



The Impact of Teacher-Student Relationships on Student Motivation: A Case Study of Vinschool Ocean Park

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ABSTRACT

Teacher-student relationships play a fundamental role in student motivation, engagement, and academic performance. This study examines the impact of teacher support, communication, and encouragement on student motivation at Vinschool Ocean Park. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from 53 students through structured surveys and open-ended responses.

The findings indicate that the majority of students perceive their teachers as supportive and understanding, which positively influences their motivation. However, a portion of students expressed neutral feelings, suggesting variability in their experiences. Encouragement, mentorship, and personalized support emerged as significant factors in fostering student enthusiasm for learning. These findings align with previous research (Hamre & Pianta, 2001), which emphasizes the long-term benefits of strong teacher-student relationships, as well as studies (Razak et al., 2017), highlighting the role of a supportive classroom environment in academic motivation.

The study emphasizes the importance of consistent teacher engagement, emotional support, and student-centered teaching approaches to enhance motivation and learning outcomes. Recommendations include teacher training on emotional intelligence, more opportunities for personalized feedback, and fostering open communication in the classroom. These insights contribute to existing literature on educational psychology and provide practical applications for improving student engagement.

Keywords: *Teacher-student relationships, Vinsers*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Context of the study

The findings of Martin & Collie (2019) strongly support the idea that teacher-student relationships play a crucial role in motivation and academic success. Their research highlights that when teachers foster a sense of autonomy, respect, and emotional support, students are more engaged and perform better in school. This aligns with Vinschool Ocean Park's approach, where diverse student backgrounds provide a rich environment for studying how these relationships shape learning experiences. The study emphasizes that students thrive when they feel heard and valued, reinforcing the importance of empathy, open communication, and a supportive classroom culture. It also confirms that when teachers create a positive and respectful learning space, students not only develop academically but also grow personally, gaining confidence and resilience. This connection between teachers and students is not just beneficial—it's essential to fostering a thriving learning community.

B. Hypothesis

We hypothesize that Vinsers who feel genuinely supported by teachers, understood, and encouraged are more likely to stay motivated and engaged in their studies. A strong teacher-student relationship builds trust and a sense of belongingness encouraging students to be more confident in their abilities and more willing to participate in class, seek help when needed, and persevere through academic challenges. Previous studies have proven that when teachers show care, support, and approachability, students tend to be more motivated to learn (Razak et al., 2017). Furthermore, (Hamre, et al. 2001) also found that students with positive teacher relationships are not only more engaged in learning but also achieve better academic results and exhibit exemplary behavior. On the other hand, students who feel disconnected from their teachers or lack impactful support may find it difficult to stay motivated and become disengaged from their education. Given these findings, this study aims to emphasize the importance of fostering strong, supportive teacher-student connections to enhance both academic success and student well-being.

C. Statement of the problem

The connection between teachers and students extends beyond classroom instruction; it plays a crucial role in shaping motivation, confidence, and overall academic growth. When students feel supported by their teachers, they are more likely to engage in discussions, ask questions, and remain committed to their learning, even when facing challenges.

At Vinschool Ocean Park, students come from diverse backgrounds, each with unique learning styles and academic goals. While the school fosters a supportive and well-rounded learning environment, the impact of teacher-student relationships on motivation varies among students. Some students feel encouraged and inspired by their teachers, while others experience weaker connections, which can affect their engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

To better understand these dynamics, this study explores the following key areas:

1. Perceptions of Teacher-Student Relationships

- a. Teachers' Understanding of Student Challenges *(Figure 1)*
- b. Comfort in Communicating with Teachers *(Figure 2)*
- c. Motivation to Perform Academically *(Figure 3)*
- d. Enthusiasm for Learning *(Figure 4)*

2. Teacher Behaviors That Influence Student Motivation *(Figure 5)*

- a. Personal Stories and Relatable Experiences
- b. Recognition of Student Progress
- c. Guidance Through Challenges
- d. Engaging and Interactive Teaching Methods
- e. Career Guidance and Leadership Opportunities

3. Recommendations for Improving Teacher-Student Relationships *(Figure 6)*

- a. Open Communication
- b. Personalized Interaction
- c. Engagement and Interaction
- d. Empathy and Support
- e. Extracurricular Involvement

II. METHODS

A. Study Design

This study used a mixed-methods approach to explore how teacher-student relationships influence student motivation. By combining quantitative data (structured survey responses) with qualitative insights (open-ended student reflections), the study aimed to provide both measurable trends and personal experiences. For the qualitative component, students were encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences, including moments when a teacher positively impacted their motivation or suggestions for improving teacher-student relationships. These responses provided valuable personal insights into the student experience. For the quantitative component, students answered structured survey questions designed to assess key factors such as their comfort in communicating with teachers, their perception of teacher support, and their overall motivation levels. The combination of data-driven analysis and student narratives helped create a well-rounded understanding of how relationships with teachers impact learning.

B. Context, Setting, and Population of the Study

This study was conducted at Vinschool Ocean Park, a school that values academic excellence, student well-being, and holistic development. With students from diverse backgrounds, the school offers a unique opportunity to explore how teacher-student relationships impact motivation and learning experiences.

A total of 53 Grade 12 students participated in the study, selected through random sampling. As they prepare for graduation and their next steps in education or careers, their perspectives provide valuable insights into how teacher interactions influence engagement, confidence, and academic motivation. Student responses emphasized the importance of empathy, respect, and open communication, highlighting the role of supportive teachers in fostering a positive and motivating learning environment.

C. Sampling Strategy

To capture a fair and diverse range of student perspectives, the study used simple random sampling, giving every Grade 12 student an equal chance to participate. This approach ensured that the sample included students with different academic strengths, extracurricular interests, and personal experiences. By doing so, the study aimed to reflect the real voices of students and provide an authentic understanding of how teacher interactions shape their motivation and engagement.

D. Data Collection Process

To make participation easy and accessible, students were given a QR code that linked them directly to an online survey via Google Forms. The survey was designed to gather both measurable data through multiple-choice questions; Quantitative and personal insights through open-ended responses; Qualitative. To ensure maximum participation, the survey remained open for two weeks, with gentle reminders sent out to encourage students to complete it. Clear and student-friendly instructions were provided to ensure that responses were genuine, thoughtful, and reflective of their experiences.

E. Ethical Considerations and Survey Questions

Ethical guidelines were carefully followed to ensure that students participated willingly and without any pressure. Before taking part in the study, students were fully informed about its purpose and objectives, allowing them to make an informed decision about their participation. To protect their privacy and confidentiality, all responses were kept anonymous and securely stored, ensuring that no personal information was linked to any individual. Additionally, the study was reviewed and approved by the class teacher and the head of the English department to ensure it met both ethical and academic standards.

The survey was designed to collect a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher-student relationships and their impact on student motivation.

Quantitative Section:

- *Do you feel that teachers understand the personal challenges you face?* (Fig. 1)
- *How comfortable are you in discussing academic or personal issues with your teacher?* (Fig. 2)
- *How motivated are you to perform well academically?* (Fig. 3)
- *Does your relationship with teachers influence your enthusiasm for learning?* (Fig. 4)

Qualitative Section:

- *Can you share an example of how a teacher has positively influenced your motivation?* (Fig. 5)
- *What suggestions do you have for improving teacher-student relationships at Vinschool Ocean Park?* (Fig. 6)

F. Data Analysis Approach

To gain meaningful insights from the collected data, the study combined numerical analysis with thematic categorization, ensuring both measurable trends and personal experiences were captured. For the quantitative analysis, responses were examined using percentages, frequency distributions, and bar charts to identify common patterns in how students perceive their relationships with teachers. This method provided a clear, data-driven understanding of student motivation and engagement levels.

For the qualitative analysis, student reflections were carefully categorized into recurring themes such as encouragement, mentorship, and engagement. By analyzing how frequently these themes appeared, we were able to determine which teacher behaviors had the most significant impact on student motivation. This balanced approach ensured that the study's findings were not just based on numbers but also reflected real student voices and experiences, providing a deeper understanding of how teacher-student relationships shape learning and motivation.

III. RESULTS

A. Quantitative Approach

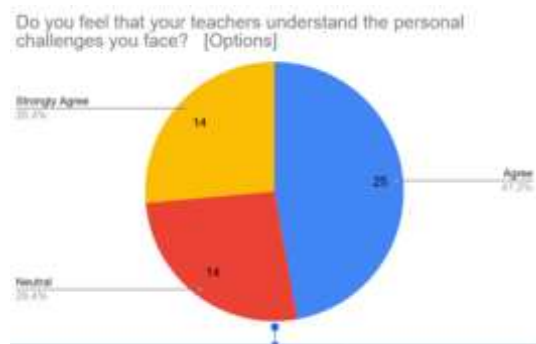


Figure 1

The survey results show that most students (47.2%) feel their teachers understand their personal challenges, with 25 people selecting "Agree." Meanwhile, 14 students (26.4%) strongly agree, showing a solid level of confidence in their teachers' understanding. However, an equal number (14 students) remained neutral, which could mean they're unsure or have mixed experiences. On average, each response category received around 17 to 18 votes, indicating a relatively balanced spread. While it's encouraging that many students feel supported, the neutral responses suggest there's still room for teachers to connect more with some students.

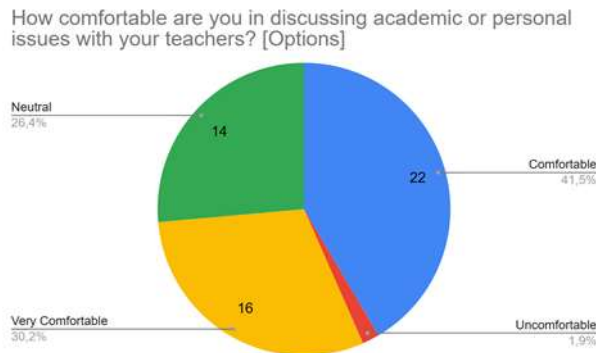


Figure 2

Most students are comfortable talking to teachers about academic or personal issues, and that is a good indication of trust. Approximately 41.5% report feeling "Comfortable," and 30.2% report feeling "Very Comfortable," which suggests most students have good relations with teachers. However, 26.4% are not strongly positive or strongly negative. There is a small but notable 1.9% who are not comfortable, and this indicates there is a need to ensure everyone is being heard and helped. Overall, the situation is good, but there is always some room to facilitate communications and enable the environment to be even more open and friendly.

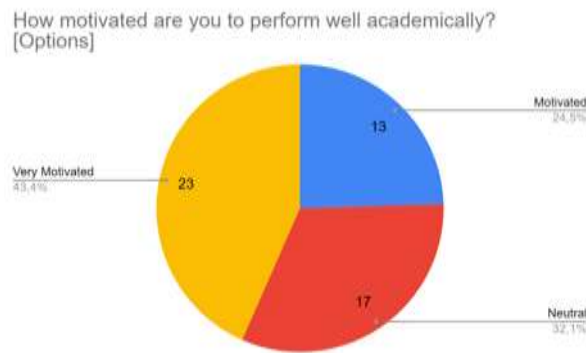


Figure 3

The survey shows that most of the students are highly motivated to perform better academically since 43.4% were "Very Motivated" and 24.5% were "Motivated." This is a positive indication that there are a lot of students who are highly motivated to do well. But approximately 32.1% of the students replied "Neutral," which means that even though they are not demotivated, they might not be necessarily very highly motivated either. As an average of around 17 answers per category is given, it can be seen that levels of motivation are varying amongst students. While the majority are eager to perform well, some others will need additional motivation or direction to stay inspired and motivated.

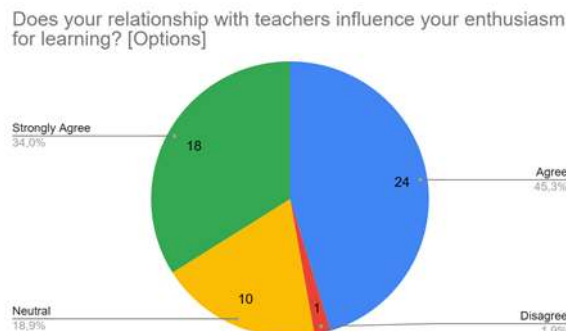


Figure 4

The survey results highlight just how much a good relationship with teachers can inspire students to learn. The majority—nearly 80%—feel that their teachers positively influence their enthusiasm, with 45.3% agreeing and 34% strongly agreeing. This suggests that when students feel supported and understood, they're more motivated to engage in learning. About 18.9% of students feel neutral, which might mean other factors also play a role in their motivation. Only one student (1.9%) disagrees, showing that negative experiences with teachers are rare. Overall, the data reinforces the idea that strong teacher-student connections can make a big difference in fostering a love for learning.

B. Qualitative Approach

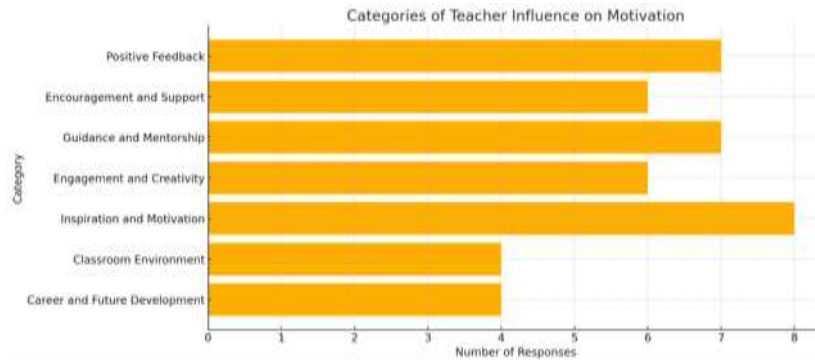


Figure 5

Our analysis shows that teachers have a powerful impact on student motivation, especially through inspiration, encouragement, and mentorship. By categorizing responses and analyzing their frequency, we found that the most common motivators include teachers sharing personal stories, recognizing students' progress, and guiding them through challenges. Many students also feel uplifted by creative and engaging teaching methods, as well as a supportive classroom environment. Career guidance and leadership opportunities further help students stay motivated for the future. The data makes it clear—teachers who believe in their students, provide meaningful feedback, and create a welcoming, engaging space for learning leave a lasting impression. In the end, this analysis highlights just how much a teacher's encouragement and passion can shape a student's confidence, motivation, and future success.

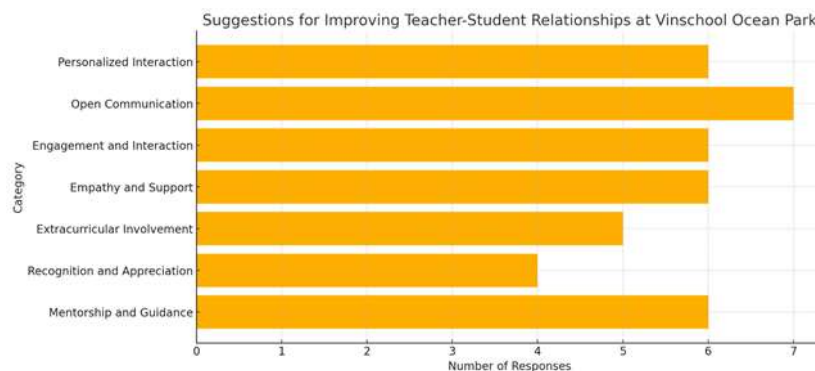
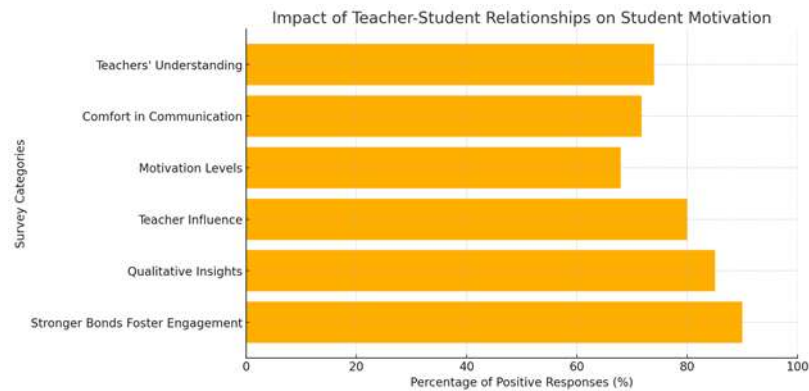


Figure 6

The data shows that students see open communication, mentorship, and personalized interaction as the most important factors in strengthening teacher-student relationships. They value teachers who actively listen, provide guidance, and engage with them beyond standard instruction. Empathy, engagement, and extracurricular involvement are also significant, highlighting the need for a more interactive and supportive learning environment. While recognition and appreciation matter, students prioritize meaningful connections and consistent support over external rewards. Overall, the findings suggest that fostering strong communication, mentorship, and engagement can create a more positive and motivating school experience.

VI. DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Understanding the dynamics of teacher-student relationships is crucial in shaping students' academic engagement and motivation. A recent survey at Vinschool Ocean Park reveals how teacher support, communication, and mentorship influence students' learning experiences. The findings indicate both positive aspects and areas for improvement, emphasizing the need for stronger emotional and academic support. (Results of Fig.1,2,3,4,5,6 represented in the chart below)



1. Teachers' Understanding: 74% of students feel their teachers understand their personal challenges, though 26% remain neutral, suggesting room for stronger connections.
2. Comfort in Communication: 71.7% of students feel comfortable discussing academic or personal matters with teachers, but 26.4% are neutral, indicating that some students may struggle to open up.
3. Motivation Levels: While 67.9% of students report being motivated, 32.1% are neutral, pointing to the need for additional encouragement.
4. Teacher Influence: Almost 80% of students acknowledge a positive influence from teachers on their enthusiasm for learning, reinforcing the importance of strong teacher-student relationships.
5. Qualitative Insights: Students highlight mentorship, encouragement, personal stories, and engaging teaching methods as key motivational factors.
6. Stronger Bonds Foster Engagement: Open communication, empathy, and personalized interaction are prioritized over external rewards, emphasizing the need for a supportive and interactive learning environment.

These results underline the significant impact of teacher relationships on student motivation, suggesting that enhancing mentorship, communication, and engagement strategies could further strengthen students' learning experiences.

A. How This Fits with Previous Research

These findings align with past studies that emphasize the importance of supportive teacher-student relationships in academic success and personal growth. Research (Pianta et al, 2012) and (Poulou, 2014) highlights that when students perceive their teachers as caring and approachable, they are more engaged in class and perform better academically. Similarly, (Hamre & Pianta, 2001) found that strong early teacher-student connections can positively shape a student's academic journey for years to come. Building on these insights, (Hussain et al, 2019) emphasize that teacher-student interactions significantly impact motivation and achievement, reinforcing that students who experience positive and consistent engagement with teachers are more likely to stay motivated and academically successful. Their findings align with (Razak et al., 2017), who found that a warm, encouraging classroom atmosphere fosters student motivation and participation, further supporting our study's emphasis on mentorship, encouragement, and open communication as key motivators for students.

At the same time, (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) provides a broader perspective, arguing that motivation is not solely influenced by teacher relationships but also shaped by school culture and peer interactions. This helps explain why some students in our study had neutral or mixed responses, as external influences beyond teacher interactions may also play a role in shaping their engagement and academic drive. Taken together, these studies highlight that strong teacher-student relationships lay the foundation for student success. However, for maximum impact, they must be reinforced by a supportive school culture, peer engagement, and a positive classroom environment (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hussain et al., 2019; Pianta et al., 2012; Poulou, 2014; Razak et al., 2017).

B. Limitations and Future Research

While the sample size in this study (53 students) is relatively small, it aligns with best practices in exploratory research, where smaller samples are often acceptable for identifying patterns and generating hypotheses. Exploratory research does not always require large samples since its primary goal is to gain insights rather than establish definitive statistical conclusions (Haile, 2023). In this study, despite the limited sample size, consistent trends emerged across survey responses, with over 70% of students reporting positive perceptions of teacher support and engagement. Additionally, neutral responses ranged from 18% to 32%, suggesting that even within a small sample, variations in student experiences were evident. This indicates that while the findings may not be fully generalizable, they still provide meaningful insights into student motivation and engagement. However, future studies could increase sample sizes or adopt longitudinal methods to further validate these findings.

C. Recommendations

To build stronger teacher-student relationships and enhance student motivation, Vinschool should focus on creating a more open, supportive, and engaging learning environment. Encouraging regular teacher-student check-ins and providing active listening training can help students feel more comfortable

reaching out for support. Establishing a mentorship system and offering personalized academic and emotional guidance will ensure that students feel understood and encouraged throughout their education.

Teachers play a crucial role in fostering student engagement, and adopting interactive teaching methods—such as group discussions, project-based learning, and real-world applications—can make learning more meaningful. Recognition programs that celebrate student progress through positive feedback, encouragement, and small incentives can help reinforce motivation. Additionally, expanding career guidance and leadership opportunities through mentorship and extracurricular activities will help students feel more confident about their future goals.

Investing in continuous professional development for teachers is essential. Research by Ekmekci & Serrano (2022) highlights that teachers who receive ongoing training create more engaging and effective learning environments, leading to higher student achievement and persistence. Providing workshops on student engagement, emotional intelligence, and modern teaching strategies will equip teachers with the skills needed to foster a more supportive classroom experience.

Finally, creating a more inclusive school culture—where student voices are heard through feedback surveys and accessible mental health resources—can ensure that every student feels valued, supported, and motivated. By prioritizing mentorship, encouragement, teacher training, and interactive learning, Vinschool can create a positive, inspiring educational environment where students thrive both academically and personally.

D. Conclusion

The findings of this study reinforce that teacher-student relationships play a fundamental role in student motivation, engagement, and academic success. Students who feel supported, understood, and encouraged by their teachers are more likely to participate actively in learning, stay motivated, and perform well academically. The survey data highlights the importance of open communication, mentorship, and personalized engagement as key factors in building strong connections between teachers and students.

While these insights align with previous research on student motivation (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Razak et al., 2017), they also suggest that teacher engagement alone may not be sufficient—a positive school culture and peer influence can further enhance student motivation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Future efforts should focus on enhancing teacher training, fostering inclusive classroom environments, and integrating student feedback mechanisms to continuously improve the learning experience. By strengthening these relationships, schools can ensure that students not only achieve academic excellence but also develop confidence, resilience, and a passion for lifelong learning.

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