

# International Journal of Online and Distance Learning (IJODL)

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(Grade V) Teacher Students**

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**Interpersonal Relations and Non-Academic  
Achievement among University Upgrading (Grade V)  
Teacher Students**



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**Article History**

*Received 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024*

*Received in Revised Form 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

*Accepted 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024*



How to cite in APA format:

Amongin, H., Baguma, P., Oonyu, J., & Lassen, E.  
(2024). Interpersonal Relations and Non-Academic  
Achievement among University Upgrading (Grade V)  
Teacher Students. *International Journal of Online and  
Distance Learning*, 5(2), 1–18.  
<https://doi.org/10.47604/ijodl.2473>

**Abstract**

**Purpose:** Given the challenges faced by distance and life-long education students engaging in non-academic activities, combined with the common assumption that adults are good at interpersonal relations, this study explores the relationship between interpersonal relations (IR) and non-academic achievement (NAA) in Ugandan universities.

**Methodology:** This was a qualitative study. Data included a population of teacher students from Makerere University and Uganda Christian University, Mukono and a sample of 75 upgrading Grade V teacher students from Makerere University and Uganda Christian University, Mukono, obtained through purposive sampling technique. The Researcher formulated (vetted by 07 Professors and pilot tested) Group interviews, an observation schedule for the students' sample, and in-depth interviews for Lecturers were used to collect data.

**Findings:** Data was presented using tables, graphs and figures. Results showed that positive interpersonal relations were very critical in non-academic activities and thus positively influenced achievement among university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students. Data analysed using NVIVO showed that interpersonal relations were very important in terms of team spirit, group work, field activities and collegial relations. In conclusion, strengthening interpersonal relations is very important in the 21st century with research stressing collaborative approaches. The practical non-academic activities not only refresh the body but enhance positive interactions that are useful in the NAA for common purpose and goals in life.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** As a contribution to policy and practice, the study suggests that teachers need to have an all-round curriculum for training interpersonal relations for better non-academic achievement. Knowledge of negative and positive perceptions of interpersonal relations is critical for learning, training, field activities and research. Ministry of Education and Sports thus, needs to be intentional in including aspects of interpersonal relations and non-academic achievement at higher educational institutions and universities. Interpersonal relations and self-determinism theories need to be made more relevant in universities.

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Relations, Non-academic Achievement, Teacher Training and Teacher Education*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Distance Education in Higher Education

Higher education is facing great challenges in the twenty-first century, (Sadeghi (2019). Some of these challenges result from a growing demand for pursuing higher education by working professionals across the globe, (India Divya J, K. Narashiman, 2018). As a solution to some of these challenges, Distance Learning programmes have been initiated and are now a current reality creating opportunities for educational institutions; a reality offering students expanded choices in where, when, how, and from whom they learn; a reality making education accessible to ever larger numbers of persons, (Sadeghi, 2019).

Theoretically, distance education is defined as a learning environment in which ‘students and teachers are separated by distance and sometimes by time’ (Agbanu, 2018). Further, distance education is different from traditional education due to its openness to adults who are gainfully employed, fully occupied with family life and do not depend on face-to-face meetings. It is characterized by mass-communication autonomy, individualization and independence of time, place and classes, (Agbanu, 2018). Distance Learning Theory considers empathy and personal relationship between the stakeholders (students, instructors, administrative staff and the institution) involved in the teaching-learning process as cardinal to distance education.

Clearly, distance education programs and courses are here to stay and will increase in the future but there are still many uncertain issues to be clarified and investigated including interpersonal relations and non-academic activities that vary from context to context (Sadeghi, 2019). Nevertheless, although distance education has been a great success in many ways in the past, the problem of the ‘distance education deficit’ remains.

Research has consistently shown that psychological traits and processes have a role in how students cope with learning challenges and difficulties and the learning strategies they use. By integrating the psychological perspective, a better understanding of students’ engagement and intrinsic motivation in opposition to pernicious behaviour such as procrastination, avoidance of difficulties, anxiety or academic burnout and its consequences could be attained, not only for academic performance but also for their wellbeing and satisfaction (Sánchez-Elvira, 2016). It should be noted that ‘for many students a personal relationship with an instructor is the key’. Facilitators should be trained periodically and encouraged to continually relate with students cordially and professionally (Sánchez-Elvira Paniagua, A & Simpson, O., 2018).

In Uganda, the upgrading Grade V teacher students come from all over the country and have to forge ways of relating with each other and with their lecturers. They follow a programme that allows them to have face-to-face sessions every three months during the formal Primary and Secondary school holidays. Since they do not participate in school practice, they have an option of being assessed in various non-academic activities of their choice.

Teacher students at College of Education, and Distance and Continuing Education, Makerere University are faced with many and unique challenges. The 2-year programme is protracted, and students study through a modular system. They meet their instructors for a period of about three weeks during the Secondary and Primary school holidays. Since they are professional teachers who have attained a diploma in education and are now pursuing a Bachelor’s degree programme, it is assumed that they are “mature” in their chronological age and wiser in their dealings with people, as compared to their counter-parts that come straight from Senior 6 to the university. Having had some experience in teaching, they are also expected to be involved in other school and community activities (non-academic) apart from teaching, (personal communication from Professor Ezati Betty).

A search on relevant literature has indicated that there is a lack of research on how interpersonal relations (IR) may influence non-academic achievement (NAA) in Distance Learning and so far, no tool has been developed for the assessment of non-academic achievement in Uganda. The study thus sets out to explore interpersonal relations and non-achievement among university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students, using a sample of Makerere University Distance Education and Lifelong students, and Distance Education students from Uganda Christian University, Mukono. Non-academic achievement is here to be understood as achievement in activities of a non-academic informal nature.

### **Problem Statement**

Interpersonal relations are the fabric that holds all activities together, formal and informal, within and around the university. Observation and experience show that these are taken for granted at higher educational institutions leading to some negative interaction among students themselves and among students and lecturers. So far there is limited knowledge about how Non-Academic Activities (NAA) may be influenced by Interpersonal Relations (IR).

The study thus has the following purpose:

The study explores a possible link between Interpersonal relations and non-academic achievement of university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students at the College of Education, Makerere University, Faculty of Education and Uganda Christian University, Mukono.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students' perceptions of IR?
2. What non-academic activities are university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students involved in?
3. How successfully do university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students perform and achieve in non-academic activities?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Interpersonal Relations and Non-Academic Achievement**

Achievement is defined as attainment, accomplishment, triumph, realization, reaching and getting, (online Thesaurus dictionary). The antonym for this is failure. In this study, non-academic achievement will be determined using activities that are not academic, including for example co/extra curricula activities (Buckley and Lee, 2018), clubs and projects such as kitchen gardening, small business enterprises among others. Achievement goals are rooted in personal dispositions and contextual features where individuals adapt to changing environments. Unique contributions to the prediction of later academic achievement above and beyond previous academic achievement includes immense intelligence, personality traits, and self-esteem (Zuffianò et al. 2013). Research has indicated that Non-academic factors of academic-related skills, academic self-confidence, institutional commitment, social support, and social involvement have been found to all have a positive relationship to retention (Lotkowski et al., 2004). This results in higher levels of co-worker and a supervisor social support, more autonomy concerning the terms of employment, good overall job satisfaction, monetary gratification, and esteem reward, (Lore, et al., 2008).

Interpersonal competence which is a close ally to interpersonal relations is defined as the ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships with a variety of people across diverse situations. This involves paying attention in terms of really listening to someone, making eye contact and hearing them, making them feel appreciated, and creating a positive feeling for them about you (Bennet, 2013). This gives personal and professional benefits, which



enhance interpersonal relations (Wallen, 2005 – 2017; Saklofske, et al, 2012). As an important aspect of interpersonal relations, the development of interpersonal intelligence as early as possible shapes the character of students and instils positive values in them such as working together, independence and lateral thinking, a great sense of empathy and a positive concept of others. High achievers were thus found to have better socio-emotional development and better job promotion possibilities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this study Peplau's Theory of Interpersonal Relations published in 1952 (Peplau & E., 2012 in Senn, J. F., 2013) was used because of the closeness of nursing to teaching in terms of its dealings with human beings and nature of interaction with people. Whereas the theory stipulates the purpose of nursing, which is to help others identify their felt difficulties, teaching is an interpersonal process that involves interaction between two or more individuals with a common goal. The roles of the Nurse and the Teacher are similar in that initially both are strangers meeting a client/student for the first time; they are teachers who impart knowledge in reference to a need or interest.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study used a mixed methods approach based on descriptive statistics, group interviews and observation. The Ontology and Epistemology included constructivist and interpretivist approaches. The data also had a transformative aspect, as the study seeks to transform how daily business is conducted in the educational and teacher training system. Data was triangulated to create a deeper understanding (Trilar et al. 2019) and accuracy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017) of non-academic achievement. Qualitative data is rich and holistic with a strong potential for revealing complexity such as "thick descriptions" (Miles & Huberman, 1994 & Silverman, 2013).

### **Data Collection**

For this study, data was collected at Makerere University and Uganda Christian University between 2015 and 2018. Makerere University was selected because it is the first Eastern and Central African University, (University, September 2013). On the other hand, Uganda Christian University, Mukono, is among the first private universities. At the Department of Distance Education and Life-long Learning Makerere, the academic achievement of students over the past several years had been good but the state of IR and the possible relationship between IR and NAA had not been documented. Makerere University and Uganda Christian University thus represent old universities of relatively high standing, which might be expected to stand strong on IR and achievement.

The respondents were stratified according to years and subject speciality and sampled purposively, using snowball methods. Males were more than females. Fifty Teacher Students of Years 1 and 2 from Makerere University and 25 of similar years from UCU were interviewed (75 in all) meeting Flynn and Korcuska's (2017) suggestion of no fewer than 60 and no more than 150 subjects. These were put into 7 groups. The study had 10 Lecturers 7 from Makerere and 3 from UCU, who were given in-depth interviews. The saturation point was reached at both universities.

Table 1 shows the sample that was used for the group interviews (75 teacher-students) and in-depth interviews (10 Lecturers).

**Table 1: Sample Distribution**

<b>University</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Lecturers</b>
Makerere	39	12	07
Uganda Christian University			
Mukono	11	13	03
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>

*Source: Made by Researcher*

### **Research Instrument**

A researcher-formulated tool and an observation schedule were used to obtain data, which was analysed manually using themes and memos. Seven Professors and Senior Lecturers at Makerere University vetted the instrument. The majority of the items were appropriate for the study.

### **Analytical Approach**

Qualitative data were described, interpreted and explained. The data were subjected to a process of data reduction, data display, and data conclusion drawing and verification using NVivo 12 Trial software. Trustworthiness of data procedures and domain items included data saturation, triangulation, thick and rich descriptions, prolonged engagement with data and reflexivity.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Prior permission and approval were obtained from the University Research Committee and the Uganda National Council of Higher Education before collecting data. Consent was sought from the two universities and all participants. Permission was obtained from the Heads of schools where observation of non-academic activities was done.

### **Findings**

#### **Demographic Information of Participants**

The demographic information in Table 2 shows two major training background categories for the participants, namely Primary School Teacher Education and Secondary School Teacher Education. The participants ranged from 25 to 48 years of age. The Grade V teacher students teaching in secondary schools had more representation among the Participants than those teaching in primary schools.

**Table 2: Demographic Information for the Qualitative Sample**

Group	Age	Training Level	Year of Study	Marital Status	Gender
Agriculture	25-40	Secondary school teacher	Year 2	Married = 9 Single = 8	Male = 13 Female = 4
IPSS	29-43	Primary school teacher	Year 1	Married = 6 Single = 0	Male = 3 Female = 3
Arts	26-43	Secondary school teacher	Year 2	Married = 5 Single = 3	Male = 6 Female = 2
UCU Year 2	29-48	Primary school teacher	Year 2	Married = 13 Single = 1	Male = 8 Female = 6
Business eEducation	25-40	Secondary school teacher	Year 1	Married = 8 Single = 3	Male = 9 Female = 2
Science	25-40	Secondary school teacher	Year 2	Married = 4 Single = 5	Male = 8 Female = 1
UCU Year 1	26-43	Primary school teacher	Year 1	Married = 10 Single = 0	Male = 3 Female = 7

Source: Waiswa, et al. (October 31, 2020) and Waiswa, et al. (2020).

University Lecturers constituted 5 females and 5 males in total; 3 females were from Makerere and 2 from UCU. Of these, there were 02 female key informants from Makerere, and 01 female key informant from UCU. Key informants were older and had spent more years in the university. Key informants from Makerere University had served the university for over 20 years. There were also 4 males from Makerere and 01 from UCU, among whom 02 males from Makerere were key informants. The general age was from 28 to over 60 years of age. There was a high level of physical and chronological maturity among the participants. Ten Participants were married. Marriage in Uganda is usually associated with physical maturity and responsibility.

In what follows we discuss findings relating to the first research question:

**Research question 1: What are the University Upgrading (Grade V) Teacher Students' perceptions of Interpersonal Relations?**

For analytical clarity, we refer to the categories indicated on table 2: Integrated Primary School Science (IPSS), ARTS, Business Education, Science and Agriculture, UCU year 1 and 2 (see table 2), as these categories form the basis of the participants' statements about IR. A combined overview of the teacher students' perceptions is provided in Table 3:

**Table 3: Grade V University Upgrading Teacher Students’ Perceptions of Interpersonal Relations**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Interpersonal relations	Sharing	Sharing
	Cooperation	Cooperation
	Friendliness	Friendly formations
	Awareness of others’ emotions	Reacting to situations positively or negatively
	Performing tasks together for a common goal	Living and working together with others, peacefully
	Helping others with their challenges e.g. materially, financially	Appropriate behaviour to others in different circumstances
	Management of feelings	Open and free communication
	Positive reactions towards colleagues	Responding to whoever we come across
	Performing tasks together for a common goal	Realizing that relations matter
	Doing to others as you would want them to do to you	Team work
	Adjustability to new people and situations	
	Giving positive advise	

**Positive Interpersonal Relations**

Overall, participants indicated that IR helped them live in harmony with others and made them appear resilient to observers. This helped them tame their tempers, maintain their jobs and not lose temper when criticized by the Boss, for example. UCU Participants asserted that managing emotions had improved on their IR using the quality of tolerance. They also learnt to love others, to understand and to help them, all because of positive IR. Participants thought that learning what others needed, taking the time to know each other, cooperation, bearing with other people’s weaknesses, valuing relationships and desiring to live amicably were part of IR.

The ARTS group emphasized the ideal of not judging others without knowing their standpoint and criticizing others, as not having positive interpersonal relations. On the other hand, offering good advice, counselling and trying to mould others was better than rebuking them (Agriculture). Qualities of patience, tolerance, emotional maturity, team spirit, peace-lovingness and a caring spirit were seen as constituting positive interpersonal relations, (Business Education). Being aware of others’ emotions, accepting others as they were and showing empathy were part of positive interpersonal relations (Science). Friendship formation, sharing, care and concern for others, teamwork and good communication mechanisms were shared by the UCU Year 1 Participants as values that form positive interpersonal relations. On the other hand, UCU Year 2 focused on positive interactions, teamwork, and spirit, doing to others what you would want them to do to you, as manifestations of positive IR.

Although the responses from the various groups displayed some differences, a best friend was generally expected to have attributes that characterize positive interpersonal relations. One Male Participant said, *‘my wife is my best friend because as of now she is taking care of my*



*children. She is taking care of the family property. And there are some expenses she is incurring on her own when I am not there'.*

Lecturer Participants corroborated this information in that positive IR fosters stability, continuity, unity as colleagues work as a team and provides better understanding (Male Key Informant). *"That one is key because if we do not have good interpersonal relations it will be very difficult for you as a teacher to go on with your students."* IR also provides better understanding between the Lecturer and the students and thus, creates a good relationship leading to ease in handling the class. *"Where the relationship is okay everything goes on well, the teaching goes on well. You reduce on conflicts, which fosters and simplifies work as a teacher."* Students were clients whose tuition fees was used to pay Lecturers' salaries, and so should be respected! When they liked the Lecturer, they also liked the subject he/she taught and thus, learnt better. *"Positive inter-personal relations with the students can either equip their understanding of interpreting you, or their failure to understand or interpret you. And if they don't like you, they hate you, then it is chaos, there is no way they will benefit from their stay."* IR avoided a flipped classroom atmosphere and since some students were older than the Lecturer, they needed respect. *"These are adults and some are even older and more knowledgeable than me,"* (Female Lecturer). Therefore, she needed to learn more in order to blend with them.

A Lecturer should show care and positive regard to the Students: *"Students perform better, some take advantage, some keep distance, but the Lecturer should show care and positive regard,"* (Female Lecturer). Respect is a key ingredient for IR. It makes the students friendly and positive to the subject: *"for example, one time I went to Revenue, I found a person I taught, so I did not even go through the line, she recognised me and said madam come. So, I was stopped by a police man, but the other one said, that is my teacher,"* (Female Key Participant - Lecturer).

This made the students like the subject, open up to the Lecturer and made the students develop good relations themselves. *"It creates a warm sense of acceptance and respect for the students and that motivates them to learn, to open up to you when they have issues which may actually block their learning,"* (Male Lecturer). Teaching and learning can take place where there is good and positive IR. It helps students develop confidence in the Lecturer. *"The students will now begin to develop confidence in me, they will open up to me and they will want to share their ideas, challenges with me because the environment is so conducive."* (Female Lecturer, UCU).

### **Negative Interpersonal Relations**

Some negative IR included limited communication, no communication, being arrogant, how communication is done and failure to manage negative feedback were all considered part of negative interpersonal relations (IPSS). The need for tolerance of other peoples' differences (ARTS), unity, cooperation and understanding (Agriculture), lack of appreciation of employees' work, lack of a desire to work together amicably (Business Education), lack of respect for people and isolation, (Science), feelings that all lead to negative IR. Feelings of uselessness and hopelessness, lack of self-confidence and self-worth, (UCU Year 1) contributed to negative interpersonal relations. Still, unfriendly reactions from colleagues, misunderstandings and withdrawal from others manifested negative IR, (UCU Year 2).

IR helped to avoid negative relations with the opposite sex and discouraged negative man/ girl relations. This indicates that the Lecturer was a mentor who encouraged descent dressing since the Lecturer was not God (Male Lecturer). It was Important for lecturers to have positive collegial IR to set a good example to their students. Good and positive IR between Lecturers

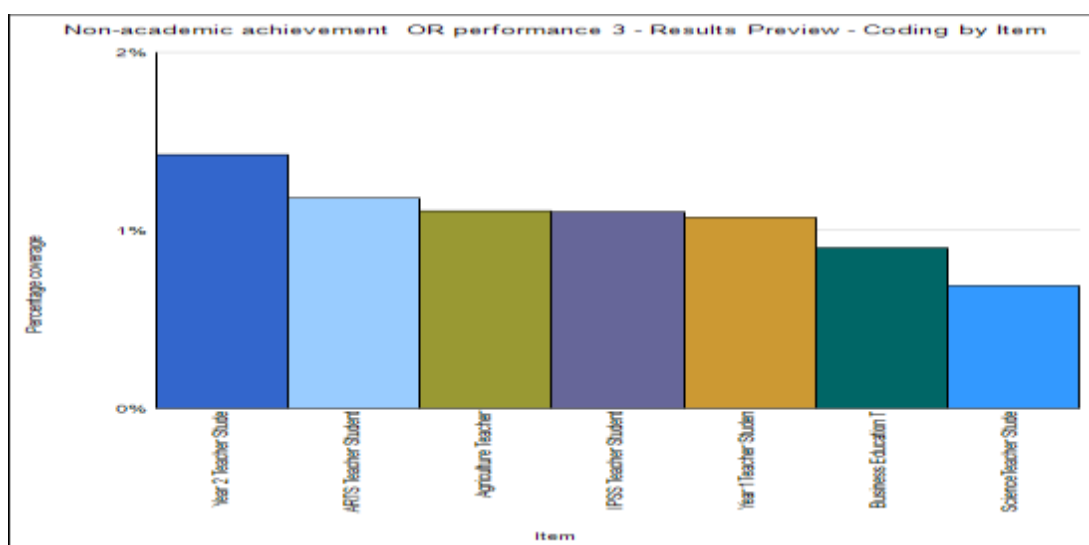
had a rippling effect on the teacher students, enabling good working relations and collaboration that subsequently led to the non-academic achievement of individuals and the university too.

*“The Bible says the body is the temple of God, but it can also be of the devil. The Lecturer should promote positive IR morals, give guidance and counselling, and openly denounce indecent behaviour and dressing”* (Key informant Male Lecturer). IR is necessary for progress in life and career development, *“right from the cleaner to the top manager in order to avoid ‘hell’. It helps one to achieve a lot,”* (Female Lecturer). *The 21<sup>st</sup> century is for collaboration, but if you do not have those inter-personal relationships, it becomes very difficult to collaborate,”* (Female Key Informant-Lecturer). According to the participants, Gossip and rumours destroy positive IR. All these manifested participants’ perceptions of negative IR.

In what follows, we move to a presentation of findings from the second research question.

### **Research question 2: What non-academic activities are university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students involved in?**

Figure 1 shows the activities all the groups undertook. Among the games and sports, football was most predominant among the clubs, debating stood out and among the projects, kitchen gardening was most outstanding. The Year 2 UCU teacher students reported outstanding non-academic achievement.



*Figure 1: Non-academic achievement NVivo 9 Copyright © 2011 QSR International Pty Ltd. ABN 47 006 357 213.*

The activities that the participants engaged in is further elaborated on table 4, which shows the frequencies of the various non-academic activities (self-reports). The activities are presented under the following main categories: Games, sports, clubs, creative arts, farming and commercial activities.

**Table 4: Non-Academic Activities and Their Frequencies as Performed by Participants**

Games	Sports	Clubs	Creative Arts	Farming	Commercial activities
Running-20	Football-33	Debating-30	Music-15	Kitchen Gardening-29	Internet Café-8
Jumps-9	Netball- 13	Scripture Union-21	Drama-10	Farming-2	Soap-making-4
Shot put-3	Hand ball-1	Mathematics-7	Dance-4	Rearing animals-1	Crafts-3
Drafts-2		Health-5		Vegetable gardening-1	Barber shop-3
Chess-2		Rotary-3		Agriculture-1	Knitting-2
		Geography-3			Hair dressing-1
					Second hand clothes-1
					Mobile Money Agent-1
					School canteen-1
					Saving scheme-1
					“Boda-Boda” (motorcycle)
					Business-1
					Fine Art-1
<b>TOTAL-36</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>27</b>

Source: Researcher Field Data

Table 4 further shows the cross-tabulation of the various non-academic activities and their frequencies. Games and Sports: Football 33; Running 20; and Netball 13 in that order, among others. The activities performed by the majority of participants had facilities that were more available, and these were at the same time more traditional and familiar. Figure 2 shows the strength of those activities starting with football, then debating and kitchen gardening.



Figure 2: Strength of Non-Academic Activities Atlas Trial Version

What follows next are the results for the third research question:

**Research question 3: How successfully do university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students perform and achieve in non-academic activities?**

IPSS Participants rated their projects as a success just by its existence and thriving. Profits were a sign of success. The not so successful aspects included the challenge of not having enough time and the strain of taking care of the birds.

Table 5 illustrates the ratings made by the groups of participants of their level of success in their non-academic activities on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest rating.

**Table 5: Level of Success in Non-Academic Activity According to Groups**

SCORE →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
GROUP											
↓											
ARTS	**	*	*		**	*	*				<b>08</b>
AGRIC				*	*	****	***	***	*		<b>13</b>
BUS.EDU	*	*	*	***	***		*	*			<b>11</b>
SCIE					***	*	*	**	*		<b>08</b>
UCU 1		*	**	***	*	*	*		*		<b>10</b>
UCU 2						*	*****	*****	***		<b>14</b>

\* Stands for number of participants at given digit.

*Source: Researcher Field Data*

Most of the Participants ranked themselves between 5 and 10 for reasons that the activity was flourishing as shown by the following examples: from five chickens that lay eggs he now had 25 and was getting eggs and money constantly; the liquid soap was being supplied around and bringing in profit that enabled the participant to renovate his house; the cabbage grown brought in more than 100% profit; one participant had his school winning the football competitions and Coca-Cola Company supported the school; ability to participate in the activities; commitment; self-motivation; personal availability; making time for the activities; good and positive results; and positive response from other participants in the activity; ability to express oneself in debates; talent development in music dance and drama; support from the Head teacher and Non-Governmental Organisations around the school; good health; ability to read and understand the tasks; and ability to be independent, (Agriculture, ARTS, Business Education, Science, UCU Year 1 and 2). Reasons for not being successful in the projects included land being used for kitchen gardening neighbouring the school community; land wrangles; goats and animals around destroying the crops. For football activity one Participant had had a surgical operation on the leg; limited time; lack of funding; lack of commitment; no involvement in the activities; age as some had grown older; lack of facilities; expensive costumes for dance and drama; negative attitude; too high enrolment of their own students; and verbal harassment from the Head teacher.

On the whole, 39 Participants rated themselves as being more successful in their non-academic activities while 27 rated themselves as not so successful in the same or similar activities, giving a total of 66 respondents out of 75 that were purposively sampled. These findings were corroborated by the information from the Lecturer Participants of the university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students. IR should be included in the Teacher Training institutions and be taught right from kindergarten, through to University level. It was only the mode of teaching and syllabi that had some differences. All Participants (Lecturers and Teacher Students) found that both IR was very important in the Education sector.

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between interpersonal relations and non-academic achievement in terms of the observed activities and the thoughts that the various participants in the different groups shared. The Year 2 UCU teacher students shared most of the ideas reflected in the data information while the least information was provided by the Makerere University Science group.

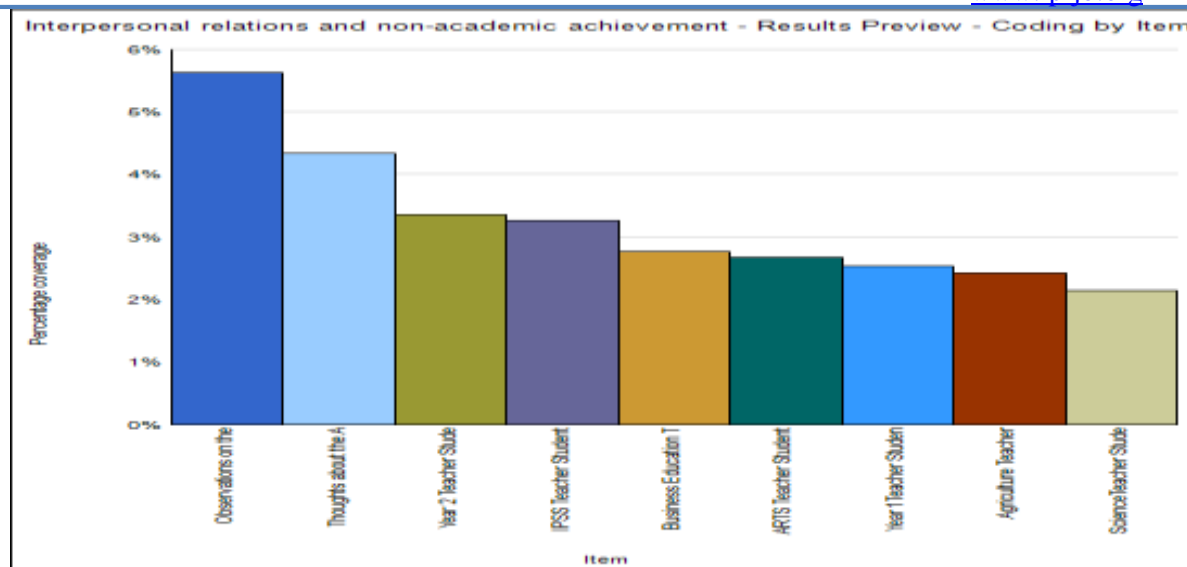


Figure 3: *Interpersonal Relations and Non-Academic Achievement NVivo 12 Copyright © 2011 QSR International Pty Ltd. ABN 47 006 357 213*

### Findings from the Observation of Some Non-Academic Activities in the Schools

Two secondary schools were visited for observation and the following non-academic activities were observed. In music, dance and drama (MDD) the schools were well organized. In both schools there was a burst of talent that was displayed, as shown in Figures 4 to 7.



Figure 4: *Sudanese dance School*

Source: *Picture Taken by Researcher*

The IR aspects were manifested through team spirit and cooperation. The School Staff were united in the training, mobilization and desire to uphold the values and cultures of the school. In one of the schools the cultural fashion show revealed that the schools did not only sustain IR within the school but even with the community. The other school had a cultural Dance by one of the Refugee communities near the school (Figure 4). Unity and hard work were exhibited through the commitment that exuded from the teachers, the non-teaching staff, the students and the parents and general community that gathered to cheer, encourage and praise the participants in the events of the day, all of which manifested strong IR.

One school had kitchen gardens in their various stages of development. Some were fresh with new plants, others were at the verge of being harvested and some were overgrown with weeds, the crops having been harvested (Figure 5).





*Figure 5: Kitchen Gardening School*

*Source: Picture Taken by Researcher*

There was commitment and eagerness to participate in these activities among the staff as each one wanted to supplement their income using these projects. Because of the limited land, sometimes conflicts would ensue as to who would use which part of land. Senior staff members tended to own bigger chunks of land. Thus, IR were very critical in the process of sharing this land. The newer teachers had to have patience and good negotiating skills in order to acquire a strip of land to cultivate some crops. Some of the crops grown included green vegetables and sweet potatoes. Chickens were reared by the older staff members and the Head teacher. Rabbits were kept by the school in general and were under the supervision of the Agriculture teachers (Figure 6). There were plans to start a piggery project.



*Figure 6: Project of keeping Rabbits School*

*Source: Picture Taken by Researcher*

One of the schools had Girls' inter-house football competitions. A high level of cooperation, hard work and organization were exhibited as the Girls got ready for the games, during the games and after the games. Both IR manifested in and through all the interactions, as shown in Figure 7.



*Figure 7: Girls' Inter-House Football Competition – First Set School*

*Source: Picture Taken by Researcher*

Indeed, in a school environment, it was necessary to have both teaching/academic and non-academic activities to balance the lives of the members of the school.

### **Discussion**

The study set out to explore a possible link between Interpersonal relations and non-academic achievement of university upgrading (Grade V) teacher students of College of Education, Makerere University, Faculty of Education and Uganda Christian University, Mukono. Participants agreed that IR influenced non-academic achievement and enabled association with people who could give them developmental ideas. They revealed the need for IR skills when coordinating with other staff members, holding discussions with them and finding a way forward on how the weaknesses could be improved. Good decision-making like deciding to go to the gym and practice every day for personal health and to improve on games and sports manifested awareness of IR. The act of consulting those who had the necessary skills to get help revealed ability to delegate responsibility. This was an indicator of trust and thus a good level of IR in relation to NAA.

Motivation by the school through financial support and allocation of more time for football showed positive IR from the Head teacher. These findings support McClellan et al. (2017) who described transformational leaders as charismatic, and able to influence followers through inspiration. Participants included administrators such as Head and Deputy Head teachers, who felt they needed to facilitate the teachers who were participating in non-academic activities. The schools could avoid overloading teachers with classroom work to make time for NAA. To officially include the NAA on the school timetable would ease the stress of having to look for special time for these activities. This reflected a good level of IR on the part of Administrators who were also Teacher Students. These findings further strengthen Lore et al.'s (2008) findings that higher psychological job demands, the presence of physical demands, and higher levels of job insecurity significantly predicted the onset of both a co-worker conflict and a supervisor conflict.

All the Lecturer Participants concurred that IR positively contributes to non-academic achievement. In their view IR leads to life-long relations as students will not be students forever. IR was thus seen as the greatest contributor to non-academic achievement, innovation, manipulation of things and survival in crises. It follows from this that brilliance alone is not enough and that IR is needed, for example when it comes to including income generating activities in teaching and socialisation. IR was an ongoing process.

These findings further strengthen De Raeve's findings as they reported that higher psychological job demands, higher levels of role ambiguity, the presence of physical demands,

and higher levels of job insecurity significantly predicted the onset of both a co-worker conflict and a supervisor conflict (De Raeve et al., 2008). Higher levels of co-worker and a supervisor social support, more autonomy concerning the terms of employment, good overall job satisfaction, monetary gratification, and esteem reward significantly protected against the onset of both a co-worker conflict and supervisor conflict. Higher levels of decision latitude and more career opportunities also significantly protected against the onset of a superior conflict. Findings support the idea that subclinical psychopathy is correlated with the insensitivity to others, emotional callousness, impulsivity, and lack of empathy (Szabó et al., 2022), and subsequently, requiring mindfulness and an emotional well-being among teachers (Johnston et al., 2021). Mindfulness can improve relationships, social skills and interactions, and trust with peers (Rozalski et al., 2021).

Teacher Student Participants pointed out that they needed to get more involved in non-academic activities, operate on internal locus of control by having self-motivation, and also on external motivation – external locus of control, for external support. They needed to reduce their commitments elsewhere, develop more zeal for NAA and engage in workshops and refresher courses to get more skills for NAA. These findings support Lotkowski et al. (2004) who emphasised that the influence of non-academic factors alone, combined with academic factors, had a greater impact on student performance at four-year colleges and universities. The non-academic factors of social support, institutional selectivity, financial support and social involvement all had a positive relationship on performance.

There was a general sentiment that various types of non-academic activities needed to be included such as indoor games to make the items inclusive. This underscored the importance of non-academic activities as a support for academic activities and also for personal benefit. The Ministry of Education and Sports was to put more emphasis on these factors which could form an area for further investigation. Predominant activities for games and sports were football and running as was manifest in the first Girls' football game as the girls were not so fast in their co-ordinations of the ball but IR was present and made an impact confirming the need for NAA.

The demographic selection of age, marital status and others showed specific relevance to the data for example, the older married participants demonstrated maturity in their non-academic activities and IR. The older married participants exhibited higher IR and NAA.

Contextualizing the epistemological discussion with adults' recreational physical activity, bodily knowledge could cultivate in individuals a trust in their own body awareness. This was manifested through games, sports and athletics. The lived experience manifested in all the other non-academic activities as the teachers mobilized their students, the competition spirit got higher and the desire to win took prominence. The music, singing, dance, skits, drama and poems took on a great turn as IR visibly ruled the day. The conclusion derived from this is that the better, the more positive and interactive the interpersonal relations, the higher the non-academic achievement in various activities.

## **Conclusion**

The study has shown that Grade V university teacher students perceived IR both positively and negatively, both of which enhanced IR in different ways. The positive IR needed to be strengthened and the negative IR minimized. IR impacted on non-academic achievement and enabled association with people who could give developmental ideas. Good work values like good decision-making, consultation, delegation, coordination leading to trust were enabled by good and positive IR. Good negotiation skills, positive organizational culture, empathy, emotional atonement, inspiration, and acknowledging but not promoting negative emotions,

were all good aspects of IR, which enhanced non-academic achievement. IR led to better team work especially between worker and supervisor. IR was the greatest contributor to non-academic achievement, innovation, manipulation of things and survival in crises. Good relations tended to have a lifetime effect and impact between students and lecturers which led to support in the life and work of both student and lecturer. The Lecturers corroborated the students' ideas.

The three categories of non-academic activities: games and sports, clubs, and projects manifested the nature of IR among the participants and clearly manifested the positive influence of IR on those activities. The negative influence was minimal. Participants needed non-academic activities as part of the curriculum. Much as non-academic activities were not as structured as the academic ones, they transferred skills more easily. The social nature of IR led to home and family work cohesion that enabled better goal achievement. Attributes and values like comfort, social support, generosity, agreeableness, good communication skills and ability to make time to talk to a person, who had challenges, were obtained through IR which subsequently enhanced NAA.

Interpersonal relations were found to be very useful in the 21st century with research stressing collaborative approaches. Outstanding activities with games and sports such as football and running not only refreshed the body but enhanced positive interactions that were useful in the achievement of common purpose and goals in life. Personality traits like extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and intellect/imagination/openness, risk-taking and harm avoidance were much more visible in NAA. The lived experience manifested in all the non-academic activities as the teachers mobilized their students to participate in various activities. A healthy competitive spirit was manifested. Thus, the better and the more positive and interactive the interpersonal relations were, the higher the achievement in various non-academic achievement activities. Demographics also showed specific relevance to the data for example, the older married participants demonstrated maturity and more positive IR in their non-academic activities.

### **Implications of the Study**

Thus, Interpersonal relations should be formally taught in higher institutions of learning including universities. Non-academic activities should officially be included on the school timetable to ease the stress of having to look for special time and venues for these activities. Non-academic activities need to be programmed in all structures of educational institutions, especially in higher learning institutions and universities. The theories of interpersonal relations and self-determinism need to be made more relevant in universities. Distance and Life-long learning need to adapt these strategies too.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There was Limited and restricted time for observation of non-academic activities due to congested school timetables. The special needs or exceptional teacher students were not deliberately sampled as it was beyond the scope of the study.

### **Acknowledgement**

This study was sponsored by Gulu University staff development scheme and Building Stronger Universities, a collaboration between Denmark and Gulu University.

### **Disclosure**

There is no conflict of interest in the research.



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