Teacher–Students Classroom Relationship in Selected Secondary School Civics Classes, in Kinondoni Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract

Democratic teacher–students classroom relationship is crucial in deploying participatory pedagogy in the classroom teaching and learning. This paper shares experience on how secondary school teachers relate with their students when teaching Civics lessons in the classroom. Specifically, it investigates whether Civics teacher–students classroom relationship reflects the recommended participatory pedagogy. A qualitative approach was used to collect and analyse data from participants in purposively selected case schools. Data were generated and collected using non-participant classroom observation, whereby, each sampled Civics teacher (CT) was repeatedly observed (at least three times in different days) teaching Civics lessons in his/her classroom. Concurrently, a sound tape recorder was used to record the teacher–students' oral interactions. The findings indicate that although, the CTs–students' relationship was characterised by both kinds of interactions, the positive interactions were dominant. This means that teacher–students classroom relationship was mainly characterised by positive interactions which also suggests that CTs largely demonstrated democratic relationship with their students consistent to participatory pedagogy recommended by the Civics syllabus.

Key words: Civics teachers, negative interactions, positive interactions, participatory pedagogy, teacher–students classroom relationship.

1.   Introduction

In 2005, the then Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) changed the Civics syllabus from content into competence-based. The change emphasised the need to change the approach of teaching and learning of Civics in secondary schools, from teacher - centred to learner-centred. This is confirmed by the statement "The ultimate aim of this syllabus is to make the teaching and learning process of Civics more interactive and learner-centred" (MoEC, 2005, p. i). This means that, the change intended to strengthen the use of participatory pedagogy during classroom teaching and learning process. As such, the deployment of the participatory pedagogy requires a democratic classroom relationship between the teacher and his/her students.

A study by Kaplan (2000) noted teacher-students classroom relationship refers to a relationship between mature and immature persons and it is both personal as well as impersonal. These aspects occur concurrently and they are considered as dimensions rather than extremes so as to avoid making them equally exclusive or opposite (Kaplan, 2000). In view of Kaplan, if the teacher chooses the personal, which refers to empathy, compassion, and understanding, he or she will consider the impersonal as 'cold or detached'. But if he or she chooses impersonal that refers to rational, deliberate, and goal-oriented, it means he or she will assume the personal as 'emotional, vague and aimless' (Kaplan, 2000).

However, some studies indicate that teachers in Tanzania secondary schools lacked knowledge and skills to apply interactive learner-centred strategies and methods in their teaching (TIE, 2005; MoEC, 2005). Further, Komba (2007) observed a weak situation of involvement of students in civic activities. It was found out that, although there were some structures for democratic participation in schools, students' empowerment was difficult to achieve. There was no supportive environment to enable students actively engage in civic activities.

Particular interest in this study was how teachers relate with their students when teaching Civics lessons in the classroom, more specifically, whether Civics teacher–students classroom relationship reflects the recommended

participatory pedagogy. It was contemplated that not much was known from Tanzania context regarding teacher–students classroom relationship, particularly, from secondary school Civics teachers. This study intended to answer the question: *How do Civics teachers relate with students in the classrooms?* As such, the study aimed to contribute to the understanding on how Civics teacher–students classroom relationship reflects the propounded participatory pedagogy.

2.   Theoretical Standpoints

The review of literature shows that there is quite a small number of empirical studies conducted in developing countries regarding teacher–students classroom relationship. Most of the studies discussed in this section were those conducted in developed countries such as USA and Canada. Following that, the discussion of references studies is mainly from developed countries whereby its findings were used to inform the current study.

Classroom interactions determine the kind of relationship between the teacher and his or her students. Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer (2012) and Pianta, Hamre and Allen (2012) classify the relationship into two major groups: first, the democratic or relationships that work in the classroom involves: involvement and warmth interactions—when the teacher treats students with care, affection, and enjoy their presence; structured interactions—manageable tasks, proper feedback and guide students how to improve; and autonomy support interactions—teacher treat students with respect, listen and value their opinions (Furrer et al., 2012). Second, the undemocratic relationships, which do not work in the classroom, involve rejecting interactions—teacher not value the students, not remember students' names, and cut short or not listen students' views; chaotic interactions—teacher not being consistent, provide unclear instructions, and do not provide feedback or provide feedback to wrong answers only; and coercive interactions—students feel being pushed, command the students, and threats to punish the students (Furrer, et al., 2012). In Pianta et al.'s (2012) view, in undemocratic relationship, students experience frequent yelling and humiliation interactions with their teachers and peers.

A study by Divoll (2010) in USA revealed that teacher's creation and maintenance of a relationships-driven classroom can be achieved if: (a) there is mutual relationship between students and the teacher, (b) the classroom interaction influences their relationship and affects their classroom as a community, (c) the teacher relates the curriculum to student, and (d) the teacher makes the teacher-students relationship as an on-going process. This means that, positive teacher-students relationship can be enhanced if there are friendship relationships which include characteristics such as teacher being supportive, feeling comfortable, and having conversations with the students. As such Tipton-Fisler et al. (2020) in UK found that student–teacher relationship is an important piece of academic success and critical mediator in minimising behavioural challenges in the classroom. It is stated that "the success of the relationship building component hinges more on the type of interaction than the frequency of interactions" (p.16).

Hershkovitz (2018) in Israel found that the teacher-students relationship is affected by many factors, including personal (of both the teacher and the students) and the context. It was revealed that learning was more learner-centred, and the teacher-students relationship was much positive in technology–enhanced classroom sessions compared to traditional classroom sessions. This means that on-to-one computing programmes, compared with traditional teaching, are featured by (a) closer, more personal teacher-students interaction in the classroom, and (b) taking a more learner-centred approach. These features are critical in influencing positive teacher-students classroom relationship. As such, Ifeoma (2020) in Nigeria noted that positive teacher-students relationship in classroom predicts the quality of teaching and learning. As such, Agyekum (2019) noted that students who develops positive relationship with their teachers can solves challenges related to learning. It was found that teachers who cultivate positive aspects with students helps them to be more forthcoming with positive behaviour.

A study by Gehlbach et al. (2016) found that if persons see themselves as similar to others, they consequently develop stronger and closer relationships. It was found out that if teachers recognise, they are similar with their students, they develop positive relationship with those students. It is stated that, "Knowing what they have in common with their students provides them with a lever through which they can begin developing this relationship" (Gehlbach et al., p. 348). In this regard, there was a causal link between similarity (between the teacher and students) and relationship results. Similarly, a study by Bruney (2012) in Canada revealed that how teachers see themselves in the classroom influences students' view of them (teachers) and consequently the teacher-students relationship. It was established that teacher's pro-activeness: acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care, and cooperation lead to positive relationship between the teacher and students. As such, Bauer (2022) recommends that teachers should set and provide time to interact with individual students in order to know their personalities, interests and develop positive relationship. It is emphasised that little to lose and much to gain from individual interaction with students.

In another study conducted in Nebraska by Knoell (2012), it was found that most valued characteristics by students regarding their relationship with their teachers were teachers' sense of humour; consistent help; active listening to students' views; value for the group and the individual; providing games for learning; and use of oral and written encouragement. In Knoell's (2012) view, the teacher-students relationship gets positive if a teacher actively listens to students' views; provides encouragement; there is fun and supportive learning environment. Based on the study, students tend to consider teachers' behaviour and how they treat them rather than their physical appearance. This means that if teachers demonstrate democratic behaviours, their students will as well internalise them.

Similarly, a study conducted in New York by Liberante (2012) found that teacher-students relationship can be positively created if the teacher and students work cooperatively in an encouraging atmosphere or environment. As such, Reis da Luz (2015) noted that caring teacher will help students to overcome struggles. It is emphasized that caring relationship will enhance students' academic development and makes learning enjoyable. It is stated "teacher who are more available to connect with their students, be open to his students, and care about them, will have a better chance to cultivate a positive relationship" (p.51-52).

Seeing from another dimension, a study by Urooj (2013) in Pakistan revealed that positive teacher–students relationship can be created if there is good communication, respect, interest in teaching from the teacher's view point and learning from students. In this scenario, positive teacher–students relationship can be enhanced if the teacher properly communicates and provides feedback to students and there is respect between the teacher and students while at the same time each feels enthusiastic about teaching and learning, respectively. As per Pianta et al. (2012), teacher–students relationship can be improved if teachers' knowledge regarding interaction with students is enhanced, teachers are regularly exposed to individualised feedback with students, teachers support each other, and teachers recognise and agree about strategies to change teacher-student interactions. This implies that teachers should have adequate knowledge regarding classroom interaction.

A study by Furrer et al. (2012) notes that teachers should not view student motivational issues as indicators of inadequacies in their teaching or students character problems, but takes it as information about the dynamics of the classroom. It was noted that if at all the teachers consider classroom relationships as important information that can help in understanding the causes of problems related to motivation and ways to overcome those problems. Urooj (2012) suggests that there should be informal opportunities for teachers and students to interact, provide moral guidance to students, properly communicate with students, teacher's creation of attractive learning environment, encouragement and care about the students. This means that teaching and learning should be interactive so as to promote democratic or positive teacher-students classroom relationship.

3.   Methodology
3.1   Design and area of the study
The study employed the qualitative research approach, a single case study, which enabled the researcher to investigate the phenomenon in depth. The study was conducted in Tanzania in one municipal of Dar es Salaam region, namely Kinondoni Municipality. Kinondoni Municipality was chosen as case study area because it had CTs who were much exposed to political information that is denied in other areas in the country and in turn influence the way they teach Civics in schools (Riggio, 2012).

3.2   Participants
All 20 wards in the Municipality were purposively stratified into two major groups: group 1, wards found in urban areas; and group 2, wards located in suburban areas. A purposeful random sample of 1 ward from each group was done to form a total number of 2 wards which participated in the study. Then, a purposeful sample of 4 schools (2 public and 2 private) with a CT with an experience of four years or above of teaching Civics were selected from each ward to form a total number of 8 schools studied. Then, 1 Civics teacher from each school was purposely selected to participate which form a total of 8 teachers.

3.3   Data collection and analysis
This study employed classroom observation method to collect data from selected schools. A non-participant observation schedule comprised the questions related to classroom teacher-student relationship was used to assess CTs on how they interact with their students while delivering Civics lessons in the classroom. Each sampled CT was repeatedly observed (at least three times in different days) teaching Civics lesson in his/her classroom. Concurrently, a sound tape recorder was used to record the teacher–students' oral interactions, thereafter, transcribed into written texts. Next, the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework of data analysis was

used to summarise both the written and transcribed oral texts which thereafter were read and re-read with the purpose of familiarising with the collected data. Then, coding exercise followed by highlighting the key words, phrases and segments that relates to the predetermined aspects of teacher–students' relationship.

4.   Findings

The findings in this study answered the question: *How do Civics teachers relate with students in the classrooms?* This was essential in understanding the manner to which teacher–students classroom relationship in Civics classrooms reflect participatory pedagogy advocated by the Civics syllabus. Data were mainly collected through repeated classroom observations. The observations focused on the ways in which CTs related with their students by examining the kind of interactions demonstrated during Civics lessons.

The findings indicate that teacher-students classroom relationship was characterised by positive as well as negative interactions. It was noted that some aspects related to these two broad categories of interactions occurred concurrently. However, for the purpose of attaining a logical flow, these aspects are presented separately in the following sub-sections.

4.1   Positive teacher–students classroom relationship

The classroom observations indicate that the positive teacher–students' interactions were of three types. They were characterised by features related to autonomy support interactions, involvement warmth interactions, and structured interactions. Table 1 summarises the features related to autonomy support interactions which were identified.

Table 1: *Features related to autonomy support interactions*

Feature	School							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
i. Teacher gives students chance to present	√			√	√			
ii. Teacher pays attention listening students when speaking	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
iii. Teacher appreciates ideas given by students	√	√						
iv. Teacher uses reinforcements: Good! Thank you! Yes!	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
v. Teacher reads aloud points written on the board				√		√		√
vi. Teacher asks students to listen to their colleagues			√	√		√		
vii. Teacher clarifies points raised by students				√				
viii. Teacher writes on the board ideas raised by students	√			√				

Table 1 indicates that teacher pays attention listening to students and teacher uses reinforcements. These include verbal expressions such as: "Good!", "Thank you!", "Yes!". These were observed during Civics lessons. For example, **CT** in school **E** was observed when teaching a Civics lesson and demonstrated the following features regarding teacher's paying attention and noting down the points mentioned by students:

Teacher: What is economic development?
Students: [all] Economic development is …
Teacher: No, no, please raise up your hands.
Student 1: Economic development is the increase in production of goods and services.
Teacher: [Looking at the student while answering the question and quickly writes the answer on the chalkboard]

Teacher: Yes, economic development refers to the increase in production of goods and services.
Teacher: Who else, can try?
Student 2: Economic development refers to the increase in per capita income.
Teacher: [Looking at the student, nods his head, then writes the answer on the chalkboard]
Teacher: Yes, economic development refers also to the increase in per capita income.

Also, CTs' use of expressions: "Yes!" "Good!" or "Thank you!" which denote their valuing of students' responses. For example, this kind of interaction was observed between the **CT** in school **B** with his students and this is what transpired in one of his lessons:
Teacher: [Asks students to sit in their groups and discuss the question: "What are the agents of socialisation?"]
Teacher: [After students discussed in their groups] I want one person from each group to stand up and mention one agent of socialisation.
Teacher: Group 1.
Student from Group 1: One of the agents of socialisation is family.
Teacher: Thank you! A family is one of the agents of socialisation [at the same time he writes the word "Family" on the chalkboard].
Teacher: Group 2.
A student from Group 2: A school is another agent of socialisation.
Teacher: Good! A school is another agent of socialisation.
These instances help explaining that the teacher was paying attention, listening to students speaking and used reinforcements such as "Good!", "Thank you!" or "Yes!". These features are fundamentally important in enhancing students' autonomy support interaction. This implies that the CT–students classroom positive interaction was commonly characterised by autonomy support interaction promoted through CTs' paying attention, listening to students and uses reinforcements.

Further, features related to involvement warmth interactions followed after autonomy support interactions. Table 2 presents the summary of features related to involvement warmth interactions observed.

Table 2: *Features related to involvement warmth interactions*

Feature	School							
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**
i. Teacher asks students to say if they did not understand	√			√				
ii. Teacher smiles and show cheerfulness	√	√	√	√		√		√
iii. Teacher encourages students to answer questions	√							
iv. Teacher uses inviting language		√		√				
v. Teacher calls students "my friends"	√	√		√				√

Table 2 shows that among the observed CTs, the CT from school **A** demonstrated more features related to involvement-warmth interactions, that is, treating students with care. Such features include teacher asking students to say if they did not understand, calling them "My friends!", encouraging them by saying "You just try", cheerfulness and smiling while talking to students. In encouraging students to participate, the **CT** in school **A**, for instance, demonstrated the following:
Teacher: [After greeting the students, he writes the name of the lesson on the chalkboard and asks] My friends, what is the role of the government in economic development?
Students: [silent].
Teacher: Who can try? You just try.
Student 1: The role of the government in economic development is to construct roads.
Teacher: Yes, constructing roads. What else my friends?
Student 2: The role of government in economic development is to provide social services.
Teacher: Yes. [Continues asking other students, calling them "my friends" and encouraging them to volunteer].

Table 2 further indicates that cheerfulness and smiling among teachers while talking to students was demonstrated by many CTs during classroom observations. The table also indicate that the particular teacher called students "my friends" followed, which was another feature of involvement–warmth interaction.

Moreover, the data from classroom observations indicate that structured interactions emerged as the least among the observed types of positive CT–students classroom relationship. Table 3 summarises the observed features related to structured interactions.

Table 3: *Features related to structured interactions*

Feature	School							
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**
i. Teacher visits groups asking if they need help	√			√				
ii. Teacher clarifies further the mentioned points		√					√	
iii. Teacher repeats what was said by students			√					
iv. Teacher summarises students' answers	√				√			

Table 3 indicates that features related to structured interaction were minimal compared to other two types of positive interaction. Table 3 shows that, features depicting structured interaction were those related to helping students on how to do classroom activities and tasks. Such help included teacher visiting students in their group discussion and asking them to say if they needed help. The teachers also clarify points and summarise the answers provided by students. It was observed that the **CT** from school **D**, while teaching one of the Civics lessons, the following discourse transpired:

Teacher: [Organises students into groups of six each, provides copies of written texts and asks] Please read, identify and describe indicators of economic development.
Teacher: [After few minutes, she moves to Group 1 and asks] Have you identified the indicators? Do you understand how you should write the brief descriptions?
Students in Group 1: [all] Yes, we can do that.
Teacher: [Moves to Group 2 and asks the same questions].
Students in Group 2: [some said] Yes. [others] No.
Teacher: [Spends time explaining how they should describe the indicators]. After identifying one indicator, she writes brief explanations how it relates to economic development.
Teacher: [Does the same with other groups].

In summary, the findings in this sub-section indicate that autonomy support interaction was dominant in positive interactions between CTs and their students. Then, it is followed by involvement warmth and structured interactions. In contrast to the findings in sub-section 4.2, CTs demonstrated much features related to positive compared to negative interactions. This means that the relationship between CTs and students was much democratic and echo participatory pedagogy.

4.2 Negative teacher–students classroom relationship
Through classroom observations, negative CT–students relationship was also identified. The negative CT-students relationship include: rejecting, chaotic and coercive interactions. Among these, rejecting interactions emerged as the dominant type of negative CT–students relationship as summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: *Features related to rejecting interactions*

Feature	School							
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**
i. Teacher does not remember the names of students	√	√				√		
ii. Teacher cuts short students' answers.			√		√		√	
iii. Teacher not allows students to present before the class								√
iv. Teacher interferes students when speaking		√						
v. Teacher asks questions and answers himself or herself							√	√

Table 4 indicates that a considerable number of indicators regarding rejecting type of interactions were identified. One of the indicators was CTs not remembering students' names when calling for their attention. This was evident when CTs were using phrases like "You at the back", "You over there, what is …?", and "You after Halima". For example, when observing the **CT** in school **F** in one of her lessons, this is what transpired:

Teacher: [Introduces the lesson by asking] What are social services?
Teacher: [Pointing a finger] Yes, you at the corner.
Student 1: Social services include education and health.
Teacher: [Writes on the chalkboard the phrase "education and health"].
Teacher: Eh, who else?
Student 2: Water.
Teacher: Yes, water. Another one?
Teacher: You after Halima, what are the examples of social services?
Student 3: [Behind Halima] Social services are education, water, and health care.
Teacher: [Explains] Social services are those services that society or people need in order to survive and develop. Such services include provision of education and water supply. [Continues to explain in detail about each social service].

Table 4 further shows that some CTs used to cut-short students' answers. This phenomenon occurred when students showed some hesitation in answering CTs' questions. It also happened when students were not able to speak the English language fluently. Similarly, this happened when some CTs prevented students to share their views or contributing ideas. Some CTs were not providing chance for students to air their views or answer the questions asked. For instance, when observing the **CT** in school **H** in one of his lessons, the following dialogue occurred:

Teacher: [Asks students to sit in groups] Discuss the qualities of good leadership.
Teacher: [In just a minute, starts asking groups] Group one, what are the qualities of good leadership?
Students in Group 1: [Silent]
Teacher: One of the qualities of good leadership is cooperation. In order to be a good leader, a leader should cooperate with people when he/she is leading.
Teacher: Group two, your answer please.
Students in Group 2: [one student stands up, trying to answer] Another quality is …
Teacher: [Interrupts] Another quality of good leadership is good communication skills. A good leader should effectively communicate with people he or she is leading.
Teacher: Group three, what is the quality of good leadership?
Students from Group 3: [one student stands up and says] Another quality of good leadership is to respect the views of other people.
Teacher: [Continues to ask other groups but interrupted the students when they tried to answer the questions].

Further, features related to chaotic interactions were identified in some of the classrooms as summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: *Features related to chaotic interactions*

Feature	School							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
i. Teacher invites responses, but after hearing the answers, continues with explanations								√
ii. Teacher assigns tasks but not bother to receive students' answers		√	√			√		
iii. Teacher provides unclear instructions			√					
iv. Teacher assigns group task then after few minutes starts giving the answers							√	
v. Teacher assigns groups task but students not engaged						√		

Table 5 shows that teacher assigns tasks but does not bother to receive students' answers was the dominant feature related to chaotic interactions. Such situation occurred when some CTs assigned students to work in small group discussions but not bother to know the answers provided by students. For instance, this kind of interaction was observed in school **B** when the **CT** was interacting with his students:
Teacher: [Asks students to sit in groups] Discuss and identify the factors for economic development.
Teacher: [After ten minutes of discussion, the teacher starts to explain]
There are several factors for economic development. Such factors are land, labour, energy, transport and good governance.
Teacher: [Continues to elaborate in detail the factors he mentioned while students remained silent listening and taking down notes].

Moreover, the findings show some features related to coercive or controlling interactions. Table 6 summarises the features related to coercive or controlling interactions.

Table 6: *Features related to coercive interactions*

Feature	School							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
i. Teacher threatens to punish students							√	
ii. Teacher shouts to some students		√						
iii. Teacher commands students	√			√		√		
iv. Students feel being pushed by the teacher								√
v. Students feel unhappy by being not allowed to contribute						√		

Table 6 indicates that the dominant action which depicted coercive interaction was teachers commanding students. This situation occurred when CTs commanded their students to accomplish a given task quickly. For example, the **CT** in school **D** was observed and this is what transpired in one of her Civics lessons:
Teacher: [Asks students to sit in groups and provide them with written texts] Please read the texts and identify the roles of different financial institutions in economic development.
Students in their groups: [Read and note down points]

Teacher: [After eight minutes] Are you ready? Have you already identified the roles of different financial institutions?
Students in their groups: [Silent]
Teacher: Hurry up, hurry up, you are going to make presentations.
Some students: [Murmuring, seem not happy with the teacher's command. One is heard saying] We are not ready.
Teacher: [Insisting] I want you to present, hurry up!

Overall, the findings in this sub-section indicate occurrence of features related to negative interactions, that is, rejecting, chaotic and coercive interactions. However, these features scantly occurred when CTs were interacting with students in the classrooms. Thus, in comparison with the findings in the previous section, CTs and their students demonstrated more features related to positive interactions. This implies that CT–students classroom relationship was more of democratic nature consistent to the recommended participatory pedagogy.

5.   Discussion and Conclusion

Teacher-students classroom relationship comprised two major categories, namely, relationships that work in the classroom (positive interactions) and relationships that do not work in the classroom (negative interactions). In this study, the findings indicated that CTs demonstrated both positive and negative interactions, that is, the two kinds of interactions occurred during Civics lessons. A similar situation was observed by Furrer et al. (2012) and Pianta et al. (2012) that teacher-student classroom consists of relationships that work (positive interactions) and relationships that do not work (negative interactions).

On the one hand, it appears that the CTs largely demonstrated positive interactions when relating with their students which denote democratic relationship. It is shown that autonomy support interactions, teacher listening to and valuing students' opinions, teachers paying attention, listening and writing on the chalkboard points or ideas mentioned by students were observed in all schools. This situation is interpreted that teacher-students classroom relationship was characterised by features related to autonomy support, an aspect consistent to participatory pedagogy. This is in line with Knoell (2012) that teachers' active listening students' views and use of oral and written encouragement were identified as features related to positive interactions.

The findings show that features related to involvement of warmth interactions: teachers asking students to say if they did not understand, calling students "my friends", encouraging them to participate, cheerfulness and smiling when talking to students. It appears also that students are treated with care when CTs use reinforcements or inviting language after a student had correctly responded to teacher's questions. As Bruney (2012) observes, teachers who were warmth (calling students "my friends" and were cheerful and smiling when talked to students) positively related with their students. This is also congruent to Gehlbach et al. (2016) who revealed that if persons see themselves as similar to others, they consequently develop stronger and closer relationships. Similarly, this situation is in line with Urooj (2012) particularly on teacher's encouragement and takes care of the students (teachers asking students to say if they did not understand and encouraging students to participate). It also reflects the recommendation put forward by Bauer (2022) that teachers should provide time to interact with individual students in order to cultivate positive relationship with them. This is interpreted that teacher-students classroom relationship was characterised by warmth interactions which promoted democratic relationship between CTs and students.

The findings further show that the CTs demonstrated some features related to structured interactions. Such features included CTs used to make clarification about points mentioned by students and helping students how to improve when doing different tasks. The CTs' help involves visiting students when discussing in groups and asking them to say if they need help, how to conduct the discussion, and what students were supposed to do in their groups. This is in line with Divoll (2010) in which positive teacher-students relationship was demonstrated by teachers through supportive and close conversations with the students. It is also concurring with Agyekum (2019) who revealed that positive teacher-students relationship can solves challenges related to learning. Arguably, this situation may mean that the CTs supported the students through close conversations which also favoured or enhanced democratic relationship when CTs taught Civics in their classrooms.

On the other hand, the findings indicate that democratic relationship between CTs and students was limited. It appears that some negative interactions which represent undemocratic relationship were also demonstrated in the Civics lessons. The negative interactions were rejecting interactions—teachers not remembering students' names when calling their attention, cut short students' answers, and not value their contribution. Some CTs also

demonstrated chaotic interactions—teachers assign tasks to students but not let them do the assignment, assigned group tasks but not bother to know what the groups had discussed, and unclear instructions.

Likewise, the findings show some other CTs demonstrated coercive interactions—teachers giving commands to students, students not given chance to air their ideas, and teachers gave threats or threaten to punish them. This consequently forced students to remain silent listening to their teachers. This means that albeit the CTs favourably demonstrated positive interactions with their students, they as well demonstrated some negative interactions which represent undemocratic relationship. It appears that CTs concurrently demonstrated some features related to rejecting, chaotic and coercive interactions. However, such negative interactions were minimal compared to positive interactions.

The findings further show that the positive teacher-students' interactions were also limited as some CTs used to interact with few students when teaching Civics lessons. It appears that not all CTs demonstrated positive interactions with their students. This means that the positive teacher-students' interactions were confined to few students, that is, the majority remained watching or listening to their teachers or fellow students. Moreover, other features such as lack of proper feedback from the teachers (structured interactions), and treating students with respect (autonomy support interactions) were not demonstrated. This means that some features related to positive interactions were never observed which also account for limited positive interactions between the teachers and students.

Conclusively, the findings provide evidence on how the CTs relate with their students when teaching Civics in their classrooms. Although, the CT–students relationship was characterised by both kinds of interactions, the positive interactions were dominant. This suggests that teacher–students classroom relationship was mainly characterised by positive interactions which implies that CTs largely demonstrated democratic relationship with their students consistent to participatory pedagogy recommended in the Civics syllabus.

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