TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS AND STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the dissertation of *Laxman Bhattarai*, for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership presented on January 13, 2023 entitled *Teacher-Student Relationship and Students' Learning Experiences: A Narrative Inquiry*

Abstract Approved by

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Asst. Prof. Shesha Kanta Pangeni, PhD

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Various studies are carried out on the teacher-student relationship, but my experience and the review of related literature observed the lack of research on its influence on the student's learning experience. To address this gap, I carried out this study. Its main purpose was to explore how students have experienced their learning activities based on the teacher-student relationship. I used the paradigm of interpretivism, and narrative inquiry as a methodology of my study. Using lens of cognitive constructivist theory, social constructivist theory and attachment theory, I explored the stories of six participants (students) from different schools in Palpa district. They shared their learning experiences based on the teacher-student relationship. Also, I explored whether or not this relationship is supportive to develop their curiosity and passion for the student learning.

The study found that the teacher-student relationship has multilayer dimensions to deal with. Treating every student with friendly behavior, loving and caring is positive side of student learning. Accepting and respecting the values of

students' voices based on the practical knowledge in and from their daily life is a strong and organic way for students to learn.

In this study, the relationship between the teachers and the students was a process of valuing the student's dignity in aligning with their learning and academic performance. When students feel loved, cared for, secured, and empowered by their teachers, they are positive to their teachers. They begin to present themselves as being competent enough to increase their learning and academic performance. In this study, loving and caring, responsibility, empowerment, and motivation were explored as the qualities to increase the students learning whereas humiliation, irresponsibility, misbehavior, and punishment were explored as the characteristics contributing to decreasing the students learning and their academic performance.

This study carries deep value on students learning. It sheds light on the existing phenomena of teacher-student relationships and practices in public schools to increase the students learning. Also, this study illustrates how the relationship motivates the students to increase their learning interest and enhance their academic performance.

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This dissertation entitled *Teacher-Student Relationship and Students' Learning Experience: A Narrative Inquiry* presented by *Laxman Bhattarai* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Education (Educational Leadership)* on January 13, 2023

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for the candidature of any other research degree at any university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late grandfather Dharma Raj Bhattarai. His inspiration, expectation, and trust in me turned valuable for me to achieve this academic success. His dreams for my higher degree became strong blessing and inspiration.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AACAP	American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
DOE	Department of Education
KUSOED	Kathmandu University, School of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCP	National Planning Commission
SEE	School Education Examination
SEDP	Secondary Education Development Program
SLC	School Level Certificate
SMC	School Management Community
SSDP	School Sector Development Panning
TSR	Teacher-Student Relationship
Participant (S1), (S2), ...(S6)	Pseudonyms of the participating Students
School (A) and (B)	Pseudonyms of the participants School

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of this chapter, I have articulated my learning experience, which inspired me to conceive this study as my academic responsibility. Under this topic, I have briefly highlighted my reflection on the issue. I have raised my queries as a problem statement. In addition, I have articulated the purpose and the rationale of my study along with the research question. This chapter ends up with some delimitations of my study.

Articulation of My Research Agenda

I am a permanent resident of Palpa, a mid-hill district of Western Nepal. I grew up in a middle-class family. I completed my high school education in my hometown. I can remember how I spent my school life. I was not much autonomous to make my learning choices. Most of my activities based on the directions of my teachers. During those days, I could not imagine that I could do anything beyond what was instructed by my teachers. There was hardly any comfortable space to go close to teachers and express myself. After completing school, I travelled to Kathmandu for my higher studies. While I was a graduate student in one of the colleges in the capital, I began to spend my free time engaging myself as a part-time career teacher in one of the schools near my residence. During the first days of my job, thinking of what impression I should develop as a teacher among my students, I decided that I would be a teacher of the kind my teachers were when I was a student myself. So, I maintained distancing; avoided many conversations; and focused only on completing what my management instructed me. But, unlike me, I could see other teachers and students sharing ideas on multiple topics beyond their assigned subject like talking

about their family relationships, world situations, and their psychological impressions with friends and teachers. Students would smile and laugh with teachers, talk about family and friends, share hobbies, and even plan for holidays trips together. This was the first time I experienced how students and teachers could share a different bond of comfort and closeness. They would talk about various other topics beyond regular subject activities of teaching and learning. By the time the first terminal ended, and the result was published, I discovered that most of the students were unable to do as well in my subject as they did in other subjects. From a conversation with one of my colleagues, it came to my notice that students in my class avoided open discussions. They did not enjoy my class and were hesitant to share their problems. Since then, I realized that the relationship between the teachers and the students is one crucial element for students' learning.

Conceptualization: Teacher-Student Relationship (TSR)

Regarding the subject matter, teacher-student relationship is a connection among the teacher and student which provides an enhanced atmosphere for a learning environment. Also, it stands as a friendship where one person tries to understand the problems faced by others and helps him/her to minimize the problem. Pianta et al. (2012) explain this relationship as the relationship of trust, which enables the students to be comfortable among the teachers and peers in presenting queries and sharing issues and problems. In addition, the strong and frequent interactions and interdependence over a significant time are considered the relationship (Knoell, 2012). Similarly, it emerges out of teachers ongoing interaction in a pleasing atmosphere (Hamre et al., 2012) that promote students to feel well with belongingness, which can ultimately sign to additional academic performance (Sabol & Pianta, 2012). Mitra (2003) also supports the view that the personal level start-up to

exchange hobbies, desires, learning difficulties, and issues between the teachers and students situated under a used-to atmosphere goes productive.

When I was a student, the teacher-student relationship was one of a hierarchical nature. Our classrooms were teacher-centered. Students were to comply with the directives given. But, coming to this time, there has been a gradual expansion in the educational system and social changes. This remarkable transformation placed a discourse for further exploration that the teacher-student relationship is a fundamental factor to increase the students learning (Mitra, 2003). Clark (2003) states that poor attendance, and poor academic performance is due to the cause of contradiction between teacher-student relationships on a personal level. If the teachers are unable to see the warning signs of students, then students become hopeless academically and personally. Supporting on the similar opinion, American Academy of Child, and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP, 2004) as cited in Le and Gobert (2015) states that when students are unable to get support from their teachers, they become unable to develop positive behaviour. They become isolated. Accordingly, Tyler & Lofstrom (2009) states that student wants to succeed personally or academically and increase their learning interest when teachers personally connect and intervene with their serious problems.

So, bringing evidence from my lived experiences and past studies, I could sense that emotion and interaction form strong elements in the relationship. The issue had been my topic of interest for a long. As an MPhil researcher in education, I began to believe that my study on the topics and the outcomes from it could explore the manifold dynamics of students learning experiences of schools in the context of Nepal.

Statement of the Problem

The teacher-student relationship for higher learning achievement is the focus of past studies in the Western context. Scholars like Mitra (2003) has shared ideas on how a good teacher-student relationship shapes students' positive attitude toward learning contributing to developing a positive attitude in students about teachers and school. Likewise, when I went through the study by Lee et al., (2019), I found that the teacher-student relationship helps to perform positive behaviours by providing respect, caring as well as the joy of learning.

In context of Nepal, it seems that the teacher-student relationship is mostly guided by a traditional belief that keeps teachers in an authoritative position. It means students should follow the instruction guided by the teachers. It shows the wrong practice. Difficult relationship acts as an obstacle to student learning and academic performance (Davis, 2001). It seems that our classrooms are teacher-centered and students are in their complete control. In our traditional education system, the teacher plays an authoritative role in a hierarchical position that lacks an enjoyable and equal relationship between teacher and student (Sharma, 2013). According to Lui (2013), t directly hampers the students learning and academic performance.

Simultaneously, in the system of education and research as well as its impacts on society, there has been a gradual development. A massive volume of resources has been spent on public schools, but the academic performance of public school students seems poor. Analyzing the SEE results of public schools in 2019, only 0.86 percentage students have achieved A+, 3.4 percent of students have achieved an A, and 69.02 percent of students have a chance to get a C+ or less [Setopati, 2076 (2019 AD)]. It shows the severe situation of the academic performance of students. Also, it indicates that there is something wrong. It made me to question the teacher-student

relationship for a better student learning experience. There are still many unanswered arguments in this area. Questions like- can teachers maintain a friendly relationship with students in our existing practice? Can we break our practice of authoritative relation to being open to communication between teacher and student? Can schools create a comfort zone to share the experiences of students with their teachers openly? Many of these questions are still unanswered. In this connection, I believe that this situation has laid a space for further exploration of the voices of students to uncover their experiences on how their learning and academic performance has been shaped with the relationship. There is no doubt that the increase in students' dropout rate, poor attendance, and decrease in grades and academic performance are the results of the distancing relationship between teacher and student (Wehlage et al., 1989).

But, as the human relationship is a complex phenomenon, there needs contextual understanding of the experiences. During my preliminary literature review, I didn't find any study that brings actual stories of the students that explore teacher-student relationships with their learning. To this end, this study was pursued to address this research gap by exploring how students share teacher-student relationships and how it contributes (or not) to enhancing their learning interest and academic performance (in the context of Nepal). I felt that further study was necessary to uncover the issue, taking voices from students in our context.

The Rationale of the Study

With this question striking me for a long time on whether or not the teacher-student relation has any role in shaping students' learning experiences, I was interested to conduct this study. Doing so, I could explore the multiple realities concerning the issue.

In my experience as a student-researcher, the study can be significant for addressing the importance of the teacher-student relationship in the educational achievement and attainment of high school children. This study supports educators and policymakers to prioritize the relationship as one prime aspect of school education. Also, this research paves a new dimension to the way we look at the relationship in our context, and developing the newer foundation of creating redefined values for education where teachers and students can share a common arena to discuss and work together with greater ease and comfort. This study may contribute to enriching quality school education for all. Also, I expect this study to bring multiple realities which possibly be a unique contribution to leadership literature in adding a cornerstone to the upcoming programs for educational leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the teacher-student relationship and students' learning experience through the stories of the students.

Research Question

1. How do students narrate their learning experience and academic performance based on a teacher-student relationship?

Delimitations of the Study

It was not possible to encompass all the areas in this small research work. So, I had to narrow down my study to certain limitations. The teacher-student relationship in this study was delimited to the relation of comfort between students and teachers including openness in presenting queries, sharing issues and problems outside of syllabus and curriculum, after-school discussions, and communication.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation has been organized into six chapters. Chapter one consists of the introduction of the study including my inspirational journey, my personal stories that create the scene setting for my study connected with the teacher-student relationship since my childhood to date. It is about the problem statement, the rationale of the study, the purpose of the study, including one research question and delimitation of the study. In chapter two, I made conceptual review regarding the literature introducing the teacher-student relationship and student learning. Research theory, empirical studies, research gap, and theoretical understanding are discussed in this chapter. In chapter three, I have presented my research methodology. It includes my philosophical consideration, research paradigm, information gathering, and meaning-making process. Also, I have portrayed the portfolio of my six participants in chapter three. The quality standards and ethical considerations are also presented. In chapters four and five, the episode of narrated stories of participants is displayed under five themes. At the end of the chapter, I generated the meaning with my reflection and theoretical discussion based on the perceptions and performance of my participants. Finally, I have placed the conclusion, implications, and reflection in chapter six. I have concluded my dissertation with a display of references that paid a valuable contribution to my study.

Chapter Essence

In this chapter, I articulated my conceptualization of the phenomenon with my closer past and present experiences of myself as a student and as a teacher. I was excited to begin this chapter with a series of events from my childhood when I was a student myself. Most of them were strongly rooted in the traditional culture and beliefs of moral values. I felt proud to reveal my learning experiences that sparked my

interest in this research journey. Also, I elaborated on my position as a teacher of my professional experiences. Then, I portrayed the scope of study in detail aligning with the statement of the problem of this study. I articulated the purpose of the study with a single research question for the study. In addition, I articulated the rationale of the study, justifying why I was interested in inquiry. I set the content of the delimitations of the study. This chapter concluded with the organization of the dissertation. The next chapter accounts for the selected literature review related to teacher-student relationships and student learning experiences.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I have presented the summary of literature review related to the study. It brings arguments regarding what research has been conducted in the field to explore the teacher-student relationship and how it contributes to enhancing students' learning experience and academic performance. The empirical studies and papers provide the background information for the study. This helped to guide the research study. Moreover, I have also reviewed some theoretical referents such as Vygotsky's social construction theory and Bowlby's attachment theory. In addition, I have reviewed the cognitive constructivist theory and Self-system theory as a supportive theory to understand the phenomenon. These theories supported me to revise and orient my research questions to explore students' learning experiences and make meaning of the narratives.

This chapter guided the research with the identification of the research gap and the preparation of a framework for a well-versed study on the research topic. The empirical perceptions of a variety of disciplines were also discussed from different viewpoints to find their authenticity with the current thinking on this topic. When I reviewed the various study regarding the topics, I found that there exist various kinds of literature supporting teacher-student relationships and student learning experiences. Thus, this chapter has built a connection with the established literature that supports the idea of my research topic.

Conceptual Review

Beginning from here is the conceptual review that conceptualizes the teacher-student relationship. The review particularly focused on the role of teacher-student

relationships like teachers' caring responses and constructive feedback on students learning engagement.

Teacher-Student Relationship and Student Learning

To understand the theme, when I went through the various studies, the evidence provided me with such understanding that the teacher-student relationship is an essential component for the healthy academic development of students (Gablinske, 2014). Numerous interventions were designed to improve student learning and academic performance. Also, I found that to prevent students from the risk of school failure, the teacher-student relationship might be an essential factor. Accordingly, seminal contributions made by Hamre and Pianta (2006) advocate that the social sphares and academic development depends upon accountability and standardized testing. Also, the author has suggested that strong relationships “provide a unique access to improve the social and learning environments of schools and classrooms” (p. 49). According to the above literature, I find that the quality interactions support in student learning. Gewertzs (2007) states that teachers’ counselling plays a significant difference in the lives of students. Also, the study shows that to improve the academic performance and personal issues of the students, teachers’ support such as the right support, personal development, and intent to the students plays an important role (Modlin, 2008). According to the research conducted by Guthrie and Davis (2003), teacher-student relationships also can be observed as an enlargement of the child-parent relationship as well as the inter-parent relationship.

On the other hand, some teachers feel that students should be kept at a distance, which benefit to teacher-student relationships (Old father & Thomas, 1998 as cited in Lee, 2012). Also, after reviewing the literature, I came to my understanding that the students are emotionally engaged and can contribute to the learning activities

when they perceive positive relations with teachers (Hughes et al., 2008). The negative interaction makes the teachers' feelings negative and stressed. They internalize these feelings as disrespectful or distant when there is a negative interaction with their students (Spilt et al., 2011). Also from the above study, it seems that the negative perceptions of teachers that are held by internalizations cannot improve the classroom environment as well as the teacher-student relationships. It ultimately hampers students' learning activities.

A study by Gregory and Weinstein (2004) as cited in Hamre and Piñata (2006) talked about the teacher-student relationship that it is an essential factor to increase the learning activities and academic performance of the students. According to this study, a good relationship is needed to increase the learning interest of the students. An undesirable relationship between teacher and student decreases the learning interest. It seems like a forecaster of degradations in the academic performance of students and future schools. Also, the positive relationship helps to decrease the disruptive behaviour, absences, and dropout level of students from the school (Cornelius-White, 2007). For Spilt et al. (2012), bad relationship seems as a predictor of chronic conflict that gradually declines the learning activities.

Hence, the above literature provides me with such understanding that the positive relationship between teacher and students results positive effect on the student's attitude that helps to increase their learning interest and academic performance.

Teacher-Student Relationship and Student Engagement

To make a broad understanding of the theme, I went through various literatures. A study conducted by Moreira et al. (2019) suggested that to increase the school quality as well as the learning activities of the students, the relationship

between teacher and student should be good to engage the students in the learning activities. Lee (2014) also states that the effect of behavioural engagement on students provides the efforts and sense of belonging in learning and reading activities. It gradually leads to the academic achievement of the students. According to Midgley, et al. (2001), the positive and supportive relationship helps them to perform better performance with great effort in difficult situations.

Weaker relationships degrade the students' academic performance. It increases the number of dropouts when there is a lack of the engagement of the students in the learning activities (Fredricks et al., 2004). Moreover, it emphasized the significant influence of student engagement in the learning activities to increase the academic performance of the students. As a result, the relationship should be good while in the teaching learning activities. It provides respectful, caring, excluding joyful learning that increases the engagement of the students in the learning activities and their academic outcomes (Lee et al., 2019). Also, the study showed that when the learning becomes interesting, challenging, fun, and relevant, students put more effort to learn and perform positive behaviours that ultimately increase the learning activities of the students.

Thus, from the above study it came to my understanding that the active and positive engagement of students in the classroom can create a relationship with teachers in the interactive and relevant course activities. As Garcia-Reid et al. (2005) suggest, it ultimately helps to increase the academic performance of the student.

Teachers' Feedback for Academic Performance

From my study regarding the theme, it seems that teachers' feedback is an important aspect in the classroom to increase the student's academic performance but the delivery of the feedback to the students is reduced due to the lack of teacher time

(Siewert, 2011). Like Brookhart (2008), my review of related literature found that feedback is the information that is provided to students which seems as the vital to improve the student's learning performance. In addition, effective feedback works as both inspirational and intelligent factors through the information. It provides suggestions with the comprehension that motivates the students positively towards the teachers. The study conducted by Lee (2008) also claims that the effective feedback is helpful to move into positive learning activities by focusing on the specific needs of the student that helps to increase the interest towards learning.

Some authors have also suggested that feedback is the process of enhancing learning outcomes. However, classroom feedback provides lots of learning opportunities to the students, which are commonly delivered by the teachers accordingly to the individual information (Boud & Molloy, 2013). The study suggested that teachers' feedback includes emotional, rational, relational, and social aspects. From the above literature, I came to my understanding that the various aspect of feedback from the teachers seems to be an essential factor to increase the learning and academic performance. Also, it is essential to maintain good relationships.

Students' Learning Experience

Student learning experiences encounter a broad range of learning environments that span both formal and informal domains in which teachers have a very significant role and long-life impact on all their students. This impact involves fostering student self-esteem as well as teaching in the classroom. Chu et al., (2019) also state that the activities such as interactions, discussion, and collaboration between classmates and teachers related to course materials increase the confidence level and communication skills. It simultaneously increases the positive learning experience of the students.

Teachers' actions have a significant role in student learning (McKeachie 2007). Also, it is an activity that is accomplished by the students that are guidance and facilitation by the teachers. However, learning is less likely to occur from what is presented by teachers. Also, the study suggests that the quality of education in the global context can only be ensured through the students learning experience (Mok, 2007). Therefore, the higher level of students' learning experience seems positive relationship with the quality of higher education (Harvey & Knight, 1996). Likewise, the learning experience of the student can be denoted as the overall experience of the teaching-learning activities within and beyond the classroom (Douglas et al. 2008). From the literature of the various studies, it can be realized that the teacher-student relationships and the students' learning depend upon the learning environment. It is necessary for caring the students with dignity, respect, collegiality, and humor, which will be profitable for the students learning and their academic performance (Modlin, 2008). Agreeing him, the characteristics of those students having effective learning experiences develop teacher-student relations. It needs time and effort on the part of adults in the student's life for individual and academic success.

The review enabled me to widen my inquiry in a way to explore the connection between experience and learning. *Experience* and *learning* both are the key terms, which I have frequently used in my thesis. If experience is the means, learning is the ends. Also, these two terms could be best understood through two closely related but fundamentally different theories i.e., cognitive constructivist and social constructivist theory. Where learning is more a cognitive phenomenon, experience is the byproduct of the wider interactions between the subjects and the objects in certain interactional context.

Students' Academic Performance

Academic performance is the knowledge and skills that students develop during the learning period (Narad & Abdullah 2016). Also, it is the multidimensional concept that is required to enhance the overall capacity of students in the higher institutions through social, emotional, and physical development. When I went through the study conducted by Nelson and Lorber (2009), it states that positive emotional stimuli help to recall newly learned information that supports to increase in the academic performance of the students. Likewise, the study conducted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India (2010) as cited in Poudel (2019), the indicators of the academic performance of the students are acknowledged into the three categories such as learning, professional extension, and academic contributions. The framework helps to enhance the capacity of students in the educational institutions. To motivate the students for learning, there should be a good relationship between teachers and students. It increases confidence in their abilities and helps to perform the task without any pressure (O'Connor et al., 2011). Regarding the problems related to students dropping out of school and to increase the positivity in long-term social and academic excellence, Stipek and Miles (2008) suggest that the positive relationship between teacher and student is a significant feature in the teaching-learning activities.

Hence, reviewing through the above literature, I developed a perception that academic performance is accomplished within a set of educational goals in a certain period. For Narad and Abdullah (2016), it depends upon the motivation, feedback, and positive stimuli to enhance the capacity of the students, teacher, and institutions.

Openness in Presenting Queries and Discussion for Student Learning

The students question as well as the scientific inquiry performs a significant role in the learning activities. Also, “it is one of the thinking processing skills which is structurally embedded in the thinking operation of critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving” (Cuccio-Schirripa & Steiner 2000, p. 210). Moreover, a prospective source has an ability to make a positive vibe in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, it also creates curiosity that provokes enthusiasm and interest in the subject matter, which gradually makes an improvement in the learning (Pearson & West, 1991). Furthermore, Mercer (2008) states that the quality of students' group interaction can improve the long-term maintenance of knowledge and skills that enables the construction of knowledge.

Likewise, the growth in the level of interaction between the teachers and students clearly inspires them to construct a supportive relationship. Also, the increase in the communication level gradually increases the confidence level as well as the learning effectiveness of the students. In studies conducted by Mashburn et al. (2008), it came to my notice that the openness in presenting queries and in the communication with each other, students feel supported, and comfortable with the teachers. It strengthens the students learning and academic performance. Learning beyond the classroom creates enthusiasm that provides real-world context. It increases self-esteem as well as improves the engagement of the students to raise academic achievement. Also, the learning activities and discussion beyond the classroom activities significantly grow the level of personal, social, and emotional development that leads to the increased academic performance of the students.

Hence, from the above literature, it can be concluded that openness in presenting queries, communication, and discussion helps to increase the students learning and their academic performance.

Theories Underpinning the Study

Theories develop a general explanation for the phenomena under study. They are suppositions or systems of ideas to explain a particular phenomenon based on general principles. I used Bowlby's attachment theory and social constructivist theory as theoretical referents in researching the student learning experience and academic performance based on teacher-student relations. Also, where necessary, I have used Piaget's cognitive constructivist theory and self-system theory as theoretical referents. These theories, in one way or another, undertake human relationships as socially and culturally constructed through interaction.

Keeping this notion in my mind, I have defined the theoretical premises for this study so that I could weave, generate, and construct the research knowledge from this study.

Bowlby's Attachment Theory

The first theory that I used for my study is Bowlby's attachment theory. When the teacher-student relationship and student learning experience is aligned with attachment theory, it enables students to feel secure and increase their level of confidence. Following Baker et al., (2008), it helps to explore how the students learning are shaped by the teacher-student relationship. Studies claim that a friendly relationship with teachers enhances adolescents' self-sufficiency (Riley, 2011). Here, my attempt as a researcher was to explore the teacher-student relationship and student learning experience via the theoretical lens of attachment theory. It provided me an

opportunity to explore the depths of this theory and comprehend how strongly it can explicate teacher-student relationship and student learning experience.

Bowlby theorized that the student could learn from interaction with others. Individuals with secure attachments increase their confidence level and approach to social interactions. It helps to maintain positive relationships with one another (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Riley (2011) indicates that secure attachments increase the interpersonal trust that accomplishes the close relationship between teachers and students which gradually increases student learning and academic performance of the students. It is to this end, I used Bowlby's attachment theory as the theoretical referent.

Social Constructivist Theory

The second theory that I used for my research is social constructionism. Social constructivist theory focuses on collaborative learning such as group inquiry and debates which helps the student to interact with the teachers to increase student learning and academic performance. Accordingly, the learner's construction of knowledge is the production of social interaction, experience, previous knowledge, interpretation, and understanding (Vygotsky, 1962). Following Vygotsky (1978), to build knowledge, there should be an emphasis on the knowledge constructed by the conversation and exchange between two or more individuals. According to this theory, students actively engage in learning if students are provided the opportunities to ask questions, solve problems, process information as well as make decisions. Jonassen et al. (1998) stress that it increases the levels of interactions that support the learning and academic performance of the students.

Hence social constructivism supported me to explore how teacher-student interactions created the knowledge of the students and their learning activities as well as how it helped to increase the learning and academic performance of the students.

Cognitive Constructivist Theory

Another theory that I used in my research is cognitive constructivist theory. The cognitive constructivist theory highlights that the students gain skills through innovation and exploration in learning (Stroet et al., 2015). It focuses on the student-centered learning and undertakes learning as methods of exploration so that students learn actively in searching the new information (p.608).

In this study, cognitive constructivist theory supported me to make meaning about how learners continue to shape the learning performance through the concrete guidance and helps from the teachers. It supported me to explore how teacher-student relationships supports to create new knowledge in order to increase their learning and academic performance.

I made further study of these two theories and have come to understand that Cognitive Constructivist Theory and Social Constructivist theory are two seemingly alike but different theories. Cognitive constructivism came directly from Piaget's work, which was further elaborated by Vygotsky with visible changes in its fundamental principles. In cognitive constructivism, ideas are constructed in individuals. It is a personal process. In social constructivism, on the other, ideas are constructed through social interactions. Both theories share the underlying concept that ideas are constructed from experience. In the case of my study, both theories were equally supportive. Cognitive Constructivism enabled me to make meaning of the individual learning process of the student, where Social Constructivism enabled me to make meaning in relation to broader social interactions.

Self-System Theory

Self-System theory focuses on the importance of the students' motivations to learn. It undertakes learning through modelling, interactions and direct instruction or socialization through the social environments (Brophy, 1987). It believes that students learn better when they are reinforced from their families and teachers. Connel (1990) and Bandura (2009) observe that the positive reinforcement and behaviors from their families and teachers provides them competence and relatedness. This seems to be the most important psychological needs for the students of their self-system process to engage in the learning.

Self-system theory enabled me to relate the meaning of this study in a way that the positive relationship among teachers and students enables the students to feel confident around teachers. It seems to be the powerful motivator to regulate students' success in the learning activities (Bandura, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2002). In general, the theory supported me to explore how the positive relationship creates the positive environment to enhance students' learning and academic performance.

Although I reviewed various theories in this study, I used Bowlby's attachment theory and Vygotsky's social constructivist theory as the major theoretical referents. These theories informed me in the knowledge production process and provided a complex and comprehensive conceptual understanding of the things on how the teacher-student relationship works on the student's learning and academic performance.

Review of the Related Policies

In the context of the Nepalese education system, various programs and projects are being launched to retain the students learning. As well, the School Sector Reform Plan (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2009) and the School Sector

Development Plan [SSDP] (2016) assist to promote community schools with the purpose to assure unbiased access to education and improving the quality of education and institutional capacity development. However, to increase student learning, there is not included a policy to maintain the teacher-student relationship though it seems as an important factor to increase student learning and their academic performance.

As designated in the National Curriculum Framework of School Education in Nepal (2018), it aims to guide the overall aspects of education such as teacher development and management, teaching-learning activities, extracurricular activities, student evaluation, monitoring, and collecting feedback. The ambitions of this framework are to prepare citizens with supreme human values in everyone with national culture as well as dignified social values and beliefs for healthy, social, and collective lifestyle with creative works. The teacher-student relationship is not aid to it in any way.

In the same way, the Education for all National Plan of Action (2001-2015) as cited in Khanal et al. (2017) ensures that the children belonging to ethnic minorities mainly girls are provided the access of free education to complete the primary education by 2015. It also formulated plans to improve all aspects of the quality of education by eradicating the inequalities in primary and secondary education (p. 47). Thus, the above policy helps to enhance gender equality and promote retaining students in school. The SSDP (2016-2023) has been supporting the empowerment of the communities under the new federal model in education reform (MoE, 2016). These interventions have contributed to the continuous improvement of student learning and the effectiveness of school outcomes.

Education Sector Plan (2021-2030) talks about the school education plan by providing the necessary and free education, continuous education with life-long

learning with its vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and key issues. At the end of 2030, the plan expected quality primary education with access to free education by improving various aspects such as children's health with hygienic feeding, and psychosocial well-being through the secure and physical infrastructure in the school. The ESP (2030) expects to improve the various aspects of students learning by providing quality education without considering the teacher-student relationship.

On the way to sustainable improvement in the quality of education in Nepal, the National education policy (2019) has also certified Universal access and enrolment to empower all children to accomplish essential levels of learning. But it is silent about student learning concerned with the cooperation between teacher and students. Hughes (2012) claimed that the high quality on students' academic performance depends upon the relationship. Hence, going through the review of the Nepalese Core curriculum, I observed that it suggests schools to provide the learners (students) to acquire and accomplish the knowledge themselves through the overall aims of education without considering the subject matter that is concerned in this study.

Review of the Previous Studies

The empirical reviews consist of reviewing journal articles and research reports and papers on relevant topics. In my study, I choose a few pieces of literature. These literatures helped for enhancing my understanding of the issue of my research.

In connection to this study, I went through the various studies that were related to the topics. Many of them were quantitative to point out the effect of relationships and its excellence on the students learning (Hughes, 2012). As from the study, I came to my argument that the teacher-student relationship has a positive effect on the student learning along with the academic performance of the students. Furthermore,

the study conducted by Horner et. al. (2013) states that the dropping out and decreasing the level of students learning in secondary schools in overall concerns are directly affected by the teacher-student relationship. To explore the adolescent's perceptions of the bridges that foster the barriers, descriptive coding and thematic analysis of focus group data were used. Based on this literature, I concluded my understanding that to increase the positive influence of adolescents in academic courses, a supportive and positive teacher-student relationship is essential.

Also, the quantitative research using an internet-based survey study conducted by Khadka (2020) shows that the student in Nepal have a better relationship with the teachers. Also, this study shows that the teachers have the capability for developing good relations with their students despite the small percentage of student participants. Besides this, the traditional culture seems challenging for the female students. However, discrimination practice is not a considerable issue in an online class. The findings from the study concluded that to increase the student participation in learning by embracing effective pedagogical practices, the teacher-student relationship is essential. Consequently, when reviewing the study conducted by Rawal (2020), I observed that the qualitative approach and phenomenological research design presents the relevancy of teacher-student relationship for the student’s motivation to increase the learning interest as well as their academic performance.

Grounded on the empirical evidence, it shows that there were many studies conducted in the past years (Hughes, 2012; Roorda et al., 2011) which focussed their comprehensions on the significance of teacher-student relationship for the strong learning and academic performance of students. Regarding the topic, a study by Nasseri et al. (2014) shows that positive teacher-student relationships have a positive impact to increase students' learning and academic performance.

As from the excess of my study, I find that there are still limited empirical research that have been carried out regarding on the topic's teacher-student relationship in the learning and academic performance of the students.

Research Gap

Grounded on the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical review, I have identified some research gaps. The large number of research studies that dealt with TSR in the past were mostly found in the western country (Rodra et al., 2011). This research carried out in the developed world may not be relevant in our context, where we are varied not just geographically, but also culturally and socially. It is a given understanding that the social and cultural norms in Nepal are very different from that of the western world. What holds in their part of the world, does not necessarily hold for us. This is a legitimate research gap. Studies were to be made in our context if we were to explore the students learning experience based on the teacher-student relationship. This would give educators and managers of higher education an added perspective on how the relationship needs to be developed.

In our context, most of the studies were carried out with classroom teaching, learning techniques, and materials with the qualitative and quantitative research design. However, I did not find any study that carried out the actual stories from the narration of the students regarding to their learning that shaped through the teacher-student relationship. It suggests the thematic and methodological gap in this area. The theory that was used in the previous study is not fully applicable in the present context where I found the theoretical gap. Addressing this gap, I conducted qualitative research with the narrative inquiry. It was supposed to bring multiple realities that cover the uncovered variables of the above studies.

The qualitative method through the narrative inquiry for this type of study has not been applied in the past. There is hardly a study in Nepal related to the teacher-student relationship and student learning experience grounded on the Vygotsky's social constructivist theory and the Bowlby's attachment theory.

Theoretical Framework

Stepping on the meanings drawn from the review of literature so far, here is a precise description of the theoretical framework of this study. As suggested in the study title and the research question, the study recommends exploring the teacher-student relationships and its contribution to students' learning. The overall review of the literature makes fundamental assumptions that an intellectually, stimulating and emotionally secured attachments between the teachers and students improves students' engagement in learning, and their academic performances. In claiming the good relationship with teachers as an enabling environment for students' self-sufficiency and personal perseverance, Bowlby's attachment theory was supportive theoretical referent of this study. Also, relationship is a form of social interaction, for which this study adopted the social constructivist theory, particularly Vygotsky's understanding of human learning as a social construct. It is from this theoretical frame; the study took the narratives of the students and made meanings.

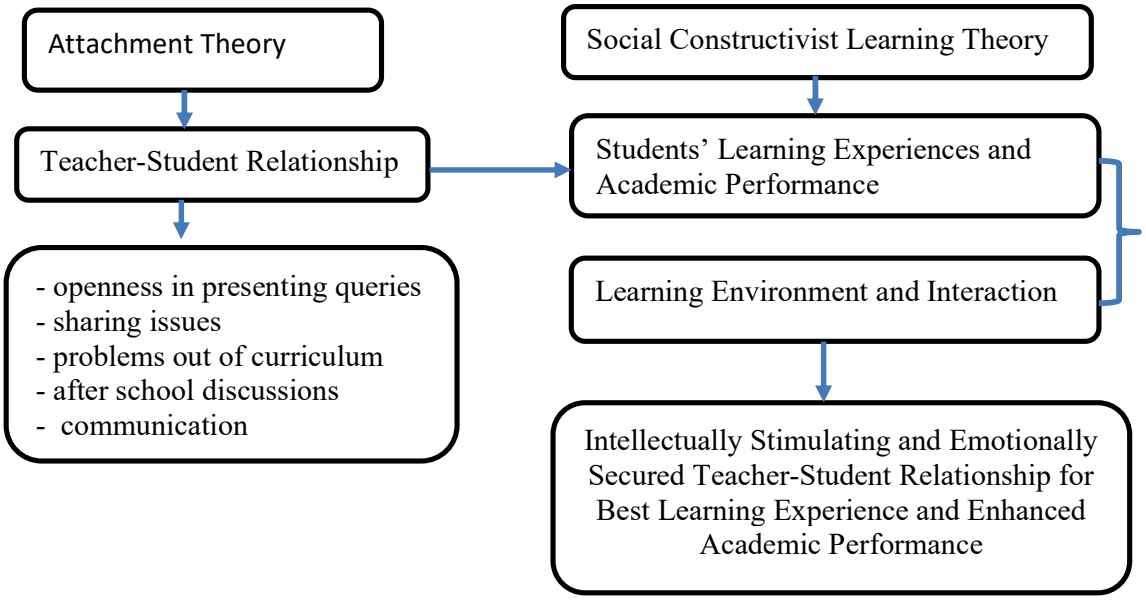

Figure: Theoretical Framework of the study

Chapter Essence

This chapter took a clear picture of the review on various aspects of the teacher-student relationship related with the student learning. After gazing at the depths on the subject matter regarding the topics, I found that the phenomena of the relationship and student learnings are defined largely by the attachments and interactions. It gave me the direction to select the Vygotsky's social constructivist theory and Bowlby's attachment as my theoretical lens. The construction of the student knowledge is the production of the interaction with the peers, teachers, and their attachment. Reviewing the literature, I found that in higher education, the positive dimension of the relationship consists of support and gentle discipline. My empirical reviews helped me to understand that the interactions, attachments, loving and caring as well as friendly behaviour of the teacher towards students helps the students in their learning to increase their academic performance. An unfavourable

relationship stands as one of the crucial elements to reduce the learning of the students. Based on the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical reviews, I articulated the research gaps and finally ended this chapter by framing the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology that I employed in this research. This chapter begins with my research paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and proceeds towards the research design with its philosophical orientations. It explains the method and every component involved in conducting this research including the information collection procedure. To this end, the chapter discusses narrative inquiry as a qualitative approach (within an interpretive research paradigm) to explore the learning experience of the students based on the teacher-student relationship in Nepali Schools. Also, the chapter explains how I interpreted the participants' narratives and the ways I ensured quality standards and ethical considerations of the study.

Philosophical Considerations

As a social science researcher, I have certain ways of seeing the phenomenon. The ways are shaped by my worldviews, which makes my philosophy concerning what is reality, the ways to reach that reality, and the values the reality holds. I believe in multiple realities and that the realities are socially constructed. These realities cannot be generalized in another context. Also, I believe that the 'right' and the 'wrong' or the 'good' and the 'bad' are relative to society and culture. Thus, as a qualitative researcher, I am aware of the fact that I have not brought any prior assumptions about participants' lived experiences. I did not seek to find the predictability or prove a hypothesis (Stogner, 2014). In this study, meaning-making has been considered more on students' viewpoints. In different sub-headings below, I have made a brief articulation about my philosophical considerations and have related them to my proposed study.

Ontology

The ontology of research design particularly deals with the question of what is knowable. It is the study of being and the nature of reality (Cohen et al., 2018). I strongly believe in the notion of reality that discards the existence of a single truth. I believe that truth is something created or constructed differently by different individuals in different contexts. In constructivist domains, the reality is normally researched through qualitative methods. My ontological standpoint, thus is to help to reveal the real reality of the existing situation of student learning experience based on the teacher-student relationship which is constructed on true information collected through the sharing of the narration of my participants. Students experience and perceive reality in different ways. So, different students have different types of realities. My strong commitment is to ensure no manipulation of facts and remain articulated to the nature and formation of societies with multiple realities (Wills et al., 2007).

Epistemology

Epistemology generally deals with the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known (Richards 2003). Also, it is an important concern within metaphysics which is concerned with 'how we know what we know. In this belief, "human experience is muddled and messy, requiring pluralism of broad and interpretive methods that critically turn the text back upon themselves in the constant emancipation of meanings" (Spry, 2001, p. 206).

Therefore, in my research, I tried to explore and interpret students' learning experiences through interviewing by visiting their sites to find how their learning experiences were influenced by the teacher-student relationships. At the same time, because my research is not based on a single reality, it seeks a deeper understanding

of the teacher-student relationship and its influence on learning activities through exploring multiple stories of the students. I stand by the assumption that knowledge can be constructed by analyzing self and others. It means that the researcher and the research participants' interaction helped to generate new knowledge in this study. Cohen (2018) defined epistemology as different forms of knowledge and nature that describe how knowledge generates and communicates. Thus, knowledge construction for me was something that generates from dialogues and dialectical interaction in the given context with my participants (students).

Axiology

The axiology of my research study refers to my values. As a researcher, I have explored my values and beliefs along with the values and beliefs of my participants. There is nothing like wrong values but values in society are different. In the research literature, axiology also refers to the involvement of the researchers' values and opinions during knowledge generation (Creswell, 2009). In a society where multiple realities are seen; I acknowledged all those multiple realities which came across my study. In this study, the value of the researcher and research participants was influenced by their expression, ideas, and views while participating in the interaction. In this context, I valued every participant as a source of new insight, and knowledge. I truly respect their ideas.

Research Paradigm and Design

A paradigm symbolizes a position or viewpoint that defines how we understand and interrelate the world around us (Gavin, 2008). Following Punch (2014), the main paradigm positions are positivism, interpretivism, and constructivism. Interpretivism concentrates on the situated meanings of people. My study, therefore, adopted the interpretive paradigm where participating students in this

research were purposefully selected. They shared the stories of their learning experiences and academic performance with the teacher-student relationship. This study provided free space for the students to describe their learning experiences with the teacher-student relationships. The received information was narrated through my interpretation abiding by the norms of standard ethical consideration of research methods.

As a qualitative researcher, I was conscious of the fact that I do not bring any prior assumptions about participants' lived experiences (Stogner, 2014). In this study, meaning making was considered more on students' perspectives. Moreover, following the interpretive research paradigm, this narrative inquiry sought students' stories about their feelings about the teacher-student relationship to explore if this has any meaningful contribution in supporting, especially in areas of enriching their learning and academic performance.

In this study, the qualitative research design was used with the narrative inquiry as a method for assembling and sharing information. Within the qualitative research design, there exist narrative, biographical, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographical, and case study methods for collecting and analyzing information (Creswell, 1998). Inquiry in this research begins with slightly comforting the participants to develop an ease and create familiar bonding for expression. Also, this research was focused to explore the learning experience of the students on how it was influenced by the teacher-student relationship through the stories based on interviews conducted with the participants. Knowledge was developed through prolonged interaction. As there exists no objective reality on the topic, my research design was guided to explore multiple realities through an interpretive paradigm.

By this, I tried to construct knowledge based on Clandinin and Connelly (2000). They discuss three-dimensional spaces of narrative inquiry, i.e., interaction, continuity, and situation. I believe that narrative research aims to its finding with well-grounded and supportable arguments, producing results that have the appearance of truth or reality. Since the prime objective of this research was to unfold students' stories about their learning experiences based on their response to my interview questions, drawing line to the research through narrative inquiry made the meaning.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a story account of events, a symbolic representation of knowledge and experience (Saldana, 2015). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that it is the way of collaboration between researcher and participants to understand and inquire into the experience within a time, in a place, or a series of places in social interaction within the environments. The interpretive paradigm, by its key assumptions, facilitated me to explore the subjective world of research participants and develop an understanding of their experiences. Here, I used the narrative inquiry as it always places experiential stories (Davis & Dwyer, 2017). In this regard, I collected the experience of participants through the storytelling of students' learning and academic performance based on the teacher-student relationship.

Research Site and Participants

It was not possible to encompass all the areas in this small research work. So, I tried to narrow down my study to certain delimitations. It would not be practical to observe all types of schools and include all streams. I tried to delimit my study in the public schools because only fewer schools have been continuously showing high performance and a large number of schools are struggling to survive. It means that students learning, and academic performance did not seem satisfactory as compared to

the investment of the government of Nepal in education (Sharma 2019). I assumed that the students at the community schools are sufficient to meet the target of my study. My purpose was not to make the study homogeneous but heterogeneous which includes both males and females, six in total. On top of that, in qualitative research, I assumed that the number of students matters less, and the depth in which participants' learning experiences are understood and represented matters more.

Purposive sampling was applied to select the participants in my research. It comprised the students from Grade 11 in the Palpa district. My research took place in two public schools located in urban and rural areas of the eastern Palpa district. My initial plan was to include four students (two from each school) as research participants in my study. However, this number increased and reached six students depending on the text to explore stories in response to my research questions. Interviews were conducted with the selected participants that include both boys and girls. Information was collected through story telling. The stories were experiences narrated by participants in response to the questions they were asked in the interview process. Participants shared their narratives on the topic based on the questions planned for the interview. There were multiple questions asked in which the participants shared their learning experiences with the teacher-student relationship. The questions asked to the participants during the interview process were designed based on the major research question.

Research Site (School Profile)

In my study, I selected the six participants from two different municipalities of Palpa district. One was from the rural area and another from the urban area (purbakhola and Rampur). Residents in Rampur municipality seem more educated. Most of them have higher economic status as compared to another municipality of

Palpa. More than 1500 students were studying in the school that I selected. Compared to other school, this school (A) had more students. The students pass out rate was also comparatively higher. Most of the teachers in this school were from the different locality.

Another school, which I selected for my research participant, was in the Purbakhola Rural Municipality. It is one of the local governments of the Palpa district. It is mostly surrounded by hills and mountains. There are 42 educational institutions including public and private secondary schools in this rural municipality. According to the Government record of 2017, in average 151 students were studying in each School. In my selected school (School B), 250 students were studying. Among them, I selected three participants. In this school, most of the teachers seem as from their own locality.

Participants' Profile

For this study, here I present a brief biographical profile of six participants from the public schools of the Palpa district. They were interviewed on issues relating to their learning experience with teacher-student relationships. In this section, I have described the participants' profiles to explain the detail of facts related to them. My interpretation of participants was based on impressions during my long engagement in the interview sessions with them. To protect the participant and their right to confidentiality, their names have been substituted with pseudonyms. I believe that a detailed description of participants in the research helps to provide information referring to their personalities, particularly how they make up stories to present their experiences. The experience of the students was significant in this study because they presented a variety of educational hopes, family backgrounds, and personality types

along with uniqueness in the way they perceived their ideas about the learning experiences they were exposed to.

Students Participant (S1)

Student participant (S1), aged around 18 years, is currently studying in a community school in class 11 in the Rampur Municipality of Palpa district. When I met her in the school, I made an impression of her as an outspoken and confident student. She showed that she was more knowledgeable than her classmates. Since she was my research participant, first I went to the school and met her along with the guidelines of my research. I introduced myself. In our short talk, I requested to discuss my research issues. She agreed and she scheduled it for Friday. When I went to her school on Friday at about 1 o'clock, she was waiting for me. We talked informally for a while and began to discuss the issues. I humbly requested her to share her experiences and stories in detail. Participant (S1) began her narrative:

> *I am from Rampur City. It is quite an underdeveloped region in comparison to other cities in Nepal. I belong to a middle-class family. Our ancestral history developed from farming. Agriculture was our main occupation. At that time, talking about education was impossible for us since we were suppressed by literate people in this village. Likely, my father's friends were a politician. They helped me to get admission. I was enrolled in a school when I was seven years old.* (Field note: Nov. 06, 2021)

As she was explaining, I was quite excited to know why she was not admitted to pre-primary school in childhood, although there were some schools already established in the village. She narrated that her family status in education level was low. Due to the lack of education from her parents, she was not able to get a bit of advice from her parents to join the school at an early age. However, after joining the

school and starting to study, she gradually enhanced her learning. Coming to the present day, her study is good. Nowadays, she is a student in class 11, and she is one of the best-performing students in the class.

Student Participant (S2)

Direct and willing to share, the student participant (S2) is an energetic personality. She was born in Rampur Municipality, Palpa. However, her family occupation was agriculture and her parent's education level were medium (Pcl Level). Being a medium class, her parents were aware of the importance of education. She had joined the school at the age of six years. Now she is pursuing secondary school education taking Science in her hometown school at Rampur Municipality. Her passion is to be a doctor in the future. So, she likes to read biology subject than other subjects.

I introduced her my research purpose. She would always have a matured reply. I inquired her if she was a good student. In a group of science students who were more focused on reading, she had been an avid talent since her childhood. I started to talk to her inside and outside of the classroom. She shared that she was shaped as an open-minded and analytical person because of her habits of reading. She was a good student since early in her childhood mainly due to her parent's motivation. She shared:

> *I find my confidence growing every time due to the cause of my parents. Since childhood, they encouraged me to focus on my study. I feel that my parent's encouragement in my learning helped me to increase my learning and academic performance (field note: Nov 08, 2021*).

Student Participant (S3)

Tall and fat with a soft voice, the third participants was 18 years old. He was originally from Purbakhola Palpa. His parents had a lower level of education status. His father would work in the field of house construction around the Rampur Municipality. A few years ago, they had migrated to the Rampur Municipality. He was only one brother with two sisters. He completed his school level of study from his parental village and came to study Grade 11 in Rampur. He was an average student in his class. Alongside his study, he also helped his parents with household purposes.

He was an interesting student when I saw him on the first day. He was silent most of the time. He was fat so he seemed more mature than his age. Whenever I asked him for the participation in my research, he presented his distinctive thought. As I spent some days in the school, he started opening and sharing his stories of learning experiences based on the teacher-student relationship. In a way, his thinking had been widened by the perspective on the teacher-student relationship in the learning activities. No wonder, he was known for his sheer perspective among his classmates.

Going through the stories, the participant (S3) shared his learning experience that he had a habit of ignoring learning activities in childhood and had no solid recollection of an interest in reading until he was in Grade 10. In that situation, he did not get any guidance from any people to guide him to make his reading activities better while he was in the lower class. He couldn't get any help from his parents to learn because his father and mother were both uneducated. But later on, in the up-growing class, he gradually increased his learning interest and slightly improved his habit of the learning activities. He revealed:

when I joined the school in my childhood, I did not have any guardians to promote and help me in my study because my parents were both uneducated. During the initial phase of my schooling, my parents would pick up from school to make only a formality to show in society. But when I went to a bigger class, I gradually learned the importance of education from the school, teachers, and society. From there, I gave a lot of time to study and slightly improved my learning (field note: Nov 10, 2021).

Student Participant (S4)

With a slender body and a pair of curious eyes behind his glasses, participant 4 was 19 years old. He was born and raised in a middle-class Mongolian caste in the rural area of Purbakhola Gaupalika Palpa District. He lives with his father and mother. From his narration, I observed that his family status has a low economic status.

The participant (S4) has been a student in grade 11 in his hometown. When I met him for the first time, I made an impression of him as an outspoken and confident student as compared with the rural areas school students. He showed me that he was more knowledgeable than his classmates. He would bring up many topics while explaining the points in the class. He was always eager to participate in the question-and-answer session. He would also share his knowledge beyond the course. When I asked him if he could be a participant in my study, he was more than happy to share his learning experience relating to the topics. He shared his family status and openly presented his learning hobby despite the various problems. He shared:

I know that my family's economic status is not sufficient for better learning in prestigious intuitions. Therefore, I have been reading in my hometown school.

Besides this problem, I have a huge interest to study better. I know that education is a more powerful thing in life (field note: Nov 12, 2021).

Student Participant (S5)

Soft-spoken with a mellow voice, participant (S5) is a girl. She is 18-year-old who was enrolled in class 11 in the Purbakhola Gaupalika 01 Palpa. She was a student from a medium class of family status. Her father was a teacher at one of the schools in that village. She could get good support for her study from her family. The younger sibling in her family, she was born and grew up in that village located in the remote area of Palpa. However, she decided to study well and become a good social worker in the future.

She was an interesting student. She was silent most of the time. However, her perspective to look at things was completely different. She seemed to be more mature than her age. Whenever I would ask to participate in the discussion, she would softly present her views. Later, as I spent some days in the class, she started opening and sharing her stories related to her learning. Alongside this, she was a medium-level student in the class. She was a talented student during her childhood but incidentally, she got into an accident that made her injured. She had to take medical treatment in the hospital. From that event, the learning activities were disturbed. Now, she loves to study to make a new perspective to look at the world. She revealed:

I have the interest to learn more and more to make me broad in the sense of knowledge. I was a talented student in the lower secondary class. When I had an accident, my learning activities disturbed. I could not manage my learning performance. I did not get any type of help from my teacher (field note: Nov 14, 2021).

She feels that for the normal level of students in the learning activities, teachers are careless. Only good performing students get too much feedback and help in the learning.

Student Participant (S6)

A girl participant has a tall and slender body with a Mongolian face that she originally hails from the Purbakhola Gaupalika, Palpa district. She has been doing her higher secondary class 11 with English major. Regarding her family status, her father is a soldier and mother a housewife. She is the elder daughter in her family. She studies in her hometown and wants to pursue higher study abroad. Although she has been reading in her hometown, she is very happy.

I remember that she was a lady of few words and was normally quiet in class. She was an average student in her study, but she liked to study social studies. She showed no field of particular interest to pursue after her study. She loved to study social studies and wanted to be a good social worker in life *(field note: Nov 21, 2021*).

Field Process

The field process in my research included information collection mechanisms that guided my research process facilitating me to reach out to my participants. It enabled me to involve in the process of interaction and gathering information.

In this research, I used the interview guidelines to gather field information/stories of research participants. The collected narratives enabled me to enrich my understanding of how it was influenced by the academic performance of the students. According to Best and Kahn (2003), the interview provides certain types of confidential information and detailed information which the individual is unable to put into writing. To reveal the depth of a person's knowledge, open-ended questions could be effective to discover the respondent's priorities (Anderson & Arsenault,

1998). Where possible, I took an audio recording of the interviews. I translated them and transcribed in full before analyzing the collected information.

Meaning-Making and Interpretation

As a narrative inquirer, I came to know that knowledge is conceived by human experience (Saldana, 2014). Therefore, I believed that my query would be addressed by the experience-based narratives of the students. Similarly, my epistemological perception of the narrative was a way of knowing (Kramp, 2004). Here, knowledge was expressed in stories narrated by the participants. Every corner of the events in the narrated stories was equally prioritized. Analyzing and interpreting information was significant work to be done for the result of the study. Information collected through interviews with the participants was properly audio-recorded and catalogued. The collected information was interpreted relating them to broader concerns and concepts. Analysis involved working with the information and searching for pattern (Biklen & Bogdon, 2011).

The information was arranged, and meaning was interpreted adopting the model of Clandinin and Connelly (2006), i.e., information organization, reading, and journaling, describing information into codes and themes, transcribing, interpreting information, and representing information and visualizing. It means to say that the collected 'field test from my participants was read and re-read, heard, and reheard (for audio tapes). After that, information was coded thematically. Then, I classified into different themes. Meaning was developed based on the essence delivered by my research participants. The purpose of interpreting the information was to change the unprocessed form of information received from the informants to an understandable form to draw meaningful inferences without manipulating the essence of the participant's reaction to the research approach.

My field text (stories) was generated from the experiences of my participants. First, I collected the field tests (stories). Then, I transcribed those stories in English. I worked carefully not to violet the essence of the information. From interim text to research text, I started my meaning making process. The clarity and confidence which I gained from the meaning making was the prime foundation of my themes. From the stories of my six participants, I generated five themes concerning student learning experience and teacher-student relationship. It led me toward the findings of this study. At the end, I created a longer and detailed presentation of the findings.

Quality Standards

The maintenance of quality standards is an integral part of educational research. I have made an effort to mention quality standards in this research study. As well as maintaining the quality standard, the ethical issues that may arise when writing a proposal according to Creswell (2009) should be anticipated by the researchers. Maintaining quality standards allows others to judge the quality of my research study.

To be more precise, the quality standard infers the perspective on holding the existence of the truth and the role of the researcher. In this study, my major focus was to unearth students' stories about their learning experiences based on teacher-student relationships. By employing narrative inquiry, I explored how students shared their perspectives on the teacher-student relationship and its influence on their learning activities and academic performance. Their existing truth was revealed through narratives collected during the interaction. However, while conducting the narrative inquiry, the biggest challenge was to explore the truth of the stories shared by my research participants; how they told their stories, how they interpret their experiences, and how they explained them to the researcher.

Trustworthiness of Research

The researcher should exhibit trustworthiness among research participants, readers, and the concerned authority. In this regard, I valued the participants' opinions and carefully gathered their information to maintain the authenticity of my research. Validating information is critical to the trustworthiness of any qualitative study. To maintain the validity of the study, the participant's realities of the social phenomena should be presented accurately (Creswell, 2009). I showed respect to the research participants' opinions, values, and perceptions during the discussion. To generate rich information and constructive suggestions to further my research, I conducted member checking and discussed the nature, purpose, and procedures of my research with the participants. I was not biased toward any participant regarding class, gender, ethnicity, experience, qualification, or personal relationship. I made a continuous engagement with participants through email, and phone calls to make them feel a sense of belongingness through their active engagement in the study. To be open and receptive to the experience of the participants, I attempted to isolate my understanding of the meaning they may attach to their narratives on their learning experiences with the teacher-student relationship. Reactions were gathered to find new and unexpected insights if they were there to be disclosed.

In all the processes of my research procedure, I tried my best to remain as genuine as possible. I respected the values of my participants in their shared stories. Values here do not refer to the evaluation of truth in my participants. The truth in this research is intertwined with the concept of verisimilitude because the truth of one of my participants may not be the truth for another one.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2006), a researcher should take the account of three dimensions in a narrative inquiry i.e., temporality, sociality, and

place. I ensured the components and enriched the quality of my research. The components are shortly discussed below-

Temporality

In narrative inquiry, it is important to understand the process because nothing remains permanent but is always in instability. Temporality refers to the events in retrospect, current and next. While generating meaning from narrative events in the form of stories and experiences of my participants, I attempted to find out their concurrent incidents of adversities and resilience that have been influenced by their experiences and how they have been forecasting their future. As researcher, with the importance of a friendly relationship with participants, their stories were revealed step by step over time. As Marggetti et al. (2013) suggested, the trustworthiness of the findings of this study, thus, depended on temporality as well.

Sociality

Narrative inquiries are entwined with personal and social interactions which engulf the feeling, hopes, desires, moral obligations, etc. of the inquirer and the study participants. Sociality refers to the necessity to focus on existential conditions like environment and surrounding factors, which help in collecting narrative texts. It emphasizes the development of good social relations among researchers and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). I took care of both the personal and social interactions of my participants. I was careful while generating meaning in their personal stories to consider how their passions, feelings, concerns, and moral obligations were shaped by each of their social interaction and surrounding measures to know their perception of education.

Place

It is the exact, real, and topological limits of place or categorizations of places where inquiry and events take place (Green et al., 2006). The place always has a strong bond with one's memory and experiences. Being a narrative inquirer, I valued place. It may influence the inquiry process that situates into temporality (Green, 2013). For maintaining quality standards in the research, places guide us to events as well as experiences for meaning making. So, its importance should not be sidelined. Linkage of places with my participants' experiences helped me to provide flow to stories. Doing so, the confession of lived experiences became more vivid.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues are critical aspects of qualitative research. Creswell (2009) explains ethical consideration in research as a system to question the fundamental moral assumption of all research agendas, their political and ethical assumption, and the fair treatment of various voices. To confirm all voices were perceived equitably, I conducted this study with full honesty and professionalism, with optimum moral judgment and no bias. Pseudonyms were used to address all participants and their schools to ensure secrecy. Unethical behaviour in research is a serious problem that can damage the credibility of the research findings (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, unethical practices in this study were avoided taking the highest regard for honesty and sincerity in the research study.

During the literature review, I followed Saldana (2013) who mentions that "research method textbooks describe the ethical responsibilities of the investor but virtually none of them advised the researcher to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of the participants themselves" (p.81). This bitter truth warned me to be more alert with every moment and my entire journey of research till the end. I paid

full respect to the dignity and worth of all my participants. Therefore, respecting and adhering to ethical values in my study became strength of the study. When I entered the personal zone of my participants, I kept in high consideration the following issues in my mind.

Informed Consent

Collected narratives are valuable to the participants who are the actual owners of them. They may have acquired them through their learning experiences. Therefore, I took consent and permission to use their narratives as data for my research. I informed my participants about this study and its significance in clarifying the purpose and procedure of the research. I made a promise not to use collected opinions for any other purpose except this research project.

Confidentiality with No Harm

I maintained openness in sharing narratives as suggested by Clandinin (2013). I was informed with professional and cultural sensitivity. I ensured that my participants maintained confidentiality, and privacy and did not harm their social, economic, physical, and emotional aspects. In order to protect their privacy, I obtained informed consent. I did not disclose the identities of participants, places, and ethical practices. I kept in my action that because of the subjectivity and intrusive nature of qualitative research, ethical concern incorporates the confidentiality of the participants (Saldana, 2015). Moreover, I maintained ethical issues during the period of research.

Honesty

I generated the narratives of learning experiences and stories adopting trustworthiness. I followed “not being judgmental and suspending their disbelief as they attend to participants’ stories” (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007, p. 647). I made

sincere efforts to remain honest while transcribing, translating, and interpreting the narratives of the participants. Finally, and importantly, I strictly followed the confidentially and other ethical considerations as required by the research guidelines of Kathmandu University, School of Education (KUSOED).

Chapter Essence

This chapter detailed the pathway and boundary of this research. At the beginning of the chapter, I articulated my philosophical premises. The philosophical premises explained the justification of my ontological, epistemological, and axiological values in this inquiry as an interpretive researcher. Ontologically, I was guided by an interpretive approach that advocates the realities lie within the life world of individuals. Epistemologically, I believed that a researcher can construct knowledge from the experience and stories of individuals which are grounded in their lived world. I valued both me and my participants' life world in the process of meaning-making. After discussing my philosophical orientation, I related it with my research paradigm as interpretivism with the narrative inquiry.

In doing so, I rationalized my motive of using a narrative inquiry in my study to explore the experienced narratives of my participants. Then, I articulated my position as a narrative inquirer. Furthermore, I clarified my living territory where I gathered experiences and stories. This chapter also incorporated three quality standards as temporality, sociality, and place to make my study trustworthy. Finally, this chapter shed light on ethical considerations.

CHAPTER IV

STUDENTS' STORIES ON THE UPSIDE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

This study explores students' positive learning experiences through their stories. In the first phase, I introduce the theme and provide brief biographical profiles of the six participants, including their family background, academic qualifications, and schooling. In the second phase, I focus on the thematic journey and present the experiences and stories of the participants. Their narratives are included in their naturally verbal narrations, with narratives framed into three themes. I analyze and interpret these narratives in the third phase, where I also reflect on my findings and provide a theoretical discussion.

As discussed in chapter three as well, the focus of this research is to understand how the teacher-student relationship affects students' learning experiences. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with six participants from three community schools in the Palpa district. The participants shared their personal stories of learning and how their experiences have shaped their perceptions of the teacher-student relationship. The students' experiences showed that a friendly and engaging relationship between teachers and students is crucial for positive learning. A comfortable and open environment encourages students to participate actively in their learning and leads to better academic performance.

Upside Learning Experience Defined

The term "Upside Learning" is used in this study to describe the kind of learning that leads to the best outcomes for students. It's a way of creating effective learning opportunities through the responsive and supportive actions of teachers. Teachers can motivate students by incorporating extra-curricular activities into their

lessons and by fostering a friendly and open relationship with students. The teachers' feedback during lessons can also help shape students' perceptions of the teacher and the learning experience. In upside learning, students are encouraged to do their best through a differentiated approach that considers individual learning styles and strengths (Perry, 2002). Teachers can also support students by providing workshops, fostering interaction and cooperation, and inspiring students with their positive behavior. According to Kalenze (2014), positive relationship between teacher and student can have a significant impact on the students' learning and academic performance. To this consideration, the chapter explores how the upside learning experience of students is shaped by the teacher-student relationship, and it focuses on three sub-themes.

Learning Affection through Motivational Activities

Addressing the research questions, I started with my first participants (S1). On the first day, I planned to take an interview with my participants, and went to her home with my friends. With the support of my friend, we introduced each other. Also, we visited her parents and shared our research purpose. Firstly, she did Namaste to me with the respective culture, ‘please sit down’. Her mother made me a cup of tea. I started my interviewing. When I started the interviewing process, she narrated that she had her likes and dislikes with the teachers who have influenced her learning activities. Her narrations pictured the teacher’s encouragement, either from friendly behavior, loving and caring, and extra-curricular activities that worked a positive role to draw her learning experiences.

Addressing my queries, she shared her stories that she had strong memories of her learning experiences that were influenced by her teacher. According to her, she had a medium level of interest in learning as she was a child of parents with a lower education status. She narrated that her motivation in learning was increased by the teacher's extra-curricular activities in the class. She revealed:

> *From the beginning of the session of class, the teacher would build eight different groups of students. Once a week in the class, he would make an extra activity mainly related to the course content, sometimes out of the course curriculum. In that activity, he would provide different topics to each group, and we would prepare a program related to the topics. We had to present in front of the students and teacher. Through this, I got an opportunity to make strong myself by making improvements where needed. I had a feeling like a popular leader in the class and the whole school. To prepare a good presentation as compared to other groups, we practiced too much by reading and working. In doing the activities, the teacher provided a great deal of help and feedback to us. Also at that moment, the teacher would encourage me to ask and discuss with him openly without any fear and hesitation to any queries and embarrassment, which increased my positive attitude towards the teacher with a good relation in teaching-learning activities. Additionally, the events and activities in the classroom slightly increased my learning habits. I developed a positive attitude. The increase in my learning habits also helped to increase my learning activities and academic performance gradually.*

After hearing about her event, I sensed that she was motivated by the positive behaviors s of the teachers toward her learning. Also, I was excited by her experience that she increased her confidentiality to make arguing and interacting with her peers

and with the teachers through the extra-curricular activities that were organized by her teacher in the classroom within and outside of the subject matters. Although she was a medium level of learning student in the class, the activities that were organized by her teacher each week made her inspired to increase her learning habits with a positive attitude. As I delved into her experiences, I realized that the increase in her learning habits through the extra-curricular activities in the class helped her to obtain better academic performance.

Also, I went through the participants (S1) stories of how extra-curricular activities had been a good resource for retaining good teacher-student relations. The narratives gave me the insight that students of the age around high schools are more curious so that the activities within and outside of the course curriculum can hold their engagement. Supportive teachers motivate them. She further added that the students' opinions should be respected by the teacher. She revealed in her story that in teacher-centered learning, students can achieve good marks in the exam but in real life, it is hard to achieve a bright future due to the lack of the practical life aspect of learning. She has additionally shared the example of the elder student's journey from the distinction holder in the SLC to the driver/helper in the future. Today, she believes that extra-curricular activities are necessary to equip students to acquire ideas for a bright future. She shared:

> *While involved in the speech and debate program at the district level, I got the first position. Also, in the municipality program, I got the first position that encouraged me to talk with the elders and teachers in the school along with in the society. Those opportunities in my prestigious position helped to enlarge my thinking level as well as helped to increase my level of confidentiality in my learning habits. Gradually, it enhanced my academic performance.*

Her tale helped me understand the importance of students participating in extracurricular activities that boost their confidence. As confidence increases, so does their level of interaction. She emphasized that teachers are just facilitators in the learning process, and it's up to the students to take charge of their own education. This means being proactive in seeking interaction, which can help them overcome challenges. Interacting with teachers can also clear up any misunderstandings or negativity related to the subject.

When I moved from the learning experience of the participant (S2), she explored many interesting stories. Extra-curricular activities (drama, debate program, etc.) organized by the teacher helped her to build up a strong confidence level. It increased her interest in the learning activities. With cooperative help and the positive feedback of the teacher in the activities, she has constructed a positive attitude towards the teacher. It has encouraged her to provide more focus on the learning activities. From the positive relationship of the teachers in the learning, she has grabbed a milestone in her academic performance. In addition to that, she revealed that the open discussion and interaction with the teacher has supported her to perform a closer relationship with the teacher in the learning activities. Also, she recalled her experience that in the open discussion, students feel free to ask questions and easily get the answer to solve the problems. These types of learning activities inspire and encourage her to engage in the learning. When reviewing Lee et al., (2019), it also supports on the same view that the teacher-student relationship performs positive behaviors by providing respect and open-discussion within and outside of the course curriculum. Also, it provides joy in learning which eventually increases the learning performance of the students.

Moving towards the goal of this study, I included the experiences of my participant S3 and the events that made an impact on his learning. In the interview, he shared his dissatisfaction with some of his teachers who solely focused on the textbook during lessons and were unable to motivate him. However, his biology teacher stood out as exceptional. The teacher went above and beyond by incorporating extra activities and taking the class on field trips to connect the course material to real life. These experiences sparked S3's interest in the subject and left him with a positive impression of the biology teacher. He narrated:

> *My teacher's teaching activity was very impressive. It encouraged me in my learning. To motivate us with a positive attitude, he would take us once a month for visiting different places to show how nature and the curriculum are related to human life. He would make us curious about the learning. Slowly, we become close with the teacher to take help regarding clarifying the confusion on the subject matter.*

After going through his experiences, I sensed that the knowledge where he achieved from the extra-curricular activities helped him to make a better plan for the upcoming days. Also, it helped him to bring positive thinking concerning the teachers. It increased his interest in learning.

Similarly, I gathered the experiences of participant S4. He believed that participating in extra-curricular activities was crucial for fostering an interest in learning. In his story, he was impressed by a teacher who incorporated real-world events into the curriculum, allowing him to understand the connections between national and international politics and his own cultural identity. This exposure to civic knowledge and society helped him grow as a more mature problem-solver. According to S4:

When the teacher teaches social study, he built an activity that is related to the social activity. Last week, while teaching nationalism from the land of Lipulake, limpiyadhura, and Kalapana, he made four groups in a class and gave classwork. His question was- if you are the foreign minister and secretary of the ministry of foreign Policy, how do you solve this problem in the interest of Nepal? He allowed us to give an answer. He continuously encouraged us to bring many views. Later, he shared his views with too much feedback and comments on our answer. These events inspired me to increase the interest in learning.

While listening his stories, I found that the extra-curricular activities in the teaching-learning activities encouraged him to reflect on his understanding. It enabled him to clarify the meaning of the subject matter. Like other students, he has experienced the motivation towards the learning activities through the extra-curricular activities. He further narrated:

These events of extra-curricular activities made me curious and conscious of Nepalese politics and Nationalism. Also, these types of curiosity have increased the learning habit in my daily life. It has taught me how to make sincere and good decisions of the problems that arrive within and outside of the subject matter. These types of activities in learning gradually helped me to be a matured and responsible person in the Nation.

From his story, I learned that the extra-curricular activities organized by his teacher broadened his knowledge beyond the textbook. These activities fueled his passion for learning and improved his relationship with the teacher. His teacher constantly introduced new concepts and activities, creating an engaging learning environment. This positive attitude towards the teacher was also stressed by the

study of Cornelius-White (2007), which found that extra-curricular activities increase student participation and positive perception in learning, reducing negativity towards teachers and improving academic performance.

Concerning the experiences of learning, I went to participant (S4) with the same question to explore his narrations. He narrated that the extra-curricular activities helped him to broaden his thinking level within the subject matter of society and the nation within the national interest. Becoming more excited through the facial expressions, he forwarded that the activity made him more eager to become a nationalist. So, he strengthened the learning day by day about the subject matter. His learning habits gradually helped him to increase his learning and academic performance. Also, he narrated that these activities supported him to project a plan with positive encouragement in the learning activities.

Practical Life Aspects of Learning

From my participant S3's experiences, I realized that a strong relationship between teacher and student is important. The teacher's positive feedback to students can boost motivation and foster a closer relationship. A positive teacher-student relationship is key to fostering a positive mindset, leading to improved learning and academic performance. His story also revealed that students can learn better when they are motivated to do what they do. He narrated that to motivate the students in their learning they should be involved in the practical aspects of learning (use of project rather than whiteboard) rather than the core curriculum of learning. He also narrated that the practical aspects of learning tend him to create a positive attitude towards his teachers, which helps to increase his learning activities. He revealed:

> *His teaching method is different. He teaches on the projector while another teacher teaches on the whiteboard. He brings outer knowledge rather than*

only books and combine outer and inner(book) knowledge. It encourages me to study. Also, the projector helps to show every event that is impossible on the whiteboard.

Additionally, the participant emphasized that teachers should also consider the socioeconomic factors that may impact a student's ability to learn, such as a lower family income. He believes that not only do extra-curricular activities improve student learning, but daily life factors such as socio-economics should also be taken into account by teachers in their teaching approach. By addressing these factors, teachers can provide students with a positive outlook and support their learning. A friendly and cooperative environment between teachers and students, along with positive feedback from teachers, can help overcome obstacles and lead to better outcomes.

I visited participant S4 to learn about his experiences with practical aspects of learning in school. He shared that the school's focus on hands-on, social activities, like growing vegetables, has greatly impacted his learning. Coming from a farming family, this practical approach to education has helped him connect the lessons to his daily life and activities. As a result, he has become more engaged in learning and has developed a closer relationship with his teacher. This hands-on approach has also led to an improvement in his performance. S4 Shared:

The teacher helps in our daily life events by teaching us how to produce vegetables from the grafting method (potato and tomato produced together). This practical knowledge that is directly linked to my household activity helped me with my daily household purpose. I could apply that knowledge which was too much helpful for my parents in the household activity. This type of practical aspect of learning creates an encouraging sensation in regard to

maintaining a close relationship with the teacher. It motivates me in my learning habits.

After going through his stories and experience, I sensed that his teacher helps to make easier in his learning difficulties. It promotes him to do good in his learning. As he expressed, the teacher supports them in preparing and managing while presenting exhibitions. He brings new science events to the class and links the new events of a science experiment with their curriculum. In the learning activities, the teacher always provides full support and moves according to the voice of the students by providing full assistance to the students if there comes any confusion in their learning. He narrated that the provision of fully teacher-supported learning activities always promotes the students in the learning activities. It maintains the relationship between teacher and student. He revealed:

While presenting the exhibition, he supports us on how to prepare and manage. He also moves according to our voice in making new experiments. Also, he brings new science events to the school that motivates me to study. He always provides full support to the students in the learning activities.

After going through this story with many interesting pieces of events, I have explored the student learning experiences in this study. During these events, the participants shared that a teacher should be more responsible in the teaching activities and that he should respect the voice and experience of the students they shared in their learning activities. The participant's explanation shows that he focused on student-centre learning to increase the learning interest of the students. Also, he narrated that to maintain the relationship, only the teacher's responsibility is not enough. Students should obey their roles and responsibilities towards schools and teachers because anything is impossible when the boundary of discipline is crossed. From his story, he

revealed that he always obeys the responsibility of the teacher. He would check homework regularly and on time. He would bring a new topic for discussion in the class and would share new events in the class with the teachers. These events and activities during the learning period were mostly appreciated by his teachers. It motivates him to learn more and more in the upcoming days. After going through the experience, it gave me an insight that the discussion in the learning activities is more effective for students to perform better learning. It helps to maintain a good relationship between them. He narrated:

> *My experience is that I always follow the teacher's rules and I also make a discussion with the teachers on each topic in and out of the school. It makes good relationships with the teachers and gradually increases the learning activities. Also, I always do homework on time and discuss interesting topics. Teachers provide a good response to me. I always share new events with the teachers, and they encourage me each time in my previous class which motivate me to learn and increase my learning activities.*

After exploring the experiences and stories, his narrations forwarded that to make better learning for the students, there requires guidance to take a good direction in the learning. So, there needs help for good guidance to the students in learning. From the participant's narrations, I sensed that to achieve good guidance from the teachers, students also should give a good response that motivates the teacher towards the students. Also, the motivation of the teacher toward student learning tends to achieve a positive relationship between them as well as better learning activities.

Likewise, when I moved into another Participant (S5), she also shared a similar view. In addition, when I asked about the reason that she likes her teacher, she narrated: *"she applies a different technique in teaching; she helps students well while*

teaching". Furthermore, she also articulated a strong preference for the practical value and daily application of learning which increased her interest in learning. Framing on the learning experiences, she clarified her encouragement for learning by providing a suggestion with a lovely environment rather than making a striking environment when mistakes were made by the students. The events of teaching activities of teachers made a positive impression on the teacher. She went back on her sweet memories and narrated: "*He would ask questions. If students did not give right answer, he would not punish hard as compared to another teacher. He would provide a lot of suggestion to learn".*

She further summed up her response by adding that a good relationship helps to encourage the students to learn better. With a long deep breath, she shared her experience:

> *I did not like the teachers misbehave and discriminate while learning. In my case, I wouldn't like those who only focused on the talented students. I have seen many friends who were unable to achieve care and love in the learning activities. Therefore, they didn't improve their learning.*

The story is about the speaker's experience with her teacher. She mentions that her current relationship with her teacher is good, but for a positive learning experience, the relationship between the teacher and student should be based on mutual understanding and trust. She also emphasizes the importance of interaction and discussion between teachers and students in the learning process. To maintain this positive relationship, both the student and teacher should be aware of their rights and responsibilities and be sincere and conscious in fulfilling them. The speaker also mentions that she did not have a good relationship with her teacher while in school, which affected her interest in learning and her academic performance.

She further shared her experience that to maintain a good relationship, students should be treated positively in the learning activities rather than punishing the students. Study also claims on the similar views that punishment decreases the learning interest of the student (Aufsatz, 2012). Also, she shared that the punishment should be eliminated because it conveys a lot of negative conceptions between teacher and student rather than positive thoughts on the learning. Also, to draw the attention of learning in the students, the teacher should be polite and make the students fearless with the teacher. She revealed: "*Teachers' voices should be polite while slight mistakes are done by their students. They should not punish and should treat positively while teaching. Students should be cared by the teachers as they are cared by their parents".*

In my study of exploring the experiences and stories of the participant (S6), she shared an impression of the social teacher. In a way, her teacher had linked the school curriculum with the extra-curricular activities that deeply focused the students' minds on the learning activities. With a blush on her face, she acknowledged that the extra-curricular activity that is directly linked with practical life, as well as social events encourage her in learning. With encouraging expressions, she narrated:

> *Sometimes, she takes all the students to the ground and makes a team of football and then plays. After playing football, she teaches us that to make a goal in football, all players of the team should perform well. To make a good performance in the society, all the social members should perform well to make a good society. She provides such types of examples that directly touches our hearts concerning society. It helps me to increase my learning interest.*

Also, she humbly narrated her experiences concerning the extra knowledge shared by her teachers while in the classroom. It would make her more curious and

encourages her to learn more and more in an exciting mood. Also, she recalled that this type of extra knowledge helps the students to make their understanding comprehensive in the learning. She shared her reflection on the connection of social activities with the curriculum activities, which enlarged her thinking level beyond society and from the perspective of humanity. It developed her positive relationship with the teacher. As stated by Roorda et al. (2011), the increase in the students learning and academic performance be subject to the increase in the positive relationship of learning between teachers and students. Also, from the narration of participants, I came to the point that the negative response of the teacher produces discouragement whereas the positive response creates encouragement in the students learning. She narrated:

> *I have an experience when I was studying in class 9. A teacher did not respond and care me well. It discouraged me from learning. I didn't have a huge interest in learning. I spoiled my studies. But, when I was studying in class 10, the teacher cared me well and helped to improve my learning activities each time, promoting positive thinking. It gradually increased my learning interest.*

Furthermore, the narration of the participant (S6) also fosters my mind that the positive response of the teachers toward students is necessary to increase the learning activities of the students as well as to create the teacher-student relationship.

Friendly Behaviours: An Effective Teaching Approach

In general understanding, the word friendly behaviour gives the sense that someone or something exhibits the characteristics of a friend, such as being kind, helpful, or caring. Based on the assumption, friendly behaviour is an example of friendly gesticulation, smiling, waving, and being helpful to serve people when arrives difficulties in any situation with kind intentions. In this study, when I presented the

queries to my participant (S1) regarding her experiences of learning, she narrated that she had strong memories of her learning experiences that were affected by the teacher. When I went through the queries of my study, she was excited to reveal her stories that she was very weak in the English language because she had passed out SEE from the Government School of Nepal. Although English was hard for her, the teacher made her easy and comfortable.

I sensed from her stories that she has acquired a lot of feedback full of encouraging behaviour from her teacher rather than punishment whenever mistakes were done in the learning. It changed her positivity towards the teacher which was the indispensable factor to motivate her in the learning interest. She added:

> *In a science practical lab, when I made the physical destruction of the instrument, I was afraid too much and felt that now he would punish me economically and physically according to its rules and cost. But the teacher made me free and relieved. Also, he encouraged me by saying that while in the period of learning, there may be mistakes. No mistakes mean no gain of knowledge*.

After going through this event that was shared by my participants (S1), I made a meaning that she has a positive insight towards the teacher. It was because of his helpful behaviour in the discomfort situation while in the learning situation. Also from those events, she was able to make a strong confidence in discussion and interaction with the teachers in and out of the subject matter where there were difficulties and confusing context been arrived. This explanation from (S1) made it clear about her feeling. She also felt that a good relationship with her teacher helped her to involve in the creative program in and out of the course curriculum to make her

knowledge linked with the practical aspects of life. It encouraged her to make learning more effective.

The participant (S6) also shared her friend's experience that the talented students were closely watched and cared for by the teacher during each difficulty. The good behaviour of the teachers towards students makes closer relationships with the students. Sharing her experience that the good care towards students by the teacher gradually increases the students learning with a better position, she revealed:

> *My friend is a talented student herself, so obviously the teacher cares for her well. She also respects the teacher. She can get too much help from the teacher. It could be the reason that she has become talented and performs a good position in the class in my view. Hence, it is necessary to make a good relationship between teachers and students for good learning activities.*

Concerning the experiences of friendly behaviour of the teacher towards students, she narrated that to increase the learning activities of the students, the teachers had a great role. The teacher can help the students with each difficulty in learning. Also from her story, she revealed that teachers could play the role to make positive thinking by sharing the learning events and caring for every difficulty of the student by increasing the encouraging behaviour to the students in the learning activities. Participant (S2) has also the same line in the learning experience. She narrated:

> *All teachers are friendly. They tell us that if we do not understand the learning, we can ask for help each time in and out of school. In the situation of economic trouble our parents invest in our learning. They provide support in our learning through the increase in free ship and scholarships. Most of the students are from a low economic level of family status.*

Standing at my research question, she narrates her experience that to sustain good learning and a good relationship with the teachers, teachers should also help their students as their parents help and care for their children. The students can learn more when their relationship seems like a parental relationship. Students can learn better in a friendly environment. She also narrated that to maintain friendly behaviour, teachers should promote their students in free and open learning activities by using the discussion as well as interaction program in the learning period that gradually discards the negativity in the student towards the teacher as well as towards the learning.

In my journey of exploring the experiences and stories of the students, participant (S3) also recalled his events and stories that the cooperation with each other between teacher and students through the sense of positive thinking encourage them to help each other. In the sense of positive thought, he developed a positive relationship with his teacher. He also revealed in his sense that to bring positive thoughts towards the teacher, the teacher should also support them in the difficulties where their parents are facing. The supportive framing of the teachers towards their learning makes a close attachment with the teachers in the teaching-learning activities. Additionally, secure attachment tends to perform a close relationship with each other in learning. A positive relationship between teachers and students tends to increase their learning and academic performance of the students. He revealed:

> *While in school, I feel teachers should be like our parents and their help should be at the parental level. When support is needed for the students such as economic, social, etc. every teacher and student should help each other, which makes a close relationship. Also, it diverts the mind in learning and*

students feel free, and friendly. It gradually helps to increase their learning by encouraging them with positive vibes.

Going through the experience of the participant (S3), I noted that he was most influenced by the friendly relationship with the friendly behavior of his teacher during the learning activities. He also narrated that the interactive program while learning helped him to reduce his fear of the teacher, which gradually increased his confidence level to keep close to the teacher to increase his learning activities. He narrated through his experience that in school, the relationship between the teacher and student should be the relationship of parental bonding like in the home.

From the review of the study, Bhattarai (2019) also stated the same view that friendly behaviour between teachers and students has an important role to increase the learning performance of the students. Also, the participants (S5) shared the related views that support friendly behaviour for the better learning of the students. To maintain friendly behaviour, he focused on teachers' behaviour and that teachers should give them positive vibes and provide feedback on the learning. If students make a mistake, a teacher should treat them positively by the words saying that *"mistake is normal in the learning period but in the future, you should do good in the learning by doing good practice".* In the story, he exposed the emphasis on encouragement rather than punishment which makes a positive vibe in the students toward teachers.

Regarding the exploration of the learning experiences, he also emphasized that only the teacher's behaviour is not enough to maintain friendly behaviour. In this situation, he narrated that students should give respect and obey the rules of the teachers and should be disciplined while in the learning activities to make positive perception of teachers towards the students to maintain friendly behaviour between

teacher and student. On this point, Bhattarai (2019) shared the same line that the loving and caring behavior for the students encourages them for the betterment of learning than the punishment.

Marching towards the journey of learning experiences of students based on the teacher-student relationship, I went to my participants (S6). She also revealed her experience of learning in her own story:

> *One time when I was studying in class 10, the social study subject teacher gave us homework to make a map of Nepal listing seven proveniences. We were asked to complete it within two days. Although I was very poor at drawing, I made a map. When I went to the class, the teacher was checking all the homework very tightly. When I see the teacher's activity with the homework, I became red and afraid. I was hopeless with the poor and incomplete picture. I was too confused about what to say to the teacher. When my turn came, I told everything about my weakness in drawing. The teacher told me not to be afraid and to be patient that drawing was itself hard. It was good that I had tried to make it better. He also added that I had to increase my level of practice more and more by providing the various techniques. It encouraged me to practice more and more for the better learning from those events. To some extent, the encouragement to me from that teacher helped me to increase my academic performance.*

Also, she narrated that the behaviour of the teacher with the friendly co-operation in the learning increased her positive sensations towards that teacher. It created a positive relationship with the teacher. Through the positive relationship, she encouraged to reflect her hidden talents and confusion to do good in her studies.

My Reflection and Theoretical Discussion:

In the previous chapter, I presented brief profiles of my participants and shared their stories about their learning experiences. I analyzed these stories to understand how the relationship between teachers and students impacted their learning. I identified three themes that came out of these narratives and interpreted the meaning of the data based on these themes. This helped me capture the essence of the experiences and provide my understanding of how the teacher-student relationship influenced student learning.

My Reflection

After analyzing the stories under the theme of learning affection through motivational activities, it was evident that the students had an indifferent relationship with their teacher, and this affected their learning. The students' relationship was influenced by their participation in extra-curricular activities. These activities were seen as crucial for motivating students in their learning process. This aligns with Habermas's theory of motivation, which suggests that teachers play a role as social agents in developing students' intellectual and emotional skills, creating a positive and supportive learning environment. This, in turn, motivates students to be more engaged in the learning process (Davis, 2006).

While exploring the students' narrations, Participant (S1) shared her experience that the extra-curricular activities provide a source of knowledge that motivates her to make a good relationship with the teacher in learning to make her academic performance better than before. The other participants S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6, have the same line of understanding on the extra-curricular activities that help to make a broad sense of knowledge which discards the fear with the teacher to make an interaction and queries where there appears the problem. This interaction and queries

with teachers help the students to develop a clear idea within the subject matter that helps them to increase their academic performance better than before.

In a similar language, Mayor of Kathmandu Metro city**,** *Balendra Shah* states that only the students are unable to perform a good performance in their learning without the positive support of the teachers (Simarekha, 2022). He further focused on the cooperation and interaction between the teachers and students within and outside of the subject matter that encourages the students to provide more effort towards learning. These activities help to broaden the student's level of thought which provides a way to widen their social circle and expand their interest in linking with social values. Furthermore, it helps to gain real-world experience linked with academic knowledge through practical knowledge in the students that increases more regularity of the students in class attendance and higher self-confidence. Hence, the increase in the encouragement of the students towards regularity in learning through extra-curricular activities also supported to make a close relationship with the teacher. It increased the higher grades and higher academic performance of the students (Hughes, 2012; Roorda et al., 2011).

In my quest for this study on the theme of *Practical life aspects of Learning,* the learning experience of the participants is grounded based on the teacher-student relationship. It is also evident that the participants were influenced by their learning activities which are directly related to the practical life aspects. The participants (S3), (S4), and (S6) were from the same family status and their family was not educated so they couldn’t get any direction to make a better learning performance. To maintain a formality, their parents send them to school rather than to make a bright future after school life because they are less conscious of the scope of education for a better future. In that weak context, the students went to school to study. In the class, their

teachers had different teaching-learning styles. When the teachers taught by connecting with the aspects of practical life, it touched heartily to the students because all the activities had been faced by them socially. It enhanced their motivation towards learning by emerging a positive relationship with the teachers.

The practical aspect of knowledge that is linked with the core curriculum makes them more curious about the learning to make a broader sense of knowledge in the related topics. On the other hand, fostering a positive teacher-student relationship in learning shows a positive implication for the student's motivation to learn and perform well academically (Luz, 2015). Furthermore, the study also suggests that the students become more energized, and excited in learning when their emotional interest increase through the positive reinforcements from the teacher. When reviewing the study conducted by Reeve (2006), the study states in the same line of view that students can get more encouraged in learning when they accomplish the role of the teacher as the facilitator in their teaching-learning activities. Moreover, this study also suggests that students can increase their learning when teachers act as the facilitator by providing the learning environment in a way through which they nurture inner motivational resources of students. It helps them to learn better and perform better than before.

In my quest for this study on the theme of *Friendly behaviour: an effective learning instrument,* I generated the meaning of the student learning experiences based on the teacher-student relationship that was shared by my participants. In my research, when I took the narrations of the students based on the topics, they shared that in the learning activities, the behavior of the teachers plays a vigorous role to increase their learning interest as well as academic performance. There is a variation in my participant’s backgrounds. Some participants were from very low parental

status in economic and educational level. Some other participants have a normal level of parental status on the economic and educational level.

As in the study from the differential background, it is found that their learning interest was increased due to the positive influence of the teacher's behaviour. Their teachers have friendly behaviour that mesmerizes the students towards the teachers as well as in the learning activities. Teachers helped them whenever there was a problem in their learning. Students were also encouraged by the teachers that they got positive feedback while making mistake in their learning. From the participant's narrations, it seems that the positive feedback to the students in learning makes them positive toward the teachers. Rather than the core curriculum, practical based teaching-learning activities seem like an essential factor to encourage the students in their learning. As it is stated by Norton (2017), students become more encouraged when they get more feedback from the teachers through the emotional, rational, relational, and social aspects of friendly behaviour by providing a positive ambiance with maintaining a positive relationship in the teaching-learning activities. In my site of study, it was realized that the teachers' behaviour seems friendly to the students.

As stated from the student's narrations, I formulated my insight that the student from the lower economic status needs teachers' supports. Teachers can support them by providing free ships and scholarships to the students that support them economically. This type of economic support (free ship and scholarship) encourages the students in their learning which also delivers the fillings of parental care from the teachers. This opportunity for the students helps them to make their learning comfortable and easy within the socio-economic problems. Also, it leads to the advancement of a favourable teacher-student relationship. This relationship is seemed to be based on collaboration, which is helpful to increase the students learning

capacity to achieve the better academic performance. On the supportive level, Luz (2015) also shared the same view that constructive interaction with friendly behaviour is essential to maintain a close relationship. It values a supportive and caring relationship between themselves. In the study, students become more interested in learning when they get a sense of caring and support from the teachers which helps the students to overcome struggles. This sense of trust and security with teachers' goodwill assists and supports their students to contribute to learning and academic success.

From this theme, it can be derived that the friendly behavior of the teacher with the supportive frameworks towards the students and their needs, helps to increase the student's engagement in learning. Also, it plays a vital role to increase the learning interest and the academic performance of the students.

Theoretical Discussion

The theoretical discussion of this study legitimized the thematic articulation of my participants' information linking with the theories which could be authenticated to exploring the teacher-student relationship and its effects on student learning. In this section, I set up a journey to link previous literature that aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (1962, 1978) and Bowlby's attachment theory (1940, 1949, 1988) to my understanding of the meaning of the themes of a student learning experience. Also, bringing together the Bandura's (2009) social cognitive theory, the theoretical discussion herein interplays between multiple factors and human processes.

The story of my participants about the learning experience based on the teacher-student relationship makes it clear that students felt they were empowered by the extra-curricular activities that have been integrated with their field of interest

created to them by their teachers helping in the growth of their self-interest to increase their learning. In Chapter IV, I presented three themes on how students perceived their learning experience based on their teacher-student relationship. Accordingly, I interpreted and made meaning of the data collected, based on the themes assigned.

From theme I, it could be derived that the relationship that the students shared was one of indifference, that they were positively encouraged in the learning due to the teaching and learning activities of the teachers. It means that a positive level of thinking tends to make a positive relationship between them, which increases their learning (Bowlby, 1949). In this sense, to motivate the students in their learning, students should be attached to their core curriculum of knowledge with a practical basis. Also, when I reviewed the study conducted by Reeve (2006), it states on the same line that students get motivated and tend to increase their encouragement in learning when they get the teachers as the facilitator. The teachers as the facilitators provide the learning environment with nurture, involvement, and expand their ideas, issues, and problems, which results in the construction of a positive relationship between teachers and students. It tends to make a better learning than before. Also, the students can get an opportunity to communicate with each other. They openly present queries that make the students to feel supported, and comfortable with the teachers in each situation of learning difficulties (Mashburn et al., 2008).

In the journey of this research, I came closer to the social constructivist theory, which emphasizes collaborative learning such as group inquiry and debates with the teachers in and out of the course curriculum. The interaction with each other while in the learning activities helps the students to construct new knowledge. Also, the previous study states that the construction of knowledge is the product of the interaction with each other, their previous experience, and

knowledge (Vygotsky, 1962). The study of Vygotsky (1978) states that to build knowledge, interaction with the teachers and students, as well as between the individual has been focused on which knowledge is constructed by the conversation and exchange of knowledge between two or more individuals. In my research site, the extra-curricular activities focus that the students on the interaction and discussion within the topics are actively engaged in the learning, and students are provided the opportunities to ask questions, solve problems, process information as well as make decisions that increase the levels of interactions between the teachers and students. In addition, the increase in interaction with the teachers and peers while learning supports to increases their learning and academic performance through the construction of new knowledge (Jonassen et al., 1998).

Merging the social construction theory with my understanding helps me to legitimize my insights in this study. From this study, I found that the students learning activities could be increased as it increases the positive relationship between teachers and students. In other words, the relation does not only analyze the teacher's role but also emphasizes the students to concentrate on the construction of knowledge, providing opportunities for interaction, discussion, and communication within the related subject. In this sense, the teacher who stands with supportive hands, and serving with the practical knowledge within and outside of the curriculum to the students is denoted as a positive teacher-student relationship.

In the teaching-learning activities, teachers used various activities rather than the core knowledge that focused on collaboration in the learning, sharing the problems and issues with the practical approaches. According to the theory of social construction (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978), the practical approaches of learning encourage the students to reflect about what they are doing. Also, according to this theory,

knowledge can be constructed in the collaboration with the students, teachers, and peers. This theory also focused on constructing knowledge and understanding by providing opportunities for the students to collaborate in learning from the teachers within and between the students. Also, this claim of providing opportunities for collaboration in learning with each other authenticates my understanding that a positive teacher-student relationship is necessary to increase the students learning.

The theory of Bowlby's attachment also talks in the same line with my participants that the extra-curricular activities, practical life aspect of learning, and the friendly behaviour of the teacher empower the students to feel secured (Bowlby, 1940, 1949, 1988). It increases the level of interaction with the teacher and the peers. It also indicates that the secure attachments increase the interpersonal trust that strengthens the close relationship between the teacher and student which supports the growth of the students learning.

The extra-curricular activities encourage the students in the interaction and sharing of issues and problems through the feelings of secure attachments with the teachers. It also shows that the good relationship has a great impact on student learning (Ber-gin & Bergin, 2009). It can be also stated that the activities as well as the friendly behaviour of the teachers in the teaching-learning activities create a secure attachment between teachers and students. The feelings of secure attachment towards teachers promote the students to make a close relationship with teachers. Also, the secure attachment tends to increase the confidence level of the student (Bowlby, 1988). As a result, it increases the engagement of the students in the learning activities and enhance their academic performance.

Additionally, the friendly behavior of the teachers looks like a source of security that decreases conflict and enslavement with increased closeness through

respect and caring by the teachers. The study findings in this chapter showed that the secure attachment of the students towards teachers motivates them to make a positive relationship with the teacher in their learning. In line with this study, with the feelings of secure attachment in students towards teachers, students feel safe to seek help from teachers and teachers also console the students. This is the fundamental claim of Bowlby's attachment theory. As this study suggests, the friendly behavior of the teacher that aligns with this theory seems like a proactive factor for the student's learning to increase their academic excellence. Hence, the findings of my study show that as stressed by Bowlby's attachment theory, the influence of early school environment is vital in the development of healthy human and reduction of group tensions.

By aligning with this theory, the extra-curricular activities that were shared by my participants motivated them to discover the cause and effects, answer the questions, or just create something new to add to the existing knowledge by sharing ideas and brainstorming with each other. In one way or another, the teaching-learning strategies that were used by the teachers through aligning the practical aspects of learning with the subject matter promote the students in the learning (Dorgu 2015). As Westwood (2008) states, the teaching method by using practical activities from the teachers enables the students to exchange their ideas within the topics and subject matter which helps to increase the learning performance of the students. These methods of learning are found in the theories of social construction. The exchange of knowledge between peers and teachers leads to a warm classroom environment. It minimizes conflict with each other which creates a positive teacher-student relationship that motivates the students to learn more and more (Nielson & Lorber, 2009). Additionally, the increased learning habits through the motivation of the

students eventually help to increase their academic performance. This claim also authenticates my understanding that a positive teacher-student relationship is necessary to increase the students learning as well as their academic performance.

Likewise, while merging this study with the cognitive constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978) and the Self-system theory, both the theories in one way or other talks on the students learning. According to this theory, the extra-curricular activities, practical life aspects of learning and the friendly behavior of the teachers in the teaching-learning activities focuse the students to gain the skills through innovation and exploration (Stroet et al., 2015). This theory also sheds light on the importance of feedback and encouragement from the teachers to address the behavioral issues of the students to improve their learning. Bandura (2009) also supports that the friendly behavior while in the teaching-learning activities helps to avoid the negative consequences of the students towards the teachers. It tends to increase the positive relationship as well as the student's engagement in learning.

Hence, both theories have informed my participants' narrations that students get motivated and engaged in learning when there are open, secured, and inclusive teacher-student relations. They develop the inquiry skills, curiosity, equip with the problem-solving skills through the concrete guidance and helps from the teachers. These positive aspects of support from the teachers are an effective tool to increase the interest of learning. As a result, it enhances the academic performance of the students. The theories, thus, authenticates my understanding that the positive teacher-student relationship is an essential factor to increase the students learning and their academic performance.

Chapter Essence

In this chapter, the study's findings about how students narrate their learning experiences based on the teacher-student relationship were discussed theoretically. The themes were extracted from the students' stories and presented in response to the research questions. The key points of the study were highlighted, along with the underlying theoretical foundations of social construction theory, Bowlby's attachment theory, cognitive constructivist theory, and Self-system theory. These theories were used to develop an understanding of students' learning based on their relationship with the teacher. The participants' stories were analyzed, organized, and used to construct meaning, which are the knowledge contributions of the inquiry.

CHAPTER V

STUDENTS' STORIES ON THE DOWNSIDE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The first part of this chapter explores the subject matter through the stories and experiences of six participants. Their words are included as in the verbal languages, with italicized text. The stories are divided into two themes, and in the second part of the chapter, I reflect on these themes and provide a theoretical discussion. In the final part, I summarize my findings and provide perspectives on student learning experiences based on my understanding.

Downside Learning Experiences Defined

The term "Downside Learning" is used in this study to describe the negative impact on students' learning and academic performance that can result from teaching-learning activities. Teachers' efforts to engage students through various learning activities may not always be successful, and students may struggle to gain effective learning strategies and performance from their teachers. This can result in a lack of interest and motivation for learning, which in turn leads to a decline in academic performance and grades (Kalenze, 2014). Ultimately, downside learning can hinder a student's ability to learn and succeed in their studies.

Traditional teaching methods, where information is simply delivered to students with little opportunity for interaction or engagement, can lead to negative learning experiences for students, known as "downside learning." This one-way delivery of information often results in a teacher-centered approach where students are passive recipients, lacking opportunities to ask questions or share their own perspectives (Castejou & Martinez, 2001). This type of relationship in the classroom can negatively impact students' learning and academic performance. The negative

actions of a teacher, such as misbehavior, harsh criticism, and humiliation, can negatively impact a student's motivation in the classroom. Also, this can lead to decreased interest in learning and a decline in academic performance (Levis & Riley 2009). To the consideration, this chapter specifically focuses on two sub-themes to understand how this downside learning experience is shaped by a negative teacher-student relationship: (1) physical punishment hinders attachment and learning, and (2) negative behavior affects student learning.

Punishment: Hurdle for Attachment and Learning

In many cases, punishment is used as the process of controlling the student's unusual behaviour and to maintain the discipline. These types of rigorous and unacceptable punishment bring negative cognizant (Lawrent, 2012). Furthermore, it should be concerned area for schools and schools' officials to prevents the negative impacts on the students learning (Cicognani, 2004). Teachers use punishment as one of their teaching tools. Teachers punish their students in the class when they do not do as they instruct them to do. Punishment can be at times when students do not do their reading or assignments. Punishment is seen as a regular practice in the schools of Nepal. There are related stories shared by my participants. When I went through the learning experience of my participant (S1), she shared a remarkably interesting story of spending a whole period out in the hot sun when she had missed the assignment.

Moving through the study conducted by Habib et al., (2019), it also states that punishments are used in school as a means of controlling student. Also, it asserts that the punishment of the teacher to the student negatively affects the students' emotional bond with the school. When teachers fail to design effective teaching activities that cannot encourage students to understand them better, they exercise authority to punish or create an extra controlling mechanism to hide their weaknesses.

When I went through the participant (S1) to explore her stories, she narrated that teachers always give punishment to students without good teaching in which the normal students cannot ask any questions when they feel uneasy doing the task. According to her story, the students who are poor in learning cannot get good help from the teachers as the talented students receive the essential feedback easily. So, this type of unequal behaviour in the learning activities is like a punishment to the normal students that always hampers in their learning. The sense of punishment depends on the situation of the class where students are learning. Somewhere students enjoy too much freedom and make the class noisy. Over freedom likely make them careless in the learning activities. In this situation, to make students devoted to learning, some punishment is needed. In this situation participant's (S2) story was in the same line that teachers should be strict according to their student's behaviour to perform learning activities effectively.

The theory of social construction also states that the student's construction of knowledge is the production of social interaction, experience, previous knowledge, interpretation, and understanding (Vygotsky, 1962). Reviewing the study conducted by Vygotsky (1978), the study states that to construct the knowledge there should be an emphasis on the collaboration between teachers and students as well as between the individuals in which knowledge is constructed by the conversation and exchange of knowledge between two or more individuals. But, when classes are monotonous and teacher-centered, it means that there is no space to discuss with each other. It fails to attract students' attention and because of it, the class deviates from the actual objective of the teacher. To bring the distracted class to track, teachers might exhibit strictness or exercise punishment as a teaching tool.

I spoke with a student (S6) from a remote public school in Palpa district about her learning experiences based on her relationship with her teacher. She shared a negative experience where her teacher became angry and punished her instead of helping her when she struggled to understand a particular chapter. This led to her losing confidence and not speaking up in class anymore. Similarly, another student (S5) also shared a similar story of not receiving support from their teacher:

> *Always she gives me homework and threat while making mistakes, and she also throws my copies. teachers use violent words in the classroom. When I talk, go to drop litter, or raise my fingers without permission, she hits me. When I give a wrong answer, she shows mad behaviour by looking at and humiliating me, which makes me disappointed. She always threatened and reprimand the students before the class without knowing what happened. I got demoralized and my productivity in the class decreases. Moreover, in the class when I make a mistake while doing the classwork, she sends me outside of the class and makes me stand in the sun with the whole class and humiliates me before my friends. Thus, from that event I do not want to show my love and respect to that teacher.*

After exploring the experiences of my participant's story, I came to realize that these types of activities and behaviour seem like a punishment that never encourages the students in their learning activities. The perspectives of the Cognitive theory also advocate that, children's cognitive development emerges from the interactions between individuals, peers, and groups in society (Swearer et al., 2014). Social relationships influence children's motivation to learn. So, the use of verbal methods of discipline through clarification and reasoning is likely to provide more intellectual incentive to the students than the use of corporal punishment without

induction (Coon, 2001). Likewise, Lawrent (2012) also suggested that the punishment makes the students ashamed, during the learning and teaching process so it should be eliminated in both the homes and schools to enhance the positive learning of the students as well as to discard the negative sensations of the relationship between teachers and students.

Hence, after going through the stories regarding their learning experience with the students, I concluded that physical punishment discards the positive teacher-student relationship in the teaching-learning activities in and out of the classroom. As well, it abandons the positive vibes of the students toward the teacher which gradually declines the learning interest of the students and finally decreases their academic performance.

Unhealthy Behaviour: Effects the Student Learning

Student learning is mostly dependent on the behaviour of the teachers. Mostly the positive behaviour of the teacher is helpful for the students to learn better. The betterment of the student's learning is dependent on the behaviours that the teachers perform while in the teaching-learning activities. The unfriendly behaviour hampers the students learning for the better academic performance of the students. As I explored on the learning experience of the student, I went to my participant (S1) to probe her to add more on it. She narrated:

> *Some of our teachers lecture so plain that there is no visual or discussion and interpretation. We just read from our course books; thus, the classes are boring, and I don't like paying attention to the course. They can make the classes more amusing; they can amuse us while lecturing. Some of the teachers teach the classes so boring. They talk all the time, dictate too much, and don't give us the right to speak. They come, they tell and tell and tell and*

leave. If we make questions, they send us out of the classroom. When I ask a question to one of the teachers, he avoids the question by humiliating me in front of all my friends. From that event, I never ask a question again in that class. He gives lectures and left without communicating within and out of the subject matter with the students which decreases my positive vibes and motivation with his teaching-learning activities.

I went into another frame of this study regarding the research question. In the journey of exploring the experiences and stories of the students, I went to my Participant (S4), where he shared his friend's story that his friends couldn't do good in learning. He always talks straight without any respect for the teacher, don't obey the teacher's rules and lacks a healthy relationship between them. According to him, his friends don't like the teacher's behaviour while in the teaching-learning activities. He narrated that the unhealthy behaviour which couldn't make a good relationship between teacher and student caused the degradation of his friends' learning and academic performance. Levis and Riley (2009) as cited in Yıldırım et al., (2016) also stated with the same line that the unhealthy behaviour of the teacher towards students decreases their positive relationship as well as the student learning process. As in the exploration of the learning experience, Participant (S5) also shared the same lines of discriminated behaviour that while in the teaching-learning activities, his teacher responded only to the talented students and didn't care well. The teacher always behaves strictly without providing feedback to encourage her that the bad attitude of the teachers didn't help to increase her learning interest. She narrated:

likes and dislikes of teachers depend upon their behaviour rather than their knowledge because no one involve in the teaching field without basic knowledge. I had an experience where one teacher was more talented than

another teacher, but I don't like his teaching because of his behaviour, which I didn't like.

In the context of exploring the learning experience, she shared her experience of her learning based on the teacher's behaviors that only talented teachers couldn't perform effective teaching and learning to the students. She shared that teacher's behavior should suit the students to attract their interest in learning because the behavior of the teacher plays an important role to increase their learning interest (Yıldırım, et al., 2016). She also shared her events on the same questions that she doesn't like her teacher, which is mainly the unhealthy behaviour performed by her teacher. Also, she shared that the teaching-learning activities were mostly influenced by the power. Those students only get an opportunity to acquire a quality education whose parents are powerful people in society. She shared that the students of the powerful parents get too much focus to improve their learning as well as get the right to discuss and interact on the topics rather than the qualitative access of the students. Furthermore, she narrated that this type of discriminated behavior by the teacher toward the students of weak parents having the lack of power in society seems unable to get an opportunity to improve their learning. She explained the reason for her struggle in learning where she had less knowledge of the subject, and therefore, low confidence due to a poor foundation in the subject. In this situation, while learning, she gradually decreased her learning interest and attachment in learning because of the unhealthy behavior of the teacher whose activities never encouraged her towards positive vibes. In the voyage of exploring the learning experience of the students, I went to my participant (S6). Standing in my research questions, she recalled her painful story of the teacher's unhealthy behavior with large disapproval of the ongoing situation where she revealed:

He always provides negative vibes and ignores me. He only focuses on the talented students. Only academically good students get a lot of learning opportunities. Teachers always inspire talented students although they make a mistake. Along with this, the teacher gives too much response to the students whose parents were reputed and powerful people in society without comparing the student's ability of learning. The discriminatory behavior of the teacher caused a decrease in my learning. One day, when I went to study opt. math in classes 9 and 10, he didn't give me permission which discouraged me. How is a dictatorship in the teaching/learning activities? I didn't get an opportunity to study with my opinion which discouraged me from my learning. I felt that I was humiliated by the teachers because of my powerless parental structure.

Going through her story, I noted that teachers should not make tyranny. Teachers should focus on the student's interests to increase their learning in the learning activities. Within the same line, Participant (S5) felt humiliated and taunted by her teacher's behaviour while in the teaching-learning activities. After that incident she felt that the school is a boring place that only discards the creativity in her learning. In addition, Participant (S6) also shared the same line of the story on the learning experience that she didn't have the interest to learn because of the teacher's behavior. In the learning activities, when she asked for help, she got disappointed with the teacher's behavior, and she always got misbehaved with humiliating words and physical punishment rather than encouraging behavior. She shared that such types of behavior made frustration in her learning.

When I asked her the ideas to improve the problems of the students learning, she narrated that the teacher's attitude should be positively charged to the students' perspectives. It means that teacher should be the mediator to help the students when it

needs. Also, she narrated that to increase the learning interest, the teacher must be sincere with the student's voice and their problems.

My Reflection and Theoretical Discussion

From the above theme (physical punishment and unhealthy behaviour), I have interpreted and made meaning from the narrations collected from the participants. According to the narration of the participants, it can be said that there were different views on students learning based on the teacher-student relationship. In general, the cold relationships between teachers and students, in many ways, hampers students' learning.

My Reflection

After examining the participant's learning experience in line with the research questions, I illumined that teachers were insensitive towards the students and their needs of interest in learning which needs to be improved to increase the learning performance of the students. In the improvement and increase of the students learning, the right support of the teacher is essential (Modlin, 2008). But, in this study, the teacher punished the students physically rather than providing the right support for their learning difficulties which gradually isolated the students to go closer with their teachers to perform a better learning activity. From the participant's story it can be understood that, in the teaching-learning activities students didn't increase their interest in learning due to the unhealthy behavior performed by the teacher. In this context, while teaching in the classroom, the teachers performed discriminatory behavior toward the students according to their economic and power status. Those students get discriminated against in the learning whose parents were weak in political and economic power. It enhanced feelings of humiliation in the students' perceptions. Levis and Riley (2009) also state that the misbehaviors of the teachers toward the

students make frightening to the students with teachers. They cannot present easily with their teacher while in teaching-learning activities. It means students are supposed to follow the instruction guided by the teachers. Those behaviors of the teachers divert the students into negative criticism, discomfiture, yelling with anger, and keeping distance from each other. Such a distanced relationship acts as an obstacle to student learning and academic performance (Sharma, 2013).

According to the narration of the students, the students feel bored and accept the learning activities as passive receivers which seems like crucial problem in schools. As the courses are conducted with classical methods dominated by the authority of the teachers, it becomes boring, and students lose the attention towards learning. A study conducted by Kearney et al., (1991) states the fact that the courses become so boring when the misbehaviors are expressed by the teachers to the students in the teaching-learning activities. It results in a decrease in student learning and academic performance. Most of the students expressed that it is due to the lack of an effective method of teaching-learning activities (Gençtanırım et al. 2014). To make the teaching-learning harmonious, students should be encouraged to participate in the course with their loved behaviors by addressing their voices and perceptions (Gurbetoğlu & Tomakin 2011). On the contrary, the teachers' misbehaviors against the students by discouraging them from participating in learning without solving their problems, and the teacher's unwanted attitude makes the students hesitate to ask questions within and outside of the subject matter.

From the narrations of the students, I sensed that many of the teachers in Nepali schools do not do any efforts to make the subject understandable by making a friendly relationship with the students. It results in a decrease in the students learning and academic performance.

The activities which were performed by the teacher while in the teaching-learning activities were apparently fewer effective ways to increase the students learning. The unhealthy behaviour of the teacher couldn't make a friendly relationship with the student. The teachers were seen to be non-supportive in students learning. The one way of lecture method without much input from the teachers and no way of interacting as well as discussing the related subject matter in the teaching-learning process create an unfavorable teacher-student relationship. Thus, it can be stated that the lack of a positive relationship hampers the students' learning and decrease their academic performance (Sharma, 2013). From this theme, it can be derived that the misbehaviors and punishment from the teachers to the students isolate the positive relationship with each other. Hence, the lack of the positive relationship tends to the decreased learning interest of the students.

Theoretical Discussion

From the above theme which I explored from the learning experiences of the students based on the teacher-student relationship, it can be said that when relationship between teachers and students seems unfavourable, there remains weaker emotional connection. Bowlby's attachment theory states that the emotional connection between teachers and students promotes feelings of security in the student that provides confidence and encourage learning (Bowlby, 1940, 1949, 1988). But, in this study it seems that the teachers did not provide that emotional security to the students. Teachers didn't care about the students by providing the opportunities to go close with the teachers. There is lack of openness in presenting the queries and providing feedback to solve the problems. Bowlby (1949) stresses that the influence of early environment of the school is crucial for the development of either introvert or extrovert personality of the students. In the study, it shows that there are just a few

spaces for the students to interact with their teachers within the subject matter and out of the course curriculum. If we accept the claim of Bowlby (1949), the student can learn from their interaction with each other. It enables them to reduce group tension and makes space for healthy human development. Since individuals with secure attachment increase their confidence level and approach to social interactions, it helps to maintain the positive relationships with one another (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Supporting this definition, Riley (2011) and Bandura (2009) indicate that secure attachments increase the interpersonal trust that accomplishes the close relationship between teachers and students which gradually increases the learning activities and academic performance of the students. The study which was conducted by Luz (2015) states that students value a supportive and caring relationship with the teachers to make a constructive interaction that motivates them to make a close relationship.

As in the study, the sense of caring and support from teachers motivates students to become more interested learners. A caring teacher helps the students to overcome their struggles. This sense of trust and security concerning teachers contributes to students in their academic success. Rey et, al., (2007) also state that a favourable teacher-student relationship is considered to stimulate learning behaviour and support the students to deal with demands in the learning context. But in my field of study, it was clearly expressed by teachers that they showed less care about maintaining a favourable teacher-student relationship, in which students faced difficulty in their learning.

In the study within this theme, students were very impassionate and unmotivated due to the teachers' unhealthy behaviour. While teaching, teachers didn't care, responded, and positively empowered the students. The study is in line with the

Bandura's (2009) suggestion that the lack of positive feelings, emotions, desires, and hope of the students toward teachers caused the detached relationship between teacher and student. The theory of social construction makes fundamental assumptions that an intellectually stimulating and emotionally secured teacher-student relationship enhance the students learning, engagement, and academic performance. Unlike this, the punishment and unhealthy behaviour of the teachers in present study showed the unfavourable teacher-student relationship which ultimately leads to to the declining in academic performance of the students. The unhealthy behaviour of the teacher that avoids the students from interacting and discussing with each other to understand and interpret the experience and previous knowledge caused the lack of student engagement in the learning. Vygotsky (1978) has also the same views that knowledge is constructed through the collaboration between the teachers and students, individual and pairs within the queries and issues on the subject matter. In the teaching and learning activities, the collaboration between the teachers and students helps the students to learn better as well as helps to increase their academic performance.

Along the same line, Bowlby also theorized that the students and teachers with such attachment could make best of the learning (Bowlby, 1969). While the students were discriminated against and humiliated by the teachers in the teaching-learning activities, student pull away from the attachment behaviour as well as from the learning opportunities. Following Bowlby's attachment, the ignored behaviour results caused a negative teacher-student relationship which directly caused the decline in the student's learning performance (Fraley & Spieker, 2003).

The cognitive constructivist theory focuses the students to gain skills through the innovation and exploration with the concrete guidance and helps from the teachers (Stroet & Opdenakker, 2015). It motivates the students in learning through

developing the inquiry skills and curiosity. Accordingly, the self-system theory also focusses on the positive reinforcement and feedback towards the students to increase their motivation in learning through the interaction (Brophy, 1987). But in this study, students are unable to get the feedback and positive behaviors from the teachers while in the teaching-learning activities. This unhealthy behavior of the teachers towards the students tends to the distance relationship between them. Whereas the distance relationship between the teachers and students declines the learning and academic performance of the students.

Hence, using the Vygotsky's social constructivist theory and Bowlby's attachment theory as the major theoretical framework as well as the cognitive constructivist theory and the self-system theory as a supportive theoretical framework is likely to support my claim that punishment in teaching-learning activities and unhealthy behavior both adversely affect teacher-student relationship. Also, it declines the student's learning performance.

Chapter Essence

This chapter contained my participants' narrations of their experiences of student learning based on the teacher-student relationship. It represented an elaborated explanation of my participants' stories relating to their learning. The stories that they narrated were introduced during the interview setting. It brought out of them their interpretation of topic which in its original extract relates to multiple aspects. In this chapter, these multi-ideas were gathered and carefully segregated into different themes. Stories were elaborately presented in meaningful interpretation where participant narrations were explained under the related themes establishing strong coherence with the signature literature and profound theories that support the topics of this study.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

As I reached the end of my research journey, I realized that there is still much to be explored academically. Despite this, I had many exciting experiences during my research. This final chapter summarizes my journey, which began in 2019. It is divided into three parts. First two parts include presenting the conclusions drawn from the students' learning experiences at public schools and highlighting three implications of the study. In the final phase of this chapter, I share my personal experiences, emotions, reflections, and understanding gained during my research journey. Writing about my reflections was both relaxing and enlightening. I explain how the research topic captured my imagination and why I found it important. In conclusion, I summarize the essence of this chapter. The dissertation ends with a list of references used in the study.

Conclusion

Acquiring the philosophical understanding is my acceptance that my researched knowledge is the partial truth but not an ultimate truth because I experienced that it is impossible to reach the truth. On the horizon of student learning, its values were aligned with every corner as well as every moment of school. It covers a wider spectrum of awareness and alertness toward the academic performance of the students as well as schools. As Bowlby (1940, 1949) claims, it creates long-term effects on individual development and better academic performance of the students.

As per my study, the upside learning activities such as learning affection through motivational activities, the life-based practical aspects of learning, and

friendly behaviour are experienced as qualities to inject aliveness into the students learning. The extra-curricular activities were performed by the students in and out of the classroom with the facilitation of the teacher, which motivated the students with positive encouragement in learning. The life-based practical aspects of learning were made better by connecting their learning activities to the practical life within and out of the course curriculum through the practical involvement of students. The involvement of the students makes them inspired to have a positive relationship with the teachers. It encourages them to enhance their learning activities. Therefore, extra-curricular activities, life-based practical aspects of learning (incorporating the practical aspects of learning), and friendly behaviours were the dimensions to increase the students learning based on the teacher-student relationship in the community schools.

In this diverse, complex, and dynamic nature of schools, students, and society, the teacher is one of the respected people that could lead to increased student learning. It leads in their academic development. As a result, the teachers must have distinct characteristics such as friendly behaviour, practical-based learning, and motivational activities to conduct the teaching-learning activities to upsurge the encouragement in the students learning. It increases the students' academic performance. Even though all situations may not be appropriate for the learning activities, the teacher-student relationship seems to be the key source to promoting increased student learning. Therefore, I conclude that the effective teacher-student relationship is a process of influencing the learning performance of the students as well as their academic performance.

The significance of the teacher-student relationship in students' learning has been established by recent research. It shows that student learning is influenced not

just by their internal beliefs but also by extra-curricular activities, practical experiences, and the friendly behavior of their teachers. The success of student learning depends on the teacher's dedication to these areas, including increased interaction with students to address questions and concerns both inside and outside the curriculum. This should be a top priority in the teaching-learning process.

Moreover, the teacher-student relationship always stands for the betterment to create a healthy environment for further growth and transformation of the knowledge of the students. Also, it stands for the holistic development of the students which is always at the centre of learning.

I am aware of the significance of the teacher-student relationship. Students benefit from exposure, involvement, passion, and exploration. Teachers should take on the challenge of transferring knowledge to students. The teacher-student relationship not only supports students' learning, but it also contributes to society's growth and development by improving students' academic performance.

In conclusion, this research highlights the importance of the teacher-student relationship in student learning. It shows that student learning is a complex process that is influenced by the positive relationship with teachers, including their behavior and practical activities that are relevant to students' daily lives. This relationship is critical in promoting change, improvement, and transformation not only in students' academic performance but also in society as a whole. Here, I assert that the teacher-student relationship is a crucial factor in student learning. Without practical experiences and friendly behavior between teachers and students, students will not be engaged and motivated in their learning. To enhance student learning and academic performance, it is essential to maintain a positive relationship between teachers and students.

The study looks for newer space to see student-teacher relationship in Nepal. Conventionally, there is a dominant belief in many of the Nepali communities that there should be certain distance between the teacher and the student. This *guru* (teacher) and *chela* (student) relationship has culturally established the hierarchical relationship, where open communication is not intertained (Awasthi, 2004). Unlike this non-inclusive hierarchical relationship between teachers and the students, this study makes advocacy for open and inclusive relational space. It has not only the cultural relevance but also the academic as well.

Implications

Aimed to understand the experiences of students from community schools in Eastern Palpa district with regards to the teacher-student relationship and its impact on their learning experiences, the focus was on how the teacher-student relationship affects students and their learning activities in their daily lives. The study findings emphasized the significance of the teacher-student relationship in promoting effective student learning.

Furthermore, I paid a sincere effort to dig out the meaning of the learning experience from the extra-curricular activities which were directly associated with practical life, and the friendly behaviour they exhibited during the teaching-learning activities. I also had an intention to explore the positions and importance of learning through practical activities as well as the friendly behaviour of the teachers in the teacher-student relationship and its impacts on the students learning. Conversely, the only concern was to explore the learning experience of the students based on the teacher-student relationship in the school. Realization of the fact that how undervaluing the importance of the teacher-student relationship, both by teachers and students, results in damagingly impacts on student learning, student engagement, and

academic performance will be enlightening to many teachers, policymakers as well as students. Based on the findings from this study, they can develop personal strategies through which they create favourable relationship.

This is a narrative inquiry, meaning that its findings have specific context and cannot be generalized to wider contexts. However, they can be used as a reference to understand similar situations. From my understanding, I present some possible implications of this research.

Implication for Practice

The study brings attention to the important role the teacher-student relationship plays in enhancing student learning. All parties involved in the learning process, including teachers and students, have a part to play in promoting growth and development. This study serves as a guide for schools and teachers to better understand the needs of their students and make improvements in the teaching-learning environment. The voice of the students should also be valued and considered in the process. Teachers should have the ability to motivate and encourage their students through different teaching styles, as the same approach may not be effective for all students. The findings of this study highlight the importance of valuing the teacher-student relationship and recognizing it as a key factor in improving student learning and academic performance.

Implication for Policies

This research was carried out for academic purposes rather than to set policies. Even in the exploration of experiences and stories of students learning experiences, I came up with some issues. I Hope, these may add value to the implications at the policy level. The findings of the study suggest that policymakers should make policies centering on the sense of student learning rather than bookish knowledge and result-

oriented activities. As Joshi et al., (2005) suggest, the teacher must have flexible authority towards teaching-learning activities so that they may figure out, increase, and implement the sense of student learning and academic performance. Mishra et al. (2010) and Shrestha (2004) suggests institutional policies to value, and respect the contextual emotions, and feeling of students rather than just following the piles of documented rules and regulations. The school management committee (SMC) should take strong and ethical steps to avoid external influences to maintain a positive teacher-student relationship.

Concerning the national-level implications, the study suggested that test scores are not the only measurement tools of quality education. Therefore, the moral and ethical values of the students also include the parameter for measuring quality education. There are many more visible and invisible, direct, and indirect aspects of students which are required to be nurtured by education. Students need to be respected and valued like the parental relationship. Only then they will be ready for further growth in learning. The value of extra-curricular activities, practical life aspects of learning, and friendly behaviour by reducing the negative behavioural attitude of the teacher seems like the bridge to a positive relationship between teacher and students. Though GoN (2008) and GoN (2016) have made some initiations to strengthen school and community relationships, school policies and planning needs additional initiations for performing a better relationship between teacher and student. The themes, which were discussed in chapters four and five, could be an effective guide to developing the policies regarding the topics.

Implication for Further Study

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of the teacher-student relationship in shaping student learning and academic performance. It provides a

foundation for future research on this topic and identifies potential areas for exploration. For example, further studies can examine the influence of individual characteristics of teachers and students, as well as the cultural, social, and economic background of the school, parents, and society. Additionally, researchers can use validated measurement tools such as the student-teacher relationship scale (STRS) and Assessment of learner-centered practices (ALCP) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher-student relationship in the Nepalese context.

Reflections on Research Journey

My first semester at the MPhil level was filled with memorable moments, both inside and outside of the university. My dissertation was the highlight of my academic journey, and despite being unsure about what it entailed, I was eager to start my research work. As I worked on my research proposal, I struggled to bring together my thoughts into a coherent proposal. I had been exploring this research problem for a long time, even when I was a student myself. This engagement helped me to define the purpose, research questions, and rationale for my study. However, putting these thoughts into a formal research format was challenging. I feel embarrassed now that I was so inexperienced and lacked confidence at the time, but I was determined to conduct research in this area. When I shared my research topic in class, I received feedback that made me reconsider my choice. But I was already deeply invested in this problem and couldn't let it go.

As a student of educational leadership, I was interested in exploring the connection between student learning and the teacher-student relationship, and if this applied globally, including in diverse contexts. I became more confident and focused on this topic and started my research journey. After confirming the research topic, I encountered various challenges, but I was committed to studying higher school

students (11th graders) experiences to enhance the knowledge for this study. This was also confirmed during my proposal defense on October 6th, 2021.

During my research journey, I struggled with choosing a research paradigm and approach. The concepts of epistemology, ontology, and axiology were confusing. I made some struggles to understand those, and I ultimately decided to adopt an interpretive paradigm. Initially, within interpretive paradigm, I was set on conducting phenomenology research, but after reading more about it, I realized that I was not yet experienced enough to handle the complexities of this approach. I sought advice from my facilitators, who recommended narrative inquiry. So, I started preparing myself for this approach at the beginning of my third semester. Now, I feel comfortable with the principles of narrative inquiry, but still have a long way to go.

The most exciting aspect of my research was talking to class eleven students and hearing about their learning experiences based on the teacher-student relationship. I was fortunate to visit different schools in the rural areas of Palpa district and gather information from the students. Transcribing and translating their narratives was challenging, and I had to make an engaged literature review to do so. This study personally touched me as I realized the significance of the teacher-student relationship in enhancing student learning and academic performance. A positive relationship between students and teachers is crucial for students to feel supported and comfortable asking questions in and out of the curriculum. Teachers should also provide a supportive and nurturing environment, like a parent-child relationship, to maintain this positive dynamic. Such a relationship leads to sustained and harmonious student learning performance and can only be achieved when teachers are able to exhibit positive behaviors and provide equal support to all students without discrimination.

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ANNEXES

Interview Guidelines for Narrative Inquiry on the topics:

Teacher-student Relationship and Student Learning Experience: A Narrative Inquiry

Plan for interview

i. The time for generating data from the field (virtual) will run from Nov. 14 to Nov. 22, 2021.

ii. The number of participants will be four, two from each school.

iii. The number of schools will be two. One from each geographical location to generate in-depth data.

iv. The geographical location will be urban (municipality) and rural (rural municipality).

v. The questions for interviews will be the same for all the participants.

vi. The probes may be slightly different from participant to participant.

vii. The questions will be of an open-ended (semi-structured) nature.

viii. The main questions will be the same as mentioned in the proposal.

ix. The interviews will be initiated with informal conversation (rapport building) in the beginning.

x. The time for the interview will be according to the time comfortable for the participants.

xi. The mode of interviews will be open-ended in the field process.

xii. The interview will go till the period of saturation (up to the point at which the possible response will finish).

xiii. The interview will be conducted with a participant consuming a comfortable time.

xiv. The Kathmandu university guidelines will strictly be followed as an ethical consideration. The written consent paper will be filled out by the participants and the school before the interview will begin.

xv. The information of participants will be collected from the school administration. Information like name, gender, age, permanent address, academic qualification, and name of the school will be collected.

xvi. The medium of the interview will be mostly Nepali and English (in case, teachers feel comfortable conversing).

xvii. The interviews will be recorded by mobile or tab-recorder.

xviii. The research diary and reflective notes will be maintained every day.

xix. The interview will be conducted focusing on the research questions.

Questions for interviews

Purpose of the research proposal: The purpose of the study is to explore students' learning experience and academic performance based on a teacher-student relationship.

For rapport building:

(Greetings and the questions related to the school and the family, their likes and dislikes)

Some of the possible (but not limited to) questions are:

i. Namaste or Good morning. How are you?

ii. Do you like coming to school?

iii. At what time do you come to school?

iv. What are the subjects you study in School? Which subjects do you like the most?

v. Do you like your teachers?

vi. Are they friendly? Strict? Caring? Threatening?

The research questions (Questions for generating data for the research):

(Questions related to teacher-student relationship and student learning experience. Some of the possible (but not limited to) questions are:

1. Who is your best teacher?
2. Why do you like him/her the most?
3. Is there any special event that makes you like him/her? (If yes) would you please share the event?
4. Do you think the event had any impact on your studies? How?
5. How was your relationship with him/her? How is your relationship with him/her at present?

   ……
6. Is there any teacher you don't like? Who?
7. Why don't you like him/her?
8. Is there any special event that makes you don't like him/her? (If yes) would you please share the event?
9. Do you think the event had any impact on your studies? How?
10. How was your relationship with him/her? How is your relationship with him/her at present?

    ……..

11. In your view, what kind of relations should a student have with teachers? Do you have any experience that supports your views? How did it (the event/s) affect your studies?

12. In your view, what makes a good student-teacher relationship? Do you have any experience that supports your views? How did it (the event/s) affect your studies?

13. At last, do you have any special experience (about yourself or your friends) that shows student-teacher relationships? (If yes) would you please share it? How did it affect your (or your friends') studies? What are your views on it?

AFTERWORDS

Hearing the final remarks and feedback from the external examiner and research committee members was another learning experience. Addressing those concerns have further strengthened my study. I have included the final observations and the ways I addressed those observations in this section because it enables the readers to make meanings from the process as well. Also, it enables future researchers to consider the concerns which were raised and discussed during this study.

Following the suggestion from the external examiner, I reduced the abstract to 400 words. Also, reducing the emotive words, I worked to make the abstract more academic and coherent. Another concern was with the word ‘how’ in the research question of this study. After a long consultations and review of literature, I decided to continue with the world ‘how’. The word ‘What’ looks for the content/s. The term ‘how’ on the other, looks for the process. As a researcher doing narrative inquiry, I looked for the approach that evolved through a dynamic interplay of story, narrative, and metaphors. Also, I looked the phenomenon through interplay between research questions, theory, experience, conversation, and reflection. Therefore, looking through ‘how’ of the storyline and the narrative thread would enable me to probe and work towards an in-depth understanding of patterns of meaning-making among a relatively small group of people involved in this inquiry.

The concern was for the theories as well. To what extent the cognitive constructivist and social constructivist theories were same and different? I made further study of these two theories and have come to understand that Social Cognitive Theory and Social Constructivist theory are two different theories. Cognitive constructivism came directly from Piaget's work, which was further elaborated by

Vygotsky with visible changes in its fundamental principles. In cognitive constructivism, ideas are constructed in individuals. It is a personal process. In social constructivism, on the other, ideas are constructed through social interactions. Both theories share the underlying concept that ideas are constructed from experience. In the case of my study, both theories were equally supportive. Cognitive Constructivism enabled me to make meaning of the individual learning process of the student, where Social Constructivism enabled me to make meaning in relation to broader social interactions.

Also, the examiner suggested me to revisit the relevance of Positive Deviance theory in this research. I studied some documents and research articles concerning the theory of Positive Deviance. The theory was new for me. I found that positive deviance is an approach to behavioral and social change. It is based on the observation that in any community there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviors enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers. Seen through this, positive deviance is a strength-based approach, which is based on the principle that communities already have the solutions and they are the best to solve their problem.

I looked for the ways to integrate this theory in my research. But almost all my participants were ordinary students with common behaviors. If any of the participant had exhibited some visible uncommon behavior and characteristics, the theory would have been very useful. Therefore, this time I didn't incorporate this theory in this research.

Another major learning, I made after the feedback session is the difference between experience and learning. Following the suggestion from one of the research committee members, I explored the issue further. This question enabled me to widen

my inquiry in a way to explore the connection between experience and learning. *Experience* and *learning* both are the key terms frequently used in my thesis. If experience is the means, learning is the ends. Also, these two terms could be best understood through two closely related but fundamentally different theories i.e., cognitive constructivist and social constructivist theory. Where learning is more a cognitive phenomenon, experience is the byproduct of the wider interactions between the subjects and the objects in certain interactional context.

So, what was the major extention of knowledge as contributed by this study? Following the suggestion of a research committee member, I worked on it as well. The study looks for newer space to see student-teacher relationship in Nepal. Conventionally, there is a dominant belief in many of the Nepali communities that there should be certain distance between the teacher and the student. This *guru* (teacher) and *chela* (student) relationship has culturally established the hierarchical relationship, where open communication is not intertained (Awasthi, 2004). Unlike this non-inclusive hierarchical relationship between teachers and the students, this study makes advocacy for open and inclusive relational space. It has not only the cultural relevance but also the academic as well.

Another equally important concern was- can narratives from a few research participants be readily enough to give direction to the policy interventions? Considering this question, I consulted literatures on narrative inquiry. This is narrative inquiry, and therefore, the finding of this study has contextual relevance. It is not generalized in the wider context. Instead, it has to be taken as a reference to understand several contexts.