

SHIFTING FROM THE OLD FRAME OF REFERENCE TO (W)HOLISTIC TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: A CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study examines the student's perception of what their relationship with their lecturers should be to enhance higher education teaching and learning, as well as students' success. The finding of the study reveals the students' perception and expectations of a lecturer's role in maintaining good pedagogical relations at the higher-education level. These roles were framed within four cardinal themes: students' academic development, social relationships, respect and trust, and the ethics of care. The finding also reveals that the students hold substantial expectations of the lecturers to take a lead in driving social relationship. The student does not only expect the lecturer to pay attention to his or her academic progress, moral and personal development but also to care, respect, trust and even the student's non-academic activities and goals are considered to be the lecturer's prerogative. The study recommends institutional strategies for promoting effective teaching and learning through relational pedagogy drive, reduction of large-size classes, raising student voice and well-being, and establishing ethics of care or caring culture as an integral part of the Institution's teaching philosophy. The study argues that the mainstream pedagogical relationship serves as a constructive way of understanding decolonialism in Africa, as well as an antidote to the persevering colonial infrastructures found in higher education.

Keywords: student welfare, decolonisation, caring culture, student-teacher relationship, improved communication, inclusivity, higher education, relational pedagogies

INTRODUCTION

Just as teaching cannot exist without learning, the teacher needs a learner to impart knowledge and the learner needs a teacher for proper learning to ensue. The relationship between the teacher and learner is regarded as a pedagogical relation. This relationship is based on the principle of respect between the teacher and student, and with the understanding that the two

cannot be separated as long as knowledge sharing is concerned. Pedagogical relations imply a wide range of social roles that influence the personal and social features of the teacher and student as they negotiate knowledge sharing. This study investigates the untapped areas of concern in higher education's invaluable bearing in South Africa. The significance of the study includes how to establish a good pedagogical relationship that would build a rewarding culture that can empower the workforce to solve some of the nation's toughest education challenges. The challenges associated with the use of technology, student voice, large-size classes, student success and well-being (Okoye and Mensah 2021). Also, the study outcome is expected to contribute towards the existing literature on pedagogical relations and decolonisation in Africa (Foluke 2023).

What do we mean by the term "holistic" as used in this treatise? The term "holistic" is derived from "*holos*" in Greek which means "whole", "health", "heal", or "holy". Holistic thinking views every phenomenon in relation to its meaningful context. Holistic implies inclusivity against the colonial system that implements Western ideas, philosophies and epistemologies as superior to others (Kang 2022; Foluke 2023). A holistic student-teacher relationship refers to finding a new way of rethinking pedagogical relationship that can amplify student voice, student success, caring and student well-being. African student wants to know that the lecturer is on their side a situation some lecturers would avoid by opting to be professional (Foluke 2023). The researcher believes there is a need to deconstruct the colonial conditions that reinforce "systematic slavery" through the educational system. The system prevents the students from being taught relevant subjects that would develop their intellectual and socio-economic well-being according to their context (Okoye 2022). For instance, mining is fundamental to the South African economy yet there is no subject on mining in primary and secondary education. Indigenous knowledge is not learned at school and what an African student knows does not matter during teaching (Foluke 2023). This raises the question of when an African student would be seen as a "collaborator" who is capable of an independent thought process and can contribute to the forming of his or her intellectuality and well-being (Okoye 2022). The "old frame of reference" as used in this article refers to the lecturer-knows-it-all system of learning in which the student remains at the receiving end (Karpouza and Emvalotis 2019). The system whereby the lecturer takes the lead in driving pedagogical relations (Owusu-Agyeman 2021).

The University of the Free State (UFS) seems to have been on the right track in ensuring that transformation happens, at least, according to its Integrated Transformation Plan (ITP). ITP is a UFS document that signals the commitment of the University to widen the scope and radically accelerate transformation across the University structures (ITP 2017; 2021). In terms

of teaching and learning, ITP aims to develop relevant knowledge with curriculum content that includes local and global research. The UFS' Strategic Plan reaffirms that this transformation needs to be nurtured by responsible and ethical business leaders who challenge the traditional boundaries of academic disciplines (see University of Free State Strategic Plan 2018–2022 2018; University of Free State Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2023–2028 2022). Hence, the Strategic Plan and the ITP signal the University's commitment to widen the scope and radically accelerate transformation in the University. This process includes instigating a curriculum review which will interrogate the marginalisation of particular identities and philosophies of knowledge, incorporating scholarship from Africa and the global South, amplifying methodologies and practices to improve student success, sustaining UFS as a research-led university by increasing contribution to local and global knowledge, building strong administrative systems to advance the institutional culture and values of the University (See UFS-Vision 2030) (University of the Free State Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2023–2028 2022). The actualisation of these aims depends on how decolonised the University's politics can tolerate. Certainly, the stubborn colonial system cannot submit without a fight (Foluke 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Maiangwa and Essombe (2022), the infrastructure of colonialism functions as a network of ideas that posit Western philosophy as the universal model of human rationality, resulting in a conceptualisation of Western imperialism as a set of standards, practices, beliefs and values that are traditionally associated with western superiority. Unfortunately, this self-serving thinking has continued to influence interactions between people who engage in knowledge sharing in HEIs of many African nations (Foluke 2023). Maiangwa and Essombe (2022) assert that this form of hegemony and dominion presents Western practices as the "objective" or universal standards. Thus, the theories and curriculum contents being taught at schools tend to exclude and downgrade indigenous African knowledge and epistemology (Foluke 2023). The curriculum contents and teaching method give the impression that Africa(ns) are set up for "systematic slavery". In the classrooms, some lecturers prefer to replace pedagogical relations with "professionalism" while others remain indifferently believing that it is unrealistic given the challenges facing African, HE such as large-size classes, diversity-related issues and so on (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022). As such, the student's voice, ideas or thoughts are granted very little or no relevance in the classroom (Owusu-Agyeman 2021). In recent years, the implication of continuously imposing foreign epistemology and knowledge on students has generated varied resistant reactions one of which is the concept of

decolonisation (Foluke 2023).

According to Foluke (2023), decolonization is more than just a curriculum redesign. Foluke (2023) affirms that the question of how the disciplines and intellectual tradition or knowledge sharing would be redesigned to breed inclusivity, exclude subjugation and serve Africans in their context remains the bone of contention. Decolonisation is not concerned with retaliation for the colonial exclusion of other epistemologies, rather it is concerned with how to breed scholars whose way of thinking and doing things do not perpetuate or reproduce the structures from which we wish to disengage (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022). This must begin in the classroom and the student-teacher interaction must allow and respect student voice, ideas and rationality in a way that welcomes knowledge diversity and an epistemological plurality (Okoye 2022). Understanding colonialism as an engine of coercive power (i.e., the power of subjugation) is critical in conceptualising decolonization (Foluke 2023). In the South African context, decolonization should be understood in the historical context as an active response that seeks to dismantle and discontinue unending colonialism (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022). It is a refusal of colonial resistance to return the stolen power, amongst other things, a sustained quest to discontinue and deconstruct the epistemologies that keep reproducing colonialism (Foluke 2023). The task of the academics is to translate varied context-dependent theories and praxes into context-based work, teaching, research and ancillary administration (Foluke 2023). It is the time that students should be seen as collaborators (Okoye 2022). After all, the building of trust between students and teachers is dependent on the relationship quality they share (Owusu-Agyeman 2021).

In the African context, HEIs exist as communities even though they serve society. Community thrives in a relationship which implies that teachers or lecturers automatically fail in their duty if they fail to keep a good relationship with the students (Parnes et al. 2020; Okoye 2022). Colonialists cannot stop without a fight just as decolonisation cannot thrive without disrupting (Foluke 2023). For instance, the reality and possibility of code-switching depend on how the context has survived conditions superimposed by the infrastructures of colonialism (or racism) which leave the student with no choice but to “play along” or resist vehemently (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022). Hence, the colonial system has co-opted the teachers as well as the curriculum the instruments of implementation.

Pedagogical relations involve a process of establishing and maintaining the climate and culture of trust, care and autonomy in the classroom (Hollweck, Reimer, and Bouchard 2019; Crownover and Jones 2018). Pedagogical relation hinges on love, obedience and authority, although it is closely aligned with the powers of the institution that gives authority to the instructors (Friesen 2017). There is a question previously asked about the *vulnerability of liability* that emerges when pedagogical relations are being discussed, implemented or executed

(Aspelin and Jonsson 2019). Thus, the question about vulnerability when the institution has a history of racial divide, highly diversified with top-down policy setup and language of learning challenges. Vandeyar (2020) argued that although most South African HEIs have established policies and structures to address issues related to equity transformation and change, the epistemological transition and transformation have not been actualised. Given the intricacies of the matter, pedagogical relations often receive very shabby (or inadequate) attention from the institutions' policymakers irrespective of its significance and impact on the Institution's teaching philosophy. In some cases, the pedagogical relationship is fraught with inconsistency, alienation and non-self-transparency (Friesen 2017). In situations where racism, religious or political bigots, neglect of students' voices and what may be described as "over-professionalism" are possible, the pedagogical relation drive needs to be considered very important by the institution (Hollweck et al. 2019). Owusu-Ansah and Kyei-Blankson (2016) argued that there is an increasing need for academics to obtain relevant pedagogical knowledge, competencies and skills to deliver. The study by Hagenauer and Volet (2014) shows that the institutional context, culture and teaching philosophy need to highlight the importance of the teacher-student relationship. The importance of a strong pedagogical relationship has a direct correlation with student success student motivation, student engagement and student performance therefore should be taken seriously (Parnes et al. 2020).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted a social constructivist theory to examine the pedagogical relationship at the HE level. The social constructivist theory explains internal relations and external relations *vis-à-vis* teaching and learning as well as their participants (Brownlee and Berthelsen 2008). The internal relations represent the associations between new information to be learned, and the previous knowledge and beliefs (Karpouza and Emyalotis 2019). External relations describe the associations or influences between the self, others and the learning environment where the participants negotiate knowledge sharing (Karpouza and Emyalotis 2019). Constructivist theory conceptualised pedagogical relations by way of three main elements which include mutual respect among lecturers and students, situating learning in students' experience and enabling a constructivist perspective of knowing and learning (Brownlee and Berthelsen 2008). The social constructivist theory enables the researcher to examine the students' perception regarding how they want to be treated by the lecturer in terms of pedagogical relations.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was utilised to increase participation while a probability sampling technique was used to gather information (Creswell and John 1998). The study was conducted at

different campuses of the University of The Free State. These include Bloemfontein Campus, QwaQwa Campus, and South Campus. The total number of students contacted was 30,741. The total number of completed and returned surveys (1091) which represents 3.54 per cent of the total population contacted through the University's website. Ethical clearance was sought and obtained before the fieldwork or data collection. The study was conceptualised and carried out by three principal researchers from the Directorate for Institutional Research and Academic Planning (DIRAP). The data was analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Evasys. The students between the age of 18 and 22 years constituted 73.80 per cent of participants while students who were above the age of 57 represented 01.10 per cent of the total participants. The distribution of participants according to different campuses was as follows: Bloemfontein 58.8 per cent; QwaQwa 27.6 per cent; and South Campus 13.6 per cent. Students who were studying for degree qualifications represented the highest number of participants with 85.0 per cent while students who were studying other programmes other than Diploma were 3.0 per cent of the total participants. The population group were distributed as follows African 89.6 per cent; Indian 0.4 per cent); Coloured 3.4 per cent; White 5.9 per cent; foreign national – Africans 0.6 per cent and; Foreign national – Others 0.1 per cent. In terms of faculties, Natural and Agricultural Sciences were 17.9 per cent, Humanities 23.6 per cent, Education 29.8 per cent), Economic and Management Sciences 21.0 per cent, Health Science 1.5 per cent, Law 4.1 per cent and Theology 2.2 per cent of total participants. The participants speak different South African languages and the majority (25.5%) speak Sesotho and IsiNdebele (0.6%) per cent as their home languages.

FINDINGS

The findings were presented under four themes: students' academic development support for the learners; social relationships; respect and trust.

The commitment of lecturers to students' academic development is important in developing effective pedagogical relationship between students and lecturers. The finding revealed high agreement percentages under the following themes: (a) the lecturers should create an environment where students feel free to share their opinion; (b) the lecturers should be interested in the academic development of students (52.4%) and (37%) strongly agree and agree respectively; (c) lecturers should give students positive feedback for good behaviour (51.2% and 33.7%) as strongly agree and agree respectively, and (d) lecturers should enforce the same rules for all students. Participants agreed with 50.4 per cent and 32.9 per cent.

The students' expression regarding the need to freely share their views may be interpreted or signify that these students have experienced not having freedom of speech. This may need to be investigated further by subsequent studies.

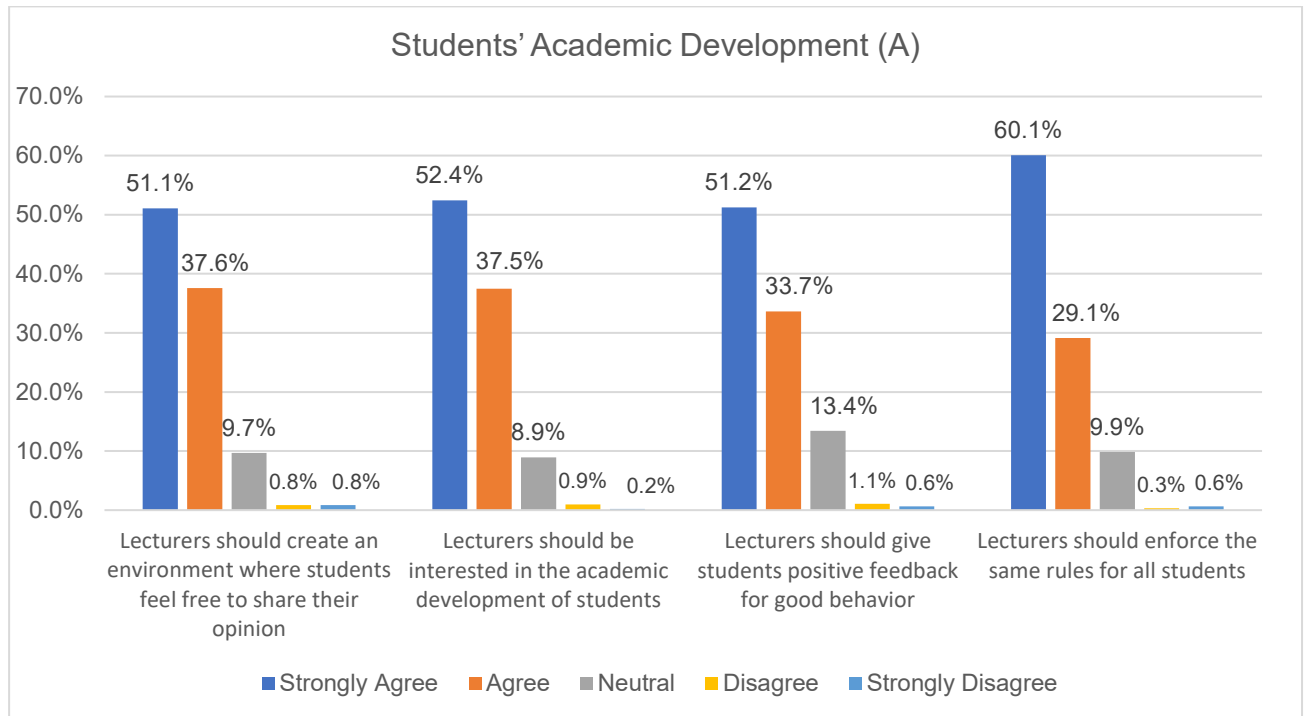


Figure 1A: Lecturers' commitment to student academic development support (A)

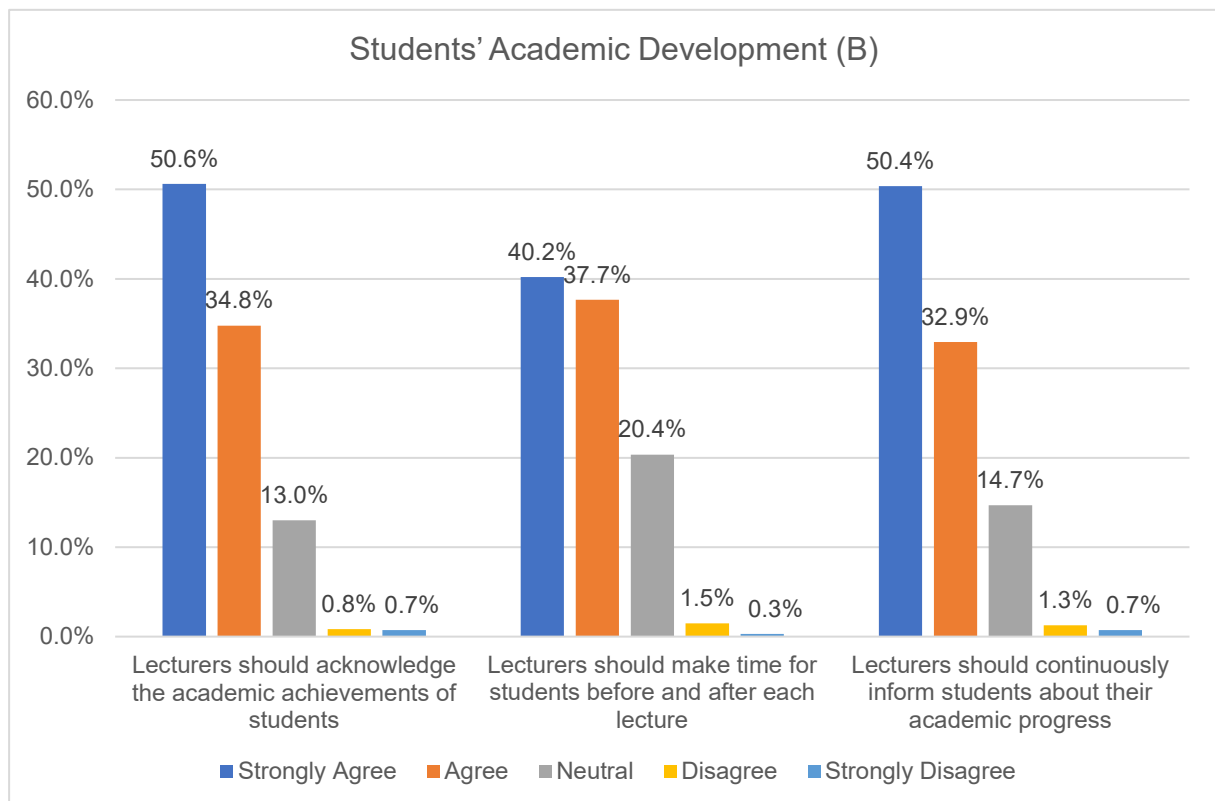


Figure 1B: Students' Academic Development

The chart labelled (B) on students' academic development revealed a high percentage of

agreement that lecturers should acknowledge, show interest and pay attention to students' academic achievements hence success (50.6%). In other words, classroom teaching and learning are not enough as the majority of the students acknowledged, the students expect to see the lecturer go the extra mile, implement interventions and take an interest in individual achievement. In other words, the ability of the lecturer to create an effective intervention outside the classroom engagements would go a long way in building a pedagogical relationship. About 50.4 per cent of students acknowledged that engaging with the students regarding their academic progress means a lot to them. Less than 1 per cent of the students, on each category of the questions, strongly disagreed or had no expectations toward the lecturers regarding the expected academic development responsibilities.

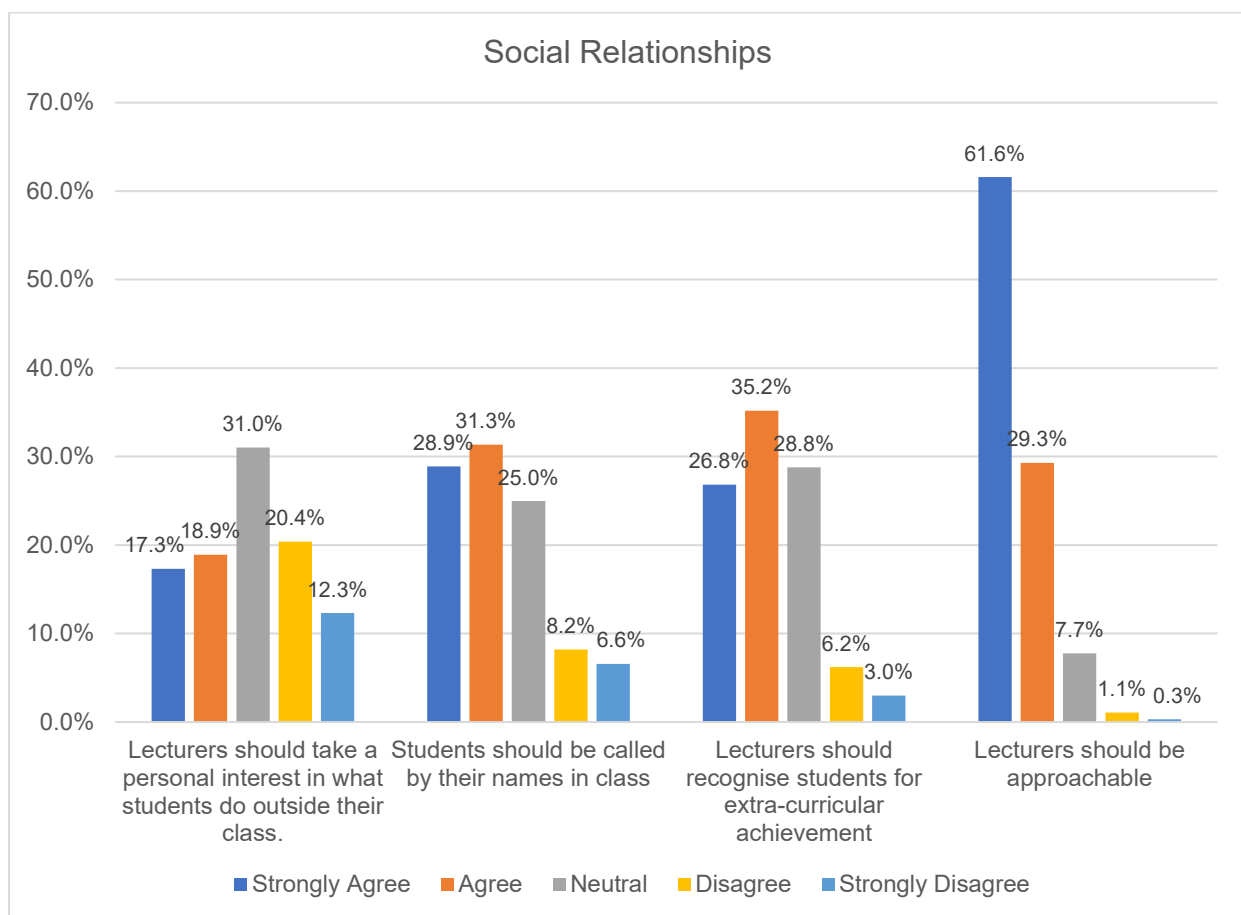


Figure 2: Student-lecturer social relationship

In terms of social relationship, 61.6 per cent of the student participants strongly agreed that lecturers should be more approachable for good social relationships to ensue. Whilst 31 per cent of the students were neutral regarding whether or not the lecturers wanted to take an interest in what the students do outside the classroom. A very minimal percentage of participants disagree that lecturers should take the enumerated social relationship-building responsibilities seriously.

Thus, this shows the complexity of the matter such that the students want social relationships but, of course, with some limits. The scenario points to the importance of upskilling the lecturer’s competence for building good pedagogical relations.

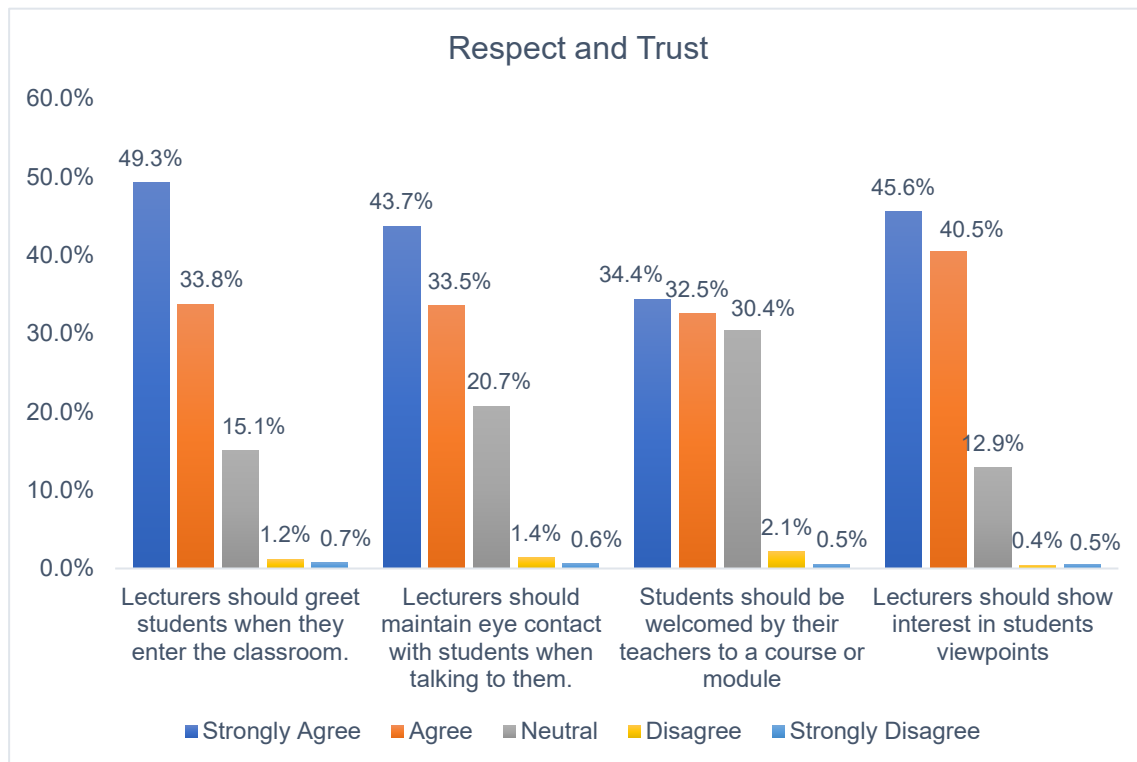


Figure 3: Respect and trust

Amongst the principal factors that engender pedagogical relations is the mutual respect and trust that exist between the lecturer and student. There is a very high agreement percentage among students that lecturers must respect their students for the sake of building trust. It is important to mention that a very insignificant percentage disagreed with the importance of respect and trust building. This might be a result of the internalisation of the existing system which has neglected for so long the intellectual autonomy of the students.

Notwithstanding, the issues of eye contact as well as using students’ names when engaging with them came up as something that students appreciate. Hence, the importance of the lecturer having some knowledge about the student facilitates quality interaction between the students and their lecturers. Understanding, efficient communication and teacher effectiveness are also very critical aspects of building trust. Even the way the students are welcomed by the lecturer matters a lot to the students in terms of relationship building (as indicated in the findings). Another crucial part is the issue of the lecturer showing interest in the student’s viewpoints. Over 40 per cent of students agreed on the fact that the lecturer allows the students intellectual

freedom by seeing the students as collaborators. Hence, this would help in building and mobilizing the students' voices as well as encouraging intellectual freedom. It is also respect and recognition that the student is a rational being capable of his or her own thoughts.

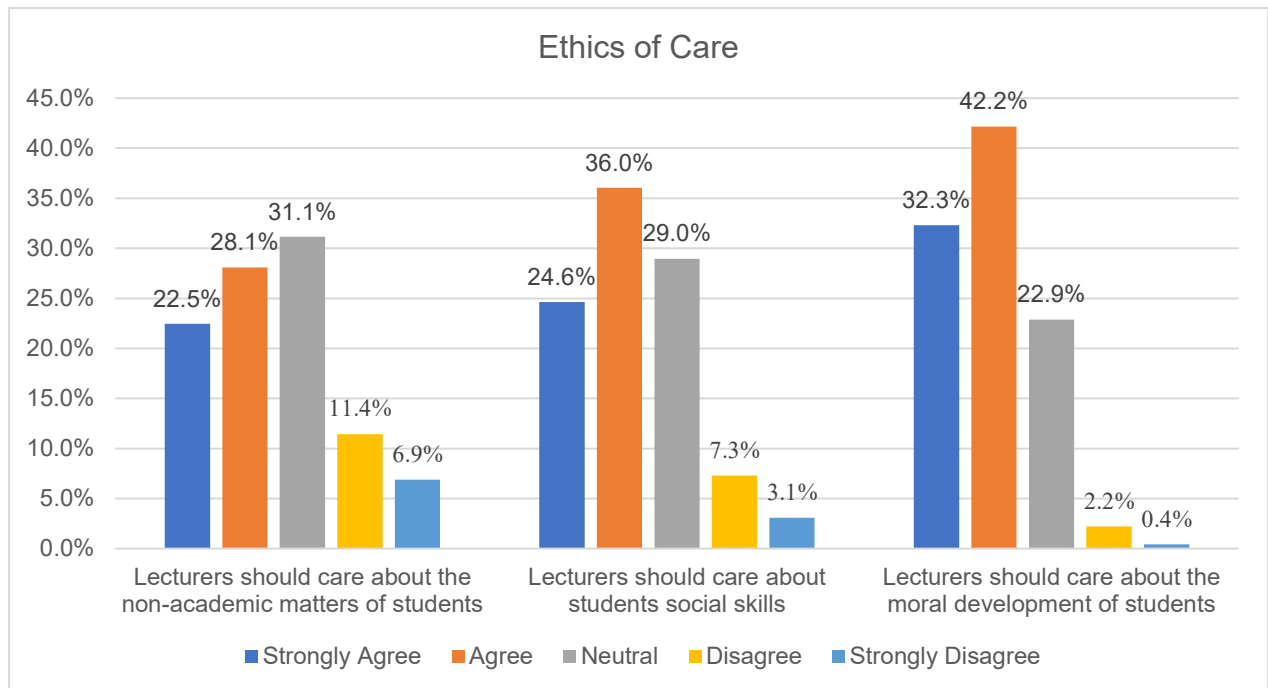


Figure 4: Ethics of care

The ethics of care is also an important aspect of building a student-lecturer relationship as shown in Figure 4. Over 50 per cent agreed that the lecturers should care about the students. This is very crucial because this is the point where large-size classes, racial divides and employee disengagement neutralize the feasibility of having an effective pedagogical relationship with the students. Some affected lecturers choose to be indifferent whereas others prefer to replace the student-lecturer relationship with so-called “professionalism” believing that it is enough to be professional. After all, professional ethics tend to caution restraint on sympathising, empathising and keeping a social relationship with the students. Unfortunately, Africans would first want to trust their teacher before learning from him or her and before trusting what is being taught. The initial traditional African learning system begins with the family folktales and stories of the grannies, so it is about trust and relationship (Foluke 2023).

However, 42 per cent of students agreed that the lecturers should care about the moral development of students, as well as their social and even economic welfare. But for some highly placed personnels, teaching and learning or the job of the lecturer is all about teaching the existing curriculum, handing down the instructions, supervising and ensuring quality delivery.

On the side of the student, it is garbage in garbage out (at the end of the day), give what you were taught, and you would be all right. This raises the question of how this knowledge imposition has improved the African economic autarky or renaissance. Is the teacher or lecturer not being co-opted as an accomplice to this never-ending colonial hegemony?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings demonstrated the students' perception of pedagogical relations within four themes: (1) students' academic development (2) social relationships; (3) respect and trust; and (4) ethics of care. The question on lecturers being approachable recorded the highest student agreement level of 61.6 per cent which, of course, raises an eyebrow and thus suspicion (more detail in the discussion section below). The result also reveals high students' expectations regarding the lecturer's role in maintaining pedagogical relations. The finding further gives a general impression that the students hold very high social-relationship expectations of the lecturers. Hence, the lecturer, in the students' opinion has more responsibility (or obligation) to drive social relationship in HE institutions than the students. This sounds tricky because a relationship is a two-way thing meaning that the parties are both responsible for its sustainability. For the sake of student's progressive goals, effective teaching and learning, students' personal development goals, student satisfaction and the building of the University's image HEIs of Africa need to fix pedagogical relations trajectories. This also means that any motivation or support from the HEIs to facilitate and mainstream pedagogical relations is considered a bonus and resources well spent.

DISCUSSION

Arguably, higher responses on "lecturers should be approachable" makes one wonder if some (African) students are not nurturing the feeling of being treated as if they were being done a favour (Okoye 2022). This is also an area that a qualitative study needs to explore (if the structure would allow it). As earlier highlighted in the study literature, decolonisation is more than just getting the curriculum changed. Hence, decolonisation is about reclaiming and recovering the captured and stolen power. The "coercive" power that consistently dominantly but subtly reinforces colonialism in the form of intellectual subjugation and exclusion, colourism, freedom of thought denial, economic dispossession and downgrading of a Black person's thoughts or ideas (Foluke 2023). Take for instance, in journal article publication processes, your African name as a writer raises a red flag and creates the impression that you must be stirred to argue or present your logical thoughts in a "universally" accepted pattern or "standard" which raises the question of whose standards? Experience has shown that the same

system has infiltrated the realm of research supervision, academic assessment and classroom teaching and learning. Hence, an African student is cursed with the agelessness of having to be guided, corrected accordingly or told what to think at all times (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022). Thus, this has become an intergenerational infirmity for a black scholar or person.

Furthermore, when the infrastructure of colonialism, coercive power, racism and intellectual domination that perpetuate this "systematic slavery" feel threatened and want to minimise the risk of being stereotyped or judged negatively, its perpetrators cling to the so-called "professionalism" or rules. You would hear them say "It is the rules", "I am doing my job" and "I am trying to be professional". On the other hand, when their victims (i.e., Africans) complain, the victims are judged to be either racial, noisy, chaotic and ungrateful (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022). When the victims clamour to employ only their own, the victim is judged to be violent, too nationalistic or xenophobic (Foluke 2023). The gatekeepers of resources, "power" and opportunities know that there is no friendship or relationship about what they do, it is about whose interest is maximized or exploited. Thus, it does not matter where and in what circumstance (even in the classrooms) it is war. In the classrooms, students must be convinced that they are the architect of their problems (Foluke). Most Africans in their rationality have been conditioned to internalise this domination such that the pressure that comes with assimilating this "knowledge supremacy tendency" has swayed and compromised their identity consciousness. For instance, the phenomenon of "code-switching" everywhere is that African people should suppress any inherent mannerisms, interests and accents to minimise the risk of being stereotyped or judged (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022).

Foluke (2023) argued that decolonisation is a quest for justice, inclusivity and being allowed to "be" and not just "co-exist." There is no friendship in downgrading another person's humanity, identity and rationality (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022). There is no relationship in using a foreign language where underperformers are mostly locals, teaching curriculum content that does not present local experiences, lifestyle and context, and there is no relationship legitimising the colonial process and system with policies that justify the means (Foluke 2023). It is professional for a lecturer to teach second-language speakers of English without code-switching, and it is not mandatory or necessary for the same lecturer to learn the local language(s). The African person is often compelled to compromise without any choice but to "play along" (Maiangwa and Essombe 2022).

The finding also reveals the importance of good pedagogical relationships for students from rural areas and low socio-economic backgrounds to be supported. These students can only share their experiences where the lecturer has developed a good social relationship with the students, as well as shown interest in their academic development. In the open questions on the

survey, some students lamented over the tendency displayed by some lecturers who create social distance between themselves and their students. These students complained that some lecturers (1) do not reply to students' emails; (2) do not show up in the office during student consultation sessions; and (3) create poor communication by dominating the entire conversation. The distance between the teacher and the learner causes a rupture in the learning process that can constrain effective teaching and learning (Parnes et al. 2020). The finding also reveals that students are motivated to participate in classroom discussions when lecturers identify them by their names and give chance to approach matters from their experiences. According to Cox (2019), the relationship between lecturers and students is driven by effective communication within and outside the school environment. The emerging discourse in higher education has revealed the importance of knowledge transfer as the essence of human existence (Champion 2017). Pedagogical relationships should depend on a strong combination, an open environment, tolerance and respect (Parnes et al. 2020). Forty per cent of students thought that lecturers should take a personal interest in what students do outside their classrooms. Meanwhile, 100 per cent of those students are African and second-language speakers of English. This indicates that struggling, underperforming and needy students crave motivation, trust and understanding of the lecturer to build confidence and develop an interest in the various courses or modules which eventually leads to a commitment (Parnes et al. 2020).

Furthermore, with the Ethics of care, the relational proficiencies of the lecturers are learned and developed through interaction with students in a learning environment (Ljungblad 2021). Crownover and Jones (2018) affirmed that good social relationship with students creates an atmosphere of trust, commitment and disposition that enable them to freely participate in class discussions. The concept of Ethics of caring consists of two pedagogic structures (1) the active development and preservation of pedagogical relationships; and (2) the importance of trust, acceptance and individual attentiveness on the part of the lecturer and students (Walker and Gleaves 2016). Students thought that lecturers should care about the non-academic matters of students, care about students' social skills and their moral development. Walker and Gleaves (2016) affirm that the relationship between the lecturer and student is built on mutual respect and trust, not on familiarity. Developing mutual respect must involve a collaborative effort that helps the lecturer identify the student's learning needs (Parnes et al. 2020). This would not only improve lecturer proficiency but also allows the lecturer to focus efforts in the right places to increase engagement opportunities and boost student achievement. The following recommendations were made:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The University should continually use student satisfaction and engagement surveys to track student satisfaction, feedback and expectations. This would enable the university to comprehend the student's engagement needs.
- Institutional strategy to promote effective teaching and learning and pedagogical relations is necessary. This should include lecturer sensitisation on the importance of maintaining respect and trust between students and staff.
- With the diversity of staff and students the University should encourage caring culture by providing opportunities that would equip lecturers with the skills and importance of practising ethics of care.
- Courses with too many registered students should be split into "controllable" small-size classes to enhance effective teaching and learning.
- Students must be encouraged to have freedom of thought from the classroom for an effective pedagogical relationship to ensue. This would make the work of the lecturer a lot easier and more effective.

CONCLUSION

One can take Africans out of Africa but cannot so easily take away the memories and quest for freedom from them. Africans want to trust the one that teaches them to trust what is being taught. HE students from developing nations face several teaching and learning challenges which range from (but are not limited to) large-size classes that form an economic model for HEIs, the communication gap that results from e-learning and the use of technological devices, poor pedagogical relations, intellectual subjugation which is caused by the downgrade of local knowledge, epistemologies and intellectuality by the colonial system that claims itself to be "world best" and globally accepted standards. Amongst these challenges, pedagogical relations are seldom discussed and taken seriously by the old frame of reference where the lecturer knows it all and students are just at the receiving end without a voice. The old frame of reference that considers the pedagogical relationship impossible, unnecessary and sometimes contradictory to the ethics of "professionalism" needs to be replaced with the wholistic student-lecturer relationship. There is nothing friendship cannot do as it seeks neither to oppress nor take advantage of the other person. The wholistic teacher-student relationship calls for HEIs to develop internal strategies that promote a good pedagogical relationship for effective teaching philosophy to ensue. Hence, the teaching philosophy that epitomizes "humane professionalism" and addresses the curing-edge issues in HE of Africa such as decolonisation, racial issues,

student dissatisfaction, knowledge inclusivity, effective teaching and learning and so on. HEIs with historical racial past or diversity issues must prioritise policies that champion ethics of care as a critical part of the teaching philosophy which every staff must adopt when relating to the students.

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