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Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

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Abstract

This paper examined recent studies highlighting the beneficial effects of teacher-student relationships (TSRs) for both educators and students. It discussed a range of research findings regarding the emotional impact on teachers, emphasizing how strong relationships with students can enhance their job satisfaction and motivation. The paper also explored effective strategies for enhancing TSRs through tailored teaching practices and professional development initiatives, showing how educators can foster closer connections with their students. Furthermore, the study addressed the academic and emotional benefits for students, illustrating how positive TSRs lead to increased engagement, improved academic performance, and better emotional well-being. Research revealed that when students feel valued and understood by their teachers, they are more likely to participate actively in class and seek help when needed. Overall, the findings indicated positive teacher-student relationships were essential for creating a supportive and effective educational environment. The paper concluded by emphasizing the need for educators and institutions to prioritize the development of these relationships as they play a crucial role in both teaching effectiveness and student success. By investing in the encouragement of TSRs, schools can enhance the overall educational experience for everyone involved, paving the way for a brighter future in education.

Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

Chapter One: Introduction

Imagine walking down the aisle at the local grocery store and bumping into an old teacher from your elementary school years. Would that teacher make eye contact or just keep walking down the aisle without acknowledging each other? Would they still remember the teacher's name? Would the teacher remember their name? Would the two of them have a conversation at that moment about their present lives? Would they end the conversation with a smile and a hug? Were they lucky enough to have a positive teacher-student relationship that made an impact on their life? Now, think about the teacher. Did the relationship they share with their students make an impact on their teaching? Did the students make their school day a little brighter? Did they, in some small way, provide the motivation the teacher needed to continue their important work?

Positive teacher-student relationships are essential in the educational world. They create a supportive environment where students feel valued and engaged. For teachers, these relationships often serve as a source of inspiration and encouragement, reinforcing the reason they chose the teaching profession. When teachers and students connect on a personal level, it can transform the classroom into a space of mutual respect and excitement for learning. These connections can be lasting influences that shape both students' and teachers' lives. They remind readers of the profound impact genuine, supportive interactions can have on our personal and professional journeys.

Importance of the Topic

Investigating the topic of positive teacher-student relationships is necessary because of the significant impact these relationships can have on both students and teachers; understanding

this dynamic is crucial for fostering an educational environment that promotes academic success, emotional well-being, and effective teaching practices. Positive teacher-student relationships are fundamental at any educational level and can leave a lasting impact for years to come. According to Hagenauer et al. (2022), "Positive teacher-student relationships have been identified as important for teacher and student well-being and for high quality teaching and learning processes and outcomes" (p. 819). When teachers fostered positive connections with their students, it not only enhanced the students' emotional and social development but also contributed to more effective teaching practices. Therefore, prioritizing these relationships was vital for achieving both individual and collective educational goals.

When teachers invested in building positive, supportive relationships with their students, they created a classroom environment where students felt valued and understood. This was key to fostering a sense of trust, which in turn encouraged students to engage more actively in their learning and embrace new challenges. Marks et al. (2022) stated it was important for teachers to be "warm, caring, sensitive, and responsive to student needs as they formed supportive relationships marked by high closeness and low conflict" (p. 2). This quote supported the point being made in the paragraph by highlighting the specific qualities contributed to effective teacher-student relationships. By emphasizing warmth and sensitivity, it reinforced the idea that a nurturing classroom environment boosted students' motivation and improved their learning outcomes. Thus, the investment in these positive relationships directly correlated with enhanced student engagement and academic success.

For teachers, nurturing good relationships with students enhances job satisfaction and motivation. Corbin et al. (2019) found teachers view "close relationships with students as their main source of enjoyment, satisfaction, and professional motivation" (p. 2). Understanding each

student's needs and tailoring their teaching accordingly not only improves instructional quality but also makes the teaching experience more rewarding.

Overall, the investigation into positive teacher-student relationships reveals how these connections benefit both teaching and learning. By fostering an environment of trust and mutual respect, teachers can enhance educational outcomes and job satisfaction, while students are motivated to engage and excel. This underscores the importance of cultivating and studying these relationships to improve educational experiences for everyone involved. Furthermore, strong teacher-student relationships can lead to reduced behavioral issues, lower dropout rates, and improved mental health for both students and teachers, ultimately creating a more effective and supportive educational system. Understanding and prioritizing these connections is crucial for developing strategies that promote not just academic success but also the overall well-being of the entire school community.

Scope of Research

The research examined qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method studies focused on the benefits of positive teacher-student relationships. The literature review was broken down into two themes. The first theme examined the impact a positive teacher-student relationship has on an educator. Within this theme, two subthemes were created to focus on the social emotional impact of the teacher-student relationship and ways to enhance a teacher-student relationship through effective teaching practices and professional development. The second theme focused on the impact a positive teacher-student relationship has on a student. Again, within this theme, two subthemes were developed to better explain the research. One subtheme focused on the academic impact a positive teacher-student relationship has on a student, and the second subtheme focused on a student's social emotional learning.

Out of the fifteen studies included, some studies took place in early childhood, elementary and high school classroom settings. Limited research was available about teacher-student relationships in higher education, specifically after high school graduation. This review could benefit from conducting longitudinal students over longer lengths of time. Nevertheless, the scope of this research will justify the importance of positive teacher-student relationships for educators and students from early childhood education to high school graduation.

Research Question

In light of what is known about differentiated instruction in the educational setting, what impact can positive teacher-student relationships have on both the teacher and student in the classroom so everyone can achieve at their highest potential? This inquiry was driven by Concordia University, St. Paul's Differentiated Instruction Program's Essential Question: "In light of what is known about differentiated instruction, how should professional educators effectively teach every student?" The essential question frames the research by emphasizing the need for educators to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the unique needs of all students. Positive teacher-student relationships open the door for students to explore learning in ways interesting to them and fit their personal learning styles. Strong teacher-student relationships and differentiated instruction are key to helping students engage and succeed. When teachers connect with their students and adjust their lessons to fit each student's needs, it creates a supportive environment that encourages everyone to do their best.

Definition of Terms

Affective engagement referred to how teachers used motivational techniques to help students feel positive emotions during lessons (Li et al., 2022). For example, a teacher might

incorporate interactive activities, such as group discussions or creative projects, to foster enthusiasm and connection among students.

Cognitive engagement described how actively students thought and participated in learning. This included thinking deeply, using different strategies, staying focused, and reflecting on their own learning (Li et al., 2022). For example, a teacher might have encouraged students to work on a project that required them to analyze multiple sources of information and synthesize their findings.

Emotion knowledge referred to the ability to recognize and name feelings. This skill developed quickly during early childhood and was a key part of social and emotional abilities (Marks et al., 2022). For example, a teacher might have used story time to help children identify different emotions expressed by characters in a book, asking questions like, "How do you think that character feels?"

Executive functioning skills referred to the brain skills involved in goal-directed behavior, including working memory, self-control, and flexibility in thinking (Marks et al., 2022). For example, a student might have used working memory to remember multi-step instructions during a classroom project, showed self-control by ignoring distractions from classmates, and demonstrated flexibility by changing their approach when faced with unexpected problems.

Externalizing Behavioral Problems (EBPs) referred to negative behaviors that individuals showed in response to their environment (Lei et al., 2016). For example, a student might have shouted or refused to follow instructions in class, which reflected their difficulty dealing with stress or frustration around them.

Teacher-student relationships (TSRs) are two-way interactions that happen in close, everyday environments (McCormick et al., 2015).

Summary

Positive teacher-student relationships play a large role in the education world, affecting both teachers and students. These relationships create a supportive environment where students feel valued, which boosts their motivation and learning. For teachers, connecting well with students enhances job satisfaction and inspires them to keep teaching effectively. Strong relationships can lead to better educational experiences, fewer behavior problems, and improved mental health for everyone involved. This paper highlights the need to prioritize these relationships to create an effective educational system. It explores how positive teacher-student connections can improve differentiated instruction, helping each student meet their individual learning needs and become more engaged. Overall, the findings stress the importance of building these connections for the best outcomes in the classroom.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

With growing evidence that positive teacher-student relationships could significantly influence both educators and students, researchers increasingly examined the details of these connections. This literature review aimed to highlight the impact a positive teacher-student relationship has on teachers and students. The research analyzed in this paper resulted in two major themes connecting to the research question of *What impact can positive teacher-student relationships have on both the teacher and student in the classroom so everyone can achieve at their highest potential?* The first theme considered the impact a positive teacher-student relationship had on educators emotionally and evaluated strategies to enhance relationships

through effective teaching practices and professional development. The second theme considered the impact a positive teacher-student relationship had on students, both academically and social

Positive Teacher-Student Relationship Impact Teachers

The first theme investigated six studies by Chung-Do et al. (2013), Cook et al. (2018), Corbin et al. (2019), Le Cornu (2013), Li et al. (2022), and Taxer et al. (2019) in different contexts to explore the impact positive teacher-student relationships have on an educator. The sub-themes included emotional impact and enhancement of teacher-student relationships through effective teaching practices and professional development.

Emotional Impact

Emotional impact on educators surfaced as a significant sub-theme in teacher-student relationships. Corbin et al. (2019), Le Cornu (2013), and Taxer et al. (2019) collectively highlighted these emotional challenges. Educators faced challenges related to burnout and negative interactions that led to increased emotional strain. Positive relationships were linked to reduced emotional exhaustion and greater job satisfaction. Each of the three authors addressed different sorts of emotional impact positive teacher-student relationships had on an educator.

Corbin et al. (2019) explored the links between teachers' relationships with their students and the phenomenon of teacher burnout. The yearlong mixed-methods study was conducted in a large, urban city in the United States, utilizing data from a school-randomized controlled efficacy trial focused on social-emotional learning and literacy interventions, combined with intensive teacher coaching designed to enhance curricular effectiveness (Corbin et al., 2019). The findings revealed a critical insight: teachers who perceived negativity or a lack of rapport in their relationships with students were more likely to experience emotional frustration and fatigue. This strain impacted their overall well-being and effectiveness in the classroom (Corbin et al., 2019).

Astonishingly, approximately half of K-12 teachers reported experiencing high levels of daily job-related stress, a proportion that paralleled those found in the nursing profession (Corbin et al., 2019; Gallup, 2014). The biggest limitation of the study was the study's reliance on teacher-reported evaluations; future work would benefit from different perspectives on the topic to gather more diverse data.

In a complementary qualitative study, Taxer et al. (2019) examined the themes of emotional exhaustion, enjoyment, and anger in relation to teacher-student relationships. The study involved 266 secondary school teachers from both rural and urban settings in Oklahoma, USA, who had an average of 15 years of teaching experience. Participants completed a questionnaire designed to capture how teachers' subjective beliefs about their relationships with students related to their emotional experiences and overall well-being (Taxer et al., 2019). The study indicated that when teachers perceived their relationships with students positively, they experienced lower levels of emotional exhaustion and anger, while simultaneously reporting higher levels of enjoyment in their roles (Taxer et al., 2019).

However, the study had notable limitations, including the dependence on data from a single source—the teachers themselves—and the fact that data was collected at only one point in time. To address these limitations, Taxer et al. (2019) conducted a follow-up study that included student perspectives. This second study involved approximately 70 teachers and 1,650 students in grades 5 through 10. Teachers completed the questionnaire independently, while trained research assistants assisted students in completing theirs. The questionnaires were administered at three different time points throughout the academic year. Consistent with the initial findings, the second study reaffirmed positive teacher-student relationships were negatively correlated

with teachers' emotional exhaustion and anger, while being positively correlated with teachers'
enjoyment (Taxer et al., 2019).

An additional qualitative research study conducted by Le Cornu (2013) concentrated on
serious concerns about the sustainability of teaching based on the attrition rates of beginner
teachers. The project focused on 60 early career teachers who completed two semi-structured
interviews. The first interview took place at the beginning of the school year while the second
occurred toward the end. A significant insight from this study was for new teachers to feel
confident and competent in their roles, they needed to both sustain and be sustained by
relationships grounded in mutual trust, respect, care, and integrity (Le Cornu, 2013). The study
by Le Cornu (2013) failed to mention its limitations.

The studies by Taxer et al. (2019) and Le Cornu (2013) exposed similar results although
the length of the teacher's educational career was different in each focus group. Taxer et al.
(2019) gathered data on veteran teachers having at least fifteen years of experience whereas Le
Cornu (2013) spent time gathering data on new teachers in the early years of their teaching
careers.

Corbin et al. (2019), Le Cornu (2013), and Taxer et al. (2019) all emphasized the
importance of positive teacher-student relationships as a buffer against burnout and stress. They
suggested fostering supportive and constructive connections with students could significantly
enhance teachers' emotional well-being. These studies consistently highlighted how such
relationships not only improved teaching quality but also contributed to teachers' overall well-
being. Moreover, the emotional health of teachers underscored the need for professional
development, which in turn enhanced the overall flow of the classroom environment.

Enhancing Teacher-Student Relationships Through Effective Teaching Practices and

Professional Development

Chung-Do et al. (2013), Cook et al. (2018), and Li et al. (2022) found that effective teaching practices and targeted professional development improved teacher-student relations. Effective teaching instruction emerged as a significant sub-theme in positive teacher-student relationships and the impact it had on a classroom. A quantitative study conducted by Li et al. (2022), highlighted teachers who maintained positive relationships with their students engaged in higher-quality teaching practices. This finding was crucial, as research on school effectiveness consistently identified high-quality instruction as one of the largest contributors to students' academic achievement (Li et al., 2022; Scheerens, 2001; Thoonen et al., 2011).

Li et al. (2022) explored this relationship using archival data from the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE), a state-wide teacher growth and evaluation system. The study focused on teachers in regular education classrooms across grades 4-10. The sample of students was notably similar in achievement and demographics, though they exhibited lower math performance and were less likely to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (Li et al., 2022). The study employed student surveys to examine the association between positive teacher-student relationships and the quality of four specific teaching practices: cognitive engagement (CE) in the content, problem solving and critical thinking (PCT), affective engagement (AE) in the content, and instructional monitoring (IM) during the lesson flow (Li et al., 2022). The findings indicated positive TSRs predicted high-quality instruction, with effects varying by teaching practice and grade level.

Specifically, researchers argued that positive teacher-student relationships enabled primary and secondary teachers to implement three complex teaching practices—cognitive

engagement, problem solving and critical thinking, and instructional monitoring—more effectively (Li et al., 2022). In contrast, the study suggested affective engagement was more likely to lead to positive TSRs in secondary schools, rather than the other way around, although results for elementary schools remained inconclusive (Li et al., 2022). A major limitation of the study was the small number of primary grade students involved in the affective engagement sample, which impacted the reliability of the results.

Building on the previous sub-theme, the study by Li et al. (2022) echoed the findings of Taxer et al. (2019), revealing positive teacher-student relationships significantly affect a teacher's mental well-being and job satisfaction.

In a multimethod study by Cook et al. (2018), teacher-student relationships were measured with a teacher report tool while student classroom behavior was measured using a behavioral observation system. Additionally, acceptability and fidelity of the strategies were evaluated through a rating scale and self-report checklist. Participants included students from ten classrooms across three elementary schools in the United States. The findings indicated teachers who underwent establish-maintain-restore (EMR) training experienced significant improvements in their relationships with students, which correlated with enhancements in student classroom behavior (Cook et al., 2018).

However, the study had some limitations. It focused on just a few classrooms, which made the results less reliable and limited how well they applied to other settings. Additionally, the teachers in the study were chosen by school principals based on who they thought would benefit from professional development. The author reported that this method introduced bias and weakened the overall reliability of the study.

In another study conducted by Chung-Do et al. (2013), the Asian and Pacific Islander student body in Hawaii was required to take a Personal Transition Plan/Leadership (PTP/L) course for four years in high school. The PTP/L course is a universal program this is designed to build students' sense of school connectedness in developmentally appropriate ways from freshman to senior year (Chung-Do et al., 2013). The study focused on 67 participants—36 boys and 31 girls—which were randomly selected to engage in focus group discussions during a 30-minute lunch period. After each session, facilitators manually coded their notes using pre-established themes based on a focus group guide. The findings revealed the most prominent theme was the critical role teachers play in students' success in the course (Chung-Do et al., 2013). Notably, the importance of teacher support emerged as a central theme, influencing nearly every topic discussed during the focus groups (Chung-Do et al., 2013). However, one significant limitation of the study was the lack of audio recordings for the focus groups. This omission raised concerns that some simple details shared during discussions may have been overlooked, potentially affecting the comprehensiveness of the data collected.

Despite the limitations in both studies, such as small sample sizes and potential biases, the evidence underscored the critical role educators play in shaping student experiences. The teacher-student relationship could be classified as a resource in classrooms and school-wide. When students feel teachers care about them, they work harder, engage in more challenging academic activities, behave more appropriately for the school environment, are genuinely happy to see their teacher, and meet or exceed their teacher's expectations (Li et al., 2022; see also Allen et al., 2011; Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Hughes et al., 2008; Podsakoff, McKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Quin, 2016; Wentzel, 2009).

In summary of theme one, the sub-themes of emotional impact and strengthening teacher-student relationships through effective teaching practices and professional development reinforce the idea, as noted by researchers, that positive teacher-student relationships have a lasting effect on educators.

Impact of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships on Students

The previous theme highlighted the importance of positive teacher-student relationships and how the connections influenced teachers' daily experiences. Educators who built supportive relationships with their students often felt more engaged and satisfied in their roles. This created a better teaching environment that benefited both teachers and students. The second theme focused on how these relationships affected students' daily lives, both academically and socially.

Academic Impact

Academic impact on students emerged as a significant sub-theme in the topic of positive teacher student relationships. Li et al. (2022), Martin and Collie (2019), McCormick and O'Connor (2015), Pakarinen et al. (2021), Quin (2017), and Varghese et al. (2019) highlighted the need for positive teacher-student relationships from the academic perspective.

The early years of a child's life are crucial for development, especially as they move from home and childcare into primary classrooms. Research by Varghese et al. (2019) showed teachers played important roles in affecting students' academic and social outcomes during this time. This is particularly true in kindergarten, where the quality of teacher-child relationships matters as children start to receive feedback on their skills and achievements (Pakarinen et al., 2021). A positive relationship with a classroom teacher can set the stage for a successful academic journey. Many authors highlight strong student-teacher relationships promote better

cognitive development, higher academic achievement, and smoother school adjustment, underscoring the importance of these early connections for educational success.

Pakarinen et al. (2021) conducted a mixed methods study to examine the relationship between the quality of teacher-child interactions and children's interest and pre-academic skills in literacy and mathematics. The study involved approximately 450 Finnish kindergarten students and their teachers, providing a comprehensive view of the dynamics within the classroom. Teachers assessed their levels of closeness and conflict with each child twice throughout the academic year, while the children expressed their interest in literacy and math and were evaluated on their pre-academic skills (Pakarinen et al., 2021). The results indicated statistically significant correlations between the quality of teacher-child relationships and various child outcomes. Notably, the study found the associations were stronger when considering teacher-perceived conflict, suggesting negative relational dynamics may have a more pronounced impact on children's academic engagement and performance. The Pakarinen et al. (2021) study had a few limitations. The study had only two time points, a large amount of data on parental level of education and maternal affection was absent and the conflict and closeness in teacher-child relationships were measured by teacher ratings.

While the previous study by Pakarinen et al. (2021) examined pre-academic skills in kindergarten students, the study by Varghese et al. (2019) concentrated on children's literacy achievement and social competencies of roughly 500 kindergarten and first-grade students. Conducted in ten rural schools in the Southeastern United States, the research aimed to understand how varying levels of conflict and closeness in teacher-child relationships impacted student outcomes. The findings revealed conflictual teacher-child relationships had a detrimental effect on children's literacy achievement and social competencies. Importantly, the study noted

these adverse associations did not differ based on the children's status as struggling or non-struggling readers (Varghese et al., 2019).

In addition to Pakarinen et al. (2021) and Varghese et al.'s (2019) research, McCormick and O'Connor (2015) also examined the impact of teacher-child closeness and conflict on math and reading achievement. Although, McCormick and O'Connor (2015) conducted a mixed methods study focused on three different grade levels in the elementary, with a specific focus on gender differences. The study utilized data from approximately 1,120 children and families across ten cities in the United States, with the sample comprising 48% female, 80% White, 13% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 5% Asian or Pacific Islander (McCormick & O'Connor, 2015). To assess the quality of teacher-child relationships, the researchers employed the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 1992), focusing on first, third, and fifth grades. Concurrently, students' reading and math achievements were measured using the Woodcock–Johnson Psycho Educational Battery (WJ–R; Woodcock & Johnson, 1989).

The findings revealed generally, students' reading and math scores increased over time, while teacher-child closeness experienced a decline. Conversely, levels of teacher-child conflict rose between first and third grades, subsequently decreasing by a nominal amount in fifth grade (McCormick & O'Connor, 2015). Gender analysis indicated boys exhibited significantly higher levels of conflict over time, whereas girls maintained closer relationships with teachers across all three grade levels. Additionally, although boys demonstrated higher math and reading achievement in first grade, this difference became insignificant by third and fifth grades.

The study by Li et al. (2022), previously discussed in theme one, highlights substantial research indicating positive teacher-student relationships (TSRs) significantly boost students' academic achievement. One key reason for this is students tend to be more motivated to learn

when they have positive connections with their teachers (Li et al., 2022; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

The structure of elementary and secondary schools can differ significantly, influencing the nature of teacher-student relationships. In elementary settings, students typically form a strong bond with one core classroom teacher, while secondary students interact with multiple teachers throughout the day (Quin, 2017). This dynamic necessitates an exploration of the balance between positive and negative teacher-student relationships in the academic lives of high school students. A mixed-method study conducted by Martin and Collie (2019) investigated this balance in a longitudinal sample of about 2,100 students from 18 Australian high schools. Students filled out surveys in the last third of the school year and then again, a year later.

The findings indicated students who reported more positive relationships with their teachers tended to exhibit greater school engagement (Martin & Collie, 2019). The study emphasized the cumulative benefits of fostering positive teacher-student relationships across various subjects, suggesting that enhancing these relationships could significantly contribute to students' academic experiences (Martin & Collie, 2019).

A systematic review conducted by Quin (2017) analyzed 800 articles from various electronic databases to explore the relationship between teacher-student relationships (TSRs) and student engagement. Out of these, 46 articles met the inclusion criteria established for the mixed methods study. Both student self-reports and school data were utilized to assess academic performance, attendance, and behavioral factors such as suspension. The findings across the reviewed studies indicated higher quality TSRs were consistently linked to increased psychological engagement, improved academic grades, and better attendance, while also

correlating with reduced disruptive behaviors, lower suspension rates, and decreased dropout rates (Quin, 2017).

Together, these six studies feature the interconnectedness of positive teacher-student relationships and the academic impact they provide. The collective findings contribute significantly to the ongoing idea surrounding the importance of supportive interactions in educational settings.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

In addition to the academic impact positive teacher-student relationships have on students, there is a parallel impact on a student's social emotional learning. The following studies Lei et al. (2016), Lin et al. (2022), Marks et al. (2022), McCormick and O'Connor (2015) and McFarland et al. (2016) highlight the importance of positive teacher-student relationships in connection to their social emotional learning.

Marks et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study aimed to explore the influence of emotional knowledge and the quality of teacher-child relationships on academic readiness for kindergarten. The study had two main goals. First, it aimed to see how teacher-child closeness and conflict affected academic readiness, while also considering demographic factors and executive functioning skills. Second, it sought to find out if teacher-child closeness influenced the link between emotional knowledge or executive functioning and academic readiness

The research analyzed around 140 four- and five-year-old students from a small early childhood center in the Midwest. The data was collected over one school year. Child testing sessions were facilitated by two school psychology graduate students trained in assessment techniques (Marks et al., 2022).

The findings indicated two critical predictors of academic readiness for kindergarten. Firstly, both emotional knowledge and the quality of teacher-child relationships were positively correlated with academic readiness, even after accounting for factors such as child age, family income, and executive functioning skills, particularly inhibitory control (Marks et al., 2022). Secondly, the study highlighted teacher-child closeness was particularly significant in predicting academic readiness among children with low emotional knowledge, serving as a protective factor in their developmental trajectory (Marks et al., 2022). These results underscore the importance of fostering positive teacher-child relationships in early education settings, as they play a crucial role in enhancing children's readiness for academic challenges.

Lin et al. (2022) explored the relationship between children's hope and teachers' perceptions of closeness in student-teacher relationships, particularly concerning children's internalizing and externalizing symptoms. Internalizing behaviors, such as social isolation and depressive-anxious symptoms, contrast with externalizing behaviors, which include aggressive and impulsive actions (Lin et al., 2022; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1978). This study involved approximately 560 Italian students aged 4 to 9 and about 50 teachers aged 26 to 60. To assess children's perceptions of their goal-oriented thinking, the researchers utilized the Children's Hope Scale (CHS), developed by Snyder et al. (1997). After collecting ratings from the students, teachers reported their perceptions of closeness in the student-teacher relationships and provided information on relevant behavioral symptoms. The results indicated close student-teacher relationships fostered a positive classroom climate, characterized by lower levels of aggression and higher levels of prosocial behavior (Lin et al., 2022).

A qualitative study by McFarland et al. (2016) explored the relationship between child and teacher gender, the qualities of teacher-student relationships, and their impact on students'

self-concept. The research involved approximately 4,200 children aged ten to eleven and about 3,350 teachers. Child data was collected through interviews, while teacher data was gathered via a completed questionnaire. The study ensured data integrity by only including cases where both students and their teachers' submitted responses regarding their relationship. The findings indicated for boys, closeness with teachers did not predict their self-concept; however, conflict within these relationships negatively impacted their self-concept (McFarland et al., 2016). In contrast, for girls, both closeness and conflict significantly predicted self-concept, with conflict exerting a more considerable influence than closeness (McFarland et al., 2016).

In a meta-analysis conducted by Lei et al. (2016), researchers examined 57 studies involving approximately 74,000 student participants. The results showed a significant correlation between both positive and negative affective teacher-student relationships (TSRs) and students' emotional and behavioral problems (EBPs). Notably, negative affective TSRs were found to have a stronger connection to students' EBPs than positive affective TSRs (Lei et al., 2016).

Similar to the findings of McCormick and O'Connor (2015), the study by Lei et al. (2016) showed gender influenced the relationship between positive teacher-student relationships (TSRs) and students' emotional and behavioral problems (EBPs). Female students had a stronger connection between positive affective TSRs and lower EBPs compared to male students. This suggests positive TSRs may have been more effective in reducing EBPs for girls, possibly because they valued their relationships with teachers more, sought more positive emotions from these interactions (Hu et al., 2015), and were more easily influenced by their teachers (Lei et al., 2016).

In contrast, McCormick and O'Connor (2015) found boys had significantly higher levels of conflict over time, while girls maintained closer relationships with their teachers across all

three grade levels. Although boys initially achieved higher scores in math and reading in first grade, this difference became insignificant by third and fifth grades. These findings highlight how emotional dynamics differ by gender, suggesting girls' stronger connections with teachers may have contributed to their better emotional well-being and academic performance.

The previous theme highlighted the importance of positive teacher-student relationships and how these connections influenced teachers' daily experiences. Educators who built supportive relationships with their students often felt more engaged and satisfied in their roles, creating a better teaching environment benefited both teachers and students. The second theme focused on how these relationships affected students' daily lives, both academically and socially. In closing, it became clear positive teacher-student relationships were not just helpful; they were essential for creating a well-rounded educational experience. Students who felt valued and understood were more likely to do well in school and develop important social skills. As teachers built these meaningful connections, they not only improved their own job satisfaction but also created a caring environment helped students reach their full potential. Therefore, making positive relationships a priority in schools was a crucial step toward achieving success for both teachers and students.

Review of the Proposed Problem

In light of what is known about differentiated instruction in the educational setting, what impact can positive teacher-student relationships have on both the teacher and student in the classroom so everyone can achieve at their highest potential? The above research highlighted two themes to help attest to the impact of positive teacher-student relationships. The first theme involved the emotional impact on educators and focused on the enhancement of teacher-student

relationships through effective teaching practices and professional development. The second theme involved student impact, both academically and social-emotionally.

Review of the Importance of the Topic

Positive teacher-student relationships are vital in schools, helping both teachers and students reach their full potential. When educators understand the benefits of these supportive relationships, they can see how they boost student engagement, motivation, and academic success. Additionally, when teachers feel valued and connected to their students, they are more likely to create lessons that meet different needs. This focus can lead to better results for everyone, creating a classroom environment where all students can thrive and succeed.

Summary of Findings

The emotional impact on teachers is an important part of teacher-student relationships, as shown in studies by Corbin et al. (2019), Le Cornu (2013), and Taxer et al. (2019). These studies found teachers often experience burnout and emotional stress from negative interactions, while positive relationships with students can reduce exhaustion and increase job satisfaction. Corbin et al. noted teachers who felt negativity in their relationships reported higher stress levels. Taxer et al. found teachers with positive views of their relationships felt less exhausted and more enjoyment in their work. Le Cornu highlighted new teachers need supportive relationships to build confidence and skills. Overall, these studies emphasize how important positive teacher-student relationships are for improving teachers' emotional health and the quality of their teaching.

Improving teacher-student relationships is crucial for both student success and teacher effectiveness, as shown in studies by Chung-Do et al. (2013), Cook et al. (2018), and Li et al. (2022). Li et al. found teachers with strong relationships with their students used better teaching

methods, which helped students learn more effectively. Their research highlighted positive teacher-student relationships (TSRs) led to effective teaching strategies, especially in areas like problem-solving and engagement. Cook et al. showed teachers who received training improved their relationships with students, which also led to better student behavior. Chung-Do et al. emphasized how important teachers are in helping students succeed through structured programs. Despite some limitations, these studies highlight the importance of building positive teacher-student relationships to create supportive learning environments that benefit educators, students, and other school staff.

Research by Li et al. (2022), Martin and Collie (2019), McCormick and O'Connor (2015), Pakarinen et al. (2021), Quin (2017), and Varghese et al. (2019) highlighted the theory that supportive relationships improved student engagement and achievement, while negative interactions hindered their progress and well-being. Specifically, quality interactions with teachers were key for academic readiness in early childhood and supported literacy and math skills throughout elementary school.

Additionally, studies by Lei et al. (2016), Lin et al. (2022), Marks et al. (2022), and McFarland et al. (2016) emphasized how these relationships shaped children's social-emotional development, showing closeness with teachers created a positive classroom environment and reduced behavioral issues. Gender differences were also noted, with findings suggesting female students were more influenced by the emotional quality of teacher-student interactions than male students.

The research findings were surprisingly one-sided, focusing almost entirely on the positive effects of teacher-student relationships for both teachers and students. In the fifteen studies reviewed, there was hardly any discussion about the negative aspects or potential

drawbacks of these relationships. This raised questions about whether issues such as boundary

problems, dependency, and conflicts of interest were overlooked or had become a concern. This

lack of attention raises important questions about how thorough the research really is, as it

doesn't consider the complexities that can occur in educational settings.

Conclusion

Overall, the two themes discovered through research, provide administration, educators,

parents and students with insight on the importance of building positive teacher-student

relationships as a core part of education. By prioritizing these connections, educators could foster

supportive environments that not only encouraged academic success but also promoted social-

emotional well-being, enhancing the overall educational experience for all students. This

literature review recognized strong classroom relationships were essential for developing well-

rounded learners. The following chapter will discuss the insights gained from the research and

how the understandings can be applied in an educational setting to support everyone in the

classroom. The following chapter will also discuss possible future studies to research and support

school leaders, teachers and students build stronger and better relationships in their districts that

benefit everyone is one way or another.

Chapter Three: Discussions and Applications

In this chapter, the research analyzed in the literature review will look at the insights

gained from the research on positive teacher-student relationships. This chapter will also discuss

how school districts and educators could use these findings to promote better relationships

between school staff and teachers. Chapter three will delve into critical insights gained from the

research and their implications for real-world application, creating the path towards stronger

teacher-student relationships.

Insights Gained from the Research

The research highlights several important points about positive teacher-student relationships. One major finding is high-quality interactions between teachers and students are vital for all learners, no matter their reading level, age, or behavior issues. This shows educators need to build supportive relationships in the classroom to help students grow both academically and socially. The studies consistently indicated a good teacher-student relationship positively impacted student achievement. Early elementary teachers are especially important in helping young children develop key skills. Building positive relationships during these early years is essential for effective learning.

Another important finding from the research is strengthening teacher-student relationships benefits educators too. When teachers build strong connections with their students, they tend to feel happier and more positive about their work. However, teaching can be tough; educators often have to balance the individual needs of students with the overall needs of the whole class. By focusing on these relationships, teachers can not only support their students but also help prevent burnout and enjoy their jobs more.

The final insight from the research highlights the importance of school administrations and districts supporting teachers in building strong relationships with their students. To help foster these connections, schools should provide teachers with resources, training, and guidance. By focusing on professional development that emphasizes relationship-building strategies, schools can enable teachers to create supportive classroom environments. This not only boosts student engagement and achievement but also benefits the whole school community. Supporting teachers in connecting with their students is essential for creating a positive learning atmosphere for everyone.

Application

       The insights from the literature review point out important areas that need immediate action to improve support in public school classrooms. One key application is personalized learning. When teachers really know their students, they can adjust their lessons to fit individual learning needs. For example, a teacher might change reading materials based on what a student enjoys or how they learn best. This makes lessons more relevant and engaging, helping students connect better with the content and boosting their success.

       Another important area is classroom management. Positive relationships between teachers and students can greatly improve behavior in the classroom. When students feel respected and valued, they are more likely to behave well and contribute to a supportive environment. Teachers can create a classroom culture where students take responsibility for their actions and support each other. This sense of community helps reduce disruptions and creates a better learning atmosphere for everyone.

       Finally, the literature highlights the role of engagement in learning. Teachers who build strong connections with their students can tap into their interests and motivations. For instance, a teacher might use themes from students' favorite books or hobbies in lessons, making learning more enjoyable and relatable. This approach not only keeps students engaged but also fosters a love for learning, encouraging them to participate actively in their education.

       In conclusion, the literature review highlights the urgent need for actions that improve support in public school classrooms. Key areas like personalized learning, effective classroom management, and student engagement are crucial for creating a positive learning environment. When teachers tailor lessons to meet individual student needs, learning becomes more relevant and enjoyable, leading to greater success. Building positive relationships also helps improve

behavior, creating a classroom culture where everyone feels respected and valued. Additionally, connecting lessons to students' interests keeps them engaged and encourages active participation. By focusing on these areas, schools can enhance both academic achievement and the overall school community.

Future Studies

Future studies on positive teacher-student relationships should focus on peer relationships to understand how these connections affect student interactions and friendships. Researching how teacher-student relationships influence peer dynamics can provide valuable insights into classroom social life. For example, strong bonds between teachers and students might encourage more collaboration and support among peers. This could help create a more connected classroom community, improving social skills and overall academic success.

Another important area for future research is parent-teacher relationships. Studying how positive interactions between teachers and parents support student achievement can highlight key factors that enhance learning outcomes. Effective communication and collaboration between home and school are crucial for student success. Future studies could explore different ways to build strong parent-teacher partnerships and how these relationships impact student motivation, behavior, and performance. Understanding this connection could lead to better strategies for engaging families in their children's education.

Lastly, future research should examine the role of technology in teacher-student relationships. As hybrid and online learning become more common, it's essential to understand how technology affects these connections. This study could look at both the challenges and benefits of using digital tools for communication and support. For instance, do online platforms help students engage more, or do they create barriers? Insights from this research could guide

educators in using technology effectively to strengthen teacher-student relationships, ensuring students feel supported, even in virtual settings.

Conclusion

Now, imagine yourself walking down the aisle at the grocery store, and that teacher you had 20 years ago is still a vibrant part of your life today. The connection you forged in those early years not only enriched your childhood but also left a lasting impact on both your lives, shaping your journeys in the educational world. Reflecting on those moments reveals how a positive teacher-student relationship can echo through time, influencing paths in unexpected ways.

The bond you developed—marked by trust, encouragement, and mutual respect—serves as a foundation for your success and your teacher's continued passion for teaching. It underscores the idea that these relationships are not short-lived; they have the power to nurture lifelong connections. As you navigate your own professional journey, the lessons learned and the support received from that teacher remain invaluable. Ultimately, this enduring relationship highlights the profound influence positive interactions can have, reminding us of the importance of cultivating connections that enrich not just our lives, but also the educational landscape for future generations.

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