used open-ended questions. Where possible, we took an audio recording of the interviews. We translated them and transcribed in full before analyzing the collected information. The collected information was interpreted relating them to broader concerns and concepts. After that, information was coded thematically. Then, we classified into different themes. Ultimately, we developed the meaning based on the essence delivered by my research participants.

Findings

In accordance with the research inquiries, the research findings have been presented within two primary themes, namely 'upside learning' and 'downside learning'. The term 'upside learning' as employed in this investigation denotes the type of learning that yields the most favorable outcomes for students. It involves the creation of effective learning opportunities through the responsive and supportive actions undertaken by teachers. To stimulate students, educators can integrate extracurricular activities into their lessons and cultivate a friendly and open rapport with them. Conversely, the term 'downside learning' is utilized herein to describe the adverse effects on students' learning and academic achievements that may arise from teaching and learning activities. Despite teachers' endeavors to engage students through diverse learning endeavors, success is not always guaranteed, and students may encounter challenges in acquiring effective learning strategies and guidance from their teachers. Consequently, this may result in diminished interest

and motivation to learn, ultimately leading to a decline in academic performance and grades (Kalenze, 2014). Ultimately, downside learning has the potential to impede a student's capacity to learn and excel in their educational pursuits.

Students' Stories on the Upside Learning Experiences

In pursuit of investigating the research inquiries, an examination was undertaken to delve into the learning encounter of a participant identified as S1. The participant's verbal accounts elucidated the profound impact of the teacher's encouragement, manifested through affable demeanor, affectionate and nurturing attributes, as well as the facilitation of supplementary extracurricular activities. These elements played a constructive role in shaping the participant's educational experiences. The participant expressed the following narrative:

Every week, in the midst of our classroom routine, something extraordinary would happen. It was like a secret ritual between us, shared only by my teacher and me. He would unveil an extra activity, something beyond the confinements of our regular course material. It was a moment that sparked anticipation and curiosity within me. But it wasn't just the activity itself that left an indelible mark on my memory. It was the way my teacher approached it. With a twinkle in his eye and a warm smile on his face, he would invite me to engage in open discussions without any trace of fear or hesitation. No question was too trivial, no query too embarrassing. This freedom he bestowed upon me, it was liberating. As I began to speak up, I felt an unspoken bond forming between us. A connection beyond the realms of traditional teacher-student dynamics. It was a relationship built on trust, understanding, and genuine care. In those moments of shared dialogue, my positive attitude towards him grew exponentially. I no longer saw him as a mere instructor; he became a mentor, a confidant. The impact of these special encounters didn't end there. The events and activities he orchestrated within the classroom subtly transformed my learning habits. I found myself yearning for knowledge, eagerly immersing myself in the pursuit of understanding. That positive attitude I developed extended beyond our discussions; it seeped into every aspect of my academic life. With each passing day, my learning habits blossomed further, fueling my educational journey. It was a gradual transformation, an evolution of my learning activities and, subsequently, my academic performance. I owe it all to those precious moments shared with my teacher, where body language spoke volumes, and a nurturing environment fostered my growth.

In addition, we analyzed the narratives provided by participant S3 regarding the efficacy of extra-curricular activities in fostering positive teacher-student relations. These accounts provided valuable insights into the potential benefits of learning through extra-curricular activities as compared to core-curriculum activities. It was evident that such activities not only yielded greater productivity but also contributed to the cultivation

of a favorable teacher-student bond. Furthermore, engagement in these activities was shown to enhance students' overall involvement in the learning process. The participant shared the following revelation:

My teacher's teaching style was nothing short of captivating. It left an indelible impression on my young mind, fueling my thirst for knowledge. There was something extraordinary about the way he motivated us, instilling in us a resolute positive attitude towards learning. Once a month, he would whisk us away from the confines of the classroom, embarking on thrilling adventures to various destinations. These excursions served as tangible evidence of the interconnectedness between nature and our curriculum. It was as if he held the key to unlocking the secrets of the world, and he generously shared it with us. As we explored these diverse locations, our curiosity was awakened. We became active participants in our own learning journey, eagerly seeking answers to the questions that sprouted like wildflowers in our minds. The teacher's ability to nurture our inquisitive nature was truly remarkable. But it wasn't just the fascinating trips that brought us closer to our teacher. It was the atmosphere of trust and camaraderie he fostered. Gradually, we developed a bond, a sense of kinship with him. We felt comfortable approaching him for guidance, seeking clarification on the intricate aspects of the subject matter that perplexed us. In those moments of uncertainty, his presence acted as a guiding light, illuminating our path. His patient explanations and unwavering support helped us overcome our doubts, leading us towards clarity and understanding. It was through these shared experiences, these heartfelt interactions, that our teacher became more than just an instructor. He transformed into a mentor, a confidant, someone we could rely on for assistance in our educational journey. His teaching activity left an indelible mark on our hearts, nurturing our love for learning and instilling in us a profound appreciation for the subject matter. It was an experience that went beyond the textbooks and worksheets, transcending the boundaries of a conventional classroom. In the end, it was not just the destinations we visited that mattered, but the transformation that occurred within us. Through his engaging teaching methods and genuine care, our teacher helped us blossom into eager learners, unafraid to explore the vast realm of knowledge.

Upon analyzing the individual's personal encounters, it became evident that they were beneficial in fostering a constructive mindset towards educators. Additionally, these experiences proved instrumental in heightening the individual's inclination towards acquiring knowledge. Likewise, the observations of participant S4 were gathered, revealing the conviction that incorporating social activities into teaching methodologies establishes interactive environments with instructors, consequently bolstering students' motivation to engage in the learning process. As articulated by S4:

In the classroom, the teacher incorporated an interactive activity into the social studies lesson. Specifically, during

the previous week's session, the topic of nationalism and territorial disputes, specifically Lipulake, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapana, was addressed. The teacher divided the class into four groups and assigned them a classwork task. The task involved imagining themselves as the foreign minister and secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Policy, and finding a solution to the territorial issue that would be in Nepal's best interest. The teacher encouraged active participation and multiple perspectives, urging us to provide our answers. Throughout the activity, the teacher consistently motivated us to share diverse viewpoints. Subsequently, the teacher provided substantial feedback and comments on our responses, fostering a robust exchange of ideas.

During the recounting of his experiences, it became evident that the aforementioned activities stimulated the individual to engage in introspection and contemplate their comprehension. Similar to their peers, the individual demonstrated a heightened level of motivation towards the learning activities. The individual's narrative highlighted the significance of contextually relevant practical learning in fostering a sense of admiration towards educators among students. The individual further conveyed-

In the realm of our everyday lives, there exists a remarkable individual who plays a pivotal role in shaping our experiences. This extraordinary person is none other than our teacher, who goes above and beyond to guide us through the trials and triumphs that await us. Through their dedicated efforts, we are enlightened with valuable knowledge, such as the art of producing vegetables using the grafting method. One particular instance stands out vividly in my memory. It was during a lesson when the teacher introduced us to the concept of grafting, demonstrating how we could unite the qualities of a potato plant and a tomato plant, resulting in the unique phenomenon of potatoes and tomatoes growing together. The practical nature of this knowledge struck a chord with me, for it had a direct correlation to our household activities. Armed with this newfound wisdom, I was able to contribute significantly to the day-to-day operations of my family. My parents, in particular, benefited greatly from my ability to apply this knowledge in our household tasks. The fusion of practical learning with real-life applications instilled within me a sense of fulfillment, as I could tangibly witness the positive impact I had on my family's well-being. Moreover, this practical aspect of learning fostered a deep sense of connection and admiration for our teacher. The teacher's unwavering dedication to imparting knowledge in such a meaningful way created a strong bond between us. Their guidance not only expanded my understanding but also sparked a fire within me, fueling my motivation to cultivate better learning habits. In retrospect, the teacher's influence went beyond the confines of the classroom. Through their teachings and the practical skills that I acquired; I was empowered to make a difference in my own home. This teacher's ability to seamlessly integrate theory with practice left an indelible mark on my life, forever reminding me of

the profound impact a remarkable teacher can have on one's journey of learning and personal growth.

The narrative shared by the participant highlighted the significance of extra-curricular activities organized by their teacher in expanding their knowledge beyond the confines of the textbook. These activities not only ignited their passion for learning but also fostered a stronger bond between the student and the teacher. Another participant, denoted as S5, expressed similar sentiments, emphasizing their admiration for a teacher who employed innovative teaching techniques and provided effective support to students during the learning process. Moreover, S5 emphasized the practical relevance and everyday applicability of the knowledge they acquired, which further heightened their interest in learning. They suggested that creating a nurturing and supportive environment, rather than a punitive one, when students made mistakes, contributed to their motivation to learn. The positive impression left by the teacher's teaching activities was evident in S5's recollections of the teacher's approach, such as asking questions and providing abundant guidance rather than harshly punishing students for incorrect answers. Reflecting on the various experiences and stories shared, it becomes apparent that continuous feedback, friendly demeanor, consistent encouragement, and a comfortable learning environment are pivotal in leaving a positive impact on both the teacher and the teaching-learning process. S5 concluded by asserting that fostering a good teacher-student relationship plays a crucial role in encouraging students to enhance their learning outcomes. Further exploration of experiences and stories led to the participation of S6, who humbly recounted how the acquisition of extra knowledge aided in deepening their understanding and broadening their thinking capacity. This, in turn, positively influenced their relationship with the teacher.

Overall, the study findings underscored the significance of extracurricular activities, practical application of knowledge, and positive teacher-student relationships in facilitating comprehensive learning experiences and fostering a conducive environment for intellectual growth.

Students' Stories on the Downside Learning Experiences

The utilization of conventional pedagogical techniques, characterized by the delivery of information to students without substantial avenues for interaction or engagement, has been found to engender unfavorable learning experiences for students, commonly referred to as 'downside learning.' Such instructional approaches predominantly exhibit a teacher-centered paradigm, wherein students assume passive roles as mere recipients of information, thereby depriving them of opportunities to pose inquiries or contribute their own perspectives (Castejou & Martinez, 2001). Consequently, this dynamic within the classroom setting may exert adverse effects on students' learning outcomes and overall academic performance. Moreover, the detrimental behaviors exhibited by teachers, such as misconduct, severe

criticism, and instances of humiliation, can further impede students' learning process.

Drawing from the research inquiries underpinning this investigation, the participants conveyed that the implementation of physical punishment undermines the establishment of a positive teacher-student rapport. Upon reviewing the narratives, participant S6 revealed that punitive measures and disparaging remarks served to diminish her motivation to engage in learning endeavors. In an attempt to delve deeper into the learning encounters of the participants, S1 recounted a particularly captivating anecdote wherein she was compelled to endure the entirety of a class period under scorching sunlight due to a missed assignment. She expounded-

In the classroom, I experienced a distressing incident when I made an error while working on the class assignment. In response, the teacher promptly banished me from the classroom, forcing me to stand under the scorching sun alongside my classmates. To exacerbate matters, she proceeded to publicly shame me in front of my friends. Consequently, this incident left an indelible mark on my perception of and respect for that particular teacher. Furthermore, I recall how some of our teachers conducted their lectures in a monotonous manner, devoid of any meaningful interaction or engagement with the students. They simply droned on, incessantly dictating information without affording us the opportunity to contribute our thoughts or perspectives. On one occasion, I mustered the courage to pose a question to one of these teachers, hoping for some clarity. However, instead of addressing my query, he chose to dismiss and humiliate me in front of the entire class. This incident had a profound impact on me, as it instilled a deep reluctance within me to ever ask questions in that particular class again. As a consequence, my enthusiasm and motivation for participating in the teaching-learning activities within that environment dwindled significantly.

During my perusal of her narratives, I discerned a recurring theme indicating the absence of any interpersonal connection between the teacher and the student. As the learning journey unfolded, Participant (S5) likewise conveyed experiences of discriminatory conduct, wherein their teacher exhibited a preference for students deemed talented, while neglecting others. The teacher consistently adopted a stern demeanor and failed to offer constructive feedback, thereby lacking the means to motivate the participant. This discouraging attitude from the teacher hindered the participant's inclination to engage in the learning process. In her account, she recounted the following-

In my personal experience, I have come to believe that teachers' likability and effectiveness are determined more by their behavior rather than their level of knowledge. It is a given that individuals entering the teaching profession possess a basic level of knowledge. However, I encountered a situation where one teacher demonstrated greater talent than another, yet I did not enjoy their teaching due to their behavior, which did not resonate with me.

Within the framework of investigating the learning experience, the participant (S6) further emphasized the significance of a teacher's behavior in captivating students' interest and fostering their engagement in the learning process. The participant's narrative shed light on a distressing incident involving a teacher whose conduct was deemed unfavorable. With great disapproval of the prevailing circumstances, she recounted the teacher's exclusive focus on talented students and disproportionate attention given to students from influential and esteemed backgrounds. Through her account, it became evident that she was deprived of any opportunity to express her own learning interests. This particular event resulted in a diminished level of respect towards the teacher. Drawing insights from these narratives, it is evident that teachers should refrain from exercising authoritarianism, as acts of discrimination and humiliation undermine the positive teacher-student relationship. Instead, teachers ought to prioritize students' interests to foster an environment conducive to enhanced learning activities.

DISCUSSIONS

Upon analyzing the narratives centered around the theme of cultivating affection through motivational activities, it became apparent that the students exhibited an indifferent rapport with their teacher, which significantly impacted their learning outcomes. The students' relationship dynamics were influenced by their engagement in extracurricular pursuits. As suggested by Bowlby, (1988), the students' accounts revealed that teaching methods encompassing social activities, constructive feedback, amiable demeanor, consistent encouragement, and nurturing environments fostered interactive spaces with teachers, thereby enhancing motivation for learning. Luz (2015) also emphasized the importance of constructive interactions and friendly behavior in establishing a supportive and caring relationship, which in turn facilitated students' motivation and respect for their teachers. This finding aligns with Bowlby's theory (1940, 1949, 1988) that positive relationships foster personal trust, attachment, and the unveiling of students' hidden talents (Riley, 2011). Additionally, it corroborates the assertions made by Vygotsky (1962) and Bandura (2009) that interactive learning experiences lead to increased engagement. Consequently, the aforementioned findings suggest that positive relationships in various ways contribute to students' learning and academic performance.

Different perspectives emerged concerning student learning in relation to the teacher-student relationship. After examining the participants' learning experiences in light of the research questions, it became evident that teachers displayed insensitivity towards students and their individual learning interests. As Bandura (2009) suggests, this lack of sensitivity must be addressed to enhance students' learning outcomes. Students' narratives indicated that many Nepali schools' teachers made little effort to establish friendly relationships that would facilitate comprehension of the subject matter. Similar

to the findings by Lee (2012), insufficient interaction created distance between teachers and students, thereby demotivating students in their learning endeavors. Moreover, instances of discrimination and humiliation eroded positive relationships. This disconnects impeded students' learning and academic performance (Sharma, 2013). Similarly, students' accounts illustrated that misbehaviors and punitive measures isolated positive relationships. This finding aligns with Bandura's (2009) assertion that a lack of positive relationships diminishes students' interest in learning. Consequently, employing Vygotsky's social constructivist theory and Bowlby's attachment theory, alongside the cognitive constructivist theory, further supports the claim that punitive teaching methods and unhealthy behaviors both negatively impact the teacher-student relationship. Hence, a cold and distant relationship undermines students' learning experiences and academic achievements in numerous ways.

CONCLUSION

Acquiring philosophical understanding entails acknowledging that one's researched knowledge represents a partial truth rather than an ultimate truth, as the pursuit of truth itself is deemed unattainable. Within the realm of student learning, this acceptance is ingrained in every facet and moment of the educational process. It encompasses a broad range of consciousness and attentiveness towards students' academic performance and the overall functioning of educational institutions. As argued by Bowlby (1940, 1949), it engenders long-term effects on individual development and positively influences students' academic achievements. Consequently, it can be inferred that establishing an effective teacher-student relationship is a dynamic process that significantly impacts students' learning performance and academic outcomes. Likewise, this study revealed novel dimensions of the teacher-student relationship within the context of Nepal. Traditionally, prevalent beliefs in many Nepali communities emphasize maintaining a certain level of distance between teachers and students. This culturally established guru (teacher) and chela (student) relationship perpetuates a hierarchical dynamic wherein open communication is not encouraged (Awasthi, 2004; Wagle, 2021). In contrast to this exclusive hierarchical association between teachers and students, the present study advocates for an open and inclusive relational environment. This approach not only aligns with cultural sensitivities but also bears academic significance.

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