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Teachers emphasized the importance of positive teacher-student relationship and concluded that such relationship increases the confidence level of the students, produces mutual respect and obedience. Findings of the interview results indicated that building a positive teacher-student relationship is a time taking process; that comes with teacher's experience and it varies with the passage of time.

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POSITIVETEACHER-STUDENTRELATIONSHIPANDTEACHERSEXPERIENCE-ATEACHERSPERSPECTIVE

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Positive Teacher-Student Relationship and Teachers Experience-A Teacher's Perspective

Nasir Hussain [α], Bilal Nawaz [σ], Shaista Nasir [ρ], "Nosherwan Kiani" [ω] & Mahdi Hussain [¥]

Abstract - This is a descriptive study of a teacher's perspective regarding creating and maintaining a positive teacher-student relationship with the teacher's professional experience at undergraduate levels. The study is a qualitative study involving interviews with a convenience sample selected randomly. The study was carried out with a sample size of 60 teachers from universities located in Islamabad/ Rawalpindi Pakistan.

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I. Introduction

Today the purpose of the teacher is not just to deliver lectures and taking exams but also the teacher takes on the role of organizing, managing, counseling, observing and evaluating (Temel, 1988) and in order to be successful in his goals and objectives the teacher has to involve the student through commitment and by developing an association with the student (Jay, 2002). Teacher is the most important element in education and teaching activities (Friere, 1990). Usually teacher is a person working in educational institute who facilitates the students to achieve cognitive, sensory and behavioral aim and gains within the range determined by the educational system (Gundogdu & Silman, 2007).

Traditionally teacher-student relationships were based on usual traditional thinking that the teachers have the basic authority and know what is best for students; students were viewed as inactive recipients of knowledge who always say yes to academic demands without questioning (Castejou & Martinez, 2001).

Total power was in the hands of the teacher who makes unilateral judgments of student performance and decides which experiences will occur (Tanner 1990). Students were expected to function from an obedience model, remaining dependent on the teacher.

But this was creating hindrances in the cognitive and behavioral development of the student (Jay, 2002). That's why many scholars have emphasized to eliminate this authoritative attitude of teachers and focused on the importance of Positive Teacher-Student Relationship (Bevis, 1990; Friere, 1990; Webb, 1974; Tanner 1990).

Although there is a considerable amount of research carried out on positive teacher-student relationships but these studies usually were not designed to describe changes across the teaching career(Zhang, 2005), they implicitly started from the assumption that becoming an expert teacher follows some kind of developmental process (Jay, 2002; Carter et al., 1988; Castejou & Martinez, 2001).

This study intends to explore the variations face by a teacher in building and sustaining positive teacher–student relationship during his/ her teaching experience. The study in this paper, contributes to knowledge on changes in daily classroom practice of teachers by providing a description of the teacher–student relationship at different moments during the teaching career.

The paper begins with a review of literature focused on positive teacher-student relationship. The next section describes the research method used. The results are then presented through examples of interaction through interview with the teachers. This is followed by a discussion and finally, conclusion and implications of the study are considered.

II. Literature Review

Today, knowledge dissemination by the teachers is becoming an issue without mutual understanding and relationship between the teachers and students. Literature reveals that a positive relationship between the teacher and students is much needed and becoming fundamental in the holistic development of students (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Many studies have pointed the importance of understanding the development of high quality teacher-student relationships on children's and adolescents' outcomes (Hoy & Spero, 2005). Positive teacher-student relationships are high in closeness like mutual respect, caring, and warmth between teachers and students (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Pianta, 2001).

For children at elementary position, positive teacher-student relationships are connected to children's successful adjustment to school, academic achievement, and school liking (Baker, 2006; Birch & Ladd, 1997). In addition, such positive relationships are related to decreases in children's aggression (Meehan,

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Hughes, & Cavell, 2003). On the other hand, negative teacher-student relationships in elementary school are associated with children's low academic achievement, low school connectedness, and poor self-direction (Birch & Ladd, 1997).

Although students typically report a decrease in their connectedness with teachers in middle school (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997), the quality of these relationships remains important for positive student outcomes (So & Watkins, 2005). The literature indicates that teacher-student relationship quality for middle school students, high school students, and students earning a general equivalency diploma foresees student achievement (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004). That is, students with positive relationships with teachers tend to have higher school performance than their peers with negative student–teacher relationships (DiLalla et al., 2004; Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; Reio, Marcus, & Sanders-Reio, 2009).

In studying the literature it seems that there are insufficient studies on teacher experience, mainly focusing on changes during the entire teaching career life. Most studies on teacher development focused on short time spans such as pre-service teacher education (Bennett & Carre´, 1993; Conway & Clark, 2003; Price, 2001) or the beginning of the teaching career (Fuller, 1969; So & Watkins, 2005; Veenman, 1984; Hoy & Spero, 2005, Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). Other studies focused on differences between novice and expert teachers. Although these studies usually were not designed to describe changes across the teaching career, they implicitly started from the assumption that becoming an expert teacher follows some kind of developmental process (Jay, 2002; Carter et al., 1988; Castejou & Martinez, 2001).

III. Methodology

The research question in the current study is that whether the relation between teacher and student increases after gaining experience level by the teacher. The study has primarily focused on the private sector undergraduate institutions located in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. The method of sampling for this study was non-probability or convenient having sample size of N=60. Teachers with a professional experience level of 1-6 years were included in the research. The research design used for this study is a qualitative method of interviewing. The interviews conducted were a semi-structured, in-depth telephone and face-to-face interview. An unstructured questionnaire was first developed by keeping in mind the research objectives.

The questions were asked from the questionnaire by the researcher and the responses of the participants were written down on paper and that were later on presented in the results section of this study.

IV. Findings & Results

After detail interview with the selected sample, results were compiled according to the specific questions asked. The results show that experience level is important to develop better relationship with students as teachers can better understand the psychological, emotional, intellectual and learning needs of the students and can better apply the teaching pedagogies. Secondly, trust level of the students as well as teacher develops with the passage of time which ultimately increases relationship. We will discuss each question and it's response in detail below.

a) Teacher-Student Relationship Varies with the Amount of Teaching Experience

On asking the above question, the participants agreed with it and responded the variations with reasons as with the passage of time, understanding is build between the teachers and students. Students came to know about the teaching style and give feedback regarding the way of teaching. Through this feedback the teacher can improve his/her teaching style. With teacher's experience, mode of communication also improves. Once the teacher came to know about the student's psychology, he/she can use different modes to make the teaching understandable. Through experience the teacher can realize with whom to be frank and with whom to be strict.

b) Characteristics of a Positive Teacher-Student Relationship

The topic under discussion is clearly communicated and students clearly understand it. No biasness or favoritism exists there. Teacher is not tilt towards one student or a group of students based on gender, caste, race etc. The students can confidently ask questions from the teacher and the teacher gives answer to the students.

c) Positive Teacher-Student Relationship can be Created with the Experience

Yes it takes time to create a good relationship in personal life or in professional life. A teacher with greater year of experience due to his/her maximum time spent with the students can better understand the needs.

d) Difficulties in Creating Positive Teacher-Student Relationship

Traditional setup and set of mind may create hurdle in building relationship between the teacher and student. Second reason could be the student itself, because many challenging students are also there. Another reason is that in today's globalized world, everyone has to be updated with current knowledge but because of lack of current and updated knowledge, relationship between the teacher and student could not be developed. Leg pulling from other colleagues may also create obstacle in building such relationship.

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e) Measures Taken to Overcome these Difficulties

Yes with experience and time the teacher can overcome these difficulties because many believes that when you are committed with your job, you came to know about all the positive and negative points and you can better cope with any issues arise in creating positive teacher-student relationship.

f) An Experienced Teacher can Create a Positive Teacher-Student Relationship than a New Teacher

Yes obviously, experience increases level of understanding between the teachers and students. A newly appointed teacher doesn't know much about the institute, the people there and the students studying so he/ she faces two challenges; one to create a relationship with the people and institute and second to create a relationship with the students. Practically speaking the teacher gets a grip on all the things after experience only.

g) Importance of Creating Positive Teacher-Student Relationship for Teachers and for Students

Positive teacher-student relationship gives confident to the students. Students feel less hesitant to ask questions from the teacher so they will understand the things more. This also enhances mutual trust and understanding. Positive teacher-student relationship will lead to better evaluation of the teacher. There will be fewer complaints about the teacher and his/her job will be secured.

V. Discussion

Relating to Grossman and McDonald (2008) suggested for future research direction in the field of teaching and teacher education, this study helps identify how relationships between teacher and student arise and develop over time and presented a description of changes in teacher–student relationships during the teaching career. This study also highlights the relational aspects of teaching and learning that can influence students' and their teacher's engagement in teaching and learning processes.

It is apparent from the participants interpretations that a good relationship between teacher and a student develops with time. After getting experience, a person can better understand the psyche of the other human being and becomes able to fulfill the needs of the others. According to Hoffman and Leak, we cannot teach students if we do not know them well (Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships).

Learning about who your students are as individuals will ultimately help you to help them be successful in their learning. It will also make them feel closer to you as a person, not as a teacher, and they may be able to take more of the class lectures by heart.

Learning about who your students are as individuals will ultimately help you to help them be successful in their learning. It will also make them feel closer to you as a person, not as a teacher, and they may be able to take more of the class lectures by heart.

Consistent with previous research, this study also finds that positive teacher-student relationship develops trust, mutual respect, confidence, good communication and a better learning environment (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005; Pianta, 2001).

Main problems the participants found in building a positive Teacher-Student relationship were traditional mind setup of the people in the institute, who don't encourage building relationships with the students either prefer to follow an authoritative way of teaching. Second issue highlighted was the behavior of some challenging students. Studies show that teachers tend to have a good relationship with those who appear easier to instruct (Baker, 1999; Wentzel, 1993).

VI. Conclusion

From the sample been interviewed, it can be concluded that building a positive teacher-student relationship is a time taking process; that comes with teacher's experience and it varies with the passage of time. Positive teacher-student relationship creates understanding between the teacher and student, increases the confidence level of the students, produces mutual respect and obedience in the students. Experience also gives an understanding to teacher regarding the policies of the institute; teachers can better adjust themselves in the system and work for the mutual benefit of the students and themselves.

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