

Teacher Student Relationship in Higher Education Institutions of Sri Lanka

M. A. N. Rasanjalee Perera
University of Sri Jayewardenepura
rasanjalee@sjp.ac.lk

Teacher student relationship is one of the most powerful elements within the learning environment. In modern society, teacher student relationship is defined by questioning and arguing instead of obedience and acceptance in traditional society. Teacher is not only a person who teaches subject matters, but also plays his/ her role as an important secondary socialization agent, counsellor, advisor, supporter as well as a faithful and close adult. Students can share their problems with their teachers and get effective solutions for any kind of socio economic, psychological, and personal or education matters. Hence, teaching is considered as a profession of honor and every one respects teachers throughout the history. However, due to several factors, its dignity has been severely damaged in current society and teacher student relationship is being faded away creating a gap. Situation is more critical within the higher education sector in Sri Lanka.

This study attempts to understand why teacher student relationship is important, to investigate the nature of the teacher student relationship in universities in Sri Lanka and to identify the reasons for the existing situation of phenomenon, and to examine its impact on university education as objectives of the study. A random sample of 50 students was selected in third year 25 academics from the faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Management Studies and Commerce, of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Questionnaire survey and discussions were the data collection techniques. Data was descriptively analyzed adopting the attachment theory that provides a descriptive and explanatory framework for discussion of interpersonal relationships between human beings. Findings clearly evident a weak teacher student relationship within the university. All most all students and many lecturers are highly dissatisfied with student teacher relationship. According to the students' point of view, university lecturers show less closeness and kindness, not given an adequate attention to them and don't try to understand their problems. Such unfavorable learning environment adversely affect their education. Academics pointed out that students do not respect lecturers referring to number of reasons such as "tuition culture in country", "busy life style of both lecturers and students", "having a large number of students in a batch" that reduces the possibility of individual attention, "students' addiction internet and mobile chatting" rather than companying with others. Attitudes of both of them and higher workload including too many curricular requirements and the impact of changing values and norms in mass society etc. are further barriers in developing good teacher student relationship. In summing up, study suggests that this matter should be analyzed continuously and scientifically as positive teacher – student relationship is essential to ensure the real meaning of the education that makes a greater contribution to the socio economic and moral development of society.

Key words; higher education; relationship; students; teacher; university education
