

Factors Affecting College Teacher-Student Relationship: A Case Study of a Govt College in Bangladesh

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Although a growing number of studies focused on the teacher-student relationship in a school context, little research on this issue in a college context is evident in the literature. Even no studies till now focus on factors that affect college teacher-student relationships. This study attempted to explore this issue and the significance of the teacher-student relationship for students. Data for the quantitative phase came from 157 undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students from Government Brojomohun College, Bangladesh, who voluntarily participated in a Google-based survey questionnaire posted on Facebook groups; data for the qualitative phase came from eight students who participated in a semi-structured interview via the Zoom platform, using convenience sampling. The findings revealed that the teachers' characteristics and ages, pedagogy, friendlier approach, attitude, students' characteristics, positive and negative experiences, and cultural similarities affect students to make relationships with teachers. However, neither the age nor the sex of the students has any effect on the college teacher-student relationship. Besides, college students value the teacher-student relationship as an influential element for their classroom engagement, academic attainment, college adaptability, relatedness with the educational atmosphere, reduction of disruptive behaviour and dropout tendency.

Keywords: teacher-student relationship, college students, pedagogy, classroom engagement, academic attainment

INTRODUCTION

The teacher-student relationship is complex and bidirectional (Lixu, 2019). In a bidirectional interaction, both teachers and students are involved. TSR is complex in the sense that it originates from the daily interaction of student and teacher as well as teacher qualities, which are continually impacting each other and their opinions of each other (Rudasill & RimmKaufman, 2009). Besides, the nature of this relationship and its meaning changes over time. When students enter adolescence, their attention shifts from relationships with teachers to growing peer orientation (Lynch and Cicchetti, 1997). Most studies, for example, reported a decline in the quality of teacher-student relationships from elementary to high school context (Lynch and Cicchetti 1997; Chang et al. 2004; O'Connor 2010; Moritz Rudasill et al. 2010). This decline may be partly attributed to changes in the school environment (more students in the class, higher academic demands, and fewer opportunities for one-on-one contact with teachers), and partially to an increase in students' need for independence (Chang et al. 2004). The teacher-student relationship will have distinct characteristics at each stage of education, from primary school to college, and the techniques to develop a healthy relationship between teachers and students will be diverse (Li Xu, 2019). It is argued that college students desire to be more than just students since they are more independent and mature than their lower-level counterparts. They might aspire to a teacher-student relationship that is akin to that of a fisherman and a fishing net, in which the student serves as the net and the teacher is the fisherman who must cherish

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them, be able to let go of the net when necessary and allow students to work independently rather than strictly controlling them (Chan, Tong, & Henderson, 2017). However, a high-quality teacher-student relationship (TSR) is critical for increasing all sorts of school students' engagement and academic attainment, lowering drop-out rates, engaging in the learning process, and adjusting to school life (Wentzel, 1998; Wentzel et al., 2010; Wilkins, 2014). Despite the complexities and significance of this relationship for the students, it remains an under-researched topic in higher education (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). The majority of empirical studies, for example, focused on the teacher-student relationship in school and kindergarten settings (e.g., Decker et al., 2007; Hughes & Cao, 2018; Karpouza & Emvalotis, 2019; Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2000; Liisa Postareff, Markus Mattsson, & Centre, 2017; Nie & Lau, 2009; Witherspoon, 2011; Xerri et al., 2017). Only a few studies on teacher-student relationships in a college setting have been conducted (e.g., Bulson, 2015; Docan-Morgan & Manusov, 2009; Hurtado et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2019; Tsai, 2017). However, none of these studies focused on students' perceptions of the factors that influence their relationships with teachers in a college setting and the significance of it. Therefore, the objective of the study is to explore the factors that affect TSR in college contexts and the significance of TSR for college students from a constructivist theoretical perspective.

Factors affecting the teacher-student relationship

The teacher-student relationship may be affected by the characteristics, personalities, and ages of both teachers and students (Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufman, 2009). According to Suldo et al. (2014), when a teacher bullies a student, it fosters a negative relationship between the two parties and may weaken the bond, which may then lead to the student engaging in delinquent behaviour. Conversely, when a teacher is caring and supportive, their teaching style and classroom management encourage students, which helps students develop relationships with teachers (Thornberg et al., 2020). The latter claim is supported by Yu et al. (2018), who discovered that school students' positive perception of teachers' personalities, particularly when it comes to humour-related conduct, conversation, and teaching style motivate them to make relationships. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that younger students are more susceptible to the effects of their relationships with teachers because they are more reliant on them, whereas older students are more emotionally detached from teachers because their relationships are formed with more independent peers (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Hargreaves, 2000; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997). Therefore, TSR is a bidirectional interaction that may be influenced by the personalities and traits of both teachers and students. As a result, more study is required to explore the issue in Bangladeshi college education.

In terms of students' perceptions of teachers' differential behaviour and attitudes toward students, Kuklinski & Weinstein (2000) found that school students recognize teachers' unequal treatment of high and low achievers and that some teachers approach the classroom differently than others which influences TSR. This finding raises the question of whether teachers treat students differently or whether students perceive teachers' actions differently. Chong et al. (2010) found, on the other hand, that low-achieving Asian school students who evaluated their teachers as helpful and encouraging displayed high-quality TSR. These researchers ignored students' negative attitudes toward their teachers, whereas Yu et al. (2018) discovered that school students have both positive and negative attitudes toward their teachers, and that some students consider some teachers to be good despite having some negative characteristics, which affect TSR. As a result, the existing literature has an unresolved discussion on these issues.

It is argued that girls have less conflictual and closer ties with teachers, whereas boys have less support and more conflictual interactions with teachers (e.g., Baker, 2006; Mantzicopoulos & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2003; Murray & Greenberg, 2006). For example, Yu et al. (2018) found that school-going girls gained more support from teachers than boys, and most students specified same-

gender teachers to form a relationship. Furthermore, Hughes & Cao (2018) discovered that school girls were given greater support and had a lower conflicting relationship with teachers during each assessment period, but three years following the transition, no gender differences in warmth or conflicting relationships were found. As a result, there was a debate in the literature on TSR and students' sex.

The teacher-student relationship is said to be affected by teachers' approachability toward students (Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Hurtado et al., 2011). Stephen et al. (2008) found that school teachers' approachability aided in both increasing TSR and decreasing student alienation through stronger relatedness. Similarly, Yu et al. (2018) and Karpouza & Emvalotis (2019) discovered that creating TSR is dependent on approaches such as teachers' respect, openness, willingness to communicate, curiosity, and positive enthusiasm toward students in a school context. In terms of cultural resemblance, it is argued that when teachers and students have cultural values derived from their race or ethnicity, it makes it simpler for them to connect (Decker et al., 2007). Yu et al. (2018) discovered that school students' perspectives on comparable interactions with teachers differed according to their diverse backgrounds and experiences. In addition, Redding (2019) found in a thorough review that when school students meet teachers from the same cultural background in the classroom, they were more interested, receptive, and motivated to participate in the class. They were also more inclined to interact with those teachers. However, little is known about these issues in a college setting.

Importance of teacher-student relationship

It has been argued that TSR is less important and influential for college students than it is for high school students (Robinson et al., 2019), although a good TSR is critical for student engagement and academic attainment at all levels. From elementary through middle school, students' relationship with their teachers deteriorates while their ties with their peers improve (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997). In contrast, Roorda et al. (2011) reported that supportive TSR and proximity are essential for school students' classroom engagement and academic attainment. However, little is known in a college setting. Concerning students' disruptive behavior, some empirical studies discovered that when school students witness teachers' pro-social behavior, they have a more positive relationship, which aids in instilling healthy classroom behavior (Prewett et al., 2019; Wentzel et al., 2010) and helps to reduce their misbehavior (Inman, 2019). However, Nie & Lau, (2009) found that increased teachers' controlling power, along with compassion, reduced school students' disruptive behavior. Therefore, while a supportive TSR helps to reduce disruptive behavior in school students, despite having a debate, less is known in a college environment. Furthermore, it is suggested that when teachers make an effort to understand students, take a special interest in them, develop relationships outside of the classroom, and favorably acknowledge their efforts, school students are more interested in learning new topics (Northup, 2011; Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018). According to certain empirical studies, students who have regular and high-quality relationships with their teachers are more likely to participate in learning activities at the university level (Trolan et al., 2016; Xerri et al., 2017). However, much is not known about this issue in college education.

In addition, students who enrol in higher education experience a significant level of uncertainty and anxiety due to a lack of connection with teachers, which leads to dropout (Kahu & Picton, 2019). However, dropouts can occur throughout the school year. Hossain (2016), for example, found that around 11.74% of students dropped out at Dhaka University during their entire academic year owing to a lack of enthusiasm, skills, and so on. Quin (2016) discovered that higher quality TSR is connected with a lower degree of dropout tendency among school students, and students who dropped out were more likely to remember the low quality of TSR. So, while supporting TSR is critical for keeping students in school throughout the year, little is known about it in the college setting. In research on kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools, the necessity of a supportive relationship with teachers

for students' effective school adjustment has been well recognized (Roorda et al., 2011). Chong et al. (2010) found that school students' perceptions of positive TSR greatly influence their school adjustment. However, Denovan & Macaskill (2017) and Liisa Postareff, Markus Mattsson, & Centre (2017) found that students at universities have a low level of interaction with their professors, which causes students' educational and social adjustment to university to be challenging. It appears that favorable TSR perceptions assist school children to adjust better, but university students have less interaction with professors, making it difficult for them to adapt, and the topic has remained under-researched in the college context.

Supportive TSR aids in the development and maintenance of a sense of belonging, which leads to improved academic and behavioral outcomes as well as student perseverance (Dwyer, 2017; Wentzel, 1997). When school students have meaningful relationships with teachers, they are more likely to feel appreciated and acquire a sense of relatedness with the institution, which boosts their motivation in school (Davis, 2006; Dwyer, 2017; Hughes, 2011; Wentzel et al., 2010). According to certain empirical studies, when school students perceive their teachers to offer warmth, acceptance, and self-esteem, they put in more effort and experience a sense of belonging, which enhances academic success (Chiu et al., 2012; Conner et al., 2013; Hughes, 2015; Vieno et al., 2005). However, students in higher education may not feel like that because teachers and students do not interact much (Chan et al., 2017; Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Hurtado et al., 2011). Therefore, this topic is worth further investigation in a college setting.

To sum up, the teacher-student relationship is well understood in kindergarten, primary school, middle school, and high school contexts, but less so in college settings. In addition, as there is controversy over prior research findings, they are worth investigating to justify in a college setting. Further, although several studies have been conducted in college settings, none have focused on the factors affecting TSR for college students and the significance of TSR for students. More importantly, there is no study on this topic in Bangladesh (Pervin et al., 2021). So, this sequential mixed-methods exploratory study attempted to investigate the following research questions from a constructivist theoretical perspective to discover new insights to contribute to the existing literature.

1. Which factors affect college students to make a good relationship with their teachers?
2. Why do college students believe that they should have a good relationship with their teachers?

Theoretical Framework

The constructivism theory (Bruner, 1960; Piaget, 1976; Vygotsky, 1986) was used in this study to define the nature of the data derived from the student's responses to understand the issue profoundly. This theory is divided into two parts: cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. Bruner and Piaget created the cognitive constructivism hypothesis in 1976. They said that learning happens in a series of steps and mental modifications. They also claimed that the learning environment encourages dynamic interaction between teachers and students, allowing students to create knowledge and skills through reflective interpretation. Social constructivism, on the other hand, is a learning theory developed by Vygotsky (1986) that says that learning is a social activity and that learners construct knowledge based on prior experience. Moreover, Piaget and Bruner asserted that learners require personal investment driven by intrinsic motivation, whereas social constructivists believe learning is a social phenomenon including both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Cholewinski, 2009). Further, in a constructivist classroom, teachers foster a climate in which students feel at ease asking questions. According to constructivism, learners use what they already know and what they did in the past to determine facts and relationships.

METHOD

Research Design

This research adopted a sequential exploratory mixed-method research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This design was utilized to develop a wider and deep understanding of qualitative data through the descriptive analysis of quantitative data. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and quantitative data were presented, using descriptive statistics. Finally, both qualitative and quantitative data were used to interpret and understand the major findings.

Setting and Participants

This mixed-method exploratory research was conducted at Government Brojomohun College in Bangladesh located in the southwestern part. As it is one of Bangladesh's major colleges, it was selected as the study location to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. At the undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate levels, there are about 30,000 students from different backgrounds enrolled in 22 departments connected to the faculty of the arts, sciences, social sciences, and business. More than 200 teachers also work here. However, 157 students from 20 different academic years (65% men, and 35% women) took part in the quantitative phase. The majority of participants (45.2 per cent, 13.4 per cent, 13.4 per cent, 7.6 per cent, and 5.1 per cent) were from the fields of management, finance and banking, botany, and soil science. Students from the first, second, third, fourth, and MSS/MSc/MA/MBA (10.2%, 12.1%, 22.3%, 26.8%, and 28.7%) academic years were included in the study. Only 1.3% of respondents were beyond the age of 29, making up the majority (45.2%) of respondents who were between the ages of 23 and 25. The second-largest group (38.9%) was between the ages of 20 and 22. Additionally, interviews with eight responders from four faculties were conducted (4 men and 4 women).

Data Collection Instruments

The main data collection instruments of this study were a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. A self-administered, well-structured survey questionnaire (Ornstein, 2014; Taherdoost, 2016b) with statements for students' self-ratings and seven open-ended questions were designed to collect data to address the research questions. The Likert scale (1-5) was used to evaluate students' perceptions because it is dependable and participant-centred (e.g., My relationship with teachers helps me to reduce the tendency to drop out.). The theme is the dropout tendency. Some questions were open-ended so that respondents might provide more detailed answers (Ikart, 2019).

Two primary questions and numerous sub-questions were included in a semi-structured interview guide (Wahyuni, 2012), which was followed throughout the interview while allowing respondents to speak freely if any issues arose to obtain more detailed information (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Wahyuni, 2012). The major and sub-questions were created based on the themes and sub-themes from the literature to address the research questions (for example, Do you think your relationship with teachers is important for your adjustment to college?). The theme is college adjustment. Data were collected via Facebook and the Zoom app between September 5 and October 5, 2021.

Procedure for Data Collection

A project description and consent form, as well as a Google form-based survey questionnaire, was initially shared with numerous departmental Facebook groups (Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). The researcher requested that the admin teachers of these Facebook groups approve the questionnaire link post and submit it to all of the Facebook groups for the various academic years. The survey was connected to a Google Docs spreadsheet, so as soon as students finished and submitted the form, their

answers were immediately added to the spreadsheet (Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). The researchers only used student volunteers because the campus was closed due to the outbreak of COVID. In addition, eight respondents were selected from four faculties with the help of teachers based on their availability and desire to participate voluntarily. Then they were sent an email with a general information sheet and a consent form. If they consented to participate and signed the consent form, they were chosen as respondents. Each interview used Zoom technology and lasted around 45 minutes in total. All of the interviews were recorded with the participants' consent, and extensive notes were taken throughout each one (Wahyuni, 2012).

Procedures for data analysis

To fully understand the qualitative data in this sequential exploratory mixed-method study, qualitative data were first analyzed and then quantitative data were presented. The quantitative data were carefully edited, coded, reverse-coded, and grouped the data (C.R., 1990). The SPSS software was then used to analyze the data (version 26). The mean and standard deviation values were included in the descriptive statistics for the questions, using the Likert scale. The open-ended question responses were integrated into qualitative data. After the qualitative data were gathered, the interview transcripts were thoroughly studied to become familiar with coding. While coding the data, which entails creating early code stages (open code) (Wahyuni, 2012), the researcher concentrated on eliminating extraneous data (C.R., 1990), taking into account which should be included or discarded to address the research questions. After coding, the data were transformed into meaningful words or sentence fragments or single words (Wahyuni, 2012). A sequential thematic mind map was created to represent the research findings after making sure that no significant patterns were left out of the topics that were noted. Additionally, the codes of the participants were made up of the first letter of each respondent's pseudonym and the name of their degree. For instance, Tamal's alias is T. Commerce indicates his major is Commerce.

Measures

Factors Influence Teacher-student Relationship

Nine self-developed statements ($\alpha = .863$) were presented to students to score on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree 1 to Strongly Agree 5. These statements (for example, "My teachers' characteristics affect my relationship with them") were used to assess student perceptions of TSR-influencing factors.

TSR's Importance for Students

Respondents rated six self-developed statements created by the researcher ($\alpha = .839$) on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree 1 to Strongly Agree 5. (e.g., My relationship with teachers is important for classroom participation and better academic success).

FINDINGS

Factors that affect college student perception of TSR

Students were asked to identify the factors that affected their interactions with teachers. Several themes were emerged from their responses, such as teachers' characteristics, different behaviour, pedagogy, notice and approach, students' characteristics, cultural similarity, and attitudes. These themes have two levels: those pertaining to teachers and those pertaining to students.

Factors regarding teachers

Teachers' characteristics

The majority of students expressed a desire to develop relationships with teachers who have a good character and uphold moral values. Some students stated that they prefer younger teachers over older ones because they perceive younger teachers to be more affable and responsive to their needs.

I always maintain a relationship with teachers who have a good personality, such as possess good moral and social values, and get decent dressed and those who are humorous." (S, Science).

I prefer establishing relationships with young teachers because I believe, they are friendlier, and I can share whatever I like with them. (K, Commerce)

Students pointed out that they are more likely to invest in a cooperative rapport with teachers who are open-minded, funny, have the ability to control and manage the class, and have the ability to motivate.

Teachers' differential behaviour

According to respondents, their relationship with teachers are shaped by the fact that they believe that teachers pay more attention to those students who are high achievers and regular than those who are low achievers and irregular in the class. This difference in perspective impacts their interaction with them.

I think, my teachers appreciate and care more about my friend because of having good exam scores than me. I'm not a regular student and my previous test score is not good. This negatively impacts my relationship with them and causes anguish". (S, Social Science).

Interviewed students reported that teachers show a dual attitude towards students in terms of their academic performance and classroom attendance that influence their relationships.

Teachers' pedagogy

The majority of respondents expressed a desire to form relationships with teachers that consistently attend class, have an effective teaching style, and prepare lesson plans prior to delivering a lecture. Some students stated that they enjoy forming relationships with teachers who have substantial teaching experience and permit classroom questioning.

I appreciate teachers who constantly begin class on time and deliver lectures intelligently and effectively, utilize a participatory approach in the classroom, allow me to raise questions, and values my point of view, I feel closer to that teacher...".(S, Social Science).

Teachers' teaching style and teaching method are the valuable elements, according to students, to attract students to form a relationship with them.

Teachers' noticing and approach

Seven out of eight participants reported that when teachers demonstrate pro-social behavior and address them by name, their morale is boosted and they sense the desire to form relationships. In addition, students develop a sense of closeness and connection when they are called by teachers with names.

When my teacher calls me out of the numerous students, I feel proud and prefer to establish a relationship with him because I believe that this teacher values, and cares me." (T, Social Science.)

According to students, teachers' caring attitude, politeness, paying attention to the needs of students attracts students to develop and maintain a good rapport with them.

Table 1
Influencing factors associated to teachers

Statements	N	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
[My teachers' characteristics affect my relationship with them	157	10	26	36	57	28	3.43	1.150
My teachers' pedagogy affect my relationship with them	157	14	23	7	100	13	3.48	1.119
My relationship with my teachers is impacted by their different attitude toward us.	157	10	26	34	57	30	3.45	1.163
My relationship with my teachers is influenced by their noticing and friendly behaviour	157	10	16	48	64	19	3.42	1.039
Valid N	157							

(The mean value is read as strongly disagree = 1.00-1.80, disagree = 1.81-2.60, neutral = 2.61-3.40, agree = 3.41-4.20, and strongly agree = 4.21-5.00)

According to table 1, the majority of respondents agreed that teachers' personal characteristics (mean = 3.43), pedagogy (mean = 3.48), differential behavior toward students (mean = 3.45), and noticing and approachability (mean = 3.42) have an impact on their relationship with teachers.

Student-related factors

Students' characteristics

Interviewed participants reported that their age and sex do not influence their connections with teachers as none of the participants had any experience with how their age and sex affected their connections with their teachers.

I have no idea, based on my undergraduate experience, whether teachers favour male or female students or whether they consider students' ages while building ties with them. (K, Arts)

Students pointed out that teachers do not consider students' age and sex while they are attempting to form a relationship, or to take care of them.

Students' positive and negative attitudes toward teachers

Most respondents said that building a relationship with teachers depends on their earlier positive and negative memories of teachers' attitudes toward them. When students experience teachers' prosocial, caring and respectful behaviour, students feel comfortable forming a relationship. However, if students experience a teacher's negative behaviour, they are reluctant to build a bond with them.

When I attended my first orientation class as a graduate student, one of my teachers encouraged me and provided me with excellent moral counsel on how to be a good human being. This good experience pushed me to develop a healthy relationship with him. (M, Science)

In my second year, one of my teachers reprimands me in class, I felt disheartened and dishonoured, and I never had any desire to form a relationship with him". (P, Commerce)

Students want to cultivate good relationship with teachers based on their positive and negative experience because what behaviour of teachers they experience throughout their academic lives encourage or discourage them to form a relationship with them.

Cultural similarity

Interviewed students reported that when they identify a teacher who shares a familial link with them or is from the same area, they make an effort to form a relationship with him/her. In addition, they feel comfortable forming relationships and sharing their thoughts or problems with teachers who have skills in the same cultural activities.

I've got an excellent relationship with a teacher who is from the same district, and I feel more comfortable sharing my concerns with him because I believe he gives me more attention. (S, Social Science)

I think I prefer to make a relationship with those teachers who have a fondness for extracurricular activities, such as singing, recitation, debate and so on as I like it. (R, Arts)

According to students, when they perceive that they and their teachers are similar or closely connected in terms of personality, cultural backgrounds, and familial relationships, they feel a sense of closeness to form a relationship.

Table 2
Student-related factors influencing TSR

Statements	N	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
[My age influences my relationship with teachers.]	157	27	57	45	22	6	2.51	1.054
[My sex influences my relationship with teachers.]	157	46	56	36	15	4	2.20	1.048
[My attitude toward teachers affects the relationship with them.]	157	11	10	29	75	32	3.68	1.086
[My cultural similarity with teachers has an impact on our relationship.]	157	11	23	32	66	25	3.45	1.135
Valid N	157							

(The mean value is read as strongly disagree = 1.00-1.80, disagree = 1.81-2.60, neutral = 2.60-3.40, agree = 3.41-4.20, and strongly agree = 4.21-5.00)

According to table 2, the majority of participants disagreed that their age (mean = 2.51) or sex (mean = 2.20) influenced their interaction with teachers, but they did agree that their attitude toward teachers (mean = 3.68) and cultural similarities (mean = 3.45) affect their relationships.

To sum up, teachers with admirable character, a young age, a friendly attitude, a participatory teaching style, and pro-social behaviour are attractive to college students for building a relationship. In addition, students consider both positive and bad memories with teachers as well as cultural commonalities in terms of geography, familial relationships, and extracurricular activities to develop a relationship. So it appears that TSR in a college setting is influenced by teacher characteristics, variances in behaviour, pedagogy, and approach, as well as student characteristics, such as cultural similarities and attitudes.

The significance of TSR for college students

Classroom engagement and high grades

When asked why TSR is important to students, the majority of them responded that teachers are torchbearers who can illuminate them with their guidance, support, and knowledge. In addition, all the interviewed students reported that when they develop positive relationships with their teachers, they receive advice, suggestions, and motivation that encourage them to participate in class and explore new knowledge.

Teachers are my guardians and gurus of mine, and if I maintain a good relationship with them, I get their guidance, support, advice, and motivation, which are essential for my classroom engagement and academic success. (T, Social Science)

Students pointed out that a good relationship with teachers is important to get the blessing and encouragement, and when they have a good rapport with teachers, they are advised and guided by teachers that help them concentrate on their studies. Consequently, this facilitates getting overall good test scores.

Sense of belonging

Interviewed participants said that their relationships with teachers increase their connection to the class and teachers, particularly when they develop a positive rapport with teachers, they do not want to miss the class, and they feel a sense of connectedness to their college campus and teachers.

...feel a sense of relatedness with all of my teachers and college campus as most teachers know me, and when I meet, they call me. From the first year, I tried to maintain a good rapport, and now I have a close relationship with all teachers that attract me to come to college and make me connect with them. (M, Science).

Students stated that they need a relationship with teachers to increase their bondage with the college campus, and they want to continue this relationship after the completion of their studies to stay connected with teachers.

Reducing disruptive behavior

The interviewees reported that when they have good bondage with teachers, they always remain careful of using any slang language, doing bad things inside and outside the class or misbehaving with fellow students on the college campus because they believe that if their teachers notice they do that, they may be disheartened.

As I've got a caring and trusting relationship with my teachers, I'm constantly mindful about generating noise or chit-chatting with classmates in the classroom or engaging in any unlawful activities on the college campus because I don't want to fall into any embracing situation in front of my teachers". (K, Arts).

The participant stated that having a caring and trusting relationship with teachers controls their unexpected behaviours inside and outside the classroom because they cannot do whatever they like in that case.

Motivation for learning

Most respondents stated that teachers are the knowledge producer and they are the creator of good human beings, so maintaining a good relationship with them always brings new opportunities to know the unknown, and to explore unexplored things. In addition, students believed that if they make a

connection with teachers, they are encouraged and motivated to concentrate on their studies that accentuate their thirst for knowledge acquiring.

I maintain a positive interaction with my teachers because they inspire me to learn about the unknown, and they not only instruct academic subjects but also motivate and guide me on how to acquire new knowledge and be a good human being. (P, Commerce).

According to respondents, teachers are the persons who create eagerness among students for searching and acquiring new knowledge not only about the academic subject but also about different issues to develop skills for getting jobs and being a knowledgeable person.

Better college adjustment

Participants stated that their positive relationships with teachers, characterized by high levels of closeness help them adjust to the new environment. In addition, to overcome anxiety and fear, it is necessary to develop a trusting relationship with teachers because students believe that when they got enrolled in college, nothing is familiar to them, only by building a relationship with teachers can overcome all sorts of uncertainty and adapt with the department environment.

When I was a freshman, I suffered from anxiety and fear because I had no relatives in the city, but my teachers gave me emotional support and advice that helped me adjust to the new environment. (S, Science)

Interviewed students valued good TSR as an important element to overcome their fear and mental disorder and to satisfy their emotional and psychological needs, which they consider important for better college adjustment.

Drop-out tendency

Respondents demonstrated that favourable TSR reduces their propensity to drop out because when they have a close connection with teachers, they can easily share the problems they encounter in different academic years with teachers, and teachers provide mental support and advice that help them continue their studies.

When I was a second-year student, I encountered a bad situation and considered dropping out. I was in a dilemma about whether I should continue my study or not... Then, one of my teachers provided emotional support to continue my study, and assured me to help with any issues if I need. (S, Social Science).

According to participants, they need to develop a supportive relationship with teachers to share the different problems that make them depressed and dejected and forced them to discontinue the study.

Table 3
Importance of TSR for college students in Bangladesh

Statements	N	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
My relationship with teachers is vital for classroom engagement and improved academic performance.	157	9	7	28	51	62	3.96	1.129
[My relationship with teachers contributes to my sense of belonging.]	157	10	12	32	62	41	3.71	1.127
[My relationship is essential to my desire to learn]	157	8	2	16	51	80	4.23	1.037
[My relationship with teachers is vital for my college adjustment.]	157	10	14	37	57	39	3.64	1.138
[My relationship with teachers helps me reduce my drop out tendency]	157	10	10	27	71	39	3.76	1.094
[My relationship with teachers assists me in reducing my disruptive conduct.]	157	13	7	19	72	46	3.83	1.148
Valid N	157							

(The mean value is read as strongly disagree = 1.00-1.80, disagree = 1.81-2.60, neutral = 2.61-3.40, agree = 3.41-4.20, and strongly agree = 4.21-5.00)

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents reported that their relationships with teachers are important for classroom engagement and better academic performance (mean = 3.96), sense of belonging (mean = 3.71), better college adjustment (mean = 3.64), being motivated to learn (mean = 4.23), and reducing dropout tendency (mean = 3.76), and reducing disruptive behavior (mean = 3.83).

To sum up, according to college students, having a good relationship with their teachers is vital because when they have a healthy relationship with their teachers, they are more likely to participate in class, and teachers assist, advise, provide ideas, and inspire them to learn that boost their academic performance. Further, when students have a positive relationship with their teachers, they receive the emotional support and encouragement that are needed to adjust to their new surroundings and continue their studies in the face of any hurdles. As a result, a trusting relationship with teachers appears to help college students participate in class, increase exam performance, feel more connected to the educational environment, decrease their tendency to drop out and reduce disruptive behaviour.

DISCUSSION

This study intended to investigate the factors that influence TSR and the significance of TSR for college students. TSR in a college context is influenced by several teacher and student-related factors, as proven by both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings showed that college teachers' characteristics (character, and behaviour) and ages influence their relationships with their students. Due to their friendlier behaviour, younger teachers were preferred by students more than their older teachers. This finding goes with the findings of Yu et al., (2018), who found that school teachers' humorous behaviour captures students' attention and fosters a connection with them. This finding, however, contradicts the findings of Yu et al. (2018), who discovered that the age of teachers does not influence TSR in a school context. In addition, the study demonstrated that the relationships between students and teachers are influenced by the teachers' different behaviours towards the students. Kuklinski & Weinstein (2000) discovered a similar pattern of findings that teachers' differential behaviour toward high and low achievers influences TSR in a school context. In explanation, college

students believe that teachers focus a greater emphasis on students with excellent grades and regular attendance than on those with low grades and irregular attendance. Low-achieving and irregular students, therefore, have less relationship with their teachers.

The most significant finding is that the pedagogy of teachers (teaching style, classroom management, teaching experience, engaging lecture topics, and good preparation) drives students to develop relationships with their teachers. This finding shed new light on the deeper understanding of how teachers' instructional techniques may attract students to build relationships. In a constructivist classroom, teachers create an environment in which students are eager to ask questions (Amineh & Asl, 2015), and they not only provide instructional materials but also maintain an open dialogue to improve students' connection with teachers (Clabaugh, 2010). In explanation, a strong argument asserts that students feel more connected to teachers who offer a lecture in a participatory style and create a student-friendly classroom in which they are free to ask any questions. In addition, teachers' attentiveness and friendliness have a positive effect on TSR in a college education. When teachers exhibit a supportive attitude toward students, understand and meet their needs, and call them by name, they make them feel pleased and encourage them to build close relationships, according to both surveyed and interviewed students. This finding appears to be highly supported by the findings of (Karpouza & Emvalotis, 2019; Stephen et al., 2008; Yu et al., 2018), who also found that school teachers' openness; willingness, affable attitude, and additional help promote the establishment of relationships between students and them. Therefore, the relationships between college students and teachers in Bangladesh depend on the teachers' personalities, ages, attitudes, behaviour, friendly approach, and teaching style.

In addition, contrary to an earlier study, the majority of college students said that their sex and age had no effect on their capacity to develop relationships with their teachers. This finding contradicts the findings of (Goodenow, 1993; Yu et al., 2018), which indicated that girls were more likely to receive benefits from teachers and that students were more likely to build relationships with teachers of the same sex in school contexts. In explanation, both surveyed and interviewed students reported that they had never gotten additional benefits from their teachers or faced prejudice based on their sex or age. Further, previous research by Yu et al. (2018) demonstrated that school students' positive and negative attitudes toward teachers impact their interactions with teachers. This previous finding is aligned with the present study, which implies that college students develop intimate relationships with their teachers as a result of both positive and negative past experiences. This suggests that students build relationships with teachers based on both their positive and negative past experiences with them. Students acquire positive attitudes about their teachers if they value, respect, trust, and motivate them; nevertheless, students develop negative attitudes toward teachers if they devalue, demotivate, or act aggressively. According to the constructivist learning theory (Bruner, 1967), students develop or discover facts and relationships based on what they already know and have done. Concerning the similarity of teachers' cultures, the study found that students enjoy getting to know teachers who share their way of life or are experts in the same extracurricular activities, family links, and subject areas. These findings go with the finding of Redding, (2019) who reported that school students are more receptive and motivated to develop rapport with those teachers with whom they have a minimum cultural similarity. According to Bruner, culture moulds the human mind, and cultural differences lead to interpersonal conflict. Thus, humans form connections based on their cultural environment (Clabaugh, 2010). Students feel more connected to their teachers if they share numerous commonalities with them. Therefore, when it comes to forming relationships with teachers, students' perspectives and cultural commonalities are more essential than their sexual orientation.

In addition, the majority of students considered TSR as crucial for their classroom engagement and academic performance. According to interviewed students, if they have a positive relationship with

their teachers, they spontaneously attend class, absorb the content, and seek academic help. This finding disproves the previous assumption of Robinson et al. (2019), who assumed TSR was less important to college students for a variety of reasons. In contrast, this result is congruent with the findings of Roorda et al., (2011), who found that TSR has a stronger impact on school students' classroom engagement and academic achievement. It is important to explain that students must have positive relationships with their teachers to be motivated to attend class consistently, feel comfortable asking questions, pay greater attention in class, and readily comprehend the topics given. All of these factors can improve students' academic performance. Previous findings of Inman, (2019), Prewett et al., (2019), and Wentzel et al., (2010) regarding the reduction of disruptive school student behaviours are aligned with the findings of the present study. According to students, teachers' pro-social behaviour and positive interactions motivate them to behave responsibly inside and outside the classroom. The finding demonstrates two points. When teachers exhibit positive behaviour in the classroom, students copy them. Additionally, if students are close to their teachers, they attempt to control their behaviour outside of the classroom as well. In explanation, students do this out of fear that their teachers may develop a bad expression about them if teachers see their poor behaviour outside the class.

In order to receive the motivation, attention, and support that inspire them to learn new things, students believe they need a positive rapport with their teachers. This finding is comparable to that of (Northup, 2011; Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2018; Trolan et al., 2016; Xerri et al., 2017), who found that when teachers make an effort to understand their students' needs and encourage them, school students show a greater willingness to learn. A plausible explanation is that to participate in learning, students want the amiable encouragement, excitement, compassion, and supportive behaviour of their teachers. According to the cognitive constructivism theory of Bruner and Piaget, learning needs the intrinsically motivated personal investment of students. According to Vygotsky's social constructivism, however, learning requires both internal and external incentives (connection with an expert)(Cholewinski, 2009).

In addition, the findings showed that students were aware of the significance of warm relationships for a successful adjustment to college. This finding is reinforced by the findings of Chong et al., (2010), who found that school students' perceptions of a friendly connection promote school adjustment. In explanation, students require teachers' emotional support and encouragement to adapt to the new environment when they get enrolled in college because of not having relatives or unfamiliarity with the new environment. Another promising finding is that students believe a positive relationship with their teachers is needed for them to feel a sense of belonging with their teachers, class, and college. This is congruent with the findings of (Chiu et al., 2012; Conner et al., 2013; Hughes, 2015; Vieno et al., 2005), who found that school students felt ownership when they had a positive relationship with their teachers. This suggests that maintaining a good relationship with teachers creates a congenial environment where college students feel a sense of relatedness with teachers and the environment. Another novel finding is that students are less likely to drop out if they have a pleasant relationship with their teachers. Similar findings were found by Quin, (2016), who revealed that an effective TSR is associated with a lower school student dropout rate. It indicates that students enrolled in college with elevated levels of skepticism, dread, and reluctance, demanding a loving and supportive attitude from their teachers to overcome these obstacles and retain them. Therefore, college students valued good relationships with their teachers because it helped them participate in class, perform better in college, and feel like they belonged, which decreased their likelihood of engaging in disruptive behaviour and dropping out.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The teacher-student relationships in a college setting are influenced by the teachers' characteristics and ages, such college students build relationships with those teachers who have good characters, humour, and personalities, and who are young. College students believe that teachers give greater attention to students who are high achievers and regular in class than to those who are poor achievers and irregular. Teachers' teaching style, engaging lectures, good preparation, and friendlier approach also influence the student-teacher relationship. Further, college students build relationships, considering their positive and negative experiences with teachers. Both teachers' and students' familial relationships, same locality, and cultural backgrounds positively affect their relationships. However, college students' sex and age do not influence their relationship with teachers. Additionally, college students believed that a good TSR is an essential element to engaging in the classroom and getting teachers' guidance, suggestions, and motivation for good exam grades. They are motivated to act well both in and out of class by teachers' warmth and good relationship, and they try to control their behaviours inside and outside of class. They become inspired, and encouraged to learn new knowledge, having a close connection with teachers. Further, college students avail themselves of the benefit of teachers' encouragement, compassion, and emotional support to adjust to the new college environment and experience a sense of relatedness with teachers and the college that help them avoid dropping out.

This study has significant consequences for college teachers and students, and policymakers. The findings, both qualitative and quantitative, give light on the factors that affect college teacher-student relationships and the significance of TSR for students. This study discovered that TSR in a college setting is influenced by both teachers' and students' related factors, such as characteristics, teacher age, attitudes, pedagogy, friendly approach, student positive and negative experiences, and cultural similarity. These findings bear a strong significance for both college teachers and students to cultivate healthy relationships among them. Besides, this study shows that college students value their relationships with teachers as important for their classroom engagement and high marks, sense of belonging and that positive TSR helps them avoid disruptive conduct and dropout risk. These findings are significant for educational policymakers who aim to increase the quality of TSR in Bangladeshi college education by enacting new regulations.

LIMITATIONS

Although this study shed light on the factors that affect TSR in a college setting and its significance for students, the study deserves some criticism. Firstly, rather than focusing on teachers' perceptions, this study incorporated students' perceptions to discover factors affecting TSR and its importance. Future research should consider how students and teachers perceive these problems to investigate them more thoroughly. Secondly, because the researcher only collected data from one place, the study's findings may not apply to the entire Bangladeshi college education (Thornberg et al., 2020). More research on both public and private institutions across the country is needed for the findings to be generalized. Thirdly, there is a limitation in the sampling procedure and data collection process. The quantitative data were collected from students based on their availability and internet access following convenient sampling, it is susceptible to representativeness bias and external validity (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016; Taherdoost, 2016a). As a result, using simple random sampling for quantitative data gathering in the future would increase representativeness, impartiality, and external validity. Fourthly, when compared to the entire universe, the sample size appeared small. For example, the survey had 157 participants, but 377 should have been used scientifically for accuracy. Because of its small size, quantitative data has less statistical power (Thornberg et al., 2020). Future research should use a larger sample size so that the results may be generalized to the entire population.

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