TEACHER-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS AND THE EFFECT ON STUDENT LEARNING AT SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE KHOMAS REGION

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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BY

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APPROVAL PAGE

This research study has been examined and is APPROVED as meeting the required standards for partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Education.

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Internal Examiner   Date

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Dean of Education Faculty   Date

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External Examiner   Date

DECLARATION

I, Philip Milinga Tawana, hereby declare that this thesis study report: ***Teacher-Learner Relationships and the effect on student learning at selected secondary schools in the Khomas Region of Namibia*** is a true reflection of my own research study, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Philip Milinga Tawana   Date

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my Master's thesis to my late father, Alfred Tawana Ntuka, for his love, wisdom and integrity that served as a source of inspiration to me. To my late mother, Partricia Manga Tawana, for her unfailing love, good upbringing and unconditional support, and my wife, Pescah Manyando Kabuku as well as children, Yolander Navula Tawana, Junior Philip Tawana, and Mart Mumba Tawana for their motivation.

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ABSTRACT

Given the limitations of almost no research information in Namibia and Khomas region about teacher-learner relationships and its effect on student learning in secondary schools. This research study aimed at exploring and investigating factors affecting teacher-learner relationships and the effect on student learning at selected secondary schools in the Khomas Education region of Namibia. In particular the research study addressed research questions posed in chapter one in this study. This research study is informed and applied qualitative research approach/method and employed explanatory case study design within attachment theoretical framework. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations were used to collect the data. The study population consisted of 30 respondents (10 subject teachers and 20 grade 12 learners) from two selected secondary schools, and it was chosen by using purposive sampling techniques based on specified criteria and thematic content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

The study findings revealed that the majority of teachers and learners have common understanding and shared same sentiments that positive teacher-learner relationships can only develop in a conducive learning environment, and motivation, communication skills are among central key factors that enhance student's learning in the secondary school. It also emerged that few learners argued having developed a negative relationships due to teachers' personal attitudes in the classroom learning. Findings of the study indicated that teachers' behaviours and level of education were vital factors affecting quality of teacher-learner relationships while the major factors were lack of physical resources and ill-disciplined learners. The study further reported that few teachers were failing to manage their classroom interactions due to lack of classroom management strategies and ignorant to implement school rules and ministerial educational policies. It also emerged that teachers have positive or negative influence on student's learning, depending on how the interact with learners in the school environment. The study also found that employing learner-centred teaching approach/strategies could help to improve teacher-learner relationships and effective student learning in secondary schools.

The research study further recommends that teachers should cultivate and build quite enabling and conducive learning atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. Thus, this improves the student academic learning in the school learning environment. Further, the study recommended that teachers must reinforce school rules and regulations and be an example to learners in the classroom learning situations, and apply learner-centred teaching strategy that calls for learners'

full participation in the classroom lessons. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should provide further extensive training to teachers regarding policies, directives and public service acts that informs and guides on teacher-learner relationships in schools. It is also critical to ensure that enough physical resources are availed in order to establish schools for enhancing students' academic learning.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AES   African Education System

BED   Bachelor of Education Degree

BETD   Basic Education Teacher's Diploma

MBESC   Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture

MED   Masters of Education Degree

NCLB   No Child Left Behind

UNAM   University of Namibia

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the study

The teacher-learner relationships are one of the important factors within the school classroom learning settings. Knoell (2012, p. 5) defined teacher-learner relationships "as emotion–based learning experiences" that emerged out of the teachers' on-going classroom interactions with their learners in the classroom learning environment. According to Anderman and Kaplan (2008) when learners believe that their educators like and respect them in the school environment, they are more likely to develop bond of hard work and make a difference in their academic work. Furthermore, Anderman and Kaplan pointed out that parents and society are more concerned about the deteriorating relationships between the teachers and learners and how this affects the learners' academic performance as well as progress of the learners in academic work (Anderman and Kaplan, 2008). The *Namibian Code of Conduct for teachers'* outlined the expected teacher-learner relationships and its effect on student learning as well as academic success of learners in the school activities (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2001). For example, it cautions the teachers not to initiate and develop unacceptable relationships with learners in the school environment as that might affect the learners' academic progress. It goes on to warn against sexual harassment of school learners', the abuse of learners as well as discrimination against any learner based on physical or mental impairment or disability in the learning environment. In addition, the code of conduct concurred with Anderman and Kaplan (2008), sentiments by emphasizing that educators must assist every learner to achieve his or her full academic potential in the classroom (MBESC, 2001).

Khaleduzzaman (2017) argues that building strong relationships between the teachers and learners is essential to the cognitive, social and emotional development of all the learners in the

school environment. The positive teacher-learner relationships are valuable resource for the learner's success. Furthermore, Sanders (2015) echoed the views of Khaleduzzaman (2017) by saying that having positive relationship with teacher allows learners to be able to work on their own because they know that they can count on their teacher if problems arise and that the teacher will recognize and respond to the problems. Additionally, Sanders (2015) says that as learners enter the formal school settings, the relationships with their teachers provide the foundation for successful learning adjustment to the social and academic learning environment. On the same note, Pianta (2014) postulated that talking with the teachers and conducting observations in the classroom learning about teacher-learner relationships could provide important and unique information for designing interventions. Khaleduzzaman (2017) concluded that building strong and supportive relationships with the teachers allows the learners to feel safer and more secure in the school settings, learners feel more competent; make more positive connections with other peers in the school environment. They also make greater academic learning gains such as social interactions, and learning opportunities to assist other fellow learners in classroom activities (Khaleduzzaman (2017). On other hand, Liberante (2012) states that the teacher-learner relationships and interactions are influenced by number of factors including teacher's attitudes and beliefs which in turn influence learners' academic performance and behaviour. Furthermore, the supportive school relationships and interactions between the teachers and learners promote a "sense of school belonging" and it motivates the learners to "participate effectively and efficiently in the classroom lesson discussions" (Liberante, 2012, p. 2).

In 2010, more than 90 research investigators and teacher educators from more than ten African countries gathered in Boulder, Colorado, for the first International Conference on the teacher-learner relationships in the African Education system (AES, 2010), Wubbels, Den Brok, Van Tartwijk, and Levy (2012). The conference theme were explained as follows:

"Indeed, positive teacher-learner relationships it has some effects on the student learning. Teachers, parents and the learners should understand that problematic bond and relations could be detrimental to student academic learning performance and educational growth. While the importance of interpersonal relationships in the education system has been accepted for many years, the research studies in this area were still very young. Therefore, it is the right time to celebrate, do some assessment and advance these efforts through conference that pays attention to state of the field and avenues for future investigation" (Magwa, 2018, p. 1). Based on the above remarks, clearly the research studies in the area of teacher-learner relationships in African education system was still at an early stage. For instance, Namibia is one of the African countries where such research study has not been carried out yet extensively. Zimbabwe is another African country that lacks information on the teacher-learner relationships and its effects on student academic learning (Magwa, 2018). Given the lack of information regarding teacher-learner relationships in Namibia, this research study aimed at exploring teacher-learner relationships and the effects it has on the student learning in selected secondary schools in the Khomas Education Region in Namibia.

Moreover, IIias and Nor (2012) argued that teacher-learner relationships and learner-learner relationships determine whether learners feel safe to open up to learning in the classroom situations. In addition, IIias and Nor indicated that trust is a critical factor of positive educational environment and foundation for conducive classroom learning atmosphere. On the same note, Oktay (2012) explained that the behaviour that learner show within the classroom learning environment is largely determined by their attitude towards the teacher-learner classroom relationships, and their willingness and learning ability to participate in challenging classroom activities, and this is also significant factor that affects the teacher-learner relationships and student learning in the classroom lessons. Oktay (2012) also found that one of the major problems that causes learners' not to behave themselves in the classroom-learning

environment is the result of boredom with routine classroom activities, such as those that involve worksheets where learners are not given opportunities to develop deep knowledge or understanding of the central key concepts. In these situations, learners often distract other learners or roam the classroom in an attempt to find more interesting alternative activities that could challenge their thinking capacity and learning abilities (Oktay, 2012). Furthermore, Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane (2014) postulated that it was crucial that teachers know their learners' learning abilities, so that the planning of challenging classroom activities is appropriate for the variety of different learning abilities within the classroom learning environment. IIias and Nor (2012) agreed with Oktay (2012) views by concluding that when teachers pursue positive relationships and interactions with their learners and tailor class work that enables learners to construct their own meaning, learners are more likely to behave and participate effectively in the classroom learning activities.

Muyoyeta, Abah and Denuga (2018) found that lack of relevant teaching and learning resources, shortages of educational facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and ill-discipline of learners and school management's lack of commitment constitute to factors affecting teacher-learner relationships and the student academic performance in the secondary school classrooms in the Khomas Education region. Furthermore, this influence the academic learning performance of Grade 12 learners in the classroom activities (Muyoyeta et al., 2018). Additionally, Muyoyeta et al. (2018) argued that secondary schools need sound classroom management strategies and teaching skills in order to have positive teacher-learner relations and interactions in the classroom learning situations. Muyoyeta et al. (2018) reported that poor classroom management could lead to complete breakdown of discipline on the part of both teachers and learners with negative effect on the teaching and learning interactions in the

classroom activities. Thus, there is a need for relevant research on the teacher-learner relationships to be carried out in Namibia to find out effect on the learners' academic learning.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Muyoyeta et al. (2018) stated that insufficient teaching and learning materials in secondary school classrooms in the Khomas region has an impact on the teacher-learner relationships and interactions in the classroom. This results in teachers' failing to maintain discipline and manage their classrooms effectively due to learners' behavioural issues, such as noise-making, back-chatting, sleeping, and disrupting classroom lesson discussions (Muyoyeta et al., 2018). On the other hand, IIias and Nor (2012) agreed with Muyoyeta et al. (2018), views by saying that school management pays scant attention to aspects of social relationships and interactions in the learning environment, especially the interactions between the teachers and learners. This can be proven by many behavioural problems in the classrooms such as disputes, fights, bullying, gangsterism and many more. Poor teacher-learner relationships and interactions can create negative learning environment that may cause poor learner performance in assessment activities. Nako (2015) also found that research studies done in the United State of America focused on teacher expectancy and correlates identify race, social class, gender, personality, prior academic achievement, minority group membership, low socio-economic status as important factors that affect teacher-learner relationships and interactions in the classroom learning atmosphere. In addition, Nako reports that learner characteristics on which teachers base their expectations about learners' academic performance, is also very vital and essential factor that affects learners' academic performance in the classroom activities.

The relationships that teachers develop with their learners have an influence on the student learning academic growth in the classroom. Hallinan (2008) argues that learning is a process that involves cognitive and socio-psychological development, and both processes must be

considered if academic learning growth for learners is to be achieved. The unbalanced reliance on the classroom assessment activities to determine the learning success of learners does not provide accurate accounting of all that goes into the creation of effective learning environment for student academic performance. Rothstein, Jacobsen and Wilder (2008, p. 27) agreed with Hallinan (2008) arguments by saying that "it is surprising that so many education policymakers have been seduced into the thinking that the simple quantitative measures, like the test scores in the classroom assessment activities can be used to hold the school teachers accountable for the poor academic performance of learners and the achievement complex of educational outcomes in the schools". Meyer and Turner (2002, p. 107) concurred with views of the scholars above by discussing their research findings further and illustrating the importance of learners' and the teachers' emotions during the lesson interactions in the classroom learning environment. They indicated that, "through investigating teacher-learner relationships and interactions, our conceptualization of what constitutes the motivation to learn increasingly has involved the emotions as essential to learning and the teaching process in the classroom setting". According to Magwa (2018), the teacher-learner relationships is derived as very important aspect in educational research in the pre-school and primary education in Zimbabwe but remains largely neglected in the secondary schools level. Most of the secondary school teachers are still uncertain about the type of teacher-learner relationships that could ensure the desired learning environment in this new era of the democratic education system in Africa. Furthermore, learners' voices were not well represented in the previous studies on teacher-learner relationships (Magwa, 2018). There has been no study so far that has addressed the factors affecting teacher-learner relationships and interactions in the secondary school classrooms in Namibia in the Khomas region known to the researcher. Given this background, therefore, this research study aimed at finding out the nature of the teacher-learner relationships

and the effects it has on the students' learning in two selected secondary schools in the Khomas Education region in Namibia.

1.3   Research questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1.3.1   How do teachers and learners see their relationships developing in selected secondary schools in the Khomas Region?

1.3.2   What factors affect teacher-learner relationships and interactions in secondary school classrooms in the Khomas region?

1.3.3   How do teachers manage classroom interactions in two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region?

1.3.4   To what extent do teacher-learner interactions influence learners' academic performance in secondary school classrooms as perceived by learners and teachers in the Khomas Region?

1.3.5   What can be done to enhance teacher-learner relationships and the effect on student learning in secondary school classrooms in the Khomas region?

1.4 Significance of the study

The research study provided vital effective strategies for teachers and learners on how to effectively engage and enhance interactions between each other in the classroom-learning environment. It also provided the learners with information on how to develop and build positive relationships with teachers in the school environment for successful adjustment to their social interactions and for improving student academic learning development.

The study also provided the knowledge on how to build supportive teacher-learner relationships and interactions which enabled learners to interact positively and freely with peers and the teachers in the classroom, which might result in enhanced academic performances in the classroom activities.

The findings of this research will assist teachers to create conducive learning environments that allows learners to develop self-confidence, which might result in improved academic performance. This study will also provide possible solutions to the problem of teacher-learner disconnectedness in the secondary schools. Additionally, this study will serve as baseline for future in-depth investigations at national level. The study will also contribute relevant literature, thereby increasing knowledge base to be used by future investigators on the teacher-learner relationships at secondary school level.

1.5 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of this research study was that during interviews most teachers and learners preferred to be interviewed in Afrikaans, in which they felt comfortable to express themselves. However, the researcher is not fluent in Afrikaans, which posed a problem and had to use the services of translator during the interview sessions. This might or will lead to misunderstanding, and result in wrong interpretations of research questions and information in the interviews process.

Some of the selected participants for this study were not available during the data collection period. Therefore, the researcher had replaced them with available participants who were ready and willing to take part in the study interviews. This was done in order to avoid losing some valuable information during the data collection process.

The participants will provide socially acceptable responses to please the researcher. The researcher tried to emphasize that there were no right or wrong responses and encouraged participants to say what they know and not what they thought the researcher need to hear.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

The study was conducted in the Khomas region only, because it was near the researcher's working area. Therefore, the research findings from grade 12 teachers and learners cannot be generalized to other regions. The study used only two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region.

This study is confined or narrowed to the following scopes:

a. Discussing the need for effective teacher-learner relationships at the secondary school level;

b. Exposing the barriers to effective teacher-learner relationships at the secondary school level;

c. Defining key areas and presenting relevant theories from literatures that review teacher-learner relationships and its effect on student learning;

d. Analysing and discussing findings gathered from the empirical data;

e. Suggesting possible solutions and recommendations towards improving teacher-learner relationships to ensure effective learning at secondary school level.

1.7 Definition of terms

It was very vital to explain the concepts that could lead to ambiguity and misunderstanding in order to establish framework of reference in which the investigator approached the problem of interest (Best and Kahn, 2014). Accordingly, the following terms should be understood as explained herein:

Academic Performance: In this study, it referred to achievement in classroom assessment activities. According to Mushtaq and Khan (2012), academic performance of learners is typically evaluated by the use of teacher's ratings, tests, and formal assessments in the school.

Classroom interaction: In this research, it refers to the participation of the learners in the learning activities. Dagarin (2004) explained classroom interaction as interactions between the teacher and learners that occurred in the classroom during the teaching and learning process.

Classroom management: In this study, is defined as how teachers discipline and control their learners in the classroom activities. According to McDonald (2013, p. 20) ''classroom management involves the teacher's actions and classroom strategies as well as teaching skills to create conducive learning environment that facilitates and supports active involvement in both academic and social and emotional learning to school learners''.

Negative Relationships: In this study was applied as teachers who do not involve learners in the teaching and learning process and use abusive language to learners. According to Varga (2017), negative relationships are relationships that include the teachers who do not develop and build welcoming learning atmosphere to the learners in the classroom environment.

Positive classroom environment: In this research, it refers to an environment, which is conducive for learning. Da Luz (2015) described positive classroom environment as an environment that offers the best conditions and opportunities to improve the students' learning and interactions in the classroom, also where the learners feel to be part of the teaching and learning process. **Positive teacher-learner relationships:** In this study, refers to when teachers and learners talk to each other with respect and use appropriate language, and work together on classroom activities. Positive teacher-learner relationships are generally explained to be understood as trusting interactions between the teachers and learners that include caring and respect (Bajaj, 2009).

Positive Relationships: Is defined in this study as caring learning and teaching interactions between the teacher and learners in the classroom. Varga (2017) refers to positive relationships as bond and connections that include the teachers who think about their classroom practice and search for ways to enhance it. These teachers give learners the authority and choice in the classroom. These educators make their learners feel a sense of belonging in the learning setting.

Relationships: In the context of this study, relationships refers to the ways in which the teacher and learner are related or connected to each other in the school environment. In addition, this formal process shows how the teachers and learners develop relationships in the classroom setting. Knight (2004) explained the concept, relationships as the very substance of life, which defines who we are. Dunn (2004) conceptualises relationships as bond and connections between two people.

Supportive teacher: In this study, refers to an educator who is helpful to the learners in the classroom activities, and impart knowledge as well as skills to the learners. Da Luz (2015) explained that supportive teacher is someone who creates efficiently positive classroom environment, who encourages the learners to behave well in the classroom and motivated to accomplish their own teaching and learning goals.

1.8 Summary

This chapter provided the introduction of the study, the background, statement of the problem and the research questions. Furthermore, the rationale of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study were presented. Additionally, the chapter also clarified and explained some key terms used in this study. Chapter two reviews the literature relevant to the topic under investigation.

CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides the theoretical framework and review of the literature on teacher-learner relationships and the effects it has on the student academic learning. Due to the limited literature on the topic of interest in Namibia, the literature was drawn from studies carried out in other countries.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is explained "as set of opinions, facts and the principles" on which the subject matter/issue or phenomenon under investigation is based; however, these terms are used interchangeably (Grant and Osanloo, 2015, p. 12). According to Grant and Osanloo (2015), theoretical framework is derived from the existing theories or facts in the literature that has already been tested and validated by other researchers and it is considered as generally accepted theory. On the other hand, Eisenhower, Baker and Blaucher (2007) concurred with explanations given by Grant and Osanloo (2015) by saying that conceptual framework is the researcher's understanding of how the research problem is best explored the specific directions the research takes and the relationships between different variables in the research study. Furthermore, Eisenhower et al. (2007, p. 205) described theoretical framework as "a structure that guides research study by relying on formal theory constructed using the established, coherent explanation of the certain phenomena and the relationships". In addition, De Voss, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport (2011) agreed with scholars above by indicating that theoretical framework determines which questions are to be answered by the research study and how empirical procedures are to be used as tools to answer these questions. Thus, theoretical framework may be considered one of the most vital aspects of the research process. From the foregoing

explanations of theoretical framework, it is clear that theoretical framework consists of the selected theory that underpins one's thinking with regard to how one understands and plans to research the topic of interest, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that provides the lens for analysing the data. It serves as the structure and support for the rationale of the research study, the statement of the problem, the purpose, and the significance of the study and the research questions. Without theoretical framework, the structure and objective of the study are unclear; this can be linked and attributed to the house without a plan (Grant & Osanloo, 2015). The attachment theory advocated by two prominent scholars-John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth was used as the framework or guide for this research study. The researcher postulates that this theory is based on the assumption, belief or central key point that a learner who establish and builds strong bond and connection with her/his parents at home, could obviously have positive working relationships with the teachers and other peers and they work hard to enhance their academic learning performances in the school environment.

This study is informed by the attachment theory, which was espoused by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's work, and Bowlby (1969) established the foundation for Ainsworth's Attachment Theory (Fraley and Spieker, 2003). According to Bowlby (1969) research studies in the teacher-learner's relationships and temperament led him to the conclusion that when school learners establishes positive relationships with a teacher in the school learning environment, it provides the necessary sense of security and foundation for future interactions to learner and with other learners in the classroom learning environment and it affects student learning positively. Bowlby added that those learners without such attachment, they could be less willing to take the risks and to learn new experiences that is vital to learning (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby further suggested that the parents should shape their learners personality and behaviour so that learners learn to develop positive relationships with teachers in the school environment that would enhance their academic learning performances. However, Harris

(2010) argues with Bowlby (1969), sentiments by stating that even if the parents try to bring up their school learners in a proper way, but the schoolchildren are under negative peer pressure, there is the likelihood that the bad peers could influence their personality and behaviour negatively. But if you take a school child heading down the wrong path and move him to a new school environment, such as a small sub-urban town, it is likely that he/she will get himself on the right track because he/she could be trying to fit in with a new peer group. Given this fact, it can, therefore, be concluded that parental nurturing is not what determines how a school learner turns out in the school learning settings. The learners/peers may have more influence on them than their parents may in the school learning environment (Harris, 2010).

Mary Ainsworth extended the ideas set forth by Bowlby (1969) in her studies further (Fraley and Spieker, 2003). Ainsworth moved step further by coming up with teacher-learner relationships situation, which forms attachment up into three categories types: for example secure, avoidance and resistance. The secure type is when a learner wants protection or comfort from his/her teacher in the school learning environment and consistently receives care in order to build positive relationships and has good classroom interactions with the teachers. The teacher is usually described as loving and affectionate in the school environment. The avoidance type is when a learner tries to pull away from his/her teacher or ignores her. The teacher is usually rated as rejecting the learner attachment behaviour. The resistance-type is when a learner tends to stay close to the teacher in the classroom learning situations. The teacher is usually inconsistent in their teaching and learning classroom cases. Therefore, this will result in negative teacher-learner relationships in the classroom interactions and it affects the learner learning negatively (Fraley and Spieker, 2003). Furthermore, Mcleod (2014) agreed with other scholars above by expressing and highlighting his opinions that the teacher-learner relationships situation has been found to have good reliability. This means achieves consistent results, as evidenced by study concluded in Germany, which revealed that 78% of the school learners were

classified in the same way at ages 1 and 16 years. Mcleod (2014), however, he further criticised the teacher-learner relationships situation on the grounds of the fact that it identifies only the type of attachment to the teacher. The school learner may have different type of attachment to the parent. This means that the teacher-learner relationships situation lacks validity, as it does not measure general attachment style, but instead an attachment action style specific to the parent.

2.2.1 Attachment Theory and teacher-learner relationships

Attachment theory explains how learners establish and develop some learning bond as well as connections, and how they formulated positive learning relationships with teachers to relate to each other in the classroom settings and organise their classroom learning interactions experiences with the teachers in order to enhance their academic learning in the school (Bowlby, 1969). Researcher believes that the central key point to this theory is the assumption or belief that learners' who establish positive learning relationships with their teachers view their teachers as secure base and feel safe when making mistakes in the classroom learning environment. They also feel more comfortable accepting the learning academic challenging classwork/tasks in the classroom setting necessary for improving their academic learning. O'Connor and McCartney (2007) stated that good teacher-learner relationships could even act as solution against the potentially adverse effects that insecure parent-learner attachment can have on the learners' academic performance in the teaching and learning classroom. Further, some studies on teacher-learner relationships (for example by Commodari, 2013) gave the attention to the ways in which learner-parent relationships resembled early teacher-learner relationships and interactions in the classroom learning situations. According to research by Wubbels, Den Brok, Van Tartwijk, and Levy (2012), the available theoretical frameworks that worked in the area of teacher-learner relationships was derived from the work of the parent-learner relationships. Additionally, Wubbels et al. (2012) said that studies on the teacher-learner

relationships employed the attachment theory to understand the relationships between the teacher and learner because they view the teacher-learner relationships as the extensions of the parent-learner relationships that connects in to build positive bond between learners and teachers in the school learning environment, and enhance students' academic learning in the classroom settings. Commodari (2013) also reports that the attachment theory has been used in some studies done by many researchers, for instance, DeTeso (2011) as framework for generating predictions concerning learners' relationships with their teachers in the school, especially during the pre-school and primary school years levels. This simply means that if a learner has positive relationships with his/her parents at home, it will be obvious that the learner could have positive relationships and interactions with teachers and other learners in the school learning environment (Commodari, 2013). Through their nurturing and responsiveness to their learners needs, the teachers serve to provide secure base for student learning in the classroom interactions, which provides the opportunities for learners to learn effectively about their academic and social surroundings (Davis, 2015).

According to Wubbels et al. (2012), the attachment theory has provided the strongest impetus for the work on the teachers' relationships with school learners in the school. Furthermore, according to this theory, the dyadic relationships between school learner and the teacher is a system in which learner experiences depends on various levels of positive effect and responsiveness to their basic school needs, with predictable and sensitive responses being associated with secure attachments and more arbitrary and insensitive responses leading to insecure attachments (Wubbels et al., 2012). Furthermore, Wubbels et al. (2012) went on to say that secure attachments are likely to foster the school learners curiosity and exploration of the school learning environment and it promotes good classroom interactions for teachers and learners, positive coping skills and mental representation of him or herself as being worthy of love and of others as being trustworthy in the school. Commodari (2013) argues with scholars

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views like Wubbels et al. (2012) above by expressing his sentiments that insecure attachments is believed to result in either wary or inappropriately risky exploratory behaviour in regulating learning challenges stress in the school classroom settings and in negative self-concepts to the learners. This in turn, results in situation whereby teacher-learner relationships and student academic learning will be affected negatively in the classroom-learning environment (Commodari, 2013). According to Krstic (2015), many studies on teacher-learner relationships have their roots in the attachment theory. Krstic, further explained that attachment theory is a system of behaviour aimed at establishing and maintaining closeness and contact teacher who is sensible and responsive to the learner's needs in the classroom learning and this builds positive learning relationships and interactions between the teachers and learners in the school classroom settings. As a result, the learners will develop and build positive bond and interact well with their teachers in the classrooms (Krstic, 2015).

Bergin and Bergin (2009) stated that attachment theory has two functions relevant to teacher-learner relationships and the effect on the student learning in the classroom setting: attachment theory provides feelings of security, so that school learners can explore teacher-relationships and interactions in the classroom learning freely; and attachment forms the basis for socialising learners with other peers and the teachers in the school classroom environment. Furthermore, they argued that learners might use their teachers as a "secure base" for exploring relationships and student learning, and for the same sort of emotional security that characterizes the sensitive and responsive learning behaviour in the classrooms (Bergin and Bergin, 2009, p.169). On the other hand, Howes, Phillipsen and Peisner-Feinberg (2000) pointed out that teacher-learner relationships appears to serve as regulatory function with regard to student learning and emotional development of relationships in the classroom environment, and therefore they have the potential to exert positive or negative influence on the student learning ability to succeed in their school academic work. Bergin and Bergin (2009) further argued with other scholars'

views above on attachment theory, by saying that not all teacher-learner relationships should be characterized as attachment, because they have some, but not all of the characteristics and fulfil some of the functions of attachment for teacher-learner relationships in the school settings (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Pianta (2006) found that using attachment theory as the basis for forming teacher-learner relationships and the effects it has on the student learning in the classroom-learning environment it offers some potentials for providing teachers with collaborative and more enjoyable ways/strategies of working with school learners in the classroom activities. Furthermore, the attachments that school learners have with their teachers can affect their future relationships including those with peers and other teachers in the school learning environment, and learners learning ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour and to learn about the school environment settings (Pianta, 2006). In the attachment theory, Watson and Ecken (2003) further suggested that within the school learners biological nature there is a need to seek nurturing relationships with their teachers, be cooperative and prosocial, and their socialization and development occurs with the "guidance and support of their teachers" so that learners are positively shaped and improve their relationships as well as interactions in the classroom settings with teachers. This might result in improved students' academic learning performances (Watson & Ecken, 2003, p. 280).

Graham (2015) shares same sentiments with researchers above by postulating that good relationships between school learner and teacher is well established in a desired school classroom learning setting. Therefore, attachment theory can be relevant and applied to classrooms interactions and learning situations for developing and building positive learning relationships in the school. Furthermore, Watson and Ecken (2003) suggested that attachment theory should change the prevailing view of classroom management by, (a) eliminating rewards for good behaviour and punishments for bad behaviour while still providing learners with some limitations, (b) using teacher-learner relationships as positive models for student learning

abilities, (c) focusing on the personal relationships between the teacher and students learning potentials, and (e) developing learning abilities, collaborative, and supporting partnerships with learners on their academic learning. Regardless of whether learners form secure or insecure relationships with their teachers in the school learning environment, teachers who form teaching and learning relationships, collaborative, and supportive learning relationships with learners have the potential to create positive desired learning environment and influence the student learning academic abilities positively and trust in self, trust in their teachers and in the school relationships with other peers (Watson & Ecken, 2003).

2.2.2 Shortcomings of the Attachment theory and its application to teacher-learner relationships

Whilst appreciating the acclaim and insights of the Attachment theory; nonetheless, the researcher was mindful of the criticism and the gaps in its application to teacher-learner relationships and its effects on the student learning. Shumba (2011) argues that proponents of the attachment theory were criticised for assuming that the outcome associated with secure parent-learner attachments should occur in the teacher-learner attachments. McLeod (2014) agreed with Shumba (2011), arguments by saying that although the teachers act in loco parentis within the school learning settings, it is not always the case that the bond and interactions between the teachers and learners are similar to the bond between the parent and learner at home. In this sense, the teacher-learner relationships are not an extension of the parent-learner relationships (McLeod, 2014). On the same note, Magwa (2018) argues that although the Attachment theory has been used as framework for generating predictions concerning the learners relationships with their teachers during the pre-school and primary schools years, it may not be the appropriate framework to provide the grounding base or an anchor for the understanding of teacher-learner relationships at the secondary school levels where most of the learners are adolescents or adults in the school environment (Magwa, 2018).

In the field of education, the Attachment theory is going through review or under review, due to lack of explanation convincing powers (Pan, 2016). Therefore, it might be reasonable to continue applying this theory in the field of teacher-learner relationships, given its limitations on analysing the teacher-learner relationships in the secondary schools. The Attachment theory is apparently too narrow to be used as theoretical framework basis for the teacher-learner relationships at the secondary school levels since in the adolescences/adult stage the attachment relationship with the teachers is different from the attachment relationships that is developed with the caregivers/parents in early childhood (McLeod, 2014). This is also confirmed by Berghaus (2011, p. 3) who pointed out that it is particularly unclear what implications and challenges early attachment interactions might have on the teacher-learner relationships at secondary level, and in the adolescents/adult stage who are likely to have experienced variety of the relationships types and the levels of the teacher-learner relationships with each other in the secondary school level.

2.3 Teacher-Learner Relationships in the school learning environment

According to Da Luz (2015), developing good and supportive learning relationships are needed to create the safe learning environment and gives learners confidence to work without pressure and become motivated to learn effectively in the school. Further, Da Luz said that specifically when school learners are exposed to positive emotional relationships stimuli, they are better able to recall newly learned information. Nielson and Lorber (2009) stressed that learners feel more motivated and stimulated to learn and actively collaborate with the teachers when the classroom is running in a safe and supportive learning environment. The relationships between the teachers and learners affect the quality of students' motivation to learn and classroom learning experiences (Nielson & Lorber, 2009).

Davis (2015) noted that school operating as socializing agents, teachers can influence learners social learning and intellectual experiences via their learning abilities to instil values in the school learners such as effective learning; by providing classroom learning contexts that develops learners learning abilities; and by addressing learners need to belong; and by serving regulatory function for the development of learning talents. Moreover, supportive learning relationships with teachers may play an important developmental role during the transition to and through secondary school level (Davis, 2015). Pianta (2006) concurred with researcher Davis (2015) by claiming that student learning abilities to connect with their teachers is one of the attributes or factors that can make great difference in the student-learning environment. Additionally, Pianta stated that when learners feel that their teachers are supportive, trustworthy people, they tend to create the connection with their teachers and start to see their teachers as someone who is there to protect them and give them all the chances to enhance their academic learning and behave well in the classrooms (Pianta, 2006). Myers and Claus (2012) supported the views of Pianta (2006) by postulating that good classroom learning environment is important because the social learning climate teachers established with learners will provide some opportunities to see themselves as capable, worthy and confident members of the classroom learning setting and make them feel part of the learning process. Additionally, Myers and Claus concludes that the classroom learning environment consists of three overarching dimensions: the learning abilities for learners to develop relationships with their teachers and peers, the extent to which learners participate in the learning activities, and the general structure and order of the classroom learning environment provided by the teachers for conducive teaching and learning atmosphere in the classroom (Myers & Claus, 2012).

Da Luz (2015, p. 389) also supported research findings done by Myers and Claus in (2012), by saying that "when teachers communicate with their learners in a supportive manner, they establish positive classroom learning relationships and interactions in which communication is

efficient and characterized by few distortions, effective learning behaviour, and clear message transmission". In the same line of thinking, Koplow (2002) proposed that effective teacher-learner relationships encourage greater confidence and classroom learning participation in much the same manner as sensitive teaching encourages greater sense of security and confidence. Furthermore, Koplow stated that learners need the confidence and motivation to learn, which could be stimulated by the relationships they hold with their teachers in the school learning environment. In the same vein, Da Luz (2015) agreed with Koplow (2002), views by saying that learners also perform well when they feel that the teacher is passionate about what they are teaching and pass security and confidence to the learners. Lastly, when teachers believe in the student learning abilities to succeed it motivates the teachers, because learners do not want to let the teachers down but it also makes learners believe that they are more capable than they even imagined (Da Luz, 2015). Thus, the researcher supports that teacher-learner relationship is very crucial in the school environment, because it helps learners to develop positive learning abilities and self-confidence. This also motivates the teachers to interact positively with learners and enjoying teaching in the classroom.

2.4 Effects of Teacher-Learner Relationships on Student Learning

According to Aina, Olanipekun, and Garuba (2015), maintaining positive classroom learning environment for student learning is the responsibility of an effective teacher. Further, Aina et al. (2015) stated that it was easy to distinguish between a teacher who is effective and the one who is not effective by the way, they manage their school classroom environment when the lesson is going on, and managing the classroom well for effective student learning is the task of an effective teacher. Orji (2014) concurred with some scholars like Aina et al. (2015) above by postulating that the ability of the teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behaviour of their learners is central to achieve good educational learning outcomes and foster positive classroom learning relationships. Oliver and Reschly (2007) also affirmed that effective

teaching requires among other things basic classroom management strategies and skills which include understanding of the nature of classroom learning environment, and stated that the teachers with problems in the classroom, have poor classroom management and ineffective in their teaching and learning classrooms, and this has negative effect on the student academic learning outcomes (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

Aina (2013) clarified that an effective teacher will always interact well with learners both within and outside the school-learning environment, because this is very important to enhance students' academic learning. Furthermore, Aina (2013) stated that positive interactions between teacher and learner in the classroom is very essential, because it contributes to good desired learning outcomes of learners and effective teachers ensure maximum interactions that will improve the students' academic learning. On the other hand, Orji (2014) reported that lack of adequate interactions between the teacher and learner is one of the reasons why Science learners do not perform very well in the classroom practical activities. Additionally, Orji (2014) also postulated that interest and achievement of learners lies within the teacher and students interactions and relationships in any given subject, and concluded by saying that creating learning environment that develops positive learning cultures with healthy interactions can motivate learners to channel their energies and desires to reach their learning subject's targets (Orji, 2014).

Knoell (2012) agreed with Orji (2014) views by expressing that teacher-learner relationships and interactions is very important in the learning environment, because it makes student learning successful. The relationships and interactions between the teacher and learner is essentially the fundamental basis for effective teaching and learning. Knoell also pointed out that good teacher-learner relationship may be even more valuable for learners with good behaviour and learning challenges in the classroom lesson discussions (Knoell, 2012). On the same note, Aina, Olanipekun, and Garuba (2015) found that most learners learn best in the

classroom where they are able to freely express their feelings. Moreover, Knoell (2012, p.12) supported and agreed with Aina et al., (2015) sentiments by saying that learning occurs best in the learning environment that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions and in which learner feels more appreciated, acknowledged, respected, and admired. Furthermore, Knoell argues that learners who enjoyed close and supportive learning relationships with teachers are more involved, works harder in the classroom learning, persistence in the face of difficulties, and cope better with the learning challenges in the classroom activities (Knoell, 2012).

According to Liberante (2012), the effect of teacher-learner relationships on the student learning has received significant attention, and the teachers do have vital role to play in determining and assisting students to achieve their learning success goals. Furthermore, Liberante states that in order for learners to be successful in their academic learning, a momentous teacher to learner relationships has been noted to be an essential element. On the same note, Liberante (2012) also pointed out that the complexity in learner to teacher relationships results into negative and poor academic learning on the learners (Liberante, 2012). According to Orji (2014), good quality teaching and learning is connected with positive student academic learning feelings and behaviour in the classroom-learning environment. In the same vein, Knoell (2012) agreed with Orji (2014), opinions by further explaining that good quality teachers are not termed just machines that are well greased or lubricated but they are known to be teacher emotional and enthusiastic individuals control who relate well with their learners and create pleasurable working relationships and positive classroom learning environment with creativity, challenges and happiness for student academic learning success (Knoell, 2012).

Moreover, Orji (2014) argues that the close emotional relationships between the teachers and learners have positive effect on the student learning. For instance, learners need to recognize the benefits of the classroom-learning environment as their home, even though the classroom

is away from the learners' home. The teachers' time devotion to learners' academic learning has been of great assistance in inspiring learners to attain their academic learning targets/goals and passing requirements of secondary school level (Orji, 2014). Nugent (2009) postulated that if teachers take the initiative to build supportive relationships with learners, they motivates learners to learn effectively and this will improve the student learning positively. In addition, Nugent also argued that further research suggested that teachers need to possess strong belief that creating relationships plays significant role in the process of motivation towards student academic learning. Orji (2014) noted that all the teachers familiarised with the effects they have on their students' academic learning, and strongly restore in mind their perception of learners towards them. According to Liberante (2012) teachers have to make sure that there are learners needs, not only academically learning but emotionally as well, and developing good classroom learning environment that channels positive learning cultures with healthy relationships that encourages learners to use their energies, desires and work very hard to achieve their academic learning goals (Liberante, 2012).

Hyun (2014) stated that in the event of providing good surrounding and strengthening the relationships with the learners, significant and positive teacher-learner relationships has been proven to have play an important role on the students learning success both academically and interpersonally. On the same note, Hyun goes on to point out that various researchers suggested that the existence of positive teacher-learner relationships and its effect on the student learning can assist learners particularly ethnic minorities to participate effectively in the classroom learning activities, have feeling of support and achieve better academically. Hughes, Luo, Kwok, and Loyd (2008) reported that based on attachment theory perspectives, which involves good and supportive teacher-learner relationships regarding teachers possible expectation to support learners security and confidence feelings in the school classroom learning environment. Hughes et al. (2008) found that secure connection of school learner with the teacher might be

looked at as resource that encourages learners to actively explore their atmosphere more effectively with their academic learning requirements in the school. In support of Hughes et al. (2008) sentiments, is Ijaduola (2014) who postulated that the type of relationships established between the teachers and learners must be warm and friendly in order to create an effective transformation of learning between them and subsequently learners' elevated academic learning performances. According to Liberante (2012) teacher positive relationships with the learners, results in the greater academic learning achievement amongst the learners in the classroom assessment activities. Shidler (2008) is of the opinion that investigating link between student learning and the teacher-learner relationships by using coaching teaching styles/approaches, it was found that learner academic performance would possibly be greater in the classroom of the teachers who related more extensively with different coaching teaching styles/approaches in the classroom settings. Furthermore, student learning is positively related with the application of staff resources, which is signified by teachers' coaching teaching styles/approaches (Shidler, 2008). In addition, Klem and Connell (2004) also point out that research studies demonstrated that learners with caring and supportive teaching relations in the learning environment with teachers revealed more positive attitudes towards academic values and portrayed positive academic learning involvement in the classroom activities.

On the other hand, Liberante (2012) argued that if teachers pursue positive relationships with the learners and adapt class work that allow learners to raise their own learning meaning, there are higher chances of learners behaving and participating effectively in the learning tasks thus having positive effect on the students' academic learning performance. Additionally, Christiansen (2002) also claimed that good behaving and hardworking learners in the school environment regularly cite good teacher and consider that as amongst the most positive components in the school environment lived life experiences hence creating reinforcing idea

that teacher-learner relationships literally have positive effect on the students' academic learning performance in the classroom. The researcher concludes that the learners will have lower chances of leaving the school when they relate and interact well with the teachers who are example minded, creative and person-centred rather than those who are negative and possess uncaring attitude to learners in the school classroom-learning environment.

2.5 Positive Teacher-learner Relationships from Teachers' views

Hussain, Nawaz, Nasir, Kiani & Hussain (2013) claimed that today's knowledge dissemination by the teachers is becoming an issue without the mutual understanding and the relationships between the teachers with learners. The literature done by Baker (2006) revealed that positive relationships between the teacher and learners is necessary, and is becoming fundamental in the holistic development learning of the learners. Further, Baker stated that many studies have pointed out the importance of understanding the development of high-quality teacher-learner relationships on the student academic learning outcomes in the classroom. Positive teaching relationships in the classroom learning environment is essential such as closeness like mutual respect, caring, and warmth-supportive interactions between the teachers and learners (Baker, 2006). According to Hussain et al. (2013) for learners who are at the secondary school level, positive teacher-learner relationships is connected to the learner's successful adjustment to the school academic learning and the school liking. In addition, Hussain et al. explained that such positive relationships is related to decreases in the learner's aggression in classroom settings.

On the other hand, Pianta and Hamre (2009) argued that the negative teacher-learner relationships in the secondary school level are associated with the learner's low academic performance in the classroom learning, the low school connectedness, and poor self-esteem. According to Hussain et al. (2013) although learners typically reported a decrease in their connectedness with the teachers in the secondary school level, the quality of these relationships

remain very important for the positive learner academic learning outcomes. Researcher agrees that learners with positive relationships with the teachers tend to have higher and good school academic performance than their peers with the negative learner-teacher relationships in the school learning environment.

2.5.1 Importance of Positive Teacher-learner Relationships in the Classroom

According to Khaleduzzaman (2017), relationships whether positive or negative in nature have proven to have profound effects on the quality of student learning in the classroom settings. The teacher-learner relationships should be established specifically for providing love, intimacy, reassurance of worth, tangible assistance, and guidance to learners in the classroom learning. Moreover, Sanders (2015) agreed with Hussain et al. (2013) views by emphasising that positive teacher-learner relationship which includes physical support, a sense of belonging, having sounding bond for emotional reactions and give opportunities to learners to express their opinions in the classroom. Researcher's sentiments is that, this will enables learners to say what they really think, provide reassurance of worth interactions with other peers, gives opportunities to help other learners, and validation and support for the way learners do things and interpret learning experiences in the school classroom. In addition, Lee (2016) further concurred with the views of Sanders (2015) by commenting that lack of positive teacher-learner relationships results in negative effects including depression, anxiety, and poor health in the student learning abilities in the school.

On the other hand, Khaleduzzaman (2017) argued that request for what contributes to teacher-learner relationships was undoubtedly producing long and varied list of responses. Khaleduzzaman further stated that the list might include teaching approaches, attitudes and commitments, but not be limited to teacher's knowledge of subject, pedagogical competence; instructional effectiveness and classroom management skills. In addition, Khaleduzzaman

(2017) said that the situation is further convoluted when considering whether teaching was an art or a science. Lee (2016) further supported Khaleduzzama 's views by postulating that the importance of the positive teacher-learner relationships has been brought to light in the seminal studies, and positive teacher-learner relationships was influenced by social interactions, interpersonal relations, and communication with learners and teachers in the school learning environment. Learners learn best in an environment that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions and in which the learners feel appreciated, acknowledged, respected, and admired by teachers (Lee, 2016).

On the other hand, Pieratt (2011) also shared more light on the phenomenon under discussions and agreed with Lee's sentiments by stating that positive teacher-learner relationships is very important because it affect the student learning process positively. Furthermore, Pieratt postulated that positive teacher-learner relationships is believed to greatly affect the classroom learning climate for learners positively, thus making it more conducive to student's learning. The researcher expressed his opinions by commenting that these relationships also provide an element of personalization, which can improve the learning experiences of learners in the school classroom. On the same note, McCombs (2007) agreed with researcher's views by saying that positive teacher-learner relationships could be used to motivate and engage learners in the learning process. In the current era of accountability for student, learning is intertwined in the discussion of the importance of positive teacher-learner relationships. On the other hand, Pieratt (2011) argues with other scholars like Lee (2016) by stating that if the researchers understand that positive teacher-learner relationships plays important role in the student learning process, the researchers then may also eventually consider how they affect such relationships between the two variables. This also raised the need for researchers to explore and carry out some further investigations on the phenomena intertwined in the discussions of positive teacher-learner relationships in the classroom settings (Pieratt, 2011).

2.6 Factors Affecting Teacher-learner Relationships in the school environment

According to Chen and Phillips (2018) teacher-learner relationships is a difficult concept; a number of research studies have revealed factors that affect the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the school environment such as attitudes, personality, poor communication, teaching methodologies, and teachers behaviour. These factors can be classified into three categories: attributes of teachers, teacher self-efficacy, and social-ecological factors.

Attributes of teachers: Chen and Phillips (2018) advocated that the quality of teacher-learner relationships was associated with teachers attributes such as educational level, teaching methodology, teacher-perceived stress, and self-efficacy. In addition, Chen and Phillips stated that a number of research studies have provided evidence that high teacher educational level, lower levels of teacher-perceived stress, and higher teacher self-efficacy are related to more harmonious teacher-learner relationships. Teacher educational level is considered a crucial factor and contributing to the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the school environment (Chen & Phillips, 2018). In addition, Choi and Dobbs-Oates (2016) supported the views of the two scholars above by stating that teachers attributes is caused by a meta-analytic study examining the relationship between teachers educational levels and teacher-learner relationships and student learning outcomes so that there is clear understanding between variables examined. Researcher agrees with the scholars above by saying that, it is vital to investigate the teachers' attributes in line with teacher-learner relationships for wide knowledge and clear understanding on how the variables affect each other in the school setting.

Choi and Dobbs-Oates (2016) reported statistically significant relations between teacher educational level and the teacher-learner relationships with a moderate effect size in the learning environment (Choi & Dobbs-Oates, 2016). This implied that teacher educational level influence the teacher-learner relationships and it affects the student learning in the school

environment. However, other researchers argued that learner-development related education and in-service training are better than teacher education level in predicting factors that affect the teacher-learner relationships in the school environment (Tout, Zaslow, and Berry, 2005). To increase the understanding of factors affecting teacher-learner relationships, researchers also have considered the role of teachers' work-related stress (Goelman and Guo, 2011). Furthermore, Goelman and Guo (2011) revealed eight factors related to teachers' stressors such as wages, working conditions, conflicting job descriptions, the lack of organizational support, educational backgrounds, employment histories, personality factors, and perceptions of learner-care work. Therefore, there is negative relationships between secondary school teachers' stress levels and the teacher-learner conflict in the teacher-learner relationships (Gastaldi, Pasta, Longobardi, Prino and Quaglia, 2014). In line with this finding, Pianta and Hamre (2009) reported that a high level of work-related stress in the teacher-learner relationships often leads to hostility and anger towards learners, especially when encountering learners with behavioural problems. Moreover, secondary school teachers who work with learners from lower-socioeconomic status (LSES) backgrounds are likely to experience high-stress level due to lower parental support, learner behaviour problems, and limited school financial resources (Pianta & Hamre, 2009).

Teacher self-efficacy: Theoretically, the teacher's self-efficacy in cultivating relationships with learners can be influenced by their relevant past teaching experiences of interacting with other learners in the classroom lesson discussions (Bandura, 2007). However, very limited research has explored the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher-rated teacher-learner relationships, especially in secondary schools. Gastaldi et al. (2014) indicated that secondary school teachers who score higher on self-efficacy scales tend to have closer relationships with their learners. In the same vein, previous research done by Bandura (2007) also suggested that learner's academic gains could be associated with teacher self-efficacy. For

example, Gastaldi et al. (2014) research studies done also found that there was positive relationships between secondary school learner's academic achievement in classroom assessments and the teacher relationship self-efficacy in the school environment.

Social-ecological factors: Pianta and Hamre (2009) found that social-ecological factors are embedded in the school learning environment and in the society; they may have directly or indirectly effects on the teacher-learner relationships. Pianta and Hamre noted examples of social-ecological factors in the school learning settings, which include relationships with teachers, and organizational support. According to Brunsting, Sreckovic, and Lane (2014) adopting ecological perspectives, teacher-learner relationships and teacher-parent relationships influence each other. Additionally, warm-supportive teacher-parent relationships are associated with closer bonds between teachers and the school learners (Brunsting et al., 2014). On the same note, it is unknown whether positive teacher-learner relationships may be the cause or result of positive teacher-parent relationships. Very limited empirical evidence suggests direct relationship between the teacher-parent relationship support and teacher-learner relationships, but ample research done by Brunsting et al. (2014) does indicate that this association may be mediated by strong teacher-parent support relationships.

According to Barker (2015) both the teacher and learner variables has an impact as well as influence the quality of the relationships in the school learning environment. Learners with externalising problems, those learners are mostly in need of buffering effects of strong relationships at high risk for conflict in the relationships with their teachers. However, Barker said that socially competent learners are capable of establishing and maintaining relationships, friendships, persisting with the challenging classroom activities, they communicate clearly and appropriately and shows positive learning interest in the classroom settings, learners also show good manners/attitudes, which promotes positive relationships with teachers in the learning environment (Barker, 2015). Furthermore, Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2012) concurred with

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Barker (2015) views by postulating that the teacher characteristics is also very important factors related to the relationships quality between the teachers and learners in the classroom learning. The stressful classroom conditions, the teacher-perceived class difficulty, and high teacher stress are associated with more negative teacher-learner relationships in the classrooms. Furthermore, Pianta et al., (2012) argued that the teachers who employed positive discipline techniques in the classroom settings tend to have more relationships that are positive with the learners in their care in the school. Additionally, the responsive teachers who are sensitive to the needs of their learners are often successful in building good relationships even with the behavioural problematic learners. In the context of emotionally supportive classroom relationships between teachers and learners, it is argued by scholars like Pianta et al. that the learners with behaviour problems do not show positive learning attitudes in the classrooms compared to their peers with good behaviour records to teachers (Pianta et al., 2012).

Sutherland and Oswald (2005) stated that both positive and negative relationships result from the interactions of the learner and teacher characteristics. Learner with positive teacher relationships has greater motivation to succeed in the classroom and they please the teachers. This motivation and good cooperative behaviour may prompt the teachers to spend more additional time and energy on the student academic learning success in the school environment. However, Barker (2015) claimed that if negative pattern of the learner behaviour and the teacher response are established, the learner-teacher interactions in the classroom might enter into self-reinforcing cycle of the behavioural and the relationships difficulties in the classroom settings. The significant efforts may be required to develop the positive relationships with the learners who demonstrates some challenging behaviour, and commonly these behaviours will result in the teacher by isolating the learner or engaging in the harsh interactions with the student in the classroom (Barker, 2015). On the same note, Sutherland and Oswald (2005) reported that harsh interactions or social neglect may prompt the learners to escalate the challenging behaviour in

the classroom learning, and this may create self-perpetuating cycle of dysfunction and negative classroom climate for the student learning in the school environment. The fact that the learner's behaviour and the teacher-learner interactions is very important in the teaching and learning environment, there is need for further intervention by school authorities in an effort to improve these classroom interactions for learners learning progress. Further, the relationships are based on the transactional processes with the behaviour of each party affecting the behaviour of the other (Sutherland and Oswald, 2005). On the same note, Pianta et al. (2012) added and supported the sentiments of above scholars by expressing that if learners' challenging behaviour decreases, the teacher will regard the learners more positively, thus it improves the relationships in the school learning environment. In addition, Pianta et al. (2012) stated that if the teacher go extra miles to enhance and create conducive classroom learning environment for learners with difficulties and behavioural problems, this would help and improve the teacher-learner relationships in the classroom. The detrimental effects of the poor teacher-learner relationships is coupled with the known risks of externalising behaviour in the learner, warrants intervention to change the dysfunctional patterns of the behaviour and interactions in the classroom learning. The interventions are the most effective ways when they target both partners in the classroom behaviour and interactions (Pianta et al., 2012). On the other hand, Sutherland and Oswald (2005) shared the same views with Pianta et al. by saying that it is essential to help the learners to develop some skills in self-regulation and appropriate behaviour, and assist the teachers in engaging in the emotionally supportive ways with their learners. Unfortunately, the individualised interventions are resource intensive and inefficient when significant proportion of young learners shows behavioural difficulties. Thus, there is a pressing need for universal training of teachers' programmes that can assist to enhance the learner's behavioural problems in the classroom, the teacher effectiveness, and the classroom atmosphere for the entire learners in the school learning setting (Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). Researcher agrees with some

scholars above like Pianta et al. (2012), and Sutherland & Oswald (2005) by saying that it is very important for line Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to ensure that teachers are well equipped, and informed about how to assist learners with learning behavioural problems in the classrooms, and continuous in-service-training be provided.

On the other hand, Fan and Wolters (2014) found that personal characteristic of both teachers and learners is one of the significant factors that affect the teacher-learner relationships and the student learning in the school environment. Further, the teacher-learner relationships plays positive role in establishing sound classroom relationships and interactions between the teachers and learners (Fan & Wolters, 2014). According to Varga (2017), the nature of teacher-learner relationships and classroom interactions affect the student academic learning. This is because the way teachers communicate in the classrooms, plays critical role in establishing positive relationship with learners in the learning environment. Teachers who do not use communication media appropriately and in different ways depending on the learners' classroom interactions are less likely to maintain positive relationships and will have more interactions that are negative in the school learning environment. The researcher concurred with Varga (2017) opinions by emphasising that teachers have responsibility to welcome all learners and create an air of respect between them so that more relationships that are positive can be developed between the teachers and learners in the school settings.

Jerome and Pianta (2008) said, it has been observed that learners who come from less economically and socially disadvantaged families are at risk of having poorer relationships with new teachers and other learners in the school learning environment, as compared to their counterparts who have good socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, learners who have poor relationships with their role models, such as parents, and other learners are likely to have poor relationships with their new teachers too. Varga (2017) agreed with Jerome and Pianta (2008) sentiments by adding that learners who have behavioural problems are more likely to

have conflict with their new teachers in the school. It is more difficult for teachers to build positive and supportive learning relationships with learners who misbehave and shows negative attentions towards learning in the classroom, because their intentions is to disturb the teaching and learning activities in the classrooms ((Varga, 2017). On the other hand, Skipper and Douglas (2015) reported that when a learner has positive relationships with the teachers in the classroom setting, it improves the likelihood of forming good relationships with the teachers in the future. The learners will feel a sense of belonging to the learning environment and security in the school environment. Skipper and Douglas (2015) further stated that learners who perform well academically have good working relationships with their teachers, because these relationships are developed in the school learning environment where the main objectives is to be academically successful. The researcher share the same views with Jerome and Pianta (2008) by saying that teachers like to work and assist learners who shows positive learning interest and establish good working relationships with teachers in the classroom learning environment.

Muyoyeta et al. (2018) found that the teacher's school attendance and absenteeism are important and crucial contributing factors that affect teacher-learner relationships in the school-learning environment, and teachers are the facilitators of the teacher-learner relationships in the classroom. Muyoyeta et al. further stated that teachers are mostly needed in the classroom in order for teaching and learning to occur and thus, teacher absenteeism is negatively affecting the teacher-learner relationships in the schools. Lebata and Mudau (2014) research findings on the factors affecting teacher-learner relationships and the student learning in secondary schools in Lesotho were supported by Muyoyeta et al. (2018) sentiments who said that higher teacher absenteeism negatively affects the teacher-learner relationships and student learning in the classroom settings. In the study carried out by Mwoombola (2001) on the effect of teacher absenteeism on the student academic learning performance in Windhoek Secondary Schools in the Khomas Education region, found that there are various reasons related to teachers'

absenteeism. These reasons include teachers sickness, death in the families, lies-fabricated and not real reasons, tiredness due to long trimester, lack of teachers commitments, teachers misusing or abusing government leave days, stressful working conditions, transport problems, and attending to workshops, and young teachers writing examinations during school time were among the reasons why teachers were absent from schools. This affects the relationships between the teachers and learners in the classroom-learning environment (Mwoombola, 2001). Gupta and Lata (2014) also reported another type of absenteeism where by teachers may be present in the school environment but absent in their classes or may be present in the classroom but may not be teaching on that day, and this may result in learners to be absent from school too. All these contributes to the factors that affect teacher-learner relationships on student learning in the school classroom (Gupta & Lata, 2014).

According to Gbore and Daramola (2013), teachers' attitude and interest are also factors that affect the teacher-learner relationships in secondary schools in particular. Teachers with unprofessional behavioural relationships may be bad example to the learners in the school learning environment. Furthermore, Gbore and Daramola pointed out that good or bad professional conduct on the part of the teacher goes long way to stimulate, influence, and encourage learners to develop positive or negative learning attitude in the classroom situations. The authors, Gupta and Lata (2014) further explained that demonstration of good professional teaching relationship probably builds up the potential in the students' learning abilities to manifest positive attitude to learning. The positive and effective relationships between the teachers and learners develops positive interrelationships with students' learning abilities in the classroom (Gupta & Lata, 2014).

2.7 Teacher-Learner Relationships Development and Contributions to Student Learning

According to Pieratt (2011), it is very important to understand how teacher-learner relationships are developed and affecting student learning in the school environment. According to Pieratt learners who are placed in positive learning environment are more likely to develop good relationship with their teachers. McCombs (2007) agreed with Pieratt (2011), opinions by adding that developing good relationship in the classroom-learning environment is very important, because learners are more likely to work hard and improve their academic performance in the subjects of the serious teachers who are teaching well and give learning opportunities to learners. Furthermore, McCombs stated that in a caring classroom environment, learners are pro-active in the lesson discussions and builds positive relationship with teachers, and other peers. This enables teachers and learners to show mutual respect for each other, create social responsibility, develop appreciation for diversity, develop emotional teaching and learning, and manage and resolve classroom conflicts with learners in the classroom (McCombs, 2007). According to the ecological living system, as suggested by McCombs (2007) classroom learning environment must be healthy learning environment that attend to the psychological –social –physical needs of the learners so that learners develop social skills and self-esteem to work and interact with teachers and other learners in the classroom learning. By developing this type of friendship in the classroom, the teacher is better able to connect with the learners on personal level, thus supporting teacher-learner relationships. These caring relationships can also be identified as communities of commitment (McCombs, 2007). Furthermore, Ancess (2003, p. 63) described the teacher-learner relationships communities as those that are characterized by "strong, caring ties that are analogous to family bonds". By developing communities that are committed to its members, teachers can develop bonds with learners that are similar to those shared within family. A sense

of unconditional caring within the classroom provides learners with hopes and sense of comfort and care that they often need to be successful in the classroom activities (Ancess, 2003).

Pieratt (2011) stated that positive classroom relationships are developed when learners feel a sense of teaching and learning support and trust from teachers in the school learning environment. Furthermore, Pieratt said that once these emotional teaching and learning support of learners such as written feedback on assessments, giving learning opportunities and teaching guidance, are met by the teachers, the learner is more likely to engage in a meaningful learning and relationships in the classroom environment. According to McCombs (2007, p. 75) in a positive classroom learning environment "the learners perceive themselves that they are cared for teaching and learning needs, respected, in a positive relationships with their teacher and the other peers, and that it is safe to make and improve their learning mistakes". Raider-Roth (2005, p. 34) agreed with McCombs (2007), sentiments by stating that " in a conducive learning environment trustworthy relationships can thrive and require learners to be free to make choices that reflect their learning interests, to disagree with teachers' perspectives, and to take risks with ideas that are new and not fully formed". Finally, in order for a learner to feel comfortable to take academic learning risks, they must feel as though they are in a safe space and will be accepted unconditionally (Raider-Roth, 2005). In the research studies carried out by Rimm-Kaufman (2015), findings reported that teaching methods that allow active participations of learners in the learning process is one of the powerful strategies for developing positive teacher-learner relationships in the school learning environment. Further, Rimm-Kaufman discovered that teachers who made more use of learner-centred teaching strategies, practices that consider individual learner's differences, was the appropriate teaching approach to use in the classroom learning. This teaching approach allows teachers to give learners the opportunities to participate fully in the teaching and learning process (Rimm-Kaufman, 2015). On the other hand, Pieratt (2011) agreed with Rimm-Kaufman (2015), views by postulating that the teachers should use

the teaching methods that facilitate opportunities for the learners to share their opinions and pre-knowledge on the academic work in order to develop positive bond between themselves and the teachers in the classroom learning. Additionally, Pieratt stated that although the relationships with learners can be established within four-walled room, the largely untapped setting of the great outdoors offers rich and rewarding relationship-building learning opportunities. Muller (2012) then concluded that teachers could for example; use the field trip method extensively to develop the positive relationships with their learners. The teaching strategies that display regard for the learners' perspectives and ideas are indeed a factor in the development of the positive teacher-learner relationships in the school classroom (Muller, 2012).

2.8 Effective Classroom Management in the School Learning Environment

According to Soo (2016), a vast amount of the literature in the area of teacher-learner relationships concerns has shown that maintaining positive working classroom learning environment is one of the greatest concerns for the many beginning teachers in the schools. Further, Soo said that these concerns fall under the vein of effective classroom management, an area that is undeniably central to the practice of the teaching and learning process. Jones, Jones and Vermette (2013) supported the views of Soo (2016) by stating that the nature of the effective classroom management itself is very difficult. As it involves the interactions and applications of various aspects relating to the classroom such as school rules, and the educational school policies, the characteristics of the learners, teachers, parents and the teacher-learner relationships, to name a few. Additionally, Jones et al. (2013) developed this complexity of the effective classroom management further by suggesting eight (8) categories relating to positive classroom management, bringing attention to the sheer number of effective and efficient strategies involved in the classroom management. These eight categories include the teacher-learner relationships, higher expectations for learners, non-verbal cues and teachers'

directions to learners in the classroom, the teacher consistency, the teacher perseverance, and the school wise consistency for the learner behaviour (Jones et al., 2013). It is thus important to recognise that effective classroom management is influenced by number of factors that arise from both within and outside the classroom context, and this complexity should be recognised when detailing issues regarding the effective classroom management. The researcher also concludes by supporting other scholars above like Jones et al. (2013) by emphasizing that every teacher should ensure that they manage their classroom-learning environment effectively by applying some good working classroom management strategies.

2.8.1 Implications and Importance of Effective Classroom Management

Classrooms are the places where the teachers and learners spend the most hours of their school working days interacting each other during teaching and learning process. As such, being able to maintain good classroom learning environment through positive management practices is very important for both the teacher and learners' academic performance outcomes. This notion is captured by Emmer and Gerwels (2006, p. 408) who said that the classroom management is very vital to the "task of teaching, and without good classroom management practices the teacher's job is much more difficult", especially in the secondary school classrooms. Furthermore, the literature by Friedman (2006) supported Emmer and Gerwels (2006) findings by stating that for the teachers, proper classroom management can have positive implications on reducing the teacher's stress in the classroom, and some studies have shown that this reduces the risk of the teacher boredom. In addition, Friedman postulated that not only are good classroom management practices important for the teachers in their classroom practice, they also have implications on the student learning, participations, and academic success of the learners' in the classroom learning.

Moreover, Emmer and Gerwels (2006, p. 408) pointed out that the implications of positive and negative classroom management for the learners, and the state that "well-managed classroom settings promote good teacher-learner relationships. It also promotes learners full participations and create some opportunities to learn; poorly managed classrooms dissipate learner's time and the attention, it reduces learning, and discourage learners' academic success in the classroom settings". In addition and support to these assertions, is Soo (2016) who stated that creating positive classroom learning environment, and applying effective classroom management strategies increases not only the learner's senses of belonging and it reduces disruptive behaviour in the classroom learning. It has also some implications on the teacher's sense of self-efficacy and the attachment to the learners (the teacher-learner relationships). Thus, it appears that the classroom management and maintaining positive classroom learning environment is very vital for both teachers and learners in a number of different respects. This is especially so given that classroom management is central to not only student learning but also the practice of teaching (Soo, 2016). Thus, also the researcher believes and agrees that it is making sense to say that teachers should be familiar with the various strategies for maintaining positive and effective classroom learning environment during the teaching and learning process.

2.8.2 Effective Classroom Management Strategies

Having outlined the importance and implications of the effective classroom management, this section will briefly review the overall literature on the types of effective strategies, actions, and guidelines, which the teachers can use and implement for effective classroom management in the classroom-learning environment. Firstly, by the research done by Evertson and Weinstein (2006) who stated that effective classroom management was seen to involve having the teachers carrying out what they call the five specific tasks of the effective classroom management:

"(1)The teachers should develop caring, supportive relationships with and amongst learners; (2) They should organise and implement the classroom rules in the ways that optimise the learners' access to learning; (3)They should use the teaching methods that encourages learners' full-participations in the classroom learning tasks; (4)They must promote the development of the learners' social skills and self-esteem; and (5)They must use appropriate teaching interventions to assist the learners with behavioural problems in the school learning environment" Evertson and Weinstein (2006, p. 5).

As these tasks shown, the effective classroom management involves using some strategies in creating structured, yet the stimulating and supportive classroom-learning environment that facilitates the student learning and the development, while also supporting both the teacher and students' wellbeing in the classroom settings. Similarly, Weinstein (2011) also proposes five guiding principles for effective classroom management:

These five guidelines principles include:

"1. Fostering self-discipline and personal responsibility. 2. Developing a positive learner-teacher relationship, implement participating rules, and using good preventing classroom rules and regulations. 3. Order must not supersede the need for meaningful learning rules. 4. Managing today's diverse classrooms requires the knowledge, skills, and predispositions to work with the learners from the diverse racial, ethnic language, and social class backgrounds. In other words, the teachers must become culturally responsive classroom managers. 5. Becoming an effective classroom manager requires reflections of hard work and time planning" Weinstein (2011, p. 5).

In comparison to Evertson and Weinstein's (2006) notions of effective classroom management, Weinstein (2011) extend effective classroom management practices to incorporate the recognition of diversity in the classrooms when implementing effective classroom management

strategies and planning actions. To further extend to the guidelines above, Evertson and Weinstein (2006) and Weinstein (2011) share the same sentiments, and both offer a number of strategies for positive and effective classroom management for teachers, based on their research on the perspectives of learners and the teachers on effective classroom management. Some of their strategies for effective classroom management include having teachers exercise authority without being rigid or punitive. For example (creating a safe and supportive learning environment for the learners, as well as setting clear limits for the behaviour in the classroom learning interactions), making learning enjoyable (i.e. to keep the learners involved in the classroom discussions, class activities, and to encourage participation in the academic learning and classroom lesson presentations), and creating a positive and supportive learning relationships with learners (i.e. a higher quality learner-teacher relationships).

2.8.3 Teacher-learner Classroom Interactions and influence on learners' academic performance

According to Louise (2016), it is not surprising that several studies have found significant value in the interactions between the teacher and learner in the classrooms. Furthermore, Louise explained that the role and interactions with the teacher is essential part of the learning experiences. The research on teacher-learner interactions has revealed that learners perceive interactions between themselves and their teachers as important influence to their academic learning performance and participation in the classroom settings, and to the quality of the teaching and their own learning. Additionally, Louise reported that the quality and quantity of the teacher interactions positively correlated to perceived learning, and those learners who felt that they knew their teachers, participated more actively in the group discussions in the classroom (Louise, 2016). On the same note, Putri (2014) agreed with research studies done by Louise (2016) by saying that classroom interactions makes the learners more participating in the teaching and learning process. It means that classroom interactions encourages learners to

be involved in the teaching and learning activities, and equally important, learners are not the only participant in the classroom interactions since the teacher is also a participant. In addition, classroom interactions help teacher-learners to share the information that they get from the materials at each other (Putri, 2014). In addition, Louise (2016) maintained that through the classroom interactions, the learning process among learners occur since they exchange their knowledge and understanding at each other. It means that classroom interaction makes the learners brave to share what they have known and learn at each other. Researcher agrees with scholars above by saying his views that it is vital for teachers to have good classroom interactions with learners so that they can communicate to each other, assist learners in classroom activities, and help learners to improve their academic performances.

According to Egeberg, McConney, and Price (2016) teachers have powerful influence in the classroom interactions between themselves and learners. While there are many factors that affect the teacher-learner classroom interactions, the research studies found these factors to be on the learners' behaviour and learning attitudes as a key component (Egeberg et al., 2016). Furthermore, Hattie (2003, p. 2) suggested that the answer to improve teacher-learner classroom interactions and learning performance of learners "lies in the person" (teacher) who gently closes the school classroom doors and performs the teaching act. The person who puts into place the end effects of so many educational policies, who interprets these policies, and who is alone with learners during their 15,000 hours of schooling. On the other hand, Egeberg et al. (2016) repeatedly stated that the teachers are described as providing, in their own personal styles and ways, the three protective factors for teacher-learner classroom interactions are as follow: caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for classroom participation and contribution in the classroom. The approaches used by teachers can provide set of best practices to guide our classroom interaction work. However, as with all the teaching practice,

it is often one's beliefs, about school learners, their needs, the behaviour they demonstrate, and the influences on that behaviour, which drive our actions (Egeberg et al., 2016).

Jones, Jones, and Vermette (2013) developed this complexity of teacher-learner classroom interactions, further by suggesting eight (8) components relating to positive classroom interactions, bringing attention to the sheer number of the elements involved in the classroom interactions. These eight components include teacher-learner relationships, high expectations for learners, non –verbal cues and redirection, teacher consistency, teacher perseverance, and classroom wise consistency for learner's behaviour. According to Henley (2010) while order in class is clearly essential, it was not the primary goal of effective classroom interactions, but teachers should serve the purpose in enabling student learning and the social and moral growth in the classroom interactions. Further, Henley identified classroom interactions as "essential teachers' teaching skills" in improving teacher-learner classroom interactions (Henley, 2010, p. 4), and he suggested that effective teachers should minimise misbehaviours to reduce interruptions and create good classroom interactions that allow for learners' expressions and sharing of knowledge experiences.

McDonald (2013, p. 20) is of the view that "teacher-learner classroom interactions involves teacher practical actions and instructional techniques to create pro-active learning environment that facilitates and supports learner's active participation in both academic and social and emotional learning". Furthermore, McDonald said that with the diverse backgrounds, interests and capabilities of learners, meeting their classroom expectations and involving them in meaningful learning dialogue required teaching techniques that will call for full learners' participations in the classroom. Jones et al. (2013) further stated that developing interactional learning environment enables learners to be involved in the meaningful activities that support and influence their learning performance, this interactional learning environment, was only truly attained when teachers understand their own interactions and their learners' participation

needs in the classroom activities (Jones et al., 2013). McDonald (2013) further his work outlined Positive Interactional Learning Framework (PILF), based on the current resilience, self-worth, and neurological research and the positive psychology, which highlighted the strengths that learners have and how, as teachers can draw upon these strengths in assisting all the learners to be fully involved in the classroom activities. The PILF offered a continuum of teacher's interactional classroom behaviours from the planning, preventative techniques, instructional design and ways to respond to learners' classroom behaviour (McDonald, 2013). Researcher concludes by supporting and emphasizing that when teachers learn to use communication skills effectively in the school learning setting, teachers will develop quality interactional classroom learning environment, which is characterised by positive teacher-learner classroom interactions.

2.9 Improving teacher-learner relationships in the school environment

The teacher-learner relationships are highly transactional with the behaviour of the teachers affecting and influencing the behaviour of the learners in the school learning environment, and the same process is occurring in the reverse (Sutherland and Oswald, 2005). In the same vein, Sutherland and Oswald said that bidirectional influences shape the behavioural and relationships trajectory of the teacher and learner in the classroom teaching and learning process. Further, learners who act out may be less rewarding to teach, such that they receive fewer chances to connect with the teachers at school and it reduces the individualised classroom learning opportunities (Sutherland and Oswald, 2005). According to Barker (2015), the teachers tend to avoid the aggressive and disruptive learners, and they focus their teaching efforts and positive attention on more prosocial learners in the classroom settings. They are more likely to reprimand the disruptive learners rather than redirecting their behaviour, and in turn, these learners are less likely to comply with the requests. This attention reinforces the appropriate school behaviour and further it motivates the learners to be involved in the teaching and learning

process, and it pleases their teachers. While most of the teachers are able to develop positive relationships with cooperative and compliant with the learners. The teachers vary in their teaching ability and willingness to work towards developing positive relationship with more difficult learners (Barker, 2015). However, Sutherland and Oswald (2005) argued that as discussed previously, large proportion of the prospective learners arrive to secondary school level with some more behavioural difficulties, thus placing them at risk of establishing negative relationships with the teachers in the classroom learning. Therefore, there is an obvious need to support the teachers and learners in developing good, low –conflict relationships with all the learners in the school learning environment, including those who may pose greater difficulties in building relationships with teachers (Sutherland & Oswald, 2005).

Furthermore, Barker (2015) postulated that many of the learner and teacher level traits that has an influence on the relationships are highly malleable; a number of research studies has indicated that intervention on either side of the relationships can produce positive teacher-learner relations results in the school learning environment. Since the interactions are reciprocal, the most effective ways or interventions will target both sides of the relationships, through the behaviour of both the teacher and learner for effective changes. According to Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2012) the social-emotional learning curricula, as discussed in the literature, it can assist learners in building and developing capabilities that will promote the positive relationships with the teachers in the classroom learning. Moreover, Sutherland and Oswald (2005) are of the view that since the teachers are the ones who are implementing the social-emotional learning curricula, and because the classroom atmosphere extends beyond the bounds of a social skills lesson. Thus, additional intervention is often needed to create an emotionally supportive classroom atmosphere, because the interactions are the most proximal variable through which relationships are developing, influencing how the teachers interact and relate to their learners can have the significant effects on the overall classroom interactions quality. In

addition, enhancing the teacher abilities to provide the emotional support is likely going to improve the quality of their social emotional teaching, which results in the corresponding gains in the learner's social skills (Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). The teachers starts the profession without the tools they need to form the positive relationships with the learners in the school learning environment. They need direct training in these social skills, which can improve their teaching abilities to effectively deliver the social emotional learning curricula, and manage learner's behaviour in pro-active manner that would avoid the hostility in the classroom teaching (Pianta et al., 2012). However, Sutherland and Oswald (2005) argued with Pianta et al. (2012) sentiments by expressing their arguments that the training alone has proved or proven ineffective in enhancing the teacher-learner relationships in the school learning environment, but workshops that are connected to didactic components such as lecturing teaching methods, discussions, and some practical scenarios are associated with the limited improvements in the teacher-learner relationships in the school.

Furthermore, Barker (2015) discussed and highlighted five strategies that could be applied in improving the teacher-learner relationships in the school learning environment as following:

- **Do not try to be their best friend**. While it is good to have positive relationship with your learners, you are the authority figure and you need to act like it to gain the respect you deserve. By trying too hard to be their friend, you send signal that it is okay to treat you as if they treat their friends. This is not what you want it may be hard to discipline the learners if they are used to the palling around with you as a teacher in the school. Then you need to set some boundaries and limitations with the learners in the classroom learning settings.

- **Do not be a taskmaster.** The authoritarian teaching style is one of the least effective ways according to most research studies carried out. If you are, too busy yelling or being stern, you miss out many learning opportunities to listen and earn respect from the

learners. No one really wants to be that teacher all the learners fear. Stick to your classroom rules, but do not be very inflexible, and then listen and try to understand the learners of what they are saying to you.

- **A little small talk goes a long way.** Greet your learners with a smile as they come into the classroom at the door and ask them how their day is going. This technique only works if you are sincere when you ask your learners, and make them feel like you really do care about them, and be available for learners to talk to you before school, during the lunch and after school working hours.

- **Smile at them and actually listen to what they say.** Making eye contact is the greatest way to show them that you respect them and their respect for you will grow as well. In an African way, teachers greets learners, ask them few questions, give them opportunity to express their views, and complains. When you are talking with the learner, put all other things aside such as marking learners' exercises books, and writing summaries on the chalkboard to let them know that what they have to say is vital to you, and you require the same amount of respect from every learner in the school learning environment.

- **Respect is reciprocal.** You may think that being the teacher automatically means the learners should respect you and your ways. This could not be further from the truth. While it would be ideal, you need to earn the respect of your learners just as you respect them if they earn it as well (Barker, 2015). Researcher concludes by sharing same sentiments with scholars above like Barker (2015), by expressing his views that teachers should relate well and interact with learners positively in the school-learning environment, be friendly, open-minded, accept criticisms and give learners opportunities to fully participate in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this will

enhance teacher-learner relationships in secondary school level, and improve the learners' academic learning in school activities.

The literature review shows the need for further research on what specific components of the teacher-learner interactions are essential to a classroom-learning environment in secondary schools in the Khomas Educational Region. This is the gap that this study will attempt to fill.

In the context of this study, it is necessary to state that positive teacher-learner relationships are very important because they can be used to enhance student learning in secondary schools. Understanding the positive effect, which teacher-learner relationships have on the students' learning and shedding more light on the importance of positive teacher-learner relationships in the secondary school, was the motivation for carrying out this study in the first place. In addition, this study sought to find out how secondary school teachers describe the process for building positive relationships with their learners and the strategies that can be applied to enhance the teacher-learner relationships and the effect on student learning in secondary schools in the Khomas Region.

2.10 Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework, which underpinned this research study. The chapter also reviewed literature related to teacher-learner relationships and its effect on student learning.

Chapter three presents and discusses the research methodology that was used in collecting and analysing the data from the participants.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was used to answer the research questions, and collect, and analyse the data from the participants' perspectives. The chapter describes the research design, the population, sample and sampling techniques, the research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis as well as the research ethics.

3.2 Research Design

Johnson and Christensen (2012, p. 275) explained the research design as an "outline, plan or strategy that is used to seek answer to the research questions of the study". This study employed qualitative research approach, which views human thoughts and behaviour in social context and covers wide range of phenomena in order to gain understanding and explore the participants' reasoning on the topic under investigation. In addition, Patton (2002) stated that qualitative methods are associated with words, language, and life experiences and refer to inductive, holistic oriented research methods. According to Best and Kahn (2014), qualitative research is defined as structured way of describing the life experiences and the meaning of the phenomenon investigated. Furthermore, Patton (2002) said that by utilizing this approach the researcher is able to comprehend and explain the meaning of what participants' experience during their daily lives, namely that of teacher-learner relationships and the effects on the student learning in this context. A qualitative research approach was used, as the study explored and described the perceptions of teachers and learners regarding the effects of their relationships on student learning at secondary school level in the Khomas Region (De Voss, Strydom, Fousche, & Delport, 2011).

On the other hand, Patton (2002) characterized qualitative research as meanings, concept, definition, metaphors, symbols and description of things. This definition clearly states that qualitative research contains all necessary instruments that can evoke recall which aids problem solving. Further, qualitative data instruments such as open-ended interviews questions or in-depth interviews, document analysis and observation notes were used to collect data from participants in this study. Guided by research questions the researcher adopted an explanatory case study design with descriptive and interpretive research orientation. Explanatory case study research design was used to examine the data closely both at surface and deep level in order to explain the phenomena in the data (Creswell, 2014).

Moreover, Patton (2002) argued that explanatory case study design provides distinctive example of real people in real situations, which enables readers to understand ideas more clearly. In this study, explanatory research design were used whereby the lived experiences of Grade 12 learners and teachers were explored through in-depth interviews. Additionally, Nshimyimana (2014) said that in-depth interviews are more suitable as the researcher is able to obtain rich information about issues that participants' might be reluctant to describe on the paper.

There are number of advantages in using explanatory case studies research. First, the examination of the data is most often conducted within the context of its use that is, within the situation in which the activity takes place (Yin, 2011). Further, Yin said that case study might be interested, for example, in the process by which subject comprehends an authentic text. To explore the strategies, the reader uses, the researcher must observe the subject within his environment, such as reading in classroom or reading for leisure. This would contrast with experiment, for instance, which deliberately isolates phenomenon from its context, focusing on the limited number of variables (Yin, 2011).

In addition, variations in terms of intrinsic, instrumental and collective approaches to case studies allow for both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data. Some longitudinal studies of individual subjects, for instance, rely on qualitative data from journal writings, which give descriptive accounts of behaviour. On the other hand, there are also number of case studies, which seek evidence from both numerical and categorical responses of individual subjects (Creswell, 2014). While Yin (2011, p. 25) cautioned researchers not to confuse case studies with qualitative research, he also noted that, "case studies can be based entirely on quantitative evidence".

The detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies not only help to explore or describe the data in real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations, which may not be captured through experimental or survey research. A case study of reading strategies used by an individual subject, for instance, can give access to not only the numerical information concerning the strategies used, but also the reasons for strategy use, and how the strategies are used in relation to other strategies. As reading behaviours involve complex cognitive processes, each reading strategy cannot be examined in isolation but rather in relation to other strategies (Creswell, 2014).

Despite these advantages, case studies have received criticisms. Yin (2011) discussed three arguments against case study research. First, case studies are often accused of lack of rigour. Yin (2011, p. 21) noted that "too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions".

Second, case studies provide very little basis for scientific generalisation since they use small number of subjects, some conducted with only one subject. The question commonly raised is "How can you generalise from the single case?" (Yin, 2011, p. 21).

Third, case studies are often labelled as being too long, difficult to conduct and producing massive amount of documentation (Yin, 2011). In particular, case studies of ethnographic or longitudinal nature can elicit the great deal of data over period. The danger comes when the data are not managed and organised systematically.

3.3 Population

Johnson and Christensen (2012, p. 218) explained the word population as "the large group to which the researcher wants to generalise the sample results", the total group that one is interested in. The population for this study comprised of 2 377 serving teachers and all Grade 12 learners in 47 Secondary Schools in the Khomas Region. The researcher chose Grade 12 teachers and learners because they had more lived experiences about the teacher-learner relationships and classroom interactions at secondary school level, as well as wider knowledge and understanding to answer the research questions for this study. Thus, they would provide rich information to answer the research questions for this study.

3.4 Sample and sampling procedures

A sample represents the selected participants from the population who partake in the study (Creswell, 2014). The sample for this study consisted of 10 serving teachers and 20 Grade 12 learners from two selected secondary schools in the Khomas educational region.

In this study, researcher made use of purposive sampling to select two secondary schools from the defined population. Purposive sampling was utilised to select participating schools by asking Khomas Regional Office to identify two secondary schools based on the following criteria:

One secondary school with hostel and day facilities, and another one without hostel facilities.

A good behaving secondary school between teachers and learner (for example good relations and interactions in the school learning environment and academically performing school), and an ill-disciplined secondary school where by teachers and learners do not conduct themselves accordingly, and academically under-performing.

Purposive criterion sampling procedures were applied by asking the principals from two selected schools to identify and select five Grade 12 teachers who knew positive teacher-learner relationships and five Grade 12 teachers who thought negative teacher-learner relationships in each selected secondary school by consulting and contacting Khomas regional professional performance evaluation.

Learners were selected by asking their subject teachers to identify 10 learners who related well and built sound classroom interactions with teachers and other learners. Another Ten learners who had behavioural problems, and did not actively participate in class activities formed the sample of this study.

3.5 Research Instruments

The interviews and observations were applied to collect data from the sample for this study. Cohen and Morrison (2011) defined an interview as flexible tool for data collection, which enables multi-sensory channels to be employed in the process, such as verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. On the other hand, Burns and Grove (2011) explained that observation as notes about descriptions of events experienced through watching and listening in the natural setting. The Grade 12 teachers were interviewed individually for 35-45 minutes, and focus group discussions, which involved ten learners in the group, were held while classroom observations three times per subject teacher were conducted during the data collection period.

Interviews with teachers had 10 open-ended questions. Individual interviews were conducted with ten selected Grade 12 teachers from the two schools, and focus group discussions with ten selected Grade 12 learners from the two selected schools. Permission was requested to tape record interviews from the participants. The researcher finds this type of instrument more suitable and effective way to collect the data from teachers and learners as the goal was to explore teacher-learner relationships issues, and face-to face individual interviews are more private and minimize the chances of self-conflict, which are inevitable within focus group discussions (Burns and Grove, 2011).

A checklist for classroom observations was used to keep record and write down notes about the physical classroom environment, teacher-learners' classroom participation and interactions in the classroom. These are notes written about the descriptions of activities, events and physical objects experienced by the researcher through watching and listening in the classroom settings (Creswell, 2014).

3.6 Data collection procedures

The interviews and observations were used to collect data from the sample in this study. The researcher made appointments with all research respondents and presented them with the letter from the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, as well as from the Director of Education for Khomas Region; officially permitted the researcher to collect data (referred to appendices D & F). In addition, the researcher orally briefed all participants about the nature and purpose of the study.

The researcher further made appointments to set time for the interviews. Individual interviews were carried out with 10 Grade 12 teachers from the two selected schools and the focus group discussions with 10 Grade 12 learners in each school. Classroom observations were done three times for each subject teacher.

The researcher interviewed each participant at agreed upon time and preferred venue. Each interview lasted between 35-45 minutes. Furthermore, all interviews were tape recorded in order to capture the information from the participants. These were later transcribed verbatim.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the reduction and displaying of the data, verification and drawing of conclusions (Burns and Grove, 2011). The researcher used thematic content analysis, and inductive approach to qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data obtained from open-ended individual interview questions with teachers and focus group discussions with learners, and classroom observations notes were analysed by using thematic content analysis. Johnson and Christensen (2012) stated that thematic content analysis allows the researcher to organize the data into themes, sub-themes, categories or patterns from which conclusions can be drawn.

Prior to commencing with the actual data analysis, all interviews were first transcribed and then the researcher repeatedly read the raw data in order to get an overall understanding of the responses from the participants' point of view.

The researcher identified broad themes by writing down short phrases, ideas or concepts that stood out while reading through the raw data and these served as labels for sections of the data. Thus, the themes that emerged from this process were gradually grouped to provide rich and deep characterization information of teacher-learner relationships and the effect on student learning at secondary school level in the two selected secondary schools. After finishing with coding, the researcher assembled the data belonging to each category and performed preliminary analysis. Where it was necessary, the researcher recoded the existing data (Creswell, 2014). The following steps below were used in analysing the data:

- The researcher read large bodies of data text and break down them into smaller meaningful sections/units in the form of sentences.

- The data were read repeatedly for several times in order to get the sense of what the data are saying while writing down the main facts/ideas on the borders for grouping purpose.

- Possible grouping were identified and then each piece of data was categorised according to research questions.

- At the end, the investigator integrated and summarised the data (Creswell, 2014).

3.8 Research Ethics

Johnson and Christensen (2012) stated that for the protection of all research participants from potential harm, there are ethical and moral issues, which must be addressed before any research, is carried out. Permission to carry out research study makes the research creditable and possible to conduct it, and researcher need to secure the approval of the research participants prior to conducting their studies. To ensure that ethical issues were adhered to in this research, ethical clearance certificate was first sought from the University of Namibia's (UNAM) Research Ethics Committee. Thereafter, a letter was sent to the Executive Director in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, to the Director of Education in the Khomas Region, Inspectors of the different circuits and Principals of the two selected secondary schools requesting permission to conduct the research (see appendices C & E).

According to Yin (2011) informed consent is an ethical requirement, which demands that the participants should be given the opportunity to choose whether to participate or not in the study after receiving the full information about the benefits and the risk of participating. The participants received full information about the purpose and objectives of the study, to enable them to make informed decisions whether to participate in the research. They were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study anytime. All participants willingly agreed to take part in the study.

Confidentiality indicates to the researcher's ethical obligation to keep the participants' identities and responses private. This means that no one has access to the participants' data or names and that no one can match the research information with that of a participant (Matthews and Ross, 2010). The information provided by the respondents was treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The teachers and learners' names did not appear on the research instruments or in the final report. Patton (2002) in any research studies, the participants should be protected from any physical, social, emotional and spiritual harm or from the potential harm of any nature. The study did not in any way harm the participants either physically or psychologically.

Burns and Grove (2011) states that the researchers should report and share their findings in a complete and honest manner, without misrepresenting what they have done or intentionally misleading others about the nature of their findings. Finally, the researcher promised to share the research findings with the Executive Director of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, as well as with the Director of Education for Khomas Regional Office and teachers in the Khomas region upon completion of this study.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the research design and methods employed to collect and analyse the data from the participants' perspectives.

The following chapter presented and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research results from the individual interviews with 10 Grade 12 teachers as well as 20 focus group discussions with Grade 12 learners and classroom observations in the two selected secondary schools.

4.1 Data presentation

Five themes emerged from the analysis of the raw data. These themes are explored in detail for finding answers to the research questions.

4.2 Biographical information of the participating teachers

4.2.1 The gender

A total number of 10 teachers (five males and 5 females) participated in the study.

4.2.2. Qualifications

The teaching qualifications of the (10) teachers in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Qualifications of the participating teachers

Qualifications	Frequency
Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD)	1
Bachelor Education Degree (BED)	8
Masters of Education Degree in English (MED)	1

Total	**10**

Table 1 shows that eight teachers hold BED, one had BETD and another one had a Masters of Education Degree in English. This shows that more teachers had BED in the two selected participated secondary schools.

4.2.3 Teaching experiences of the teachers

The teaching experiences of the participating teachers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The teaching experiences of the participating teachers

Numbers of years	Frequency
0-5	3
6-10	1
11-15	3
16-20	2
21-25	1
Total	**10**

Table 2 shows that three teachers had between 0-5 years, another three teachers had between 11-15 years of teaching experiences in their teaching subjects. Two participants had teaching experience of between 16-20 years and one had between 6-10 years and the other one teacher had between 21-25 years of teaching experiences. Based on these research results/findings, it can be concluded that six teachers had more teaching experiences than others did.

4.2.4 Subject (s) taught by the teachers

The different subjects taught by the teachers are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Subject (s) taught by the teachers

Subjects' Fields	Frequency
Languages	3
Sciences	3
Social sciences	2
Commerce	2
Total	**10**

Table 3 shows that three teachers were currently teaching the languages subjects and another three were teaching sciences subjects. Two teachers were teaching social sciences subjects and another two commercial subjects. This study results shows that more teachers who had been interviewed were from the languages and sciences subjects.

4.2.5 The age groups of the teachers

The age groups of the teachers in this study are given in Table 4.

Table 4: The age groups of the teachers

Age group in years	Frequency
Under 35	5
Between 35-40	2
Above 45-60	3
Total	**10**

Table four shows the age group of the teachers who participated in this study. Five teachers were under 35 years old, two were between 35-40 years and three teachers were above 45-60 years old. This study results shows that the majority of the teachers interviewed were young.

4.2.6 The average number of learners in the two selected secondary schools

The teachers were asked to indicate the average number of learners in their classrooms. Their replies are given in Table 5.

Table 5: The number of learners in different subjects

Number of learners	Frequency
Less than 25 learners	2
26-30 learners	2
31-35 learners	2
36-40 learners	4
More than 42 learners	0
Total	**10**

According to table 5, four of the teachers indicated that the average number of learners in their classrooms ranged between 36-40 learners. Further, Table 5 revealed that two of the teachers had less than 25 learners, two others had between 26 to 30 learners in their class while another two had between 31-35 learners. Based on this study results, it can be concluded that no classes had more than 42 learners in both two selected secondary schools participated in this study.

4.3 Theme 1: Teachers and learners' perceptions of the development of teacher-learner relationships

It seems that both teachers and learners have common understanding on the development of teacher-learner relationships. Three teachers had expressed their views on the theme above and stated these views:

Teacher A: Teachers should encourage the learners even when they are giving wrong answers in the teaching and learning discussions. They should involve all the learners in the lesson activities. Know their names and tell them that they can do it and pass with good marks.

Allow the learners to discover and figure out some problems and give them the opportunities to try and solve the problems in the classroom.

Teacher B: Teachers should appeal to the learners' interest, and give them the chance to attend to outside classroom activities. Speak to the learners with respect, and involve your learners in the teaching and learning. Show some trust to your learners and monitor unintentional behaviours in the classroom.

Teacher H: Teachers must motivate the learners to set their subject targets as well as by positively influencing them to achieve their goals. They should guide and advise them to study very hard and achieve their expectations. To encourage them to have positive thoughts in their studies and act responsibly in the classroom.

On the same note, two Grade 12 learners presented their opinions as follows:

Learner 2: By showing respect to teachers and dignity being diligent and smart learners, and endure what the teacher is telling you to do, and to be always a good behaving learner in the class.

Learner 20: I for one firstly believe that they should be respect between the individual learners and teachers, learners should follow the rules of the classroom, and engage in the class discussions, conduct themselves in a respectable way. The teachers must have strong world ethic and try to adopt different teaching methods according to the type of learners they are dealing with in the classroom.

John Bowlby aligns this to the attachment theory and Mary Ainsworth's work (1969) which is based on the assumption that a learner who have positive connections with his/her parents is likely to form good working relationships with the teachers and other learners at school. Further, Fraley and Spieker (2003, p. 387) state that in Bowlby's research studies about the learner's development learning and temperament led him to the conclusion that when school learners

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develop a close relationships with a teacher, it is obviously that the learner could build positive classroom relationships with other teachers and peers. Thus, this could provide the necessary sense of security and foundation for future interactions to a learner and with other learners in the classroom-learning environment and influence student learning positively. According to Pieratt (2011), learners who are placed in a positive learning environment are more likely to develop good relationships with their teachers. McCombs (2007) added that developing good relationships in the classroom-learning environment is very important because learners are more likely to work hard for the teacher that they know and like. From the study findings, it is clearly that developing positive teacher-learner relationships is vital and improves student academic performance in the school environment. Based on the views above, it can be interpreted that relationships development between the teachers and learners is influenced by their interactions in the learning environment. The teachers should have open communication with learners and respect learners' dignity in the school. According to researcher, study findings revealed that some teachers work hard to create good learning environment for learners and motivates them to do their best in the schoolwork. This result in learners to feel connected, respected and valuable in the school environment. Further, this will make learners to develop positive relationships with teachers in the school. The researcher agrees with teachers' opinions by emphasizing that the teacher can only develop good relationship with school learners, if he/she builds and establish close bond as well as positive connections in the classroom learning. Researcher is of the view that relationships development between the teacher and learner in the school is based on the teacher's interactions and language usage in the classroom learning settings.

The following emerged as the sub-themes on this research question from the individual interviews with subject teachers and focus group discussions with grade 12 learners of two selected secondary schools; participants' understanding of positive teacher-learner relationship,

ways used to develop positive relationships with learners in the classroom, and types of relationships teachers engage in with learners in the classroom.

4.3.1 Participants' understanding of positive teacher-learner relationship

The majority of all participants shared the same understanding of what is positive teacher-learner relationship. During the interviews with teachers, three subject teachers expressed their views and understanding on the theme as follows:

Teacher F: I understand positive teacher-learner relationships as the relationship, which is based on teaching and learning atmosphere. Where by the learners want to feel listened to, valued, nurtured and looked after, and it is your role as the teacher to provide them with that love of caring. The teacher is in a position of authority and power, and the influence of a teacher can play a significant and consequential role in the lives of the school learners they teach.

Teacher G: Is when the teacher and learner are working together to achieve a certain goal, in order for learners to pass a certain subject they should always be positive, in terms of time on the task, respect their teachers and one another and listen and follow what they are being told by teachers. The teachers should always provide conducive learning environment to the learners in many ways.

Teacher I: Being a positive teacher towards learners, I should not be a negative teacher. Being polite, good, understanding them, treat them with respect and support them when they do not understand anything. A positive teacher-learner relationship is a good relationship between a teacher and the learners. When they have mutual respect for each other in the teaching and learning classroom, understanding and good communication in the classes.

During the focus group discussion with Grade 12 learners from two selected secondary schools on the same theme two learners said:

Learner 8: A relationship in which both the learners and teacher are willing to learn from each other. There should be no negative tension that occurs between a learner and the teacher. It is the general positive understanding between the learner and teacher, communication wise and building a friendly environment for both teachers and learners.

Learner 7: What I understand by positive teacher-learner relationship is the good connection between a learner and the teacher. The connection must be good to the point where by a learner can ask anything related to the previous topics discussed in the classroom.

These views above seem to support Bajaj's (2009) understanding of positive teacher-learner relationship that referred to it as when teachers and learners talk to each other with respect and use appropriate language, and work together in the classroom. On the same note, Varga (2017) referred to positive teacher-learner relationships as bond and connections that include the teachers who think about their classroom practice and search for ways to enhance it. These teachers give learners the authority and choice in the classroom environment. These educators make their learners feel a sense of belonging in the learning settings (Varga, 2017). From the study results above, it is also clearly that both teachers and learners have good understanding of positive teacher-learner relationships in the school. They have explained positive teacher-learner relationships as close bond, interactions and teamwork in the learning environment. Based on this study findings, researcher found that both teachers and learners had common understanding of what was meant by positive teacher-learner relationship by aligning it to the same central key-words i.e. strong ties, mutual respect, good communication, conducive learning environment, and respect and among many others. The positive teacher-learner relationship is the teaching and learning that invites both teachers and learners to be active participants in the classroom. Further, a strong bond, interactions and good communication for conducive learning atmosphere.

4.3.2 Ways used to develop positive relationships with learners in the classroom

The teachers had interesting views on this theme. Three of the teachers had this to say:

Teacher D: Every teacher has his/her own boundaries that you set in order to protect yourself, but at certain points, you will have to loosen your walls and allow the learners inside of your walls to certain extend. By giving personal experiences as an example, it gives the learners a platform to get to know you and that you are a normal human being and they can relate to you very well. Teaching with enthusiasm and passion and displaying a positive attitude. Also treating my learners with respect and finally, I believe in showing interest in my learners lives outside the classroom.

Teacher C: By praising each attempts, and encourage participations in the classrooms. By acknowledging, each wrong attempts and give them some feedback or written corrections.

Teacher E: By trying to engage and involve them in the lessons at all the times, by willing to listen to everything they say even sometimes it is not academic issues. By showing them that you care and constantly give support, bring the learners more closely and it positively influence our relationships in the classroom.

Two Grade 12 learners expressed different arguments on this theme during the focus group discussions:

Learner 9: When teachers are in the class teaching, the learners must listen very well. The learner must obey the classroom rules, and whenever the teachers asks questions, the learners should answer and she/he must ask questions where they do not understand, learners should always show good examples to others. The learners must always wear properly in order to be well mannered when there are in the class, and always smile in the class in order to develop some ethical behaviour in the class.

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Learner 18: The positive relationship is developed when learners obey and follow the classroom rules that are set up by the teacher. In addition, learners have to participate when the teacher is asking questions in the class in order for the learning environment not to be negative. The teacher should also have to socialise with their learners in a positive way in order to create and build a strong bond between them.

Pieratt's (2011) findings seem to support the views expressed above in that he pointed out that positive classroom relationships are developed when learners feel a sense of support and trust from the school environment. According to Pieratt once, the teachers meet these positive emotions relationships, the learners are most likely to engage in meaningful positive learning relationships in the classroom with the teachers. Learners' views above seem to be supported by McCombs's (2007, p. 75) who notes that in a positive learning environment "the learners' perceive themselves that they are cared about, respected, in a positive relationships with their teacher and the other peers, and that it is safe to make and improve their learning mistakes".

Rimm-Kaufman (2015) reported that research studies have established that teaching methods that allow active participations of learners in the learning process is one of the powerful strategies for developing positive teacher-learner relationships in the learning environment. Further, Rimm-Kaufman found that learners in the school learning environment mostly love teachers who made more use of learner-centred teaching approach, to actively involve learners in the classroom learning. In order to make relationships strong and positive between the teachers and learners, the teachers should give learners the opportunities to participate fully in the teaching and learning process (Rimm-Kaufman, 2015). Researcher is of the same views that, some good ways on how to develop positive relationships with your learners in the classroom is to respect their rights and give them supporting authority to address their classroom problems/issues. In the same line of thinking, researcher concludes that the appropriate ways

for teachers to develop positive relationships with learners in the classroom is to involve them in the classroom lesson discussions and formulate classroom rules together.

4.3.3 Types of relationships teachers engage in with learners in the classroom

Four teachers made the following comments on the above aspect:

Teacher G: A positive relationship where by learners knows that when they do something good you praise them and when they do something wrong any punishment can follow the wrong behaviour, but nevertheless they should always know their limits that you are the teacher and they are the learners in the classroom.

Teacher I: A positive one, I always create one. I let them express themselves, and ask them a bit about their background, motivate them and encourage them to focus on their studies.

Teacher J: Teacher learner positive relationships, and friendly towards learners, helpful and caring them in the classroom.

Teacher C: A positive peer learning, the teacher uses the fast learners or the students who grasp the concept to explain to the others in the classes. A positive advisory relationship, the teacher advice and encouraging learners, even when they find the work tough to handle.

Three learners commented thus on the same theme:

Learner 18: Positive relationship, because our teachers most of them motivate us, and they also look and care out for us, as if they are our second parents when we are at school. They also try to create open communication especially in cases when we are in trouble and you do not know whom to talk too, we can always go to them for help.

Learner 19: Good relationships (a positive one). I always do my homework in order for the teacher to have hope and trust in me in the class. The teacher always understands us as learners, and they punish us whenever we do something very wrong and this is good,

because we will learn a lesson that we cannot repeat it again. The teachers always shows good example to us so that we can follow and we do well in the school and in the community in general.

Learner 8: Positive relationships occur when you have a good performance; however, negative relationships will take place when you are not in good understanding with your teacher in the class. Sometimes positive and sometimes it is negative, because the teachers are sometimes answering the learners with an attitude in the class.

According to Khaleduzzaman (2017), relationships whether positive or negative in nature have proven to have profound effects on the quality of student learning in the classroom. Further, Teachers and learners opinions above seem to be supported by Sanders' (2015) who found that positive teacher-learner relationships which include physical support, a sense of belonging, having sounding board for emotional reactions and opinions, being able to say what you really think. Providing a reassurance of worth, opportunities to help other learners, and validation and support for the way learners do things and interpret learning experiences in the school classroom. It is also well explained that the types of relationships teachers engage in with learners is positive in nature, because teachers need to create conducive learning environment and motivate learners to work hard and improve their academic performance. Based on the teachers and learners views above, the researcher argues that it depends on the individual teachers; some will be engaged in a positive relationship with learners in the classroom, if learners are behaving well, and other teachers will be in negative relationships with learners who are not conducting themselves according to classroom rules. Based on these findings, researcher concludes that positive teacher-learner relationships results in learners to develop strong self-esteem and positive learning ability in the school environment.

4.4 Theme 2: Factors affecting teacher-learner relationships and interactions in the classroom

The above Theme 2 regarding the factors that affect the teacher-learner relationships and interactions in the classroom identified two sub-themes, which include the factors contributing to the quality of teacher-learner relationships, and effects of the factors on the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the classroom.

4.4.1 Factors contributing to the quality of teacher-learner relationships

The teachers had expressed different views on the sub-theme above, they argued that it was important to review and look at the factors that affect the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the classrooms, because they have some effects on such relationship. A number of studies have revealed factors that affect the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the school environment such as attitudes, personality, poor communication, teaching methodologies as well as behaviour and many others. The views of four teachers are given below:

Teacher C: Teaching methods employed by the teacher in the teaching and learning sessions, for instance learner-centred approach. Unwillingness of learners to participate in the classroom lessons and the interest in the subject.

Teacher B: The way the teachers conduct their classes, and behaviour of the teacher and learners in the classrooms. Lack of interest among the learners, and the teacher's attributes. The level of education can affect the teaching and learning process to take place effectively. Lack of teaching and learning resources can also limit the lesson discussions in the classrooms.

Teacher A: Mutual respect between the teachers and learners in the classrooms affects them positively. The teacher should act as a facilitator and the learners act as participants in the lesson classroom discussions and this has a positive effect on them. Intrinsic motivated

learners, self-motivated learners are not only learning positively, because of the teachers'

presence but it is because of high self-esteem and self-motivation they have developed,

as well as employing learner centred teaching lesson approach.

Teacher E: To have good subject content knowledge, and create an environment of trust and

caring. Listening to the learners' contributions, and pointing out the learners that might

have some special needs and figuring out the appropriate assistance that they might need.

On the other hand, some learners had this to say on the same sub-theme:

Learner 2: The contributing factors are poor classroom learning environment and ineffective

listening skills, poor communication, and lack of dignity and respects as well as bad

language usage towards learners in the class.

Learner 5: I show respect to all my teachers, and stay away from trouble in the school

classroom, and remain dedicated and hardworking, I always show interest in my

schoolwork so that the teachers like me.

Learner 6: Poor performance at school, when your teacher for example calls you stupid you

will believe that you are stupid and you will not put more efforts in your schoolwork.

Lack of respect some time teachers do not respect the learners, but they want learners to

respect them. Teachers sometimes come from their homes with stress and later they want

to put their stress on the learners. Some teachers have a lack of communication skills with

their learners in their class.

The views above seem to be supported by Barker's (2015) who argues that both the teacher and

learner variables influence the quality of the relationships in the learning environment. Further,

learners with externalising problems, those most in need of the buffering effects of strong

relationship are at high risk for conflict in the relationships with their teachers. Pianta, Hamre,

and Allen (2012) supported views of Barker (2015) by stating that the teacher characteristics

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are also very influential factor related to the relationships quality between the teachers and learners in the classroom learning. Further, stressful classroom conditions, the teacher-perceived class difficulty, and high teacher stress are associated to negative factors affecting the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the classrooms. Lebata and Mudau (2014) in their research carried out on the factors affecting teacher-learner relationships and student learning in secondary schools in Lesotho agreed with Muyoyeta et al. (2018) who said that higher teacher absenteeism negatively affect the quality of teacher-learner relationships and student's learning in the classroom. Muyoyeta et al. (2018) found that the teachers' school attendance and absenteeism are important and crucial contributing factors that affect the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the learning environment, and teachers' were the facilitators of the teacher-learner relationships in the classroom. Muyoyeta et al. further stated that teachers are mostly needed in the classroom in order for teaching and learning to occur and thus, teacher absenteeism is affecting the teacher-learner relationships and the student learning negatively in the Khomas secondary schools. It is noted that, there are many factors that influence and affect teacher-learner relationships and interactions in the classroom. This factors includes such as, poor classroom management, lack of subject knowledge and lack of school physical resources. Researcher believes and supports the views above, by saying that factors affecting teacher-learner relationships in classroom are influenced by the school environment natural settings, and some need active participation of school stakeholders in order to be addressed.

4.4.2 Effects of the factors on the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the classroom.

Four teachers were concerned about the effects of the factors on the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the classroom settings. Their comments are presented below:

Teacher F: Student motivation to learners it influences them positively by having a caring and supportive relationship with the teachers. In addition to academic achievement, positive

teacher learner relationship provides important social outcome for learners, and a number of studies suggested that if teachers takes the time to build strong relationship with learners, they could motivate their learners to learn positively.

Teacher D: The moment the learners know that you care and they trust you, they will be free to participate positively in lessons and they will not hold back even the shy one's will come out of their chair because they feel a sense of safety and protection in the classroom.

Teacher E: Positively, because most of the learners would want to be part of the teaching and learning process and be engaged in all the class activities and greatly it will improve their academic performance.

Teacher H: These factors create a conducive learning environment for positive learning and they strengthen the teacher-learner relationships in the classroom. These factors can also contribute positively to the academic learning performance and the wellbeing of teachers and learners in the school learning environment.

Four learners had this to say on the same sub-theme:

Learner 12: It has a very positive effect because I focus more when the teacher is teaching with energy in the class, and it makes me want to study more and pay attention more attentively in the class. I as a learner when I am busy writing exams it is easier to remember something the teacher said in the class, than being taught by a teacher who is always teaching while seated in the class.

Learner 17: In a good way and positively, because the teacher teaches us with enthusiasms, and it improves my academic performance, and it creates a good learning environment and the willingness to come to school every day to learn more.

Learner 4: Well it creates a very strong, positive, healthy (bond) relationship, and we respect each other that will come from both sides. It is necessary to actually feel free and open-up and to talk with teachers of preferred choice. As a learner, you have the responsibilities to study and do schoolwork while the teachers brings their side by teaching and helping where /when needed in the classroom learning.

Learner 1: This affects my relationship and academic performance in a good way because of the positive atmosphere provided by the teachers in the classroom-learning environment.

Varga (2017) revealed that the nature of the relationships and interactions that take place between teacher and learner affect their classroom relationships, because the way teachers communicate plays a critical role in establishing strong and positive relationship with learners. Teachers who are friendly and positively develop better relationships with their learners in the school environment. Thus, teachers have responsibility to welcome all learners and create an air of respect between them and learners, so that more relationships that are positive can be formed between the teachers and learners in the school (Varga, 2017). Jerome and Pianta (2008) argued with Varga (2017) that learners who have had past negative experiences have more difficult time for forming positive relationships with their teachers. These experiences may include interactions with prior teachers or other learners, and the learner's socio-economic status. Learners who come from less economically and socially disadvantaged families are at risk of having poorer relationships with their teachers and other learners in the school. Moreover, researcher has observed that learners who have poor relationships with their role model, such as parents, and other learners are likely to have poor relationship with their teachers in the school environment. Varga (2017) added that learners who had behavioural problems are more likely to have conflict with their teachers in the school supports that researcher's views. Further, it is more difficult for teachers to form positive and supportive relationships with learners who misbehave and shows negative attitudes/attentions to learning in the classroom,

because their targets/goals is to disturb the teaching and learning activities in the classrooms ((Varga, 2017). In line with views above, it is clearly that the factors explained above, have positive effect on the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the classroom. From the study findings, the researcher has found that teacher' teaching approaches, classroom atmosphere and communication techniques influence the quality of the teacher-learner relationships in the learning environment and this can be either in a positive or negative way. In most cases teachers relationships to learners in the school environment is always positive, thus it improves leaners academic performances.

4.5 Theme 3: How do teachers manage classroom interactions in school?

It is very important that teachers establish and cultivate strategies on how to manage their classroom interactions with learners. It seems that setting classroom rules and applying appropriate teaching and learning techniques such as role-play classroom presentations and learner-centred approaches are vital strategies for teachers, in an effort to manage their classroom interactions effectively. This main theme has raised several issues, and categories them into five sub-themes. Creating a conducive learning environment, maintaining a conducive learning environment, learners' behaviour in the classroom, ways of dealing with disruptive learners in the classroom, and managing classroom interactions for effective learning. These sub-themes are discussed below:

4.5.1 Creating a conducive learning environment

Four teachers had expressed their views on the sub-theme above and had this to say:

Teacher H: I avail all the learning materials to the learners in the classroom, and expose all the learners to a wide range of resources available for effective teaching and learning in the classroom. By displaying the learning activities in the classroom e.g. some posters on the wall, and organise a reading corner for learners to develop reading culture as well as

encouraging learners to create their own self-made teaching and learning aids/materials for effective learning in the classroom. By collecting some suitable and current learning media such as newspapers and magazines and bring them to the classroom for reference purposes, and involve all the learners more in discovering self- learning by carrying out some basic research and do more projects.

Teacher B: By building some classroom rules and procedures, and allow your learners to know that you have trust in them, and be honest in your feedback. By avoiding being bias when dealing with some conflicts in the classrooms and involve your learners in the teaching and learning process.

Teacher A: By being prepared for the teaching and learning lessons, and have a wider understanding of the concepts to be discussed in the lessons. By involving my learners in the classroom activities and giving feedbacks to the learners as soon as possible after assessment and evaluation is done.

Teacher E: By involving all the learners and make, them feel that they are part of the group in the classroom, and emphasise on accepting each other and respect others' cultures, background, and different tribes' languages usage. The physical condition of the classrooms and the seating arrangement is very vital in creating a conducive classroom-learning environment for the learners.

Three learners discussed their interactions with teachers in the classroom and their opinions were as followings:

Learner 20: As an introvert person, I am mostly quiet in the classroom, and I just engage in when it is necessary for example in-group activities in the class, but nonetheless I respect my teachers and always follow the classroom rules.

Learner 12: I always try to answer questions when the teachers are asking, and do some research before I come to the class on certain topics to bring up the questions to the teacher to get more clear understanding. However, in some classes I do not attend because the teacher is always teaching while seated when we get there and does not elaborate more on the certain topics. This makes me loose interest in the subject.

Learner 13: I am lazy to do class work, and sometimes I talk to my friends while the teacher is teaching in the class. I make noise when the teacher leaves the class and finds me making noise and making fun of others in the class.

This notion is captured by Emmer and Gerwels (2006, p. 408) who said that classroom management is very vital "in the teaching and learning, and without good classroom management practices the teacher's job is much more challenging", especially in the secondary school classrooms. Furthermore, Friedman (2006) has shown that for the teachers, a proper classroom management has positive challenges on reducing the teachers stress in the classroom such as writing notes, marking class activities, and some studies have shown that this reduces the risk of the teacher burnout. In addition, Friedman postulated that not only are good classroom management practices is important for the teachers in their classroom practice, they also have implications on the student learning, participations, and academic success. Moreover, Emmer and Gerwels (2006, p. 408) pointed out that the challenges of positive and negative classroom management for the learners, and state that "effective classroom promote learner participations and create some opportunities to learn; poorly managed classroom dissipate learners time, attention, and learning focus". It also reduces learning, and affect learners' academic success in the learning environment. Further, Soo (2016) postulated that building positive classroom learning environment, increases students learning ability and minimize misbehaviour in the classroom, but also it has some challenges on the teacher' teaching methodologies, teacher-learner relationships and classroom interactions in the school

environment. Thus, it appears that classroom management and enabling learning environment is vital for both teachers and learners in the classroom. Classroom management is central to not only student learning but also to the practice of teaching and classroom interactions. From the results above, it is also evident that in order for teachers to create conducive learning environment, they should ensure that their classroom is fully resourceful and well managed. The Researcher is of the view that classroom is the place where the teachers and learners spend the most hours of their school working days. As such, being able to maintain a conducive learning environment through positive management practices is very important for both the teacher and learner academic performance. Researcher concludes by commenting that it is in the sense that educators should have more knowledge of various teaching approaches and strategies for maintaining effective learning environment.

4.5.2 Maintaining a conducive learning classroom environment

Learners to learn effectively and efficiently the teachers should create and maintain a conducive learning atmosphere in the classroom. Further, the teachers should ensure that the learning atmosphere is enabling and learners should feel motivated to engage in the learning process. Four teachers expressed their views on this sub-theme as follows:

Teacher F: In order to create a classroom environment conducive to learning you must first focus on the physical space of the classroom, and use every possible areas of the room to create an atmosphere that encourages positive participation and learning to the learners in the classroom.

Teacher E: By constantly disciplining learners, and working on the seating arrangements by trying to bring the problematics learners closer to front and keep constant contact. By praising the learners when they do good school work, and make use of them as good examples to others. By formulating some classroom rules that will also help to foster a

positive learning atmosphere to the learners, and learners will know what is not accepted in the learning environment.

Teacher H: By making sure that all learners have access to learning resources in the class, and learning resources are kept and can be borrowed for use. By making sure that any learning materials/resources that is lost or damaged will be replaced, and all the projects carried out are displayed and used as future references.

Teacher G: By making sure that learners with special needs must be identified and treated special based on their needs, for example a learner who cannot see well must always seat in front of the class. Problematic learners or learners with behaviour problem should be dealt with just to make sure that the behaviour is not repeated and spread to the whole school.

Four learners had the following views regarding the above aspect:

Learner 19: Whenever the teacher asks a question that I have no answer to it, I rather keep quiet or say anything randomly good answer that I can think might be correct. I sit on my chair until the period is over so that I do not disturb the teacher in the class. I ask for permission whenever I want to leave the classroom for some good reasons.

Learner 15: I am a very discipline child who does not have bad attitudes towards my teachers, I always listen to what they say in the class, I do not answer my teachers back in a bad way, whether I am accused of doing something wrong, I always apologise to them.

Learner 7: I always try to conduct myself in a respectful manner especially when the teacher is teaching. Nevertheless, my behaviour tends to vary in different classes depending on how the teacher is. I tend to be a joke full person in passive classes because that does not make the teacher feel disrespected in anyhow in the class.

Learner 6: I behave differently to my teachers because they have different attitude towards my academic performance, some have positive and some have negative relationships with me in the class.

The views above seem to be supportive of those by Rimm-Kaufman (2015) who reported that research studies have established that teaching approaches that allow active participations of learners in the learning process was one of the influential skills for developing and maintaining a positive and conducive learning environment and interactions in the school. Further, Rimm-Kaufman's (2015) are of the view that teachers who made more use of learner-centred teaching approach, that involves individual learner's abilities and classroom participation, were mostly loved by their learners in the learning environment. In order to strengthen the positive relationships between the teachers and learners, the teachers should give learners the opportunity to participate fully in the teaching and learning environment. Pieratt (2011) asserts that the teachers should use the teaching methods that facilitate opportunities for the learners to share more of their opinions, experiences and pre-knowledge on the academic work in order to develop strong bond between themselves and teachers in the classroom. Based on the results above, it is important to elaborate that all teachers should ensure that they maintain good classroom atmosphere for positive student learning, and create enabling learning environment. The views above, informs the researcher that for teachers to maintain a conducive learning classroom environment he/she should ensure that the classroom is resourceful and learners are well disciplined and teachers conduct themselves accordingly in the classroom. Further, researcher found that most teachers in the schools use learner centred teaching approach in the teaching and learning process, in order to maintain a conducive learning environment.

4.5.3 Learners' behaviour in the classroom

Many teachers in the Khomas education region according to the researcher's observations are concerned about the behaviour or learning attitudes of the learners in the schools. The participants' comments on discipline in schools are given verbatim below:

Teacher H: Many learners behave well in the classroom lesson activities. However, there are few individuals learner who are misbehaving; some of these learners are disrupting classroom lesson activities. They disruption of classroom lesson activities lead to the disruption of the whole class discussions. Eventually, the lesson objectives on that particular day would not be achieved or partly achieved.

Teacher A: My learners are well behaving and very involved in the classroom lesson discussions. They participate fully in the lesson without some fear and intimidation from the teacher's side. Perhaps a few lack some self-confidence and are shy to participate in the lessons.

Teacher B: They normally work in pairs and small groups in the classroom activities, and they always work together to comprehend some of their answers. In-depth conversation among the learners, and they present their ideas to each other and all ideas are respected.

However, four Grade 12 learners had this to say regarding the above:

Learner 14: It really depends on how the teachers is managing the class. I like interacting with the teachers and have conversations about almost everything, but sometimes I am a child who does not want to listen to the teachers in the classroom lessons.

Learner 3: I behave in a very bad way if I do not like the teacher because I do not want to be in that classroom, for some other reasons.

Learner 1: I always behave in a well-mannered and respectful way towards my teachers because of the moral values instilled in me by my parents, as from home.

Learner 18: I always keep quite in the classrooms, and I ask some questions where I do not understand. I do not like answering questions in the classrooms because it shows the signs of showing off to other learners in the class.

However, Emmer and Gerwels (2006) claimed that the learners' behaviour in the classroom depends on the teaching methods employed, teachers' attitudes, classroom rules, learners' interest and many other factors, just to mention a few. Further, Emmer and Gerwels (2006, p.108) argued that " a good learning environment promotes learner's active participations and create some opportunities to learn effectively; while a poorly managed school disturbs learner's learning interest in the classroom". Moreover, it also reduces learning ability, and discourage learners' academic success in the classroom. Additionally, Soo (2016) states that developing positive teacher-learner relationships and effective controlled school environment, improves not only the learners' feelings of belonging to school, but reduces negative learning attitudes in the classroom, and has also some effects on the teacher-learner interactions in the school. From study results above, it is clear that the behaviour of learners in the schools is acceptable and depends on how the teachers manage their classrooms. Based on the study findings, researcher found that many learners behaves and conduct themselves accordingly in the schools. This means that learners' behaviour in the classroom is sounding to teachers and result in improvement of learners academic performances. The researcher is of the view that good classroom management are important for both teachers and learners in a number of ways. This is especially so given that effective classroom management is essential to student learning talents, and to the practice of teaching and learning as well as improvement on learners' behaviour in the school. It is on this basis that the teachers should share more light and

experiences on different teaching strategies and approaches for enhancing learners' behaviours in the classroom.

4.5.4 Ways of dealing with disruptive learners in the classroom

Four teachers held different views on how to deal with disruptive learners in the classroom, given that no corporal punishment is allowed to be meted out to learners in Namibian schools, even though it does take place illegally. Their views are given below:

Teacher E: By giving learners some extra work to do, and let them stand for some few minutes and noting them down in my disciplinary book, and if the behaviour does not improve, I will try to talk to the learners on one-one conversations. At a time, this has helped in several incident, and I try to tell them that I do not appreciate what they do in the class and most learners tend to change. By giving them little punishment of staying with them after school and give them extra work to do has recently helped me, as most learners do not want to stay, they started to focus a little bit more and the behaviour has changed since.

Teacher H: By disciplining them on a regular basis, and give them serious warnings. By encouraging them to have a focus and purpose for learning, and discouraging them to refrain from ill-discipline behaviour, and strictly applying classroom rules, and give little punishment. By referring them to the school discipline committee members, and if no improvement I send them to the school principal for further actions. By motivating them to have responsibility and to set good examples to others. By keeping a closer contact with their parents/guardians, and assigning them with different challenging tasks and responsibilities to do, for example being a class prefect or school head boy/girl.

Teacher G: The disruptive learners are ignored especially the attention seekers and be dealt with after the lessons. Learners who fight during lessons are taken out of the class and be

dealt with after the lesson by the relevant school authority. Learners are given many tasks, just to keep them very busy and making sure that they have something to do in the classroom. Some of these learners can be made to control other for example, you make them to monitor the behaviour of others in the class, make them to be class captain or write down the names of those that are making noise or report whoever is misbehaving to the teacher in the class.

Teacher B: Prevention is better than cure (prevent first), and have a sense of humour. I am always calm and never raise my voice, and try to be a good listener, and communicate with my other colleagues. I treat my learners with respect and make sure learners understand their misbehaviour cases and dislikes, and advise them accordingly to school rules.

The learners had this to say:

Learner 11: I think the best ways for teachers to deal with disruptive learners in the classroom learning is to chase them out for few minutes, and give them final oral warnings. If they cannot improve their behaviour, the teacher should call in their parents for further actions.

Learner 17: It depends on the misbehaving cases, for example, learners may misbehave if the lesson is not quite interesting to them and if there are no challenging class, activities to keep them busy working in the class. In that case, the teacher should work on his /her teaching methods, improve, and blame himself.

Learner 2: The teacher should always set the classroom rules and regulations with the learners, and inform them on time about the results and consequences of failing and breaking them down, and the possible punishments to be given if one has found guilty.

Learner 16: I guess that the teachers should first identify the misbehaving or the troublemakers in the class, and always set for them some classroom rules that they need to obey, and

make sure they are all seating up front raw in the classroom so that the teacher can easily monitor them.

Sutherland and Oswald (2005) said that bidirectional influences shape the behavioural and relationships trajectory of the teachers and learners in the teaching and learning process. Further, learners who act out may be less rewarding to teach, such that they receive fewer chances to connect with the teachers at school and are deal with accordingly to classroom rules (Sutherland and Oswald, 2005). According to Barker (2015), the teachers tend to avoid the aggressive and disruptive learners in the classroom, and they focus their teaching efforts and positive attention on more good behaving and prosocial learners in the classroom. They are more likely to reprimand the disruptive learners rather than redirecting their behaviour, and in turn, these learners are less likely to comply with the requests of classroom rules. Additionally, Barker (2015) said that pro-social or good behaving learners are rewarding to teach and receive great deal of the teacher attention in the classroom. This attention reinforces the appropriate school behaviour and further motivates the students to be involved in the teaching and learning process. While most teachers are able to form positive relationships with cooperative and compliant learners, the teachers vary in their teaching ability and willingness to work towards developing positive relationship with more difficult and problematic learners in the classroom (Barker, 2015). However, Sutherland and Oswald (2005) argued that a large proportion of pre-school learners arrive at secondary school level with some behavioural difficulties, thus placing them at risk of developing negative relationships with the teachers in the classroom. From study results, it can be interpreted that ways of dealing with ill-discipline learners in the classroom depends on the teachers approach, for example, some teachers formulate classroom rules. Researcher argues that whatever disruptive behaviours school learners demonstrate in the classroom, the schools and teachers have some procedures that need to be followed and deal with learners' ill-discipline cases properly and procedurally. Therefore, given the views above,

the researcher is of the opinion that there is need to support the teachers and learners in developing close, low –conflict relationships in the school in an effort to build positive relationships and address problematic issues of learners in the classroom.

4.5.5 Managing classroom interactions for effective classroom learning

With regards to managing classroom interactions for enhanced learning, three teachers said the following during the interviews:

Teacher H: By actively involve all the learners in the lessons always, and displaying learning materials to arouse learners' curiosity in the teaching and learning discussions. By involving learners in discovering learning and report back to the rest of the class, and involve students in debate competitions, and engaging learners in quiz competition, as well as engaging learners to participate in oral presentations. By allowing and giving learners more learning opportunities to express themselves freely in the class, and set rules for classroom participations.

Teacher B: By teaching my learners on how to act and tackle some issues in the class, and use a polite, appropriate language to school learners in the learning environment. By keeping my phone in the bag or pocket being switched off to avoid disturbance to learners, and give them chance to raise concerns about one another, and encourage some dialogue with learners in the class. Give written feedback to learners on every assessment activity, praise all the learners in the classroom, and encourage active participations in the lesson discussions.

Teacher E: Have a common language (English as a medium of instructions in the class) to be used by all learners in the class, and I stress the fact that my learners should always feel welcome to reach out to me and ask me with anything, be open and get mutual respect of the school rules.

The learners held different views on this sub-theme during the focus group discussions:

Learner 20: The teachers should create an open learning environment for students to feel freely in participating in the classroom lessons, and they must encourage good discussions with the learners in the classes, and motivates the learners to express themselves with confidence and feel free to interact with the teachers in the classes.

Learner 9: I think that the teachers must use some different teaching techniques that will involve all the learners to be active in the classroom lesson discussions, and help learners where they are going wrong in the discussions. The teachers invite the learners to initiate and start some dialogues with each other's in the classes, and the teachers should guide them in their class dialogues.

Learner 8: I think the teachers should be open enough to learners, and call student to engage in the constructive and meaningful communication as well as to exchange some information and accept the point of learning from each other in the classroom.

According to Louise (2016), the studies carried out on teacher-learner classroom interactions have revealed that learners perceive interactions between themselves and their teachers as important influence to their academic performance and participation in the learning, and to the quality of the teaching. Additionally, Louise reports that the quality and quantity of the teacher interactions positively correlated to perceived learning, and that learners who felt that they knew their teachers, participated more actively in the group discussions in the classroom (Louise, 2016). While, Putri (2014) asserted that classroom interactions make the learners participate more in the teaching and learning process. This means that classroom interactions encourage learners to be involved in the teaching and learning activities, and equally important, learners are not the only participant in the classroom interactions; the teacher is also a participant. Louise (2016) maintains that through the classroom interactions, the learning process among learners

occur since they exchange their knowledge and understanding with each other. According to Egeberg, McConney, and Price (2016) teachers have powerful influence in the classroom interactions between themselves and learners. While there are many factors that affect the teacher-learner classroom interactions, the research studies have found these influences to be on the learner behaviour and learning attitudes in the learning situations (Egeberg et al., 2016). On the other hand, Hattie (2003, p. 2) suggests that the answer to improve teacher-learner classroom interactions and learning performance of learners "lies in the person (teacher) who gently closes the school classroom doors and performs the teaching act. The person who puts into place the end effects of so many educational policies, who interprets these policies, and who is alone with learners during their 15,000 hours of school working days". Based on the views above, it is evident that using appropriate teaching methodologies and open communication in the teaching and learning environment will enhance classroom interactions for effective student learning. The researcher is of the opinion that it is very important for teachers to cultivate, establish and develop good classroom interactions with learners for effective learning in the classroom. If teachers are open to learners in the classroom, learners will develop self-confidence and develop good classroom interactions with other learners, and improve their academic learning.

4.6 Theme 4: Influence of teacher-learner interactions on learners' academic performance

Two sub-themes where identified in this study regarding the influence of teacher-learner interactions on learners' academic performance as indicated below:

4.6.1 How teacher-learner interactions influence students' academic performance?

Three teachers expressed their views on this sub-theme:

Teacher E: Positively, I have realised that most learners tend to put more efforts on the subjects which they have good relationships and interactions with the teachers'. In most cases,

they do not want to disappoint the subject teacher because of fear that the relationships will break down. These interactions help the teacher to understand and know more about these learners, what happens outside the school and it help us teachers to provide the necessary guidance to this specific learner.

Teacher F: Teacher-learner interactions can influence students' academic performance either positively or negatively depending on how the interactions is done in the classroom learning. For instance, if the teacher-learner interactions are bad, then this will influence students' academic performance negatively, and students will not like the subject taught by that specific teacher.

Teacher B: Yes, in a positive way that it enabling learners to feel secure and safe in their learning environment. It helps learners and teacher to improve their academic outcomes and it helps learners to be highly motivated because they put their trust in their teachers. Teachers are the role models to their learners; therefore, if they love teaching, learners will also love and enjoy learning.

Some of the learners said the following on this sub-theme:

Learner 14: I think that the teacher-learner interactions have a big impact on the learning of students in the secondary schools. A learner who has a positive interaction with his or her teachers is likely to pass with good marks than a student with negative interactions with teachers' in the class. Positive interactions with teachers gives the learner self-confidence, and negative teacher learner interactions creates a bad learning environment which results in poor academic performance and bad behaviour from the learner side in the class.

Learner 18: Positive effects, because if interactions are positive one then this learner will try to focus and put all their efforts in their schoolwork, which is also one of the most important dreams of learner's educations. While if the interactions is negative, the learners

can easily lose focus towards their schoolwork and this can be a bad and negative example, especially to the schoolchildren in particular they will have lower academic performance.

Learner 7: It depends on the learner's self-esteem. Sometimes the learner will, take it lightly but some will take it at heart and it will have a negative effect on their academic performance and future carriers' plans. The teacher's comments will keep on replying in that individual learner's minds for a very long time, and this will have a negative result to learners in the classroom learning.

Learner 12: Teacher and learners in secondary schools tend to have a more positive interactions and it affects learners' academic performance positively as they become more interested in doing their schoolwork. However, less learners have negative interactions with the teachers especially school girls, because some teachers (male's one) tend to fall in love with schoolchildren which lower their academic performance at secondary school. It is because the girl learner will not do the schoolwork, as they feel that they are more in romantic relationships or loved by male teachers in the school.

In explaining and supporting the sub-theme above, McDonald (2013, p. 20) clarified that "teacher-learner classroom interactions involves teacher practical actions and instructional techniques to create pro-active learning environment that facilitates and supports learners active participation in both academic and social and emotional learning". Furthermore, McDonald said that with the diverse backgrounds, interests and capabilities of learners, meeting their classroom expectations and involving them in meaningful learning dialogue required effective teaching methodologies. Jones et al. (2013) state that developing interactional learning environment enables learners to be involved in the meaningful activities that support and influence their academic performance, this interactional learning environment, can only truly

be attained when teachers understand their own interactions and their learners' participation needs in the classroom (Jones et al., 2013). Henley (2010) postulates that while order is clearly important in the class, it is not the primary goal of effective classroom interactions, but it does serve a purpose in enabling student learning and the social and moral growth. Further, Henley (2010, p. 4) identifies classroom interactions as the "essential teaching skill" and suggests that effective teachers minimise misbehaviours to reduce interruptions and create good classroom interactions that allow for learners' expressions and sharing of knowledge experiences among themselves in the learning environment. In view with above opinions, it is clear that teacher-learner interactions influence learners' academic performance in the positive direction, and teachers' interactions play a crucial role. The researcher points out that teacher-learner interaction has positive influence on the learners' academic performance in the school. Thus, it is important for teachers to interact with learners on a daily basis during school working hours.

4.6.2 Policy framework or school rules guiding teacher-learner relationships and interactions in Namibian schools

It seemed from the results in this study that many participants had little information, knowledge and understanding of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture's policies, directives, rules and regulations that guide the teacher-learner relationships and interactions in secondary schools. Some teachers expressed little understanding on this sub-theme during interviews:

Teacher F: Yes, the policy says that the teachers-learner relationships and interactions should not be romantic, but be professional in the school learning environment.

Teacher A: Yes, in the teacher's code of conduct, a teacher is to set the basic professional services that improves the teaching and learning. This is further elaborated under the topic teacher-learner on the 2004 government gazette of the republic of Namibia.

Teacher G: Yes, there is a policy, which says that male teachers should interact with learners, but they should not engage into sexual relationships with school girls-learners, because that will affect their academic learning very negatively, and they will perform very poorly academically in the school assessments. The teacher should have to treat all the learners the same but not discriminating them in the teaching and learning environment.

Teacher B: Yes, there is a policy, for example the National policy guide for senior secondary schools in Namibia. There is also a learning support teacher manual. There is a National safe schools' framework part A and B for Namibia education for all in Namibian school that explains quite clearly, how the teacher should relate and interact with school learners in the school learning environment.

Four learners during focus group discussions were of the following views:

Learner 12: Yes, the school rules says that teachers are not allowed to get intimate relationships with the learners, and teachers are not allowed to look at learners' appearances or give them answers freely "spoon feed". Teachers' have to make sure there is no close contact between them and learners, and as learners, we are also not allowed to seduce our teachers. Teachers should not give learners answers in exchange for something valuable.

Learner 19: Yes, teachers must respect their learners and put sexual contact with them away, learners should respect their teachers. The teachers must never talk about private things to learners but rather focus on educational matters in the classroom. Teachers must beat school learners when they do not show respect, and learners must respect the teachers whenever they do something wrong in the class.

Learner 1: Yes, a school rules and regulations guide the teacher-learner relationships in the school-learning environment, for example, the one that says that teachers should not have intimate relationships with students, and learners must respect teachers in the school.

Learner 2: Yes, but they do not give us the respect we need, and some of them come to school late, and dodge classes. They are sometimes using or use their cell phones in class while teaching and learning is taking place.

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (2001) reports in *Namibian Code of Conduct for teachers'* states that the teachers should conduct themselves within theoretical framework policies, respect learners' dignity in order to improve teacher-learner relationships and students learning in school. Teachers should not develop sexual relationships with school learners, because that might contribute to poor learners' academic performances in the school and hinder their future carriers. Further, the code of conduct inform the teachers that they have social responsibility of in-parting knowledge and skills as well as assisting every learner to achieve his or her full academic learning potential in the school curriculum programmes (MBESC, 2001). Based on this study results, it is evident that Ministerial policies, rules and regulations are available in the schools and at Khomas Education region, but many teachers and learners lack reading culture and they are not up dated about these policies that guides their relationships in schools. From study findings, Researcher found that some teachers lack information about Ministerial policies that guide and inform educators on teachers-learner relationships in the schools. Thus, most of the teachers during interviews were unable to answer the research question on the policy framework that guides teacher-learner relationships in Namibian schools.

4.6.3 Observations of classroom learning environment

The researcher also carried out classroom observations with in the two secondary schools in order to find out the interactions taking place in the selected teachers' classrooms. The findings are given below under six headings:

a. The physical aspects of the class:

The sizes of the classroom in the two schools varied. Some classrooms were small, while other were big and accommodate more than 35 learners. The numbers of learners in the classrooms ranges 18-40 learners at one school and at the other school range is between 28-40 learners in the class. The seating arrangement was quite fine and well organised from all the schools. Some furniture were found to be very old and others look new in good condition at both schools.

b. The use of teaching and learning materials in the classrooms:

Teachers and learners in the classrooms often used mostly textbooks. Schools lack self-made materials in their classes in order to stimulate learners' creativity in the classroom.

c. Teacher attention to learners in the classroom:

Some teachers knew their learners by names, and had good eye contact with them in the classrooms which building positive relationships. Some teachers were unable or have failed to do that in their classes.

d. Classroom management control by teachers:

Teachers managed very well their classes, and disciplined learners according to classroom rules, and other teachers were unable to manage their classes effectively, and as a result had some ill-disciplined learners in their classes.

e. Teacher's classroom interactions with the learners:

In both schools, many teachers had a friendly and good classroom interaction with their learners. All in those classes the learners were actively involved and participating in the teaching and learning. Learners in commercial and languages classes were not very active, and did not interact with each other or with the teachers.

f. Learners' classroom interactions with the teacher:

Many learners were very active and participating in the class lessons, and some ask teachers questions for clarifications. Other were shy to show up in the teaching and learning situation, could not even express themselves due to poorly communication skills in English as a medium of instructions used in the classes, and lack of teaching methodologies. It seem that views above are supported by Jones, Jones and Vermette's (2013) who state that the nature of the learning environment is very difficult to understand, because it involves the interactions and applications of various aspects related to the classroom. These include aspects such as classroom rules, school discipline procedures, teaching methodologies, learners characteristics/behaviour and teacher-learner relationships in the classroom. In addition, Emmer and Gerwels (2006) argued that classroom learning environment should be conducive and invite positive learning atmosphere for learners to enjoy teaching and learning in the classes, and to promote learners active participation in the classroom.

4.7 Theme 5: Improving teacher-learner relationships and the effects on student learning in secondary school classrooms

The alternative ways on how to enhance the teacher-learner relationships in secondary schools from the interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with Grade 12 learners are given:

4.7.1 Ways of improving the teacher-learner relationships

The teachers were asked to indicate how the teacher-learner relationships could be improved in the secondary schools. Their general views are reflected in some of the teachers' views below:

Teacher D: By accepting your learners as they are and caring for them as a good parent cares for their children, and being available for learners to talk to you before school, during lunch or after class. By treating all the learners, the same and set some boundaries with

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the learners, and support the school's extra-curricular activities, even if you are not involved go to sport events, play and participate in other school events. By greeting learners with smile as they come in your class, and talk with them and listen to what is going on in their lives. This will make the learners' feel as if you are interested in them and it bring a positive relationships and interactions in the classroom learning situations.

Teacher A: By providing schools with adequate teaching and learning materials for example apparatus in sciences laboratories, and by furnishing some old classrooms, build enough rooms that can allow good interactions. By providing workshops and training to teachers on how teachers can improve their relationships with learners in the teaching and learning process. Teachers need to develop a positive attitude towards learners and treat them all equally.

Teacher J: By interacting more with the learners, and getting to know the students very well by their names, and by helping learners to understand themselves better. By always being helpful to student's needs, and be a mother figure to the learners in the school learning environment.

Teacher B: When the teacher forms a positive bond with learners, the classroom become supportive, and it will improve both teacher and learners' behaviour, one-step a time. By shadowing, monitoring and modelling are all ways of improving the teacher-learner relationships in the classroom-learning environment. Improving learner relationships with teachers can produce positive gain in school academic achievement. By having a positive teacher-learner relationship draws learners into the process of learning effectively and it promotes students desire to learn more and grow academically.

The Grade 12 learners made the following suggestions:

Learner 11: Government must set new rules and regulations in school for teachers-learner relationships and they must be strict to it, and learners must wear proper school uniforms that is long enough, and covering their whole bodies. Teachers must be trained in such a way that they do not form any intimate relationships with school learners.

Learner 1: Teachers should not put down learners but rather build them up so that they learn from their mistakes, and encourage them and not bully them, and have good communication between the teachers and learners in the classes. Teachers should respect the learners also and know that we have feelings and they must watch out their words that they are saying.

Learner 14: Learners should be made aware of the main objectives for coming or going to school and that is to learn. Teachers should learn different behaviours of learners and try to make learners feel comfortable in the classes. One on one sessions should be conducted between the teachers and learners in order to try and solve some problems hampering the learning process in the classroom. Teachers should make their classes child friendly environment where by every learner feel comfortable to express their views.

Learner 20: Teachers should be more understanding and patient with learners, form more of a team with the learners, and involve parents more in the school activities.

Barker (2015) argues that many of the learner and teacher level traits that have an influence on the relationships are highly malleable: intervention on either side of the relationships can produce positive change. The above views seem to be in support of Barker's (2015) views states that teachers should be friendly to learners and use appropriate language in the teaching and learning environment in order to enhance teacher-learner relationships in school. From study

findings, it is clearly that teachers and learners have made some positive suggestions on how to improve their relationships in schools and enhance student academic learning. The researcher is of the view that the best ways on how to enhance teacher-learner relationships and student academic learning is to fully engage learners in the teaching and learning processes. The teachers should develop positive relationships with learners, by applying appropriate teaching approaches, and create enabling learning environment. The teachers should formulate some classroom rules with learners involved and be good example to learners in the learning environment, use open communication platforms, and respect learners' dignity. Further, researcher supports that teachers should use effective and efficient teaching methodologies that calls for learners' active participations in the classroom activities, thus it improves teacher-learner relationships and interactions as well as student learning performances in the classroom.

Based on this study results/findings, the researcher concludes by saying that positive teacher-learner relationships and classroom interactions is one of the most powerful influential factors within the student learning environment in the secondary schools. Lastly, teachers should cultivate, develop, build and create enabling learning environment where by learners are more actively involved in the classroom activities in order to improve their academic learning.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented the findings on the teacher-learner relationships and the effect thereof on student learning at two selected secondary schools in the Khomas Education region. In the next chapter, the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of this study are presented.

<center>**CHAPTER FIVE**</center>

<center>**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**</center>

This chapter provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations of this study.

5.1 SUMMARY

This study explored the teacher-learner relationships and the effects on the student learning at two selected secondary schools in the Khomas Education region of Namibia. The following research questions were examined in order to obtain comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. The following questions were addressed.

1. How do teachers and learners see their relationships developing in selected secondary schools in the Khomas Region?

2. What factors affect teacher-learner relationships and interactions in secondary school classrooms in the Khomas region?

3. How do teachers manage classroom interactions in two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region?

4. To what extent do teacher-learner interactions influence learners' academic performance in secondary school classrooms as perceived by learners and teachers in the Khomas Region?

5. What can be done to enhance teacher-learner relationships and the effect on student learning in secondary school classrooms in the Khomas region?

This study aimed at finding out the factors affecting the teacher-learner relationships and the effect on the student learning in two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region. The study was informed by qualitative research approach and employed explanatory case study design. The Attachment theoretical framework of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's work

for (1969) informed this research study by stating that learner who has positive interactions and sound relationships with the parents, is obviously likely to develop good working relationships with teachers and peers in the school settings. The population of the study comprised of 10 teachers and 20 Grade 12 school learners in two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region. The investigator chose the teachers and learners, who were deemed to information rich and possessed vast experiences about the teacher-learner relationships at the secondary school level. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two secondary schools from the population by consulting the Khomas Regional Office using specified criteria. Thus, a total of 10 teachers and 20 learners participated in this study. All the respondents were interviewed and participated in the focus group discussions. The data collected from the interviews, focus group discussions were analysed using thematic content analysis, which resulted in the formation of themes, sub-themes, and categories, all teachers were each observed three times at each school resulting in three observations in total. The interviews provided the researcher with in-depth and rich information regarding the teacher-learner relationships and the effects it has on the student learning at the selected secondary schools in the Khomas region, and the possible ways of enhancing teacher-learner relationships at school level. The interviews and focus group discussions were tape recorded upon being granted permission to do so by the research participants.

The findings of this study indicated that both teachers and learners from the two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region had common understanding of what is meant by teacher-learner relationships. Further, they shared the same views that positive teacher-learner relationships in secondary schools, can only develop if the teachers shows good attitudes, develop strong bond, use appropriate language, and appropriate teaching methodologies, show mutual respect and create conducive learning environment for the learners to feel free to relate and interact well with teachers. On the other hand, the majority of the teachers agreed that

positive relationships with school learners in the classroom were vital, because they contribute to effective teaching and learning in the class, and thus improves the students' academic performances. It also emerged from research findings that the teachers' negative attitudes towards learners in the classroom, poor communication skills and lack of physical resources were some of the significant factors that affected the quality of the teacher-learner relationships and interactions in secondary schools in the Khomas region.

The study findings also revealed that the teacher-learner interactions influenced the learners' academic performance positively and negatively. Positively in the sense that if a learner has positive and strong connection with the teacher, the learner will be close to the teacher and feel free to ask questions or ask for help regarding school work and the teacher will give positive guidance to such learner. While, negatively, if the learner has some behavioural problems with the teachers and peers in the school environment, such learner will have difficulties in developing positive interactions and close ties with teachers and fellow learners, thus this learner will be afraid to ask for assistance and fearful to participate in the class activities. Thus, her/his learning ability and academic performance could be affected negatively and consequently the learner may drop out of school. The research participants suggested that teachers and learners should be constantly reminded about the Ministerial policies, directives, school rules and regulations that inform and guide the teacher-learner relationships in Namibian schools. The teachers should build and establish positive bond with school learners in the learning environment, show positive attitudes toward learners in the class, motivate and engage learners in the classroom discussions, apply teaching methods that call for learners to be pro-active and create conducive learning atmosphere that invites full participation of learners in the classroom activities.

5.2 CONCLUSION

It is clear, from the research findings that the majority of teachers explained how positive teacher-learner relationships was developed by including the following key words in their explanations; like positive-strong bond, attitudes, appropriate language, appropriate teaching methods, motivation, engagement, and creating enabling learning atmosphere among others. These findings were aligned to the attachment theory of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (1969) which revealed that learners who cultivate and build positive relationships with their parents, always have good working relations with teachers and other learners in the school environment. This result in improved academic learning and good interactions in the school activities. The results seem to suggest that the majority of teachers in this study knew how to develop positive relationships with learners in their classes.

In conclusion, the researcher found that lack of physical school resources (extra classrooms, chairs, tables and laboratories) as well as lack of textbooks, lack of self-made teaching and learning materials as well as teacher-centred teaching method/approach were the major contributing factors affecting the quality of teacher-learner relationships in the classroom setting in the Khomas Education region.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the research findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

5.3.1 Teachers and learners in secondary schools in the Khomas region

- Teachers and learners should be encouraged to build strong bonds and develop positive relationships for effective teaching and learning in the classroom. This might improve the learners' academic performances.

- Teachers should create enabling environments that are conducive to better learning atmosphere.

- Teachers should improvise and give learners opportunities to make their own teaching and learning materials in the classroom.

- Teachers must be encouraged to develop culture of reading ministerial policies, directives, and public service acts. This will enable them to implement these successfully in their teaching and interactions with colleagues and learners.

- Teachers and learners should have shared desired to see that learners succeed in their learning process, and to implement this recommendation, school should create conducive atmosphere for learners and teachers to share their experiences in the teaching-learning process.

- School management should put in place mechanisms to check against underperforming teachers in order to improve teachers' teamwork and student academic success. Strict measures such as not paying incentives to these free riders/teachers could be adopted in order to encourage teachers to relate well with learners and achieve better results in the classroom.

5.3.2 Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

- The Ministry should ensure that schools are equipped with all physical school resources for quality teacher-learner relationships and classroom interactions.

- The Ministry should formulate secondary and tertiary level policies that provide guidelines and focus on improving the quality of teacher-learner relationships with view to lifelong and productive learning.

5.3.3. Recommendations for further research

- Given the limitations of this research study, further research on the effects of teacher-learner relationships on the teachers themselves at national level is recommended. Following this research, it could be quite interesting and potentially valuable to investigate the impact of teacher-learner relationships in the secondary schools of Khomas region.

- The study also recommends that future researchers should focus on the potential influence that the use of social media, on the part of the learner and teacher, it has on the teacher-learner relationships at secondary school level.

- Further research should be conducted to find out the factors that enhance the teacher-learner relationships in the secondary schools in Namibia as whole with larger sample.

- The study also suggests to extend the investigation on the understanding of teacher-learner relationships to the institutions of higher learning between the lecturers and students by putting emphasis on the results thereof. Since such relationships affects the quality of learning and teaching in the secondary school education system, it can be vital agenda for research in the tertiary education curriculum with direct implications for policy and practice purposes.

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Appendix B: Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNAM
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE /465/2019   **Date: 21 June, 2019**

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: Teacher-Student Relationships And The Effect On Student Learning At Selected Schools In The Khomas Education Region

Researcher: PHILIP MILINGA TAWANA

Student Number: 200716514

Supervisor(s): Prof. C. D. Kasanda (Main) Dr. J. Mushaandja (Co

Take note of the following:
(a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
(b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
(c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
(d) The UREC retains the right to:
(i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
(ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

Dr. E. de Villiers: HREC Chairperson   Ms. P. Claassen: HREC Secretary

Appendix C: A Letter to the Executive Director

TO: The Executive Director   P.O. Box 26746

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture   Windhoek

Private Bag 13186   Namibia

Windhoek   24 May 2019

Dear Ms. Sanet Steenkamp

Re: Requesting for permission to conduct an Educational Research in the Khomas Region on the topic: ***"Teacher-Learner Relationships and the effect on student learning at selected secondary schools in the Khomas Region".***

I am a registered student at the University of Namibia pursuing a Master's degree in Leadership, Management and Policy Studies in Education field. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the completion of this degree, I am required to conduct a research project on the topic stated above during the month of June 2019.

In fact, building supportive teacher-student relationships and interactions enable learners to interact positively and freely with peers and the teachers in the classroom which might result in enhanced academic learning performances in the classroom activities. Therefore, the aim and goal of my research is to explore and investigate the factors affecting teacher-student relationships and the effect on student learning in two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region of Namibia.

I kindly request your good office to allow me to use the secondary schools in the Khomas region as my research site for the research project. If granted permission, the first phase of the research project will involve individual interviews to 10 randomly selected Grade 12 subject teachers in two secondary schools in the Khomas region. The second phase of the research project will involve focus group discussions with Grade 12 learners that will be chosen by their subject teachers on the basis of learning behaviour and interactions in the classroom settings. The Grade 12 subject teachers and learners will receive full information about the purpose and objectives of the study. Their information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The participants' names will not appear on the interview guide or in the final thesis report. This study will not in any way harm the participants either physically or psychologically.

The findings of this research study might be useful to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in formulating policies with respect to improving the quality of teacher-student relationships and the effect on student learning in selected schools in the Khomas region, and the country as a whole.

Find attached a copy of my Master's proposal and testimonial letter from the supervisor, and look forward to a favourable response from your good office.

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Philip Milinga Tawana

Master's Student

University of Namibia

Cellphone Number: 0812702296

Email Address: pmilinga@gmail.com

Appendix D: Letter of approval from Executive Director

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61 -2933202
Fax: +264 61- 2933922
Enquiries: G. Munene
Email: Gibson.munene@moe.gov.na

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

File no: 11/1/1

Mr. Philip Milinga Tawana
Private Bag 26746
Windhoek
Email:pmilinga@gmail.com

Cell: 081 270 2296

Dear Mr Tawana,
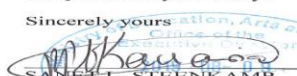
SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KHOMAS REGION

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct an academic research for your Master's Degree in Education in *"Teachers-Student Relationships and the effect on Student Learning at selected Schools in the Khomas Region in Namibia,"* is hereby granted. You are requested to present this letter of approval to the Regional Director to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Ministry. You may contact Mr G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of a summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you upon completion of your study.

Sincerely yours

SANET L. STEENKAMP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Executive Director.

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Appendix E: A Letter to the Director of Khomas Education Region

TO: The Director of Khomas Region   P.O. Box 26746

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture   Windhoek

Private Bag 13236   Namibia

Windhoek   24 May 2019

Dear Mr. Gerard. N. Vries

Re: Requesting for permission to conduct an Educational Research in the Khomas Region on the topic: *"Teacher-Learner Relationships and the effect on student learning at selected secondary schools in the Khomas Region".*

I am a registered student at the University of Namibia pursuing a Master's degree in Leadership, Management and Policy Studies in Education field. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the completion of this degree, I am required to conduct a research project on the topic stated above during the month of June 2019.

In fact, building supportive teacher-student relationships and interactions enable learners to interact positively and freely with peers and the teachers in the classroom which might result in enhanced academic learning performances in the classroom activities. Therefore, the aim and goal of my research is to explore and investigate the factors affecting teacher-student relationships and the effect on student learning in two selected secondary schools in the Khomas region of Namibia.

I kindly request your good office to allow me to use the secondary schools in the Khomas region as my research site for the research project. If granted permission, the first phase of the research project will involve individual interviews to 10 randomly selected Grade 12 subject teachers in two secondary schools in the Khomas region. The second phase of the research project will involve focus group discussions with Grade 12 learners that will be chosen by their subject teachers on the basis of learning behaviour and interactions in the classroom settings. The Grade 12 subject teachers and learners will receive full information about the purpose and objectives of the study. Their information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The participants' names will not appear on the interview guide or in the final thesis report. This study will not in any way harm the participants either physically or psychologically.

The findings of this research study might be useful to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture in formulating policies with respect to improving the quality of teacher-student relationships and the effect on student learning in selected schools in the Khomas region, and the country as a whole.

Find attached a copy of my Master's proposal and testimonial letter from the supervisor, and look forward to a favourable response from your good office.

Yours Sincerely

Mr. Philip Milinga Tawana

Master's Student

University of Namibia

Cellphone Number: 0812702296

Email Address: pmilinga@gmail.com

Appendix F: Letter of approval from Director of Khomas Education Region

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 9411
Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251

Private Bag 13236
WINDHOEK

Mr Philip Tawana
P.O. Box 26746
Windhoek

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN THE KHOMAS REGION

Your letter dated 24 May 2019 on the above topic refers.

Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct your research for your Master Degree in Leadership, Management and Policy Studies in Education field titled: "Teacher-learner relationships and the effect on student learning " in two selected secondary schools of your choice in Khomas Region.

The following conditions must be adhered to:
- Permission must be granted by the School Principal;
- Teaching and learning in the respective schools should not be disrupted;
- Teachers/learners who will take part in the research should do so voluntarily;
- A copy of your thesis with your findings/recommendations must be provided to the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture, Khomas Regional Council.

I trust this confirmation will suffice.

Yours sincerely

28/05/2019.

Gerard N. Vries
Director of Education, Arts and Culture

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ARTS AND CULTURE

2 3 -05- 2019

DIRECTOR
KHOMAS REGION

Appendix G: Participants' letter of Consent

<div align="right">---May 2019</div>

Dear participant

You are kindly requested to take part in this research study/project aiming at exploring the **"teacher-learner relationships and the effect on student learning at selected secondary schools in the Khomas Education Region"**

Research studies carried out in the world have reviewed that teacher-student relationships has effects on the student learning outcomes, and students' learn effectively and efficiently when educators/teachers creates a conducive learning classroom environment. Therefore, your contribution is crucial to this study.

The information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity, and be assured that your name will not appear anywhere on the thesis report or in the research instruments/tools. Your participation is voluntarily and may entail audio-taped interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observation schedules.

Please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent that you are willing to participate in this study willingly. The information to be obtained from the interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations will be solely used for the purposes of this research study.

Yours Sincerely

Philip Milinga Tawana

<div align="center">CONSENT</div>

I agree to take-part in this research study entitled **"TEACHER-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS AND THE EFFECT ON STUDENT LEARNING AT SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KHOMAS REGION"** as explained in the consent letter.

Name: ---

Signature: --

Date: --

Appendix H: TEACHERS' INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview instructions:

Dear …………….

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information regarding **teacher-learner relationships and the effect it has on students' learning at some selected secondary schools in the Khomas Region of Namibia.** Please be assured that this information will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. You are encouraged to try and answer these questions to the best of your knowledge and understanding. Please feel free to ask for clarifications where you do not understand what is being asked during this interview.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. What is your gender? Male Female

2. What is your highest professional teaching qualification?

   ----

3. How many years have you been teaching?

   ----

4. What subject(s) are you currently teaching?

   ----

5. In which age group do you fall?   Under   35

☐

Between   35-40

☐

Above   45-60

☐

B. HOW TEACHERS AND STUDENTS PERCEIVE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE KHOMAS REGION

6. What do you understand by a positive teacher-student relationship?

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7. In what ways do you develop positive relationships with your students in the classroom?

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8. What type (s) of relationships do you engage in with your students in the classroom?

C. **VIEWS ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS IN THE KHOMAS REGION**

9. What are the factors that contribute to the quality of teacher-learner relationships?

----

10. How do these factors affect the quality of teacher-learner relationships in classroom?

D. HOW TEACHERS MANAGE CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE KHOMAS REGION

11. How do you create a conducive learning classroom environment for your learners in the classroom setting?

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12. Explain how you maintain a conducive learning classroom environment for your learners in the classroom setting?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………......

13. How do learners behave in your classroom lesson activities?

----

14. How do you deal with disruptive learners in your classroom?

----

15. How do you manage your classroom interactions in order to have an effective classroom learning environment?

E. **INFLUENCE OF TEACHER-LEARNER INTERACTIONS ON LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

16. In your view, how does teacher-learner interactions influence students' academic performance in secondary schools?

----

17. Is there any policy, rules or regulations in Namibia that guide teacher-student relationships and interactions in the secondary schools? Yes or No.

18. Explain your answer.

F. IMPROVING TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS AND THE EFFECTS ON STUDENT LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS?

19. How can teacher-student relationships be improved?

----

20. Any other comments which you wish to make related to the questions posed in this interview?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX I: LEARNERS' INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS TRANSCRIPTIONS

Focus group discussions with grade 12 students:

Moderator: Philip Tawana

Group Members:……………………………………

Date of focus group discussion:………………

Venue: Name of the school:------------------------------------

Focus group discussion Topic: **Teacher-Learner Relationships and the effect on student learning at selected secondary schools in the Khomas region**

Introduction

Moderator: Welcome to this focus group discussion, please feel free to express your opinions and views clearly and in detail, allowing one person to speak at a time. The purpose of this focus group discussion is to obtain information regarding teacher-student relationships and the effect they have on student learning at selected schools in the Khomas region of Namibia. Please be assured that this information will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. You are encouraged to try and answer these questions to the best of your knowledge and understanding. Please feel free to ask for clarifications where you do not understand what is being asked during this focus group discussion. The information from this discussion would be used to answer the above research question only and your names will not be used in the final discussion.

Warm up

Moderator: May you please take turns to introduce yourselves by saying your name and subject field of study?

Moderator: Thank you. Now that we know each other, let us get down to the business of the day.

QUESTIONS	LEARNER'S RESPONSES	MAIN THEME	LINK TO LITERATURE
1. What is your understanding of positive teacher-student relationship?		Conceptualization of positive teacher-student relationship	
2. From your understanding, how do you develop positive relationships with your teachers in the classroom?		Developing positive relationships with teachers	
3. From your experience, what type(s) of relationships do you engage in with your teachers in the classroom?		Type(s) of teacher-student relationships	

4. In your view, what are the factors contributing to such relationships?		Factors contributing to teacher-student relationships	
5. How does these factors affect your relationship with teachers?		Effects of factors to teacher learner relationships	
6. How do these relationships which you have with your teachers influence your academic performance in the classroom?		Influence of teacher-student relationships on learners' academic performance	
7. From your experience, how do you behave to your teachers in the classroom?		Classroom behaviour towards teachers	
8. From your point of view, how does this learning situation affect your relationship with your teacher(s) and other learners in the classroom environment?		Effects of learning situation on classroom relationships	

9. What are your views, on teacher-student relationships? What effect do they have on student learning in secondary schools?		Views on teacher-student relationships and the effect on student learning	
10. Is there any school rules and regulations that guide teacher-learner relationships in the school learning environment?		School rules and regulations that guide teacher-student relationships	
11. In your understanding, how can teacher-learner relationships be improved at secondary schools in the Khomas region?		Ways of improving teacher-student relationships	

Closing remarks – Moderator: Thank you once again for your co-operation and time. The information obtained from these discussions is of much value to me and would be extremely useful for my thesis discussion.

Thank you for your time and participation

Appendix J: CHECKLIST FOR CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

SCHOOL: **DATE:**

SUBJECT: **LESSON/TOPIC:**

GRADE:………………….

TEACHER: **TIME: ……………………….**

1. **Physical aspects of the class:**

    a. Physical size of the classroom.

    ----

    b. Seating arrangement of learners in the classroom.

    ----

    c. Furniture condition (chairs, and tables in the classroom, teachers'?).

    ----

2. **The use of teaching and learning materials in the classroom.**

    a. Textbook, b. Teacher's prepared materials, c. Supplementary materials.

    ----

3. **Teacher attention to learners in the classroom.**

    a. By names, b. By gesture, c. By stance / facing them or not, d. By eye contact.

    e. Verbal prompts.

    ----

4. **Classroom management control by teacher.**

    a. Instruction, b. Pair work, c. Group work, d. Monitoring, e. Checking

    ----
    ----

5. **Teacher's classroom interactions with the learners.**
   a. Friendly,   b. Helpful, c. Supportive, d. Distant,   e. Indifferent.

   ----

6. **Learners' classroom interactions with the teacher.**
   a. Animated,   b. Active,   c. Attentive,   d. Disinterested,   e. Passive.

   ----

7. **General comments of the classroom environment, and observations.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION