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Lecturer-Student Interaction Patterns and Academic Engagement: The University Dynamics

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ABSTRACT: In today's educational system, interactions within the classroom are essential since a conducive learning atmosphere is necessary. This study explored the relationship between lecturer-teacher interactions and learning effectiveness at universities. The survey design used in this study was correlational research design. The participants in this study were selected from universities in Kwara State. Using multi-stage sampling approaches, 350 student-teachers participated in the study. Proformas and a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled "Teacher-Student Interaction Questionnaire" were utilized to gather data. A split-half approach was utilized to determine the questionnaire's reliability, and the gathered data was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha, which has a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Mean was used to answer the research questions, and the PPMC and t-test at the 0.05 significant level were used to test the hypotheses. According to the study's findings, lecturer-teacher interactions in universities in Ilorin are not often vertical, antagonistic, authoritarian, or laissez-faire. This study also reported that most respondents had above-average academic engagement levels in Ilorin. The researchers recommended that lecturers prioritise building positive relationships with their students. Establishing trusting, supporting relationships with their students fosters open communication and a sense of trust that increases student engagement and motivation, which is why lecturers should prioritise developing these relationships.

Keywords: Academic Engagement, Dynamics, Lecturer-Student Interaction, Patterns, University.

Abstrak: Dalam sistem pendidikan saat ini, interaksi di dalam kelas sangat penting karena suasana belajar yang kondusif diperlukan. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi hubungan antara interaksi dosen-guru dengan efektivitas pembelajaran di universitas. Desain survei yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah desain penelitian korelasional. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini dipilih dari universitas di Negara Bagian Kwara. Menggunakan pendekatan sampling bertahap, sebanyak 350 mahasiswa-guru berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Proforma dan kuesioner yang dirancang oleh para peneliti berjudul "Kuesioner Interaksi Guru-Mahasiswa" digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Metode split-half digunakan untuk menentukan reliabilitas

kuesioner, dan data yang terkumpul dianalisis menggunakan Cronbach Alpha, yang memiliki koefisien reliabilitas sebesar 0,78. Rata-rata digunakan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian, dan PPMC serta uji t pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05 digunakan untuk menguji hipotesis. Menurut temuan penelitian, interaksi dosen-guru di universitas di Ilorin tidak sering bersifat vertikal, antagonistik, otoriter, atau laissez-faire. Penelitian ini juga melaporkan bahwa sebagian besar responden memiliki tingkat keterlibatan akademik di atas rata-rata di Ilorin. Para peneliti merekomendasikan agar dosen memprioritaskan membangun hubungan yang positif dengan mahasiswa mereka. Membangun hubungan yang saling percaya dan mendukung dengan mahasiswa dapat mendorong komunikasi terbuka dan rasa saling percaya yang meningkatkan keterlibatan dan motivasi mahasiswa, oleh karena itu dosen harus memprioritaskan pengembangan hubungan ini.

Kata Kunci: Dinamika, Interaksi Dosen-Mahasiswa, Keterlibatan Akademik, Pola, Universitas

INTRODUCTION

The most significant global medium for human learning has always been education. The efficacy of the education sector has a considerable impact on the learning and teaching process. In this context, educational policymakers are primarily concerned with identifying the elements that can play critical roles in achieving educational objectives (Ekechukwu & Ifeanyichukwu, 2020). Effective teaching and learning settings directly influence students' mental and relational conduct. It has been observed that most educators are professionally incompetent and adopt outmoded teaching practices, which hinder the level of interaction in the classroom (Maulana et al., 2017). Nevertheless, several things can make a lecturer more antagonistic, such as low pay, miscommunication, misconduct, authoritative behavior, an overwhelming workload, a lack of in-service training, gender bias in the classroom, and the culture of the university. Destructive conduct worsens the situation and harms interactions between educators and learners (Kidger et al., 2016). Educators' conflict-inducing attitudes harm students and hamper educational institutions' learning processes and psychological well-being (Tyler & Boelter, 2018).

Classroom interactions are critical in today's education system since it is required to create a positive environment in the classroom for optimal learning. In order to fully engage in learning, students must interact socially and interact with the lecturer, with other students, and with instructional materials (Koen, 2018). Ensuring that students' social and academic needs are met in the classroom is the responsibility of educators. Establishing a positive learning environment in the classroom can enable students to channel their desires toward achieving their objectives (Ingram, 2021). When an educator is unfriendly, persuading students to study under them might be challenging. Also, it creates an unfriendly learning environment. This makes it difficult for students to connect with the topic and feel comfortable asking clarifying questions. Furthermore, students may be less motivated to study from an educator with whom they do not feel at ease (Crowther et al., 2009).

Interaction is an activity that happens during any communication. It can be expressed vocally through written or spoken words or nonverbally through

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gestures, eye contact, and facial emotions. (Omolone & Olanrewaju, 2017). For students who struggle with learning issues, the quality of the student-lecturer connection is crucial. According to Utami (2018), students who communicate closely with their lecturers have several advantages over their peers who don't. According to Coristine et al. (2022), when students connect well with their teacher, they also participate more actively in class, show a more substantial interest in their subjects, and maintain higher grade point averages. Effective student-lecturer interaction creates a nice ambiance in the classroom with cordial interactions among the participants in the learning process. Additionally, students are encouraged to become proficient communicators. This can be accomplished in some ways, such as by establishing distinct roles for teachers and students, exposing them to a range of classroom organisational styles, using a variety of activities, assisting students in finding their voices and supporting their use of communication strategies (Buffet, 2019). effective social interactions between students and teachers help them settle into school more quickly, see it as a positive experience, struggle less in social situations, have better social skills, and show higher levels of academic engagement (Haider & Hussain, 2014; Opesemowo, 2023).

Encompassing both the individual student perspective and the institutional perspective, the concept of student engagement is intricate and multidimensional. Students' deliberate and conscious efforts to meet learning objectives have been defined as engagement (Brophy & Good, 2017). Therefore, engaging in effective instructional methods outside of the classroom that result in various quantifiable results is meant to be understood as engagement. Engagement involves emotions, sense-making, and action and goes beyond simple involvement or participation. According to Odutayo (2023), student engagement refers to the degree to which students participate in activities demonstrated by research in higher education to be associated with superior learning results. The degree of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student–faculty interaction, a supportive campus environment, and stimulating educational activities comprise the concept of academic engagement. Academic engagement is perceived to include individual student effort and institutional structures, procedures, and practices. Positive attitudes towards learning activities and effective communication between students and teachers are prerequisites for academic engagement (Gehlbach et al., 2016; Hughes & Chen, 2011; Opesemowo et al., 2024).

The Nigerian educational setting presents problems for academic engagement and lecturer-student relationships, notably substantial class sizes, little resources, traditional teaching techniques, absence of student support services, and infrastructural issues. Overcrowding in classrooms prevents meaningful connections between instructors and students at Nigerian institutions. Less academic engagement results from professors finding it challenging to give each student personalised attention and feedback in large class sizes. Nigerian institutions lack resources, such as obsolete buildings, poor instructional materials, and restricted access to technology. This lack of resources affects the calibre of interactions between lecturers and students and prevents chances for

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participation and active learning. Lecturers in Nigerian institutions frequently use traditional teaching strategies like lecture-based education and rote memorization, although ineffective in fostering student involvement (Yusuf & Odutayo, 2022). These tactics discourage students' critical thinking, inventiveness, and active engagement. Comprehensive student support services, necessary for promoting positive lecturer-student relationships and academic engagement, are absent from Nigerian institutions. These services include academic advising, counselling, and mentorship programmes. Students find it difficult to stay interested in their academic environment when insufficient support mechanisms exist (Odutayo & Ramsaroop, 2023). On the last point, insufficient infrastructure discourages lecturer-student relationships, especially regarding online learning platforms or digital resources. Examples of these include unstable electrical supplies and lousy internet access. Technical difficulties impede interaction and cooperation between instructors and students, which lowers academic engagement.

This study aimed to investigate lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement. Specifically, this study examined the common interaction pattern between the lecturer and students and investigated the lecturer-student interaction pattern and academic engagement based on gender and school type.

Research Questions

This study set out to answer the following research questions: 1) What is the most common lecturer-student interaction pattern? 2) What is the academic engagement level of student-teachers at universities?

Research Hypotheses

The following theories were examined for this study:

Ho_1 There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement.

Ho_2 There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement based on gender.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement based on school type.

Literature Review

Rita (2014) researched the interaction between primary school teachers' work attitudes and students' academic engagement. The study results showed that student intellectual engagement is significantly impacted by interactions between teachers and students in the classroom. DeVito (2016) investigated how interactions between teachers and students affected academic engagement. Upon concluding the study, the researcher discovered the significant effect of the teacher-student relationship on the student's academic engagement. Conversely, when a student detests a teacher, they tend to carry that hatred into the topic the educator teaches, leading to poor outcomes in that subject. This implies that the

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teacher-student relationship in the classroom or at school is crucial as it can improve or worsen the learning results for the students. Teachers and learners should constantly engage in cordial interpersonal interactions. Students who engage in interactive learning exhibit high levels of critical thinking and constructive interactions (Opesemowo & Omideyi, 2023; Setianingsih, 2018).

Rohmah (2017) explored interactions with teacher-students in an English language program studying Economics. Teachers must create communicative, interactive teaching-learning activities that encourage greater student engagement and interaction. According to some, learning should take place in a setting where there are good interactions and where the learner feels respected, admired, acknowledged, and valued in order for them to reach their full potential (McComb & Whisler, 2017; Opesemowo & Adekomaya, 2024). Richie (2018) investigated how students interacted with their classroom teachers and how it affected their performance through a voluntary study of the students. The learning process and students' performances were shown to be significantly impacted by their interactions with educators, and this was found to be particularly pertinent when teachers were seen as really interested in getting to know their students. A teacher should set an example for their students, parents should prioritize their children's welfare, and authority and discipline should be personal rather than formal (Opesemowo et al., 2023; Rabo, 2022).

Sari (2018) investigated the interaction patterns during teaching and learning. The findings demonstrated the patterns of interaction that emerged in the first session, which included group work, choral replies, solo work, student-teacher answers, closed-ended instructor questioning as initial response feedback (IRF), initial response evaluation (IRE), open-ended teacher questioning, and cooperation. In a different study, Nurul (2018) asserted further that the instructional strategies used by teacher educators could be classified as IRF, IRE, individual work, group work, choral response, teacher talk, open-ended teacher questioning, student initiates, teacher responds, challenges, and teacher-student interface. According to Utami (2018), to increase student interaction, teachers should provide their students more chances to join learning groups, engage in group discussions, or create games inside the learning paradigm. According to Shamim et al. (2019), student-teacher interaction and educational background statistically correlate with student involvement based on school type. Tuğba and Feyza (2016) examined the connection between students' aptitude for critical thinking and instructors' views toward democratic classroom management. It was discovered that teachers' attitudes toward learner-friendly classroom management significantly predicted students' propensity for critical thought. Social and emotional development, genuine engagement, and critical thinking are all encouraged in a democratic classroom.

Alsaif (2018) examined how students interacted with one another and how teachers responded in a Saudi EFL university. It was discovered that the teachers used the feedback in four ways: to ask fresh questions, to improve communication in the discourse, to encourage student participation and engagement, and, last, to offer an embedded and explicit evaluation. According to Essa et al. (2022), the

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statistically significant differences at 0.05 between the average scores for middle school mathematics teachers on the post-application of the cognitive achievement test, observation card, and product evaluation card related to the skills of producing interactive lessons are caused by the impact of the different interaction patterns in the e-training environment. Teacher-student interactions, particularly those between the educator and the entire class, the instructor and each student in the classroom, and the learners themselves were found to be the most common type of interaction (Okunlola, 2023; Thanh & Duyen, 2021). According to Sari et al. (2018), cross-content interaction is the prevailing interaction feature, although the teacher-student interaction pattern is one-way traffic.

Noone et al. (2016) and Nnorom and Erhabor (2019) found that students perform better when classroom interaction patterns are used than when they are taught conventional methods. Additionally, there is no significant difference in mean cognitive achievement scores based on gender when classroom interaction patterns are applied. According to Indrakala (2019), multiple interaction patterns, teacher initiation, individual work, group work, close-ended questioning, choral replies, full-class engagement, open-ended inquiry, and self-access were employed by secondary-level ELT educators to encourage their students' discourse. The teacher initiation pattern was one of the most often utilized ones. Students taught through suitable interaction patterns retained a greater amount of information than those taught through an expository approach. Additionally, a statistically significant retention gap favouring urban learners was discovered between rural and urban learners. Group and location interaction had no discernible impact on student retention (Marschall, 2021; Osakwe et al., 2023; Adewuyi, 2021).

METHODS

Context and Participants

This study employed a correlational survey design. To ascertain the extent of the interaction between the variables, measurements of several variables are compared. Similarly, the degree to which variation in one element corresponds with variation in one or more other factors is determined by the researcher using the correlation coefficient, as Hassan (2015) noted in his description of a correlation study. It was, therefore, decided that a correlation survey approach would be suitable for this investigation. It helps the researcher determine how much or how little there is a relationship between academic engagement and lecturer-student relationship.

The participants in this study were selected from universities in Kwara State. All university students in Ilorin were the target audience, with an emphasis on those in the faculty of education. Specifically, respondents were drawn from students who have spent at least two academic sessions at the university. The researchers decided that students who have spent two years in their respective institutions should have adequately interacted with some, if not all, their lecturers. This would then be useful to properly and effectively measure their interaction patterns. Likewise, students must have had ample interaction with the lecturers, which in turn impacts their academic engagement. A multi-stage sampling

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approach was used for this investigation. Using the stratified sampling approach, the institutions were grouped according to ownership (public and private). The participants were then chosen using the proportional sample approach according to their population. Eventually, the random sampling method was employed to select the study's respondents. The research included 350 student-teachers as participants.

Instrumentation and Statistical Analysis

A questionnaire designed by the researchers was one of two tools employed in this study. The first step is determining the interaction pattern between the lecturer and students using the Teacher-Student Interaction Questionnaire, adapted from Balagová and Haláková (2018). In order to measure the student's academic involvement in the form of learning outcomes (Grade Point (GP), proforma was also utilized. The questionnaire was divided into A and B sections. The purpose of Section A was to collect biographical data from the respondents. Forty-three items in Section B of the questionnaire focused on interactions between lecturers and students. A four-point Likert scale was used to score the questionnaire. Both face validity and content validity were used for the questionnaire. The instruments were presented to three authorities on teacher education and educational assessment for approval. Their submissions, recommendations, revisions, and corrections were carefully integrated into the final copies, which were then produced for data collection. The split-half approach was utilized to determine the questionnaire's reliability to determine the instrument's dependability. The gathered data was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha, which has a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The researcher individually conducted the questionnaire with the help of eight assistants who had received training after approval from the pertinent authorities of the selected universities. The research assistants were trained in quality control to ensure consistency in data collection. Every ethical guideline was adhered to.

Data Analysis Techniques

Research questions one and two were addressed using the mean rating and the mean, respectively. The first hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 significant level. Because it evaluates the degree and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was selected to examine the association between lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement. PPMC helps determine whether changes in one variable correlate with changes in the other, as interaction patterns and academic engagement can be measured on a continuous scale. It is perfect for looking at behavioural or educational research correlations because it assumes a linear relationship and a normal data distribution. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient (r) and significance level (p-value) are provided by PPMC, enabling an easy understanding of the relationship's strength and importance.

The second and third hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level using the t-test. The t-test is a statistical test that compares the means of two

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groups—in this case, gender (male and female students) and school type (private and public)—to see if there is a significant difference in academic engagement between the two groups. This is why it was chosen to analyse the hypothesis. When the independent variable, gender, and school type, is categorical with two levels (male and female; private and public), and the dependent variable, academic involvement, is continuous, the t-test is appropriate. Assuming homogeneity of variances, independence of observations, and normal distribution of the data, it is suitable for investigating whether academic engagement and gender or kind of school impact the relationship between lecturer-student contact. Additionally, the t-test helps identify if any observed differences are statistically significant, aiding in hypothesis testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of respondents sampled for this study. 169 of the respondents were male students, while 181 were female students. This implies that more female students were involved in this study. Furthermore, 245 of the respondents were students at public schools, while 105 were students at private schools. This implies that more public institution students were involved in this study, as shown in Figure 1.

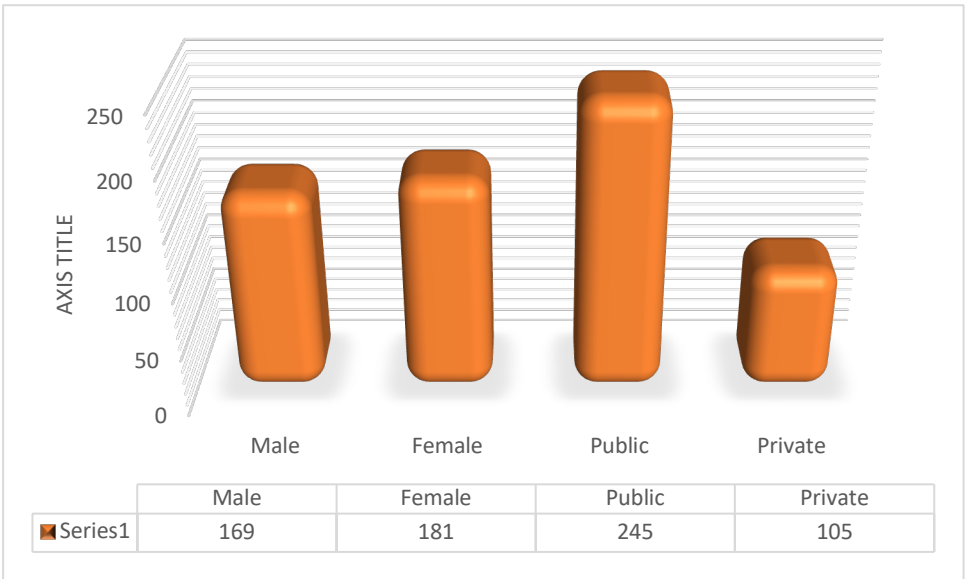

Figure 1: Demographics Characteristics of Respondents

Answering Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the most common lecturer-student interaction pattern?

Since each item in the questionnaire included five (5) sub-items and was constructed in a four-response format, a cut-off score of 12.50 was chosen as the baseline to determine participants' replies. The student-teacher connection was

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therefore noted as "Existing" for items with mean scores equal to or more than 12.50 and as "Not Existing" for items with mean scores less than 12.50.

Table 1. Mean and Rank order of the common Student-Lecturer Interaction pattern

S/N	Variables	Mean	Rank	Remark
3	Friendly	16.37	1st	Existing
5	Horizontal	16.10	2nd	Existing
4	Democratic	16.00	3rd	Existing
6	Vertical	11.19	4th	Not Existing
1	Hostile	10.39	5th	Not Existing
2	Authoritarian	10.35	6th	Not Existing
7	Lassiez-fare	9.20	7th	Not Existing

Table 1 shows the statistics on lecturer-student interactions at universities in the Ilorin metropolis. Ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd are items whose mean scores were above 12.50. This implies that the common lecturer-teacher interaction pattern is friendly, horizontal, and democratic. However, ranked 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th are items whose mean scores were below 12.50. This shows that the most common lecturer-teacher interaction pattern at universities in Ilorin is not vertical, hostile, authoritarian, and lassie-fare.

RQ 2: What is the academic engagement level of student-teachers at the universities?

Student-teacher grades in the form of grade point (GP) were collected, collated, and subjected to stanine analysis. Students whose grades were 4.50- 5, 3.5 – 4.49, 2.4 – 3.49, 1.5 – 2.39 and 0 – 1.49 were scored 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The statistics of learning outcomes are as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Performance

	Mean Score	SD.	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Range Score
Overall Performance	4.58	1.35	1	5	4

As shown in Table 2, the average (mean) score of 4.58 with a maximum score of 5 and minimum score of 1 was obtained. This indicates that the general performance of students in Social Studies is above average and high.

Hypothesis Testing

H_{o1} There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement.

Table 3. *Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between Lecturer-Student interaction pattern and academic engagement*

Variables	No	Mean	SD.	df	r-Cal.	Sig

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Lecturer-Student Relationship	350	14.30	9.74			
				348	1.26	0.000
Student Performance	350	7.36	2.13			

P<0.05

At the 0.05 alpha level, Table 2 displays an r-cal of 1.26 and a p-value of 0.00. The null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 alpha level. This suggests that the connection between ($r_{(348)}$=1.26, p<0.05) is significant.

H_{o2} There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement based on gender.

Table 4. t-test Statistics showing the difference in the relationship between lecturer-student interaction pattern and academic engagement based on gender

Gender	No	Mean	S. D.	df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Male	169	13.429	2.619				
				348	1.394	0.17	**Not Rejected**
Female	181	13.399	2.357				

*Insignificance at p>0.05

Table 4 demonstrates that when the t-value 1.394 is calculated at the 0.05 alpha level, a p-value of 0.17 is produced. The null hypothesis is kept since the p-value of 0.17 is larger than the 0.05 criterion of significance. As a result, the association between gender and the pattern of lecturer-student contact and academic engagement is not statistically significant (t{348} = 1.394, p>0.05).

H_{o3} There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student interaction patterns and academic engagement based on school type

Table 5. T-test statistics showing the difference in the relationship between teacher-student interaction patterns and academic engagement based on school type

School Type	No	Mean	S. D.	df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Public	245	13.312	2.118				
				348	1.621	0.36	**Not Rejected**
Private	105	14.147	2.381				

*Insignificance at p>0.05

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As can be seen in Table 5, computing at the 0.05 alpha level yields a t-value of 1.621 and a p-value of 0.36. The third null hypothesis is kept since the p-value of 0.36 is larger than the 0.05 criterion of significance. Consequently, the connection between academic engagement and the structure of lecturer-student contact is not significantly different depending on the kind of school (t{348} = 1.214, p>0.05).

Discussion

According to the study, interactions between lecturers and students at universities in Ilorin, Nigeria, are generally pleasant, democratic, and horizontal; authoritarian, antagonistic, and vertical connections are less common. This result is consistent with the argument made by Marxall (2021) that a teacher who is approachable is more likely to encourage innovation, which can lead to excellent academic results. The researcher went on to say that in the instance of an authoritarian instructor, the opposite is true. Therefore, it is highly advised that teachers and students get along in order to promote student involvement and positive interactions in the classroom. Pupils who experience comfort and respect in the classroom are more likely to be motivated to study and actively participate in their studies. Additionally, Noone et al. (2016) and Tuğba and Feyza (2016) submitted that teachers' attitudes toward learner-friendly classroom management significantly predicted students' propensity for critical thought.

This study's second finding revealed that most respondents had above-average academic engagement levels in the Ilorin metropolis. This means the respondents are generally motivated to learn and actively involved in their education. This is a positive finding, as it suggests that students are well-positioned to succeed academically. Several factors may contribute to the high levels of academic engagement in Ilorin. For example, the study found that students have high levels of intrinsic motivation, meaning they are motivated to learn for personal satisfaction rather than external rewards. Additionally, the study found that students have high levels of attention and classroom engagement. The findings of this study are encouraging, as they suggest that students are well on their way to achieving their academic goals. Students who engage in interactive learning exhibit high levels of critical thinking and constructive interactions (McComb & Whisler, 2017; Setianingsih, 2018; Odutayo, 2023).

The results of this study also showed a strong correlation between academic involvement and the student-lecturer connection. This is consistent with research on the impact of the teacher-student connection on the academic achievement of talented students (DeVito, 2016; Onyemah & Omoponle, 2022). Upon concluding the investigation, the investigator discovered a noteworthy impact of the teacher-student dynamic on the scholastic achievement of pupils. Reichie (2018) also discovered that students who thought their professors had a more caring relationship with them often had better attitudes toward academics and performed better than their peers who did not have the same support structure. In addition, Essa et al. (2022) cited a 1993 study by Belmont and Skinner that bolstered the notion that a favorable student-teacher interaction affected

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students' commitment to their studies. Moreover, the results of the study showed that the association between academic engagement and patterns of instructor-student contact did not change statistically significantly based on gender. This suggests that there are no appreciable differences in the interaction styles and levels of academic engagement between male and female students. This result supports the findings of (Nnorom & Erhabor, 2019), who discovered relatively few differences between the patterns of academic engagement and teacher-student interactions between male and female students.

Lastly, the association between the kind of school and academic engagement and the forms of teacher-student interaction did not differ statistically significantly. This suggests no discernible difference exists in the interpersonal styles and academic involvement of children attending public and private schools. This result is consistent with research conducted by Osakwe et al. (2023) on the significance of teacher-student connections. They proposed that healthy connections between teachers and students in both public and private schools are a resource for students because they keep them interested in their academic work. According to Oyewunmi et al. (2019), pupils who did not feel that they had a good rapport with their instructor had lower levels of involvement and accomplishment in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that student-lecturer relationships play an essential role in academic engagement and achievement. Lecturers can play an active role in fostering positive student-lecturer establishing personalized learning interaction, facilitating a positive and inclusive learning environment, creating a supportive classroom environment, and providing opportunities for interaction. They guarantee that all students feel valued and respected by fostering a good and welcoming learning environment, which promotes involvement and engagement from a variety of groups. Furthermore, fostering a supportive classroom environment where students are more likely to succeed academically is achieved through offering opportunities for engagement, such as group discussions, office hours, and cooperative projects. These initiatives also serve to strengthen relationships and boost academic motivation.

Therefore, it was recommended that: 1) Lecturers should prioritize building positive relationships with their students. Establishing trusting, supporting relationships with their students fosters open communication and a sense of trust that increases student engagement and motivation, which is why lecturers should prioritise developing these relationships. In addition to promoting a more inclusive and collaborative learning environment, positive interactions also improve students' emotional health and general academic achievement; 2) Universities should provide lecturers with training and support on how to build and maintain positive student-lecturer relationships. To educate lecturers on the skills they need for inclusive teaching practices, effective communication, and empathy, universities should offer them training and help them create and sustain meaningful connections with their students. By fostering a more engaging learning

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environment, this support enhances student retention, academic performance, and general contentment with their time in school; 3) Universities should create opportunities for students to provide feedback on their relationships with their lecturers. Academic institutions ought to facilitate avenues for students to offer feedback regarding their interactions with instructors. It will enable them to obtain essential insights into the dynamics of these interactions and make ongoing improvements to their teaching methods possible. This feedback encourages open communication and helps instructors modify their methods to suit the requirements of their students better while creating a more encouraging and supportive learning environment; 4) Encouraging students to build positive relationships with their lecturers fosters a sense of connection and trust, enhancing their interest in academics and leading to better learning outcomes. By actively participating in class discussions and engaging in collaborative learning activities, students strengthen their rapport with lecturers and deepen their understanding of course material, boosting overall academic performance.

Implications and Limitations of the Study

This study emphasizes the significance of student-lecturer connections for academic engagement. Lecturers may play a critical role in promoting student engagement by giving students chances to communicate with one another and the lecturer outside of class and establishing a welcoming classroom climate where they feel comfortable asking questions and seeking assistance.

Like other investigations, this study has limitations regarding sampling bias, cross-sectional design, causality, and contextual factors. Sampling bias may arise in this study focused on a specific group of lecturers and students, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Regarding cross-sectional design, this study may only provide a snapshot of lecturer-student interactions and academic engagement at one point, limiting the ability to establish causality or identify changes over time. Due to the study's observational nature, it may be challenging to establish causal relationships between lecturer-student interactions and academic engagement, as other variables may contribute to the observed associations. Lastly, the findings of the study may be influenced by contextual factors specific to the university under investigation, limiting the generalizability of the results to other settings. Irrespective of the identified limitations, the outcome of this study is adequate and appropriate for policy-making decisions and improvements in the university system.

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