

IMPACT OF TEACHER-LEARNERS RELATIONSHIP ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of teacher-student relationship on academic performance of business education students at Awka South, Local Government Area of Anambra state. The descriptive survey research design was used and guided by three research questions. Data were gathered by a structured questionnaire from the respondents, followed by the mean and SD analysis. The study employed descriptive survey design that was administered to 200 public junior secondary students from 10 schools that were randomly selected in Awka South. There was a reliability coefficient of 0.83 using a data collection instrument that was validated according to a 15 item questionnaire. Data analysis was carried out using mean and standard deviation, and the criterion for the acceptance was 2.50. It was found that positive teacher-student relationships have a significant positive effect on Academic Achievement, because friendly teachers make students interested in the subject (Mean = 2.85) and listening to the student's opinion improves students' motivation in the classroom (Mean = 3.00). On the other hand, the lack of positive relationship creates great problems, such as high classroom anxiety (Mean = 3.20) and students not seeking help when confused (Mean = 2.93). In order to create a better classroom climate, the respondents agreed that setting up models of fair, non-threatening environments (Mean = 3.30) and providing models of interactive group projects (Mean = 3.03) are highly effective. Regular constructive feedback was not seen as one of the main factors (Mean = 2.25). The study found that supportive emotional climates play a significant role in being able to achieve the maximum success in Business Education. On this basis, it is recommended that targeted professional development opportunities for business educators be provided in order to develop a set of approaches that are accessible to students, and that institutions have clear guidelines that encourage safe, interactive, and equitable learning environments.

Keywords: Teacher student relationship, Academic performance, Business Education, Awka South.

Introduction

In the field of business studies education, more is expected than mere rote memorization, active interaction, practical application, and meaningful connection. The quality of classroom relationships is the foundation of effective learning, particularly in applied disciplines such as Business Education, where achieving applied learning and problem-solving are essential and collaborative working is important. The quality of teacher-learner relationships has been a growing focus for research to account for student achievement difference. For example, teacher interpersonal positive behaviors and classroom support are essential for the growth of students' confidence and

emotional health, directly to enhance student engagement (Wang, 2025). Students' motivation to participate in challenging and complex tasks in their professional training programs increases greatly when they are motivated and supported by their instructors (Alzain, 2025). These relationships create an emotional safety and security, reducing test anxiety and promoting a positive school environment that supports high academic success.

The teaching and learning relationship has been and is evolving into new opportunities and challenges with the rapid integration of technology in the contemporary business classroom. The positive interpersonal rapport and teacher immediacy behaviors are still essential in sustaining learner engagement and mental health in technology-enhanced learning environment (Han, 2025). In the context of modern classrooms, in which human teachers and technical interfaces are combined, the key to understanding behavioral engagement (Wang et al., 2026) is to understand the interaction between technology acceptance and perceived teaching support from the teachers. Moreover, by streamlining teacher development and minimizing administrative workload, AI-driven learning management systems can actually enhance the teacher-student relationship, providing teachers with more time for personalized interactions and meaningful engagement with students (Dalal et al. 2026). In the context of innovative learning, teachers' relationship is crucial for achieving high motivation and active participation in learning, as in gamification, students are more motivated to learn if taught by teachers who are supportive (Ameen, 2026). Thus, knowledge of the dimensions of relationships in the students' perception in various cultural backgrounds and languages allows the educator to formulate their teaching strategy to maximize the students' cognitive development (Binti-Jaafar, 2026). This interpersonal base is a key intermediate factor that affects students' self-efficacy, cooperative learning benefits, and academic performance in analytical subjects (Appiah et al., 2023).

But the teacher/learner relationship is not autonomous or untouched — it is influenced by larger environmental, socio-cultural, and historical contexts that affect the teacher and the learner before they step into the classroom. Instructive achievement and emotional stability are significantly affected in structurally unstable areas where people are exposed to contemporary armed conflicts, or where intervention frameworks have failed (Okezie, 2026). Within the historical context that colonialism, mass migration and complex intergroup relations have reshaped the structures of societies, access to education and the relationalism of education institutions is often controversial (Molokwu et al, 2023). Continuity of educational continuity and economic development is directly challenged by the systemic violence and insecurity that is plaguing Nigeria and other emerging economies (Ezeogidi et al., 2020). Furthermore, students tend to bring a lot of psychological problems in their education process such as the negative influence of domestic violence on the learning psychology of female students (Okezie, 2022). This Paper also reveals that the socio-cultural and ethnic realities in the country create developmental challenges and require a culturally responsive approach in pedagogy and empathetic leadership in classroom (Okezie,

2021). If unchecked, these background pressures can lead to a greater degree of social exclusion for vulnerable groups; this necessitates that such groups are actively represented and that human rights are drawn upon within the academic institution for fair participation (Okezie et al., 2023).

A philosophical understanding of the teacher-learner relationship also involves an understanding of the manner in which people interact in complex social systems. Basic discussions on man, history and society reinforce the relational nature of man's growth implying that educational institutions are micro-societies where relationships influence growth (Chukwu et al., 2025). This human-centric approach is very aligned with the current state of organization science. Although there are many differences between the two, manufacturing companies have adopted progressive HRM practices to boost sustainability and the well-being of their employees, and it is essential that educational administrators do the same with the educator-student relationship, as it is an important asset in HRM (Muogbo et al., 2025a). In addition, positive incentive and aligning of human incentives is crucial in any system, the perception of the institutional incentives directly reflects the response of the students to emotional and academic support from the teachers (Muogbo et al., 2025b). In conclusion, the strategic use of innovation and entrepreneurship for the effective enhancement of organizational performance is reflected in the classroom where the teacher has to innovate his/her interpersonal approaches to develop resilient, highly motivated and successful learners (Muogbo et al., 2025c).

It is therefore very important to investigate the teacher-learner relationship in Awka South Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State as a way of improving the poor performance in Business Education. Business Education is a hands-on education, where supportive classroom dynamics are essential in developing business skills. While global studies highlight general relational benefits, a local research gap persists. Existing regional literature focusing on Awka South frequently prioritizes static teacher variables, such as professional qualifications or years of teaching experience, over active, real-time interpersonal communication. Scholars have long noted that broad administrative and institutional factors are insufficient if classroom-level interactions are neglected. Consequently, this study addresses a critical localized gap by examining how specific relational indices, like interpersonal trust, empathy, and constructive feedback, directly influence the academic performance of Business Education students within Awka South's distinct socio-economic landscape.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the effect of teacher-students' relationships on students' academic achievement in Business Education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. What are the challenges encountered by students who lack the teacher - students relationship in Business Education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

3. What are possible measures that could be used to enhance the teacher-student relationship in Business Education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Methodology

The method used for this study was descriptive survey to study the effect of teacher learner relationship on student's academic performance in Business Education students. A descriptive design is used to collect data at a certain time to describe what is going on, to set a standard for comparison and to find relationships among events. The study was carried out in Awka South Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State, Nigeria where the State Capital of Anambra State is located. It is made up of 9 towns, it has urban trade and agricultural production, and has a town reputation in metal production and blacksmithing. The target population were all the public Junior Secondary students in the LGA for which the findings would be generalised. A simple random sampling technique was used in the researcher to get a representative sample of 10 schools from 19 schools available and 20 students from each school which gave a total sample size of 200 respondents.

The data collected were made up of a structured questionnaire with a total of 15 items that were evenly distributed across the three research questions that were rated on a four-point likert scale, with section A capturing the demographic variables of age, sex, and class. Face and content validities were checked by experts in Measurement and Evaluation, Business education and a supervisor from Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe to ensure the quality of the instrument. A test-retest method was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire with 60 students in Onitsha South LGA. After a 2 week delay the instrument was re-administered and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient gave a reliable correlation coefficient of 0.83.

The researcher personally visited the selected schools, sought the principals' permissions and distributed the questionnaire to 200 copies during the data collection phase. All 200 copies were successfully completed and returned with close guidance and supervision. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to analyse the collected data. The criterion cut-off mean was mathematically computed as the average of the Likert scale points (4, 3, 2, and 1), and was 2.50. Therefore, an item with a mean score of 2.50 or higher was deemed to be a positive response, and a score lower than 2.50 was deemed as a negative response.

Results

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on the effect of teacher-students' relationships on students' academic achievement in Business Education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

S/N	ITEM	ΣX	Mea n	Std. Dev	Decision
1	A friendly and approachable Business Education teacher makes me more interested in the	570	2.85	1.06	Accepted

	subject.					
2	I perform better in Business Education tests and exams when my teacher encourages and supports me.	485	2.43	1.15	Rejected	
3	I feel comfortable asking questions in my Business Education class without fear of being embarrassed.	525	2.63	1.16	Accepted	
4	When my teacher listens to my opinions, I am more motivated to participate in class activities.	600	3.00	1.05	Accepted	
5	Positive relationship with my Business Education teacher helps me to understand difficult topics	535	2.68	1.06	Accepted	

The results of the analysis in the above table (Table 1) indicated that the teacher – student relationship has a bearing on the academic achievement of students in Business Education in Awka South LGA generally, with a significant number of the respondents agreeing on this. The findings revealed that a friendly and approachable teacher has a positive effect on students' interest in the subject (2.85) and students also showed that they are not afraid to ask questions about the subject (2.63). Moreover, the data indicated that teachers' listening of student opinions would lead students to be more motivated in class activities (3.00). The respondents also agreed that positive teacher–student relationship helps them to understand hard topics (2.68).

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on the challenges encountered by students who lack the teacher - students relationship in Business Education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

S/N	ITEM	ΣX	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
6	Fear of an unapproachable Business Education teacher prevents me from asking for help when am confused.	585	2.93	1.03	Accepted
7	I lose interest and concentration in Business Education lessons when there is poor relationship with the teacher.	615	3.08	1.01	Accepted
8	A negative relationship with my teacher has made me dislike the Business Education subject entirely.	570	2.85	1.01	Accepted
9	I feel anxious or stressed before and during Business Education classes due to a poor teacher relationship.	640	3.20	0.87	Accepted
10	I found it difficult to participate in class discussions when the teacher seems biased or unfair.	600	3.00	1	Accepted

From the analysis made on the second research question as shown above in Table 2, the respondents agreed that the non-existence of positive teacher–student relationship creates several problems to the students in Business Education in Awka South LGA. The findings showed that fear of an unapproachable teacher, made students

unable to seek help when they are confused (2.93) and poor teacher relationships, caused students to lose their interest in class and their concentration (3.08). Further, they concurred that the poor relationship between the teacher and the learner may lead them to not enjoy the entire subject (2.85). The results also revealed that low relationship with teachers causes anxiety and stress before and during lessons (3.20). Students also indicated that it was difficult to participate in class due to bias or unfairness (3.00).

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation on possible measures that could be used to enhance the teacher-student relationship in Business Education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

S/N	ITEM	ΣX	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
11	Business Education teachers should be more friendly, patient, and willing to listen to students' problems.	610	3.05	0.99	Accepted
12	Organizing interactive class activities like debates and group projects would improve teacher-student relationships.	605	3.03	0.99	Accepted
13	Providing regular, positive, and constructive feedback on students' work can strengthen the bond between the teacher and students	450	2.25	1.18	Rejected
14	Creating a classroom where students can express their views without fear of punishment would help to improve teacher-student relationships.	660	3.30	0.81	Accepted
15	Teachers being fair and avoiding favouritism to any student in the class would improve teacher-student relationships.	620	3.10	0.94	Accepted

From the analysis of the research question 3, the respondents agreed that there are some ways in which the teacher – pupil relationship could be improved in Business Education in Awka South LGA as shown in Table 3 above. Results showed that teachers need to be friendlier, patient, listen to students' concerns (3.05). Organizing interactive class activities like debates and group projects were also seen as strengthening the teacher–student interaction (3.03) by the respondents. In addition, it was considered an effective measure to provide an environment in which students were able to freely express their opinions without facing any consequences (3.30). The results also indicated that teacher–student relationship will be better if they are treated fairly and teachers do not show favouritism (3.10). Feedback on students' work, however, was not suggested as a main measure (2.25) because it was not seen as regular, positive, and constructive. On the whole, items 11, 12, 14, and 15 were accepted with mean scores of 3.05, 3.03, 3.30, and 3.10 corresponding to standard deviations of 0.99, 0.99, 0.81, and 0.94 respectively, while item 13 was rejected with a mean score of 2.25 and standard deviation of 1.18.

Discussion

Research question 1 dealt with the effect of teacher-students' relationships on students' academic achievement in Business Education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. From the analysis, it was observed that teachers-students relationships has positive impact on students achievement. In particular, a friendly approachable teacher raised students' interest (Mean = 2.85, SD = 1.06). This result was consistent with Al-Jaberi et al. (2024), who concluded that teachers who have high emotional and social intelligence have a positive influence on students' engagement and satisfaction with their learning. Students also reported they did not feel embarrassed to ask questions (Mean = 2.63, SD = 1.16) and teacher active listening enhanced their motivation (Mean = 3.00, SD = 1.05). Ambaye (2024) in another study corroborated the findings that supportive classroom interactions and active teaching styles are important factors in general academic achievement. In addition, the finding in Table 1 that positive teacher-student relationships positively correlate with academic achievement suggests that creating a supportive cultural and psychological school environment is a crucial correlate of academic achievement (Emeasoba et al., 2026a). A friendly and responsive teacher promotes students' interest as demonstrated by how family attitudes towards program interest predict program interest (Oguejiofor & Onyiorah, 2023) and family attitudes towards academic achievement predicts academic achievement (Onyiorah, 2023a) in Business Education. This positive interaction in the classroom also has positive implications for students' general classroom behaviors, such as reading habits (Onyiorah, 2021a). Finally, building these positive relationships greatly depends on regular professional learning to ensure the delivery of optimum instruction (Onyiorah, 2023b).

Research question 2 which focused on the problems faced by students without teacher-student relationship in Business Education, Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State was investigated and it was found that a lack of positive relationships

creates many students' problems. Students indicated that they are afraid that teachers are not accessible and therefore they do not ask for assistance (Mean = 2.93, SD = 1.03) and that this results in anxiety (Mean = 3.20, SD = 0.87). The results were consistent with Marici's (2025) experimental research which showed that negative emotions such as fear from teacher action will lead to decreased willingness to participate and increased student stress. Furthermore, students lose interest (Mean = 3.08, SD = 1.01) and feel blocked by perceived bias (Mean = 3.00, SD = 1.00). However, Pourtaheri et al. (2024) found that although interpersonal issues in the school contribute to youth anxiety, family or wider socio-familial supports can also mediate the impact of classroom stress, indicating that classroom relationships do not necessarily cause youth anxiety. On the other hand, the problems that can stem from poor relationships (fear, anxiety, low concentration) pose a risk of emotionally isolating students (Table 2). This is particularly harmful if one intends to use complex internet technologies (Oguejiofor & Onyiorah, 2021) or adjust to distant learning programs, where high level of learner autonomy and independent efforts are expected (Onyiorah, 2022). The lack of adequate support by instructors in easing academic stress makes it difficult for students to gain knowledge of advanced modern skills like artificial intelligence skills (Onyiorah, 2025) and specialized skills in digital marketing for self-employment (Okoro et al., 2025).

In order to get answers to the possible measures that could be used to improve the teacher-student relationship in Business Education in Awka South LGA of Anambra State, research question 3 was investigated. The respondents were all in agreement that for this to be bridged teachers are required to be patient (Mean = 3.05, SD = 0.99) and create conducive atmosphere through making the environment non-threatening (Mean = 3.30, SD = 0.81). Bersaluna, (2023) pointed out that such structured professional development is essential for improving relationships between students and teachers, especially in terms of fostering active, supportive, and participative classroom environments. Believe it or not, regular constructive feedback was not a high priority (Mean = 2.25, SD = 1.18). However, this rejection contrasts with the conventional educational systems that claim that ongoing formative feedback is one of the strongest tools to foster academic resilience and trust (Ambaye, 2024). In order to improve relationships (Table 3), innovative instructional strategies (Onyiorah, 2021b) should be implemented. To remain successful in the implementation of entrepreneurship education programs, setting up interactive, fair and non-threatening classrooms is of major importance (Oguejiofor et al., 2022). Relational trust helps students to be more open to discussing challenging topics and gain insight into complex financial practices such as debt and risk management (Emeasoba et al., 2026b). In conclusion, making good teacher student relationships the educational door to foster long term employability competencies of undergraduates in Nigeria's dynamic tertiary space is an educational goal that must be achieved. Finally, in the changing tertiary space of Nigeria, building employability competency of undergraduates over a long term, the teacher student relationship must be cultivated.

Conclusion

The study on effect of teacher-learner relationship on the academic performance of public secondary school students in business education in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State showed that the quality of the teacher-learner relationship has great impact on the student's academic performance. Positive teacher – learner relationships which were characterized by approachability, friendliness, patience, fairness and attentiveness to students' concerns were shown to improve students' interest in Business Education, enhance their participation in class activities, and improve students' understanding of difficult concepts. Pupils reported that they felt more confident to ask questions, engage in discussions and complete task effectively if teachers listened to their views and set up supportive classroom atmosphere. The lack of positive relationships, on the other hand, can lead to fear, anxiety, stress, diminished concentration and even a dislike for the subject, negatively affecting academic outcomes. The study also revealed strategies to enhance the relationship between the teacher and the learner which encompassed the use of interactive learning strategy, debates, group projects, fair treatment, unbiased approach, and allowing learners to express themselves without fear of punishment. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of teacher–learner relational issues, in addition to instruction, as they affect students' academic performance. Good teacher–learner relationship that is supportive, respectful and interactive is therefore critical in enhancing performance in Business Education in public secondary schools of Ghana.

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