

## **Positive teacher-student relationships: Reflection of methods in teacher education in Tanzanian universities.**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined methods used to promote positive teacher-student relationships among student teachers in the university-based teacher education in Tanzania. Guided by conceptual change theory, the study argued that proper methods are vital for student teachers to develop positive teacher-student relationships ability alongside other teaching skills. A sample of 355 student teachers and teacher educators was sampled from different subject specialisations. The study employed in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The University of Dar es Salaam, with the most diversified specialisations was selected as a typical case for the study. Findings of the study revealed that faculties have always employed role modelling, educational courses, teaching practice, and subjects' didactics courses their bottlenecks notwithstanding. Teacher educators have shown varying and contradicting positions regarding the nature of positive teacher-student relationships. These implied that there are inconsistencies in the meaning and value attached to positive teacher-student relationships in teacher education. The study recommends for the reorientation and redefinition of teacher-student relationships as an entry point for maintaining consistency and mainstreaming its importance.*

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a convincingly huge amount of literature in support of the pre-eminence of positive relationships in teaching (TSRs) and learning (Sands, 2011, Raufelder, Sahabandu, Martinez, & Escobar, 2015). Indeed, Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] from 2010 onwards adopted teacher-student relationships among the criteria for quality learning performance in schools (OECD, 2010). Positive teacher-student relationships are critical for establishing classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students who are at risk; like those from socio-economically disadvantaged background learn more actively and are likely to have fewer behavioural problems when they feel that teachers expresses care and takes them seriously (OECD, 2010; Pianta, Hamre & Allen, 2012). Positive teacher-student relationships promote constructive teacher-student engagement beyond formal academic circles, allowing teachers to access and influence students' social, psychological and moral spheres of their development (Raufelder, Sahabandu, Martinez, & Escobar, 2015).

Martin Buber (1878-1965), a Jewish educator and renowned thinker analysed patterns of relationship-based dialogue. In his existentialist stand point, Buber analysed two forms of relationship-based dialogue which are central for individual learners to attain self-actualization; through empowering their *originator* and *communion* instincts. In particular, he points out two patterns of relationships; I-It (*Ich-Es*) and I-Thou (*Ich-du*). According to Buber (1958), the I-it pattern of relationship is

characterised by an asymmetrical and dominating influence of an adult figure over the relational space, tending to objectify a student in the course of dialogue. In the I-Thou pattern, there is symmetrical and shared relational space. The two beings encounter one another and realize mutuality between them.

In an educational experience, Buber acclaims teachers to embrace the inter-human dimension of relationship when dealing with their students. Teachers are called to interact with students as their fellow human beings. Teachers should be able to see learning from the eyes of their students (Hattie, 2012). Buber underscores the friendly and collegial virtues of relationship in teaching and learning situations. Teachers should display integrity, presence, authenticity and trust (Palmer, 2001). In addition, John Dewey (1859-1952), a progressive educator and philosopher, stressed on the fact that education is a social process and that democratic values should be an inherent characteristic of this process in order to promote democratic mental habits among learners (Jerlink, 2009). To Dewey, schools are to be miniature or microcosm of social realities, this in turn, helps learners to live their social realities while in school settings (Ishumi & Nyirenda, 2002).

The primacy for positive teacher-student relationships cannot be overemphasised. The requisite for bonding between teachers and students is professionally-indispensable and takes precedence over other competences (Shapira-Lischinsky, 2009; Boynton & Boynton, 2005). As it will be analysed in the subsequent sections, positive relationships between teachers and students do neither occur automatically nor should it be expected to develop in that fashion (Jones 2010; Sands, 2013; Zygmunt, Cipollone, Tancock, Clausen, Clark, & Mucharah, 2018). This study argues that, the realization of positive relationships in the teaching and learning environment certainly

demands that teachers, as professionals, are equipped with the relational competencies (a set of knowledge, skills and virtues) needed to initiate and sustain positive relationships with their students. The central question that this study sought to answer is: how does pre-service teacher education address positive teacher-student relationships?

This study draws on the Conceptual change theory to explain how teacher-student relationships can develop or be developed among novice teachers. Posner et al (1982) view the onset of conceptual change to be on the restructuring process of the very concepts in an individual. Concepts here refer to innate mental pictures that aid in a categorization of the real world events and phenomena (Rips, Smith & Medin, 2012). The restructuring takes place when the existing concepts are confronted with new experiences that present more intelligible, more plausible and more useful concepts, thus causing an abandonment of the existing concepts in light of the new ones (Hewson, 1992).

In professional learning, and in the teacher education, in particular, the change may take place threefold: (i) through an extinction of former misconceptions in light of the new concepts; (ii) through an exchange of lesser intelligible concepts by more intelligible ones; (iii) through an extension of narrowly conceived concepts by more precise concepts about teaching and the teaching profession. The accomplishments of these cognitive processes of change are an important precursor in the evolutionary and iterative process of developing professional self and professional identity among pre-service teachers (Scanlon, 2011).

This change is viewed as paramount in teachers' professional learning because pre-service teachers come to join the

teaching profession from different relational backgrounds. Some of these background experiences may work to contradict with the newly taught experiences. In a situation where pre-service teacher education could not cause the desired change in patterns of relationships (with their future students), chances are that they would perpetuate such relationships no matter how unprofessional they might be. To arrive at these expectations, pre-service teacher education experience should have pro-relational methods in place whose implementation is meticulous enough to cause the described change of relational concept among pre-service teachers. Equally important, in order to have consistencies (and intelligibility) in forming such competencies among pre-service teachers; there should be harmony between teacher educators' views on positive teacher-student relationship and the methods used.

### **1.1 Characteristics of positive teacher-student relationships**

Literature shows that positive teacher-student relationships have different features. This section attempts a characterisation of these features. In doing so, it draws a conjecture on teachers' role in forming and promoting the positive teacher-student relationship. The characterisation aids in guiding the study enquiry on the pro-relational methods as well as views held by teacher educators on positive teacher-student relationships. In a nutshell, the features of positive teacher-student relationship phenomenon entail: *voluntarism, continuity, growth, mutuality* and *transcendence*.

**Voluntarism:** relationships are voluntary and do require proper pedagogical and didactical strategy (Cooper, 2011; Meier, 2005). For positive TSRs to exist, teachers should have skills

on how to handle such relationships. Voluntarism dismisses the assumption that positive teacher-student relationships are automatic or naturally-occurring. Indisputably, teachers as professionals have the noble responsibility to craft supportive relationships in their dealing with learners (Giles, 2012). Efforts to form or promote positive relationships by teachers must be preceded by a thorough grasp of the nature of TSRs. In addition, teachers ought to have positive perceptions of positive relationship since it is a necessity for learners' development.

**Continuity:** the term refers to the quality of teacher-student relationships that exist in a continuum of magnitude. It means, relationship between teachers and students is fed by positive feedback from each actor in the course of their dealing (or behavioural interdependence) (Hattie, 2012; Jones, 2009). When the interpersonal dealing is dominated by stable and predictable positive behavioural interdependence (such as positive communication, care, and friendliness, trust, affinity, honesty, and respect), their relationship tends to be sustained and advances from its lowest level (imagined *zero*) to the highest level called sustained teacher-student relationships (Jones, 2009; Sands, 2011).

**Growth:** relationships can grow as a result of inward rewarding experiences, connections and successful bonding within the actors. The relational growth is essentially within the actors (Giles, 2012). Giles (2008) and Palmers (1997) refer to this facet as the inter-human bonding which results from human self as it combines with physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual realms of being.

**Mutuality:** simply means the former facets can produce nothing if the two relating beings (teacher and student) do not work

together. Teachers as professionals and architects of positive relationships are duty-bound to make sure that they consistently reciprocate relational gestures in their interaction with students (Fulford, 2015). This is to say, positive relationship requires reciprocal efforts between teachers and students. Shapira-Lishchinsky (2009) singles out the reciprocity (of efforts) as an ethical quality typical of the teaching profession.

**Transcendence:** means the notion of comprehensiveness. The positive relational virtues and practices ought to be a predominant characteristic of all that happens between teachers and students. It embraces the verbal and non-verbal patterns of their interactions happening when they are in a classroom and beyond (Beebe & Timothy, 2009; Campbell, 2003). Relationships, in this case, should not be equated or limited to conventional teacher-student interactions as dictated by teaching methods. Teachers are called to embrace the holistic view of relating and apply themselves wholeheartedly in expounding positive elements of relationships. Kesna (2000) and Pianta, Hamre and Allen (2012) argue for the need of supportive structures in schools in order to permeate interactions in schools with social and relational virtues. They further support the view by Palmer (1997) and Glasser (1998) that positive teacher-student relationships should not be viewed as mere means to some academic ends but the vital educational ends in themselves.

## 1.2 Problem statement

The role of positive teacher-student relationship's competencies is central for effective teaching and learning processes. Pre-service teacher education, along other competencies, is expected to orient and reorient pre-service teachers on skills,

knowledge and values they need to form and promote positive relationships with their students in the real work context (schools). More importantly, teacher educators on the other hand, are dependable for the provision of relational experiences, and in guiding pre-service teachers as well as ushering in such experiences in the actual teaching and learning situations.

Studies conducted in Tanzania have revealed that schools are characterised by mounting cases of unpromising teacher-student relational atmosphere; as there are cases of fight, abusive language, acts of sabotage, indiscipline and sexual harassment involving teachers and students (Anangisyee, 2010; Mgonda, 2010). There is evidence that these situations partly are contributed by the pre-service teacher education that did not capacitate teachers with adequate professional skills; pro-relational competencies, among other factors (Tao, 2016; UDSM, 2014). This study sought to appraise positive TSRs methods used to form and promote positive teacher-student relationship's competencies (knowledge and virtues) among student teachers in the university-based pre-service teacher education. Equally important, this study reviews teacher educators' views on the nature of positive teacher-student relationship. This appraisal offers a yardstick of gauging the methods used in this regard.

### **1.3 Study purpose and questions**

This study sought to examine pro-relational methods used in the formation and promotion of positive teacher-student relationships' competencies among pre-service teachers in the



university-based teacher education in Tanzania. In particular, the study addressed two important questions:

- i. What methods does the university-based teacher education use to promote positive teacher-student relationship competencies among pre-service teachers?
- ii. How do teacher educators view positive teacher-student relationships?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study targeted teacher educators and student teachers at the University of Dar es Salaam. The University of Dar es Salaam was selected as a typical case for this study in Tanzania. The rationale for this selection owes to the fact that the University of Dar es Salaam is the oldest and most diversified in pre-service teacher education. With its constituent colleges of Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE) and Dar es Salaam College of teacher education (DUCE), it enrolls the highest number of pre-service teachers in natural science, social sciences, humanities, commercial, physical education, education and special education specializations, reaching up to a total enrolment of 13,500 pre-service teachers. Hence, studying experiences of positive teacher-student relationships at the University of Dar es Salaam provided rich yet diversified experiences of the phenomenon.

The study employed the mixed methods research approach as it gathered both quantitative and qualitative data from structured interviews and questionnaires. Subsequently, both qualitative and quantitative data were analysed and presented in answering the research questions. The use of narratives was

complemented by descriptive statistics (frequencies figures) in order to substantiate lines of inquiry of this study. The interviews were held with 12 teacher educators (Professors and Lecturers). These were selected purposively owing to their areas of specialisation. In particular, 10 years or above of teaching experience was considered criteria for their inclusion. Keen interest was made to include most senior teacher educators from different course specialisations and units; namely, Educational Psychology (2), Educational Foundations (2), Educational Management (2), Curriculum and Teaching (2), Adult Education (2) and Teaching Practice (2).

In addition, quantitative sample of 343 final-year students was selected using the Cochran (1977) random sampling tables for categorical data (see Bartlett et al., 2001, p. 48). The sample size was estimated at a confidence level of 95%, .05 Alpha level (corresponding Z-score of +/- 1.96) and proportion of the population of .50, which accommodates maximum variability within the population (Bartlett et al., 2001). The student teachers completed the questionnaire. From the questionnaire, student teachers indicated course aspects, in teacher education, that they considered to have helped them acquire relational knowledge and virtues. They chose from educational courses, subject didactics, teaching subjects, teaching practice and others.

## **2.1 Data analysis**

All student teachers' responses were manually coded and entered in SPSS file. The student teachers' choices per subject area were captured in frequencies and presented in bar graphs. The frequency distribution indicated how useful each aspect was useful to student-teachers in promoting their positive TSRs.

Interview held with teacher educators (lecturers) were subjected to thematic analysis. In particular, Data analysis employed thematic analysis of both *priori* and *emergent* themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Recorded interviews were transcribed into textual transcripts soon after every session. The analysis of transcript followed six stages of Clarke & Braun (2013). First, general familiarisation with data involved a thorough reading of every interview transcripts and noting initial analytic observations. Second, data (open) coding; this involved meticulous reading of transcripts, constant comparison and systematic indexing and labelling of information that corresponded to particular pro-character approaches, characteristics (the *modus operandi*), their successes and limitations. Third, searching and aggregating themes (from codes) based on the link established in stage 2. Fourth, reviewing themes and checking for harmony with their features and across the themes. Fifth, defining and naming themes based on evidence of their characteristics and overall fitness to question under study. Sixth, writing up a story, weaving it with evidence of verbatim in a coherent and persuasive way contextualised in the literature about teacher-student relationships. Relevant information from documents were manually coded along paper margins, identified with the broad themes (above) and integrated in the thematic findings. Findings from qualitative and quantitative data sets were analysed and presented concurrently.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

### **3.1 Methods used to promote positive teacher-student relationships**

Teacher educators responded to the questions on what they considered to be the methods found in the teacher education experience through which student teachers develop their ability to form and promote positive teacher-student relationships. The analysis of their responses was aggregated in four major categories constituting: teaching practice, educational courses, role modelling and others. The methods are presented as follows:

#### *3.1.1 Teaching practice*

Teaching practice emerged as one of the important theme from interviews held with teacher educators. It was unveiled that student teachers are usually placed to schools and other educational institutions every year for a period of eight weeks for teaching practice. During the eight weeks, student teachers get the opportunity to interact with students in classrooms and outside classroom, fellow teachers in schools and school community as a whole. Student teachers develop their ability to interact with their students in practical terms when they teach in class and partake other roles of teachers in school. The following were teacher educators' view regarding usefulness of teaching practice as an avenue for relational learning:

[...] During the teaching practice, we assess student teachers and want them (student teachers) to show some sense of humour as well as awareness of students' names. During teaching practice, we encourage them to interact and give a chance for students to interact with

them. So they form good relationships out of participation and interaction over the subject matter (Teacher educator).

Despite its usefulness, teacher educators opined that teaching practice time has not been effective due to inadequate time of interaction and exposure student teachers get in schools. Indeed, despite having assessment form that provides guidance on classroom assessment, there is lack of objective criteria on how professional skills such as teacher-student relationship skills can be assessed by teacher educators (teaching practice supervisors). Teacher educators pointed out that teaching practice serves very little in developing teachers' autonomy, instead the exercise is increasingly tilted to a demonstration of formalized lesson events student teachers can emulate in the classroom.

### *3.1.2 Educational courses*

The interview held with teacher educators revealed that educational courses such educational psychology, curriculum and teaching, management of human resources, guidance and counselling as well as teacher ethics taught to pre-service teachers contained aspects that oriented student teachers on positive relationship aspects with their students. When probed on the effectiveness of such courses, teacher educators opined that some educational courses were not compulsory to all student teachers instead they were offered as elective courses. The only compulsory courses to all student teachers are five (5) courses namely: EP 101: Introduction to educational psychology, CT 100: Curriculum and teaching, EF 100: Principles of Education, EA 300: Management of education and school administration, and EF 303: Professionalism and ethics in education. The rest of educational courses, about 25

educational courses are offered as either optional or specific to some degree programmes only. This means, not all student teachers were under obligation to study them and thus student teachers did not end up with comparable experiences on positive relationships. Also, they viewed that relational elements in those courses were not necessarily taught proficiently to enable student teachers acquire relational competencies.

Well, as I have said, I think a positive relationship is an important aspect to be taught to our student teachers. In my case, I teach and want it to happen! I know, I do not give it the required weight in teaching or in preparing my student teachers [...] we mostly teach some issues of relationships but we do not go into the depth of teacher-student relationships and skills needed, this is a deficiency on my part. You know, in a situation where you have many things to teach in your course within a given semester, minor things are overlooked. So, I can say teacher-student relationship does not feature much (Teacher educator).

From the quote one notices that, despite acknowledging its importance, teacher educators did not give it the required attention due to either lack of methodology or knowledge of positive TSRs. The teacher educator pointed out that teacher-student relationship was not taken as a top priority in a situation where many things are supposed to be covered in a semester. This suggests that matters of TSRs were accorded little importance by teacher educators.

### *3.1.3 Role modelling*

Role modelling was another approaches teacher educators mentioned to have been useful in fostering student teacher's relational competencies. It was found out that student teachers not only learned from the classroom instructions but also from real life experiences. It was learnt from the interviews that relational patterns demonstrated by teacher educators to student teachers in the universities had the potential to guide student teachers to imitate the ideal patterns of relationships. Under this theme, teacher educators underscored the relevance of social learning by being role models of positive relationships to their student teachers as follows:

To me, the best way to transform student teachers for effective teacher-student relationships is through my conduct. I believe that student teachers imitate the way I take care of them, the way I listen to them and give them time to talk to me. So the whole notion of role modelling is very important in preparation of good teachers. This is, however, an ideal situation. However, situations in our teaching and learning environment do not favour best practice like when you have a big class with a thousand plus student teachers to teach, it is difficult to model this  
(Teacher educator)

Teacher educators pointed out that role modelling as an approach was constrained by poor teaching and learning environment particularly overcrowded classroom that did not guarantee them to act as role models to student teachers in matters of counselling, healthy interaction with their student teachers, poor availability for consultation and other relational building gestures.

### 3.2 Student teachers' ratings of their positive TSRs to aspects of teacher education

In addition to teacher educators' responses, 343 student teachers rated aspects of teacher education among various aspects of teacher education that they considered to have helped them acquire teacher-student relationship knowledge and virtues. Student teachers were supposed to select the most influential aspect that helped them to acquire positive teacher-student relationships. The results of their ratings are presented in Figure 1.

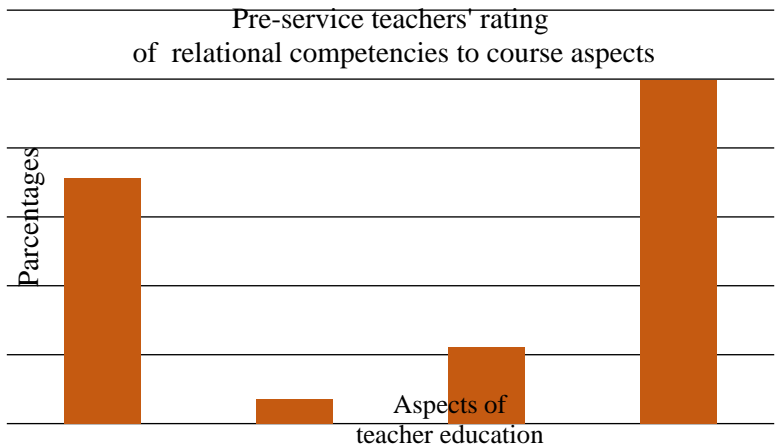


Figure 1: Student teachers' ratings of course aspects they consider to have helped them master positive TSRs

### 3.3 Teacher educators' views on the nature of positive teacher-student relationship



Table 1 shows categories of responses from teacher educators' views. In particular, the interview held with teacher educators sought to find out what is the nature of teacher-student relationships and how can it be developed among pre-service teachers? Their views are aggregated into five broad categories of meaning as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Teacher educators' views on the nature of positive TSRs

Themes	Frequency	% Frequency
Ones' upbringing/personal experiences	1	8
Motive-dependent	2	17
Resource-dependent	5	41
Automatic phenomenon	2	17
Learned competence	2	17
Total	12	100

**Source:** Field data 2017

### 3.3.1 *Positive teacher-student relationship as an automatic phenomenon*

Teacher educators 2 (17%) viewed that positive teacher relationships are formed automatically in a class situation between teacher and students. This meant that relationship between teachers and students is naturally occurring caused by interaction between them. To them, interaction between teachers causes positive relationship to develop.

### 3.3.2 *Positive teacher-student relationship as a resource-dependent phenomenon*

This perspective was shared by 5 teachers who are the majority of teachers (41%) during the interview. Teacher educators perceived that positive teacher-student relationship was dependent upon the level of teachers' motivation as a result of material incentive they receive from their work. That is to say,

the higher the material rewards a teacher receives the better will be their commitment and motivation to relate well with their (future) students. Secondly, they viewed that relationship between teacher and students was dependent upon the availability of teaching and learning materials.

**3.3.3** *Positive teacher-student relationship as dependent on the student teachers' personal background experiences*

One teacher educators (8%) consistently pointed out that relational abilities among student teachers was dependent upon their personal experiences and upbringing. They opined that virtues of friendliness, care, democracy and others make sense among individuals (student teachers) whose background reflected such experiences in their home, family and school lives. Impliedly, efforts to craft such competencies among teachers may prove futile if student teachers had no similar positive experiences during their upbringing.

**3.3.4** *Positive teacher-student relationship as dependent on student teachers' motivation for the teaching profession*

The fact that motivation of teachers for joining the teaching profession was a critical element that determines their commitment to the service of a teacher; including forming and sustaining positive relations with students. This view was the position of 2 teacher educators (17%). They viewed that student teachers who feel passion for the teaching service have intrinsic motivation and can be more resilient and committed to the teaching responsibilities than their counterparts whose motivation to the teaching profession is majorly extrinsic. Teachers educators cautioned that currently, the trend of many students joining the teaching profession is propelled by the Higher Education Students' Loans Board policy of extending

100% loan to education degrees. To an extent of attracting even less motivated students in the profession whose motivation with the teaching profession may not be long-lasting.

### **3.3.5** *Positive teacher-student relationship as a learned phenomenon*

Some teacher educators 2 equivalent to (17%) inclined to the argument of this study. They viewed that positive teacher-student relationship is a learned competence just as other professional competencies taught to the student teachers. They viewed that teachers are supposed learn about knowledge, skills and principles of forming lasting relationships with their students in order to be effective. To them, positive teacher-student relationship is dependent upon the rigor of pre-service teacher education.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The implication of the conceptual change theory demands that in order to induce a change among pre-service teachers, methods used ought to have enough rigor and be intelligible enough to cause the abandonment of the less plausible concepts (Posner et al (1982). Accordingly, the findings have indicated that the existing methods can hardly induce change among pre-service teachers because the methods used, such as educational courses had no corresponding hands-on activities as a follow-up to relational concepts taught to the student teachers. The association between TSRs concepts (knowledge and virtues) and hands-on practices would enable student teachers to apply knowledge immediately on concrete

relational situations. However, currently, teaching practice is the only practice-based orientation that comes only once in per year. Indeed, the administration of the teaching practice suffers discontinuation of experiences as its assessment/supervision is solely based on one customised guide whose interpretation may not be consistent across supervisors/assessors, students' level and nature of the subject matter or content in question. As such, teaching practice is reduced to a forum where pre-determined practices and activities are observed and rewarded in a snapshot fashion. As such, relational qualities of voluntarism, continuity and growth in the positive TSRs may not be clearly observed, scrutinized and promoted among student teachers (Giles, 2012, Sands, 2013).

In the same vein, findings from teacher educators and student teachers have indicated that there was lack of comprehensiveness of positive relationships in several other aspects of teacher education. Aspects such as subject didactics and teaching subject courses were marginally utilized. The use of these methods could offer a handy avenue for the realization of relational turning points with student teachers. Courses with strong inclination to human relationships, relational virtues and skills such sociology of education, educational guidance and counselling, human resources management in education and others have been accorded elective status and student teachers were not under obligation to take such courses. This means student teachers did not necessarily get the same experience regarding positive teacher-student relationships.

Further to that, findings have indicated that there is lack of clear orientations among teacher educators on the nature and character of positive teacher-student relationships. Some teacher educators perceived it to be an automatic and akin to teacher-student interaction; this view erroneously dismisses

voluntarism as an important characteristic of positive teacher-student relationships (Jones, 2009). On the other hand, the perspective is narrow one as it tends to restrict relationships to exchange permitted by teaching methods. This, in turn, objectifies the social relational space (Giles 2012). Others teacher educator related relational building to resources availability; assuming that with more material resources and incentives teachers could be empowered to form and sustain positive relationships with their students. While these conflicting views frame further areas of research, they also indicate novelty and ambivalence on the concept of positive teacher-student relationships among teacher-educators themselves. There is reason to believe that the conflicting views among teacher educators are reflected in their approach and presentation of the teacher-student relationships causing further imprecision of the concept among their pre-service students.

As gathered from both, methods used and teacher educators' views, efforts towards forming relational competencies among student teachers are looked as second to formalized lesson preparations and mastery of subject knowledge. Relational skills are limited by inherent methodical norms whose interactions are narrow and tilted towards academic attainment (Raufelder, Bukowski & Mohr, 2013). Indeed, positive teacher-student relationship was viewed as an add-on in teaching and learning processes as means to some academic ends. However, according to Giles (2012) and Palmer (1997) positive relationship should be regarded as an important end in itself. Therefore, teachers must learn to make it realizable in the repertoire of their dealing with students, which is the notion of transcendence in teacher-student relationships (Kesna, 2000).

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings on the methods and views teacher educators have regarding positive teacher-student relationship in the university-based teacher education have indicated inadequacy in the conceptualization and translation of positive TSRs. Teacher educators and student teachers need to appreciate the fact that education is a social activity that essentially takes place in a social space involving social beings. Strict emphasis on formal curricular structure and methodical normativity often work to deprive the social nature of this exchange making it a mere academic and dehumanised. Student teachers, as (future) architects of positive relationships ought to be versed with relational knowledge and virtues to be able to craft the same by making the most of their daily interaction with students. They should be able to orchestrate growth and sustain positive relationships with their students. Hence, positive teacher-student relationships, needs to be reconceptualised and mainstreamed in the existing aspects of pre-service teacher education in Tanzania.

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