# STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

*Ng Ching Yee[1], Yeo Kee Jiar[2]*
[1,2]Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia
Corresponding Author[1]ngchingyee69@yahoo.com.my

**ABSTRACT:**
Teacher's readiness to form warm relationships with students might serve as a protective factor for at-risk student. The objectives of this study are to examine (i) the student-teacher relationships in closeness; (ii) the student-teacher relationships in conflict. This research design adopts the quantitative method. Non-probability sampling involving purposive sampling is used in this study. 35 teachers from 6 Chinese National Type schools from regular education classes rated Year Three students from six schools in Johor Bahru on their student-teacher relationships. Student-teacher Relationship Scale Short Form STRS-SF (Pianta, 2001) is a 15-item self-report measures teachers believes of the quality of the teacher-child relationships. 23.5 % of teachers have moderate level of total closeness of student-teacher relationships. 53.9 % and 23.5% of teachers .

## INTRODUCTION

Positive relationships between a teacher and a student contribute to social and emotional development. However, relationships characterised by conflict between students and teachers can inevitably lead to anxiety, disaffection, poor academic performance, and behavioural disorders in school (O'Connor, Dearing & Collins, 2011). There is a significant amount of supporting student-teacher relationships as being a protective factor in a student's academic outcomes, and in producing social-emotional outcomes and a healthy classroom environment (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). High-quality student-teacher relationships protect the students at risk of experiencing behaviour problems in primary school (Ng & Yeo, 2018). Furthermore, there is increasing evidence that students demonstrate negative views of themselves through having low-quality relationships with teachers resulting in behaviour problems, compared to those students who have positive views of themselves through acquiring high-quality relationships with teachers (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Thus, it is vital to improving the impact and quality of the daily interactions of teachers with students to form warm relationships with students might serve as a protective factor for at-risk student.

Within the Bronfenbrenner Bioecology systems interaction perception, it is anticipated that behaviours reciprocally influence each other. For instance, a student with behaviour problems will tend to create negative student-teacher relationships which can ultimately cause the student to dislike school and

disengage from learning. When students feel disengaged, they are at a much greater risk of increasing antisocial behaviours along with lower academic achievement (O'Connor et al., 2011). The relationship between student conduct problem and negative student-teacher relationships is well known. Teachers' emotional and professional competencies are important to classroom connections and students' emotional and behavioural problems. It has been indicated that when a classroom environment is characterized by warm and respectful relationships, students do better academically, because they are more engaged in the learning and teaching process (Poulou, 2017). Most of the previous studies are concerned on the externalizing and internalizing behaviour problems within individual student. When student exhibit externalizing and internalizing behaviour, teachers view students' deficits rather than the contexts factors that cause misbehaviour (CASEL, 2012). Teachers tend to assist student to gain self-control of their behaviour. The context factors have been ignored in dealing with the externalizing and internalizing behaviour problems, which the student have been considered the main causes for the inappropriate behaviours. There is little research on the student-teacher relationships in the classroom context to improve social emotional learning on externalizing and internalizing behaviours.

Teachers' emotions are increasingly recognized as the foundation of their beliefs toward their students, and their capability to offer a psychologically safe classroom atmosphere (Ng &Yeo 2018).  At the same time, Teachers beliefs on the student-teacher relationships are revealed in their connections in the classroom, which influence student adaptation to school. Primary schools teachers training is focus on effective instructional, but not student-teacher relationships (O'Conner et al., 2011). It is vital that the school counsellors and teachers have the knowledge, attitude and skills to assist these students cope with their emotions (Che Rozaniza Azizan, Asbah Razali & Rajalingam Pillai, 2013). Fostering student-teacher relationships in primary school is crucial to adjust student's behaviour problems. Teachers play an important role in redirecting student with behaviour problems into the right track of developmental trajectories.

In sum, promoting good communications among student and teachers can improve teacher-student relationships, in turn to enhance social emotional learning. Providing teachers with the information concerning the protecting role of positive teacher-student relationships for students with internalizing behaviour problems might be specifically vital in preventing students from maladaptive behaviour with their teachers (Conner et al, 2011). In respects to teacher education, the current study demonstrated the importance of enhancing elementary school teachers' awareness on their role of building positive relationships with student and providing teachers with information on how to develop positive relationships with their students. Due to the important impact on student education, and student-teacher relationships would be examined specifically.

Therefore, further research is needed in order to gain a better understanding of student-teacher relationships and behaviour problems. Preventive intervention programs that establish high-quality student-teacher relationships for students and an intervention on enhancing student-teacher relationships may help to reduce students from developing behaviour problems in elementary school. This study considers that class-based intervention is a combination of efforts of teachers and students as they both play a vital role and mutually influence throughout the learning and teaching process. Indeed, student-teacher

relationships are related to the student's emotional responses to the classroom environment, so teachers need to provide a positive classroom environment for students to engage in classroom learning.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *The Association between Student-Teacher Relationships and Academic Outcome*

Student-teacher relationships is characterised by conflict and closeness. Conflict describes the relationships that are characterised by degrees of negativity relationship. However, closeness indicates a close relationship which is characterised by "trust, warmth, and low conflict". Positive relationships between teachers and students is characterised by trust, warmth, intimacy, care, understanding, mutual recognition, open communication and cooperation (Ng &Yeo 2018).

Research has shown that conflict is significantly associated with externalising behaviour. Likewise, students with externalising problems appear to be at a greater risk of having negative relationships with their teachers (O'Connor, 2010). In this case, teachers have difficulty in managing students displaying externalising behaviour problems thereby creating conflict between the teacher and student. However, closeness was not significantly associated with externalising behaviour, signifying that as conflict decreases, externalising behaviour also decreases (Wells, 2014). Similarly, teachers will have a conflict with students who exhibit inattention behaviour problems (Thijs & Koomen, 2009).

Given that student behaviour problems are associated with student-teacher relationships, behaviour problems have the strongest association with negative relationships, particularly regards to externalising behaviour. Moreover, student behaviour problems tend to cause distress between the teacher and student which eventually affects the student's behaviour. Therefore, as students with behaviour problems create stress for teachers, and in turn increasing teacher-student conflict, this conflict situation will continue to evolve if left untreated, impacting other students.

O'Conner et al.'s (2011) research on moderate stages of externalising problems in early childhood showed a decline in externalising problems. Students involved in negative student-teacher relationships displayed a significant level of behaviour problems in elementary school. The findings revealed that negative relationships would invariably hinder the student's positive socio-emotional and behavioural development while positive relationships would support positive behaviour development. O'Connor et al. (2011) also revealed that the quality of the relationship might impact the student's social-emotional and behavioural development in which growing quality in a relationship would support the student's socio-emotional and behavioural development.

On the other hand, within low-quality relationships, teachers may not provide a supportive environment for students and in fact, may hinder students from obtaining support from the relationship, and in turn, the student may consider the teacher incapable of providing emotional support (O'Conner et al., 2011). Within high-quality relationships, teachers support students with creating a positive behavioural support environment. Students with externalising problems tend to have student-teacher relationships marked with higher levels of conflict and are less likely to benefit from the positive effects that would

result from high-quality student-teacher relationships. Notably, these students also tend to have less instructional and positive feedback from their teachers.

None the least, teacher-student conflict is related to negative academic performance, school avoidance, negative attitudes and behaviour. The closeness of the student-teacher relationships is related to positive academic performance, school engagement and enjoyment in school. Accordingly, a negative teacher-student relationship is challenging concerning externalising and internalising problems. High-quality relationships tend to be related to fewer behaviour problems and help to develop the student's social skills and self-control development while low-quality relationships tend to be associated with behaviour problems (O'Conner et al., 2011).

Furthermore, during primary school, conflict student-teacher relationships are the main cause of many behaviour problems (Setanni, Prino, Sclavo, Fraire, & Longobardi, 2017). Teachers will tend to have difficulties and conflicts with students who exhibit inattention behaviour problems given then jeopardise social abilities and interactions, impede good school performance, hinder the development of positive attitudes towards school work and increase the risk of absenteeism from school (Thijs & Koomen, 2009).

On the other hand, positive student-teacher relationships let students to feel psychologically secure in the school educational environment by providing conducive environments for the development of vital social and academic skills (O'Connor et al., 2011). In developing positive relationships with teachers, students learn about appropriate and proper behaviour, and relevant rules and regulations adopted by society (O'Connor et al., 2011; Poulou, 2014). According to O'Connor et al. (2011) students who experience positive relationships with caregivers are better able to cope with negative emotions, to take the perceptions of others into account, and to manage their behaviour. Many studies have shown that conflict is significantly associated with externalising behaviour (Wells, 2014). Therefore, teachers need to take time in developing positive student-teacher relationships in order to create a positive learning environment towards meaningful learning.

Primary school teacher training is mainly focused on effective instructional strategies, but not on student-teacher relationships (O'Conner et al., 2011). Fostering student-teacher relationships in primary school is critical in addressing and adjusting student behavioural problems. To this end, teachers play an important role in redirecting students with behaviour problems in the right areas of developmental trajectories. Although, it is vital that school counsellors and teachers have the correct knowledge, attitude and skills to assist these students in coping with their behaviour and emotions (Azizan, Razali & Pillai, 2013).

In conclusion, student-teacher relationships are directly associated with academic outcomes as many studies support that a positive student-teacher relationships is important for academic achievement. Likewise, positive student-teacher relationships are essential for the student's ability to achieve social, emotional, and academic success. Consequently, student-teacher relationships provide an understanding of how relationships affect behavioural developmental in that positive student-teacher relations correlate positively with student academic, behavioural, and social competencies. Accordingly, a positive student-teacher relationship is viewed as important protective measures that can help improve student behaviour problems.

### *The Association between Student-teacher Relationship and Students' Behaviour*

Conner et al 2011 indicated that high quality student-teacher relationships expected low levels of externalizing behaviour level. Poulou's study(2017) confirmed that teachers were less likely to address students' emotional, hyperactivity and conduct problems when they argued closeness in relationships with their students, and more likely to address peer difficulties and hyperactivity when they beliefs conflict in their relationship. High quality relationships represented as protective factors, helping to inhibit students with high levels of internalizing behaviour in early childhood from developing trajectories of long term internalizing behaviour (Conner 2011). O'Conner et al. (2011) previous research with moderate levels of externalizing problems in early childhood showed declined in externalizing problem in the moderate-low and moderate group. This research identifies four grade groups of student: strong, strong-worsening, poor-worsening, or poor-improving. Student in the negative group for student-teacher relationships revealed high level of internalizing and externalizing behaviours problem in the elementary school. The findings revealed that negative relationship would hinder student's positive socio-emotional and behavioural development while positive relationship would support positive behaviour development.

In sum, high quality student-teacher relationships appeared to defense students from the risks normally related with early internalizing behaviour. Conflict in student-teacher relationships correlated highly with students' behaviour. Problems of externalizing showed the closest association with conflict scores. The findings reveal that different strategies may be needed to encourage closeness and lessen conflict in student-teacher relationship. Early interventions for students with behaviour problems may be particularly important to prevent high levels of externalizing behaviour.

This finding may provide a foundation for risk posed by students' hyperactivity and conduct behaviour. This confirmed that student-teacher closeness and conflict were related with students' externalizing behaviour problems. Perceptions of teacher-student relationship have the power to students' emotional and behavioural difficulties. The high level of social-emotional learning skills, and teaching ability may help teachers to emphasis on their students positive relationship. In turn, students who received teacher closeness may be related with less emotional problems by their teachers.

### *The Effect of the Student-Teacher Relationships on Students and Teachers*

Literatures demonstrate the importance of positive student-teacher relationships as a contributor to positive learning achievement (Drugli & Hjemdal, 2013; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; O'Connor et al., 2010), but exactly what teachers can do to develop good relationships with students is less documented. Providing information and raising awareness of teachers on student-teacher relationships to support student at-risk are crucial to prevent the student to develop high level of behaviour problems in primary school. Teachers can foster skills in students through their interpersonal and student-centred instructional interactions throughout the school day. Student-teacher interactions support Social Emotional Learning when they result in positive student-teacher relationships, enable teachers to teach Social emotional competencies for students, and improve behaviour problems.

During primary school, the conflict student-teacher relationships are at the causes of many behaviour problems (Setanni, Prino, Sclavo, Fraire, & Longobardi, 2017). They jeopardize social abilities and interactions; impede good school performance; hinder the development of positive attitudes on school work and increase the risk of absent from school. Positive relationship between teacher and student allows students to feel psychologically secure in school educational environment, providing positive environments for the improvement of significant social and academic skills (O'Connor et al., 2011). In positive relationships with teachers students learn about proper behaviour, relevant rules and regulations adopted by society. O'Conner et al (2011) shows that student who experience positive in relationships with caregivers are better able to cope with negative emotions, to take the perceptions of others, and to manage behaviour. Effective teachers take times to develop positive student-teacher relationships to create a positive learning environment for meaningful learning.

Student-teacher relationships associate with academic outcomes. The researches support that positive student-teacher relationships are important for academic achievement. Positive student-teacher relationships are essential to a student's ability to achieve social, emotional, and academic success. Student-teacher relationships provide an understanding of how relationships affect the behavioural developmental. Positive student-teacher relations correlate positively with students' academic, behavioural, and social competencies.

Student with externalizing problems appear to be at risk of having high-conflict relationships with their teachers (O'Connor et al., 2011). Teachers feel difficulty to manage student externalizing behaviours problems causing the teacher to have conflict with students. Researches indicated that conflict significantly related with externalizing behaviour, but closeness was not significantly related with externalizing behaviour, signifying that as conflict decreases, externalizing behaviour also decreases (Wells, 2014). Teachers will have conflict with students whom exhibit inattention behaviour problems (Thijs & Koomen, 2009). Student's externalizing and internalizing behaviour are associated with student-teacher relationships. Internalizing and externalizing problems have the strongest relations with negative relationships, mostly externalizing behaviour.

Students' behaviour problems distress their relationship with their teacher, which eventually affects the students' behavioural. Students with externalizing behaviour problems cause stress for teachers, thus increasing teacher-student conflict, and this conflict would cause the students to display externalizing behaviour problems. Within low-quality of relationship, teachers may not provide a supportive environment for student. Student with low quality relationship with their teachers may inhibit student from getting support from the relationship, causing them unable to use the teacher as a support of emotional instruction (O'Conner et al., 2011). On the other hand, within high-quality of relationship, teachers support student with positive behavioural support environment. Student with externalizing problems tend to have negative student-teacher relationships with higher levels of conflict, and they are less likely to benefit from the positive effects that would come from positive student–teacher relationships. Negative student-teacher relationships causes negative attitudes toward school. These students also tend to obtain less instructional and positive feedback from their teachers.

Student with negative teacher-student relationships with their teachers often become disconnected with classroom activities. Teacher-student conflict is related to negative academic performance, school avoidance, negative attitudes and behaviour. The closeness of the student-teacher relationships is related to positive academic performance, school engagement and enjoyment in school. A negative teacher-student relationships is challenging on externalizing and internalizing problems. High-quality relationships related to lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviours and develop student's social skill and self-control development. On the other hand, low-quality of relationships associated with externalizing and internalizing behaviour problems.

In sum, students who with behavioural and learning difficulties, those who also with a close student-teacher relationships had better school outcomes than those who did not have close student-teacher relationships. A close teacher-student relationships was projecting of adaptive school outcomes. There is a research that supports the idea that high student-teacher relationships high in closeness can become protecting factors for future externalizing behaviours.

### *Theoretical Perspectives on Student-Teacher Relationships*
In this study, the researcher proposes that the Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) developmental-ecological theoretical perspectives are used as the framework to examine student-teacher relationships, in the classroom context over a certain period. The framework provides a useful method in order to understand the underlying causes of behavioural problems as many of the behaviours exhibited by students result from various risk factors, such as individual, family, teachers, school, social, biological and environmental factors. Indeed, behaviour is the product of dynamic relationships that exist between individuals and their surrounding environment. In this context, students not only influence the environment, but they are also moulded by their surrounding environment (Poulou, 2014).

Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Theory emphasises the importance of human relationships and interacting with the environment to increase the positive impact on the individual's behaviour problem. Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological model was initially developed from the ecology of human development which includes a process, person, context and time (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015) with many of the applications of the theory on the Ecology of Human Development based mainly on the concepts relating to certain contexts. The ecological model highlights the human understanding of others and one's self within the system of interpersonal and physical environmental contexts. Furthermore, it provides a framework in addressing an individual's macro-system, exosystem, mesosystem, and micro-system of experience. An individual's experiences within ecological surroundings highlight the interrelatedness of humans and their behavioural, cognitive and emotional behaviours.

Notwithstanding, in terms of bioecological theory, mutual interaction between an individual and the surrounding environments, the integration of people, objects, and symbols is defined as a proximal process (Ashiabi & Neal, 2015) In this regard, the process, the individual or person, context and time are considered as causal factors in predicting student behaviour. Proximal processes are the development processes of interaction between a person and their surrounding environment in which the process refers to the interactions between teachers and students; the interaction between peer groups and interaction between a student and an object. Bronfenbrenner further suggested that individuals continuously interact with these systems and likewise, both

individuals and their environments constantly affect one another. In the PPCT model, proximal processes are progressively complex mutual interactions that exist between people and their environment which may involve persons, objects, or symbols. In this context, the environment influences the process and person, while the person represents personal characteristics and skills (Ashiabi & Neal, 2015).

Therefore, based on the bio-ecological model, contextual influences are facilitated by proximal processes, and the student's socio-emotional development (Ashiabi & Neal, 2015). Moreover, proximal processes can lessen or be a buffer against environmental differences in developmental outcomes. For instance, high levels of student-teacher interaction decrease problem behaviour. Here, the prominence is on the mutual of interaction. The basis of proximal processes are centred on the bidirectional relationships in which the ecology modifies the person, and the person, in turn, modifies the ecology (Kuperminc, Smith, & Henrich, 2013; Smith, 2011). Although, proximal processes need to be mutual and occur regularly over a time to motivate effective development (Ashiabi & Neal, 2015).

Ecologically oriented programs emphasise teaching skills, creating real-life opportunities to student-teacher relationship factors as immediate factors that have an impact on students' developmental outcome in the classroom. The effectiveness of skills-training programs relies on how socialisation patterns are encouraged and supported in the intervention setting. Therefore, based on Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory, the researcher hypothesises that proximal processes (student-teacher relationships) have an impact on students behaviour developmental outcomes.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Method and Data
The objectives of this study are to examine (i) the student-teacher relationships in closeness; (ii) the student-teacher relationships in conflict. This research design adopts the quantitative method. Non-probability sampling involving purposive sampling is used in this study. 35 teachers from 6 Chinese National Type schools with experience in teaching Year Three students rated Year Three students from Johor Bahru on their student-teacher relationship. The student participants for this study came from six schools in Johor Bahru. Different schools were selected to obtain the sample from different geographical areas. 35 Chinese National type teachers were recruited for this study, consisting of different gender with different teaching experiences and they rated three Year Three primary school students in Johor Bahru, Malaysia from regular education classes.

### Instrument
Student-teacher Relationship Scale Short Form STRS-SF (Hamre & Pianta, 2001) is a 15-item self-report assesses teacher perceptions of the quality of the teacher-child relationship The items were from the original Italian of the regular STRS (Pianta, 2001). The reduced number of items in the STRS-SF allows for the use with other instruments without increasing teacher workloads. The closeness and conflict subscales of the relationships are studied. In the STRS-SF, the closeness subscale is the teacher's beliefs of the seek comfort, sharing, beliefs of self-efficacy and trust. The conflict scale concerns the teacher's beliefs of temper, the student have difficulties in dealing with the conflict. Teachers assess the questionnaire based on their current relationship

with a student by using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=definitely does not apply; 2=not really; 3=neutral, not sure; 4=applies somewhat; 5=definitely applies.). The STRS-SF comprises 15 items that measure 2 dimensions of teacher–student relationships: Closeness and Conflict. The closeness subscale consists of 8 items measures the amount of positive interactions in the relationship. On the other hand, the conflict subscale consists of 7 items and measures conflicting interactions. Closeness items are aimed to obtain information about perceived positively within the relationship, whereas conflict items attain information about perceived negatively within the relationship. Whereas, closeness can be characterised as positive teacher-student relationships, positive attitudes toward school, involvement, open communication, and engagement. In this study, closeness measures the perceptions of closeness with the student, which measures students' willingness to share their feelings and teachers taking care of students' feelings. In this study, the conflict element measures the negative aspects of the relationships, such as disagreeing interactions and the absence of positive student-teacher relationships. Conflict measures the emotional drain that the teacher from dealing with the student.

### *Validity and Reliability of STRS-SF*
The STRS-SF comprises two subscales: Conflict (eight items) and Closeness (six items). The STRS-SF instrument has good internal consistency ($\alpha>0.80$), high correlations with the scales from the STRS ($r > 0.90$) (Setanni et al., 2017). Drugli & Hjemdal (2013) found the closeness and conflict subscales showed good reliability. The Cronbach's $\alpha$ values for the closeness subscale were 0.82 and the conflict subscale were 0.84.

This model displayed good concurrent validity, in that student conduct problems were associated positively and strongly with the conflict subscale and negatively related with the closeness scale. Correlation analysis indicated that a significant positive correlation between the student externalization problems and STRS-SF conflict scale on the Teacher Rating Form (TRF) ($r=0.80$, $p<0.001$), and a significant but low negative association between the student externalization problems and STRS closeness scale and ($r=-0.23$, $p<0.001$).

The validity of the STRS-SF was studied in a national sample of 863 Norwegian school student in grades 1–7 (aged 6–13). The CFA of the STRS-SF supported the shortened version. The concurrent validity of the STRS-SF was found to be good (Drugli & Hjemdal, 2013). Results show that the 14-item instrument displays good internal consistency ($\alpha >0.80$). Cronbach's alpha is used in calculating reliability of the STRS in this Study. The content validity of the instruments is examined by two expertise lecturers in educational psychology.

The mean of each closeness and conflict scale will be used to calculate a dimension score. Each student's total scores of closeness and conflict were divided by the total number of items assessing that construct. The amounts of closeness and conflict will determine the quality of the relationship. Higher scores reveal higher quality relationships, whereas lower scores reveal lower quality relationships. No wording or rating scales of any items on the measures should be modified. The closeness subscale consists of 8 items ranging from 8 to 40, where higher scores show higher levels of closeness in the student–teacher relationships. On the other hand, the conflict subscale consists of 7 items and measures disharmonious interactions ranging from 7 to 35. For all other students, the total conflict and Closeness scores were calculated by sum up the values for the Conflict subscale and the values for the Closeness scale

respectively. Low levels of closeness and high levels of conflict indicate low-quality relationships. High levels of closeness and low levels of conflict indicate high-quality relationships.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**
In table 1, 22.5 % of teachers have moderate level of total closeness of student-teacher relationships. 53.9 % and 23.5% of teachers in the high level and very high level of closeness level of teacher-child relationship. 22.5% of the teachers have moderate high level of closeness of student-teacher relationships. Only 2.9% of teachers have low closeness of student-teacher relationships. 42.2 % and 20.6% of teachers in the moderate high level and very high level of conflict respectively. This indicated that, many (62.8%) of the teachers have conflict with the students.

**Table 1**. Student-teacher Relationships Level

|  | Closeness | | Conflict | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | n | % | n | % |
| *Very high level* | 24 | 23.5 | 0 | 0 |
| *High level* | 55 | 53.9 | 21 | 20.6 |
| *Moderate high level* | 23 | 22.5 | 43 | 42.2 |
| *Low level* | 3 | 2.9 | 33 | 32.4 |
| *Very low level* | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4.9 |

The findings of the study indicated that the student-teacher relationships among Year Three students were not satisfied. Majority of the students need to have preventive intervention, although minority of the students performed well in student-teacher relationships. Prevention and intervention in enhancing student-teacher relationships to reduce behaviour problems might benefit the students who in the typical range and need for instruction. Findings of the study showed that training and coaching, regular support and monitoring could produce significantly different results. This implies that professional development opportunities should be offered to in-service teachers for the closeness of teacher-student relationships to ensure quality teaching in the classrooms. Pre-service teachers should be trained to use instructional strategies which are de bono approach to ensure optimum learning. Similar types of trajectories of externalizing behaviours have been known in previous research.

Further work is required to have better understanding on the student-teacher relationships. Preventive intervention programs emphasize on developed high-quality student-teacher relationships for student and intervention focus on improving student-teacher relationships may decrease student from displaying high levels of internalizing and externalizing problems in elementary school. This study believes that a class-based intervention is a combination of teachers' and student's efforts. Both teachers and student play vital roles and mutually influence throughout the teaching and learning process. The student-teacher relationships are related to student's emotional responses to the classroom environment. Teachers need to provide positive classroom environment for student to be engaged in the learning classes.

*Limitation and Future Directions*

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, the data were gathered based on the teachers' self-report and no qualitative data analysis techniques were used to observe what was really happening in class. Multiple sources of data from parents and students including qualitative data gathering procedures such as interview and observation can be included in further studies. Combining different approaches to assessing student-teacher relationships yield a more accurate and comprehensive information.

This study is relying on teachers' self-reports. The use of mixed-method designs, would aid to overcome this limitation. Secondly, this study measured student-teacher relationships and students at one point in time, longer-term of data collection are required to clarify on how student-teacher relationships vary over time. Finally, there was no treatment given in the current study to scrutinize the changes and effects in the students' student-teacher relationship. An experimental design would have revealed the reasons behind the students' student-teacher relationship and provide a better understanding of student-teacher relationship influence on the development of social-emotional skills and students' behaviour so that schools could customise the interventions that best fit their needs.

This study involved a small number of participants (N=68) from a Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The research could be extended to include a larger sample of participants and include participants communicating in a different language. Replication of the research in other districts or geographical regions would help to provide a valuable tool for determining the extent to which the research findings could be generalised across geographical regions.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Conclusion
In spite of these limitations, the present study is a way to have a better understanding of the factors related with student-teacher relationship. STRS short form offers a brief and easy way to examine the important qualities in student-teacher relationship. All in all, the findings include results of short form in respectively of primary students. These findings should be useful for school psychologists, primary teachers, and researchers who are involved in the valuation of the quality of student-teacher relationships, students' emotional and behavioural problems, as well as the association between student-teacher relationships and students' emotional and behavioural problems.

It extends the findings of previous research that established relations between the quality of student-teacher relationships and teachers' psychological (Brown, 2010; Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, & Vesely, 2014) Greater insight was obtained as to the teacher awareness may relate to students' emotional and behavioural difficulties. Poulou 2017 suggested that the emotional components of student-teacher relationship, in conjuction with teachers' professional skills, minimization of students' emotional and behavioural problems. Teaching efficacy is potential teacher-based factors in student-teacher relationships and students' behaviour.

Positive relationships between teachers and students are associated positively with student academic achievement (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, & Taylor, 2011). Students' tend to appreciate teachers who demonstrate care, listening to students, ready to provide necessary assistance, encouragement, praise, showing patience, and respecting their opinions. The quality associated with

student-teacher relationships has a significant impact on learning motivation. In this case, positive relationships help to foster the formation of the pupil's interest in the subject, will help them believe in themselves and help to motivate pupils to learn better. This research accompanied by the intervention efforts may help teachers in becoming more aware of the importance of developing closer relationships with students that will lead to better outcomes. Likewise, the professional development of teachers can help to support teachers in understanding how their attitudes might impact their students.

In summary, students will be more successful in school and life when they can manage themselves, understand the emotions and opinions of others, their own beliefs and perspectives that relate to others and in making the right decisions. In the short term, these social and emotional skills will result in more positive attitudes towards oneself, others, and tasks; forming more positive social relationships and behaviours with adults and peers; reducing inappropriate behaviour; reducing problems and decreasing emotional distress; and improving attendance at school, grades, and test scores. In the longer term, improved student-teacher relationships can help to increase the possibility of high school graduation, positive work performance, family atmosphere, reduce criminal behaviour, good citizenship, and career success.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is expected that this study will provide sufficient information on how to support and develop high-quality student-teacher relationships. The preventive intervention program has focused on developing high-quality student-teacher relationships in order to avoid students from developing a high level of behaviour problems. Teachers can serve as an intervening factor in this process to redirect students toward healthier outcomes and assist students in developing positive behaviour and social-emotional skills, which will enhance their learning ability. Moreover, it is important to identify students' externalising and internalising behaviours as a basis for curriculum development and integrating social and emotional skills into the curriculum.

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