Influence of Student-Teacher Communication on Students' Academic Achievement for Effective Teaching and Learning

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Abstract This paper examines the influence of student-teacher communication on students' academic achievement for effective teaching and learning. Three objectives of the study, three research questions and three research hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprises of all 100 level and 200 level undergraduate students from the Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt Rivers State. The total population of the undergraduates from the Departments is four hundred and thirty (430) students. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting one hundred and fifty (150) students from the entire population as the sample for the study. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection tagged Students-Teacher Communication Questionnaire (STCQ). Validity of the instrument was done by experts in the field of Educational Psychology, and the reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha Analysis and the reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Mean, standard deviation and Regression Analysis were used as statistical tool for the study. Findings from the study reveals that that students have a strong positive relationship between their level of communication and their academic achievement in schools, student have a very weak positive relationship between their attitude and their academic achievement in school, the findings also revealed a very strong positive relationship between students' benefits on student-teacher communication and their academic achievement in the department. Based on these findings conclusion and recommendations were made.

Keywords: teaching, learning, communication

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1. Introduction

Teaching involves a sequential and systematic presentation of facts, ideas, experiences, knowledge, skills and information by the teacher to students. This process is not as simple as it is often perceived. Why do some teachers, despite their perceived knowledge of the subject matter and probably the methods of instruction, fail to achieve their set objectives or satisfy the learners? The fact remains that a good socio-emotional atmosphere must be created in the classroom for actual learning to thrive. It is against this background that this paper emphasizes the importance of effective communication in class room instructions especially in this 21st century system of teaching and learning. Some important ideas of what teachers need to do to have the best social and emotional classroom climate are highlighted.

2. Concept of Communication

The Dictionary definition of communication puts it thus: as an exchange of information between people by means of speaking, writing or using a common system of signs, or behaviors. The process of communication requires the creation of rapport between the sender and the receiver. Rapport is the interconnectivity that enables the purpose of the information to be adequately decoded by the receiver.

When someone passes an information, communication cannot be said to have taken place until it is understood by the receiver. By implication therefore, if a teacher fails to attract the interest and understanding of the learners to what he presents, no communication has occurred.

This process of communication is however not the mere talking and hearing that happens in every normal classroom, but we are considering the psychological and emotional communication that predisposes the learners to effectual learning. Below are some proactive ways teachers can ensure effective communication in the classroom.

2.1. How to Ensure Effective Communication in the 21st-Century Classroom

Johnson [1] in a study highlighted ten ways a teacher ensure effective communication in classroom; they include:

Show a sincere enthusiasm or humuour: The first lesson content the teacher communicates to learners is his

level of interest or passion to have them before him. Learners are very sensitive to a teacher's emotional state and feel more at home with teachers who show enthusiasm and humuour. Therefore teachers should not let their personal challenges accompany them to the classroom so as to make every learning an interesting experience.

Build Friendship: Learners gain better comportment when the instructor provides an atmosphere of friendliness. To build friendship involves the instructor accepting learners as partners in progress and people worthy of respect. When teachers accept learners as friends the process of teaching and learning is facilitated. A facilitative teacher places high premium on the learner, he or she sees them as the purpose of his professional calling and students become more emotionally involve in learning when teacher-learners friendship is assured.

Make learners the focus: This has to do with the teacher making the class work learners-centered instead of teacher-centered. This can be done by allowing learners to take control of their learning, beginning from sharing of the lesson objectives. Other practical ways of placing learners at the center of the lesson include by listening to them with a sense of empathy, understanding their concerns, showing unconditional positive regard and patiently attending to their individual needs. The most appreciated teacher is one who acknowledges learners' respective weaknesses and makes frantic effort to build up their areas of strength.

Ensure that there is trust: The first time of meeting a set of students is very important in the life of the teacher. At first contact, there is usually some element of doubt and suspicion. If this is not tactfully handled, relationship will be built on anxiety and uncertainty. Teacher must prove to the learners that he trusts them by incorporating himself to their affairs. Sincere smiles and handshake from the teacher communicate trust to the students. Making effort to identify each learner by his or her name and believing in them can make them enjoy and attend a high level of freedom of thought in the process of learning which will equally grant them the opportunity to make contributions over issues of common interest in the classroom.

Create an atmosphere of interdependence: This involves teachers building in learners the consciousness of interdependence by making them know that they need each other's support so as to achieve their set goals. When this is achieve they relate harmoniously and exchange compliments for good gestures among themselves. The teacher on the other hand should be apt to encourage and support student in need as well as appreciate those who contribute to the success of the class work.

Probe into learners' intellectual aptitude at the onset of a class: It is pertinent for a teacher to ascertain the intellectual capacity of his learners especially when they are meeting for the first time. This exploration will guide the teacher on how to ascertain their levels of operation as well as projecting learners in a ready mood to learn. It can be done by asking questions on what they had previously done and on the new learning. This brain storming experience will usher them into a facilitative intellectual scenario.

Make learners feel challenged: Learners' interest is better aroused when they are challenged by the task before

them. Solving a problem is usually a motivation to individual learners. It accords them a sense of belonging in the teaching-learning interaction process. The teacher can achieve this by adopting appropriate teaching method that involve learners such as discussion, role playing methods etc.

Be a master of the subject matter: This is concern with teachers proving their high level of proficiency in their subject area. After the formal teacher training, the personnel is expected to continue reading and engaging in trainings for professional development. However, there may be a situations where a teacher is not very conversant with a given topic, it is advised that such teacher should not fail admit lack of knowledge. He should research and return to students with the information. It is unethical to share a wrong information when one is not sure of what he or she is saying make learners to know that everybody is learning and that no one knows it all. However, teachers are required to be up to date with current knowledge and to read wider than the scope of the learners.

Understand different learning styles and be generic: In every learning environment, there are different kinds of learners who maintain different learning styles. A teacher is expected to be resourceful to accommodate the diverse characteristics of learners. Some prefer to just listen to the teacher's instructions, some learn better when instructions are supported with visual aids while many others learn better when they learn and act or do what they have learned. A facilitative teacher must be able to attend to all form of learners simultaneously.

Be accommodative and tolerate students' mistakes: Every human is subject to making mistakes. When learners make mistakes, it is the duty of the teacher to encourage the person by correcting with interest. Learners should not be mocked, criticized negatively or condemned for mere mistake. Mistake should rather be exploited as a learning experience.

2.2. Factors Affecting Effective Classroom Communication

Presently in this 21st-century educational system of teaching and learning communication plays an important role in conveying information from one person to the other. Here communication can be from teacher-student or from peer to peer depending on the context. However, Ntuk [2] highlighted certain factors that can hinder this communication in classroom to be;

First anxiety which is a strong factor that barriers student-teacher communication in classroom and it happened when students are anxious to contribute in the classroom interaction. It is mostly controlled by emotions especially when students are being stop or being afraid of the colleagues' opinion to supersede their own opinion. Secondly, expression is another factor that comes to play when there is a gab in communication which prompt the sender to put his ideas into words expecting the receiver to decode those words so as to understand the rationale behind it.

Thirdly is imperceptions which has to do with a situation in which the learner fails to understand the instructor's lesson content and thereby making an extra effort to gather information outside the content in order to

communicate well with the instructor. Fourthly, physical discomfort is another factor that occurs when students' experiences discomfort due to external or internal factors in the learning environment that distract their attention from their learning. When this happens it disconnects the communication link between the teacher and the students in the process of learning.

3. Concept of Academic Achievement

Bacon, et al [3] defined academic achievement as the extent to which a learner, teacher or institution has achieved their educational set goals. Michael, [4] defines academic achievement as a standardized test score, grades and overall academic ability and performance outcome of learners within their program in school. It can be described as a mark of success for both students and the teacher at the completion of the program of studies. Danesy [5] opined that academic achievement entails the general achievement of the learner on the academic requirement as designed by the school authority, therefore factors like the health of the learner, parental factor, socio-economic factor and school environmental factor can either improve or reduce the academic achievement of learners in school. The academic achievement of learners can be improved when there is a common flow of communication between students and teachers within and outside the classroom [6].

This study is anchored on two theories which are; theory of communication by S. F. Scudder [7] and theory of connectivism by George Siemens and Stephen Downes [8]. The communication theory states that to survive, every living entity needs to communicate with each other thereby making communication a constant factor in life. Sculdder [7] opined that communication among humans can take either of the following shapes; mechanistic, psychological, social, systematic or critical form of communication with the aim of conveying information from one person to the other. Barry [9] noted that for effective learning to take place there must be sequel flow of communication between the instructor and the learners either in synchronous form or asynchronous form in the learning environment. Relating this theory to this study implies that there must be a mutual form of communication between the students and the teachers during learning process so as to help foster the students' level of understanding considering the concept under consideration. The theory of Connectivism (learning theory for digital age) by George Siemens and Stephen George Siemens and Stephen Downes [8] rooted its emphasis on the role of social and cultural form of communication in teaching and learning. Here learning is through contact which centralizes on the symbol of network nodes and connection with humans globally. The theory focuses attention on the technological effort on how humans, operate, communicate and share ideas with others especially in the context of teaching and learning. Conenctivism views learning as a process of creating connections, enlarging network and sharing knowledge using the new digital technologies. The theory posits that knowledge is literally a set of connections formed by

actions and experiences people through communication. Anderson [10] opined that connectivism encourages students online social communication to a very high extent, therefore students have been perceiving connectivism as a theory that offers new opportunities which enhances student-teacher communication within and outside the classroom.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to ascertain the influence of students-teacher communication on students' academic achievement as a path way for effective teaching and learning.

Specifically, the study intends to;
1. Find out the level of student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.
2. Ascertain the attitude of students on student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.
3. Benefits of student-teacher communication and the academic achievement.

4.1. Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study.
1. To what extent do students communicate with their teachers for improved academic achievement?
2. What are the students' attitude towards students-teacher communication and their academic achievement?
3. What are the benefits of student-teacher communication and their academic achievement?

4.2. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.
1. There is no significant relationship between students' level of communication with teachers and their academic achievement.
2. There is no significant relationship between students' attitude on student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.
3. There is no significant relationship between benefit of student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.

4.3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprises of 100 level and 200 level undergraduate students from the Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt Rivers State. The total population of the undergraduates from the departments is four hundred and thirty (430) students (Office of the Head of Department, 2017). The distribution of (students) population was selected through purposive sampling technique while the sample for the study was one hundred and fifty (150) students. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection tagged Students-Teacher Communication Questionnaire

(STCQ). Validity of the instrument was done by experts in the field of Educational Psychology, and the reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha Analysis and the reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The data obtained were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Regression Analysis while the formulated hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

5. Findings

5.1. Research Question One

To what extent do students communicate with their teachers for improved academic achievement?

Entries in Table 1 shows that respondents agreed that they exchange ideas with teachers only in classroom communication. (Mean=3.52; SD=0.53), also engagement in dialog with teachers upgrade my knowledge (mean3.75; SD=0.54). Respondent agreed that student-teacher communication enhances their communication skills (mean=3.64; 0.48), Communication in classroom has improved with my teachers through student-teacher communication (mean=3.65; SD=0.47). Respondents disagreed that student-teacher communication is a distraction to effective learning (mean=2.43; SD=0.40), also respondents agreed that student-teacher communication provides enough information to complete classroom assignment. (Mean=3.74; SD=0.43), involvement in student-teacher communication improves my level of motivation for learning (mean=3.25; SD=0.42), student-teacher communication has help me connect with colleague outside class. (Mean=3.60; SD=0.59). Respondents also agreed that student-teacher communication improves their level of understanding of courses (mean=3.53; SD=0.54), Student-teacher communication create meaningful dialogue among learners. Also that student-teacher communication create meaningful dialogue among learners (mean=3.00; SD=0.20).

5.2. Research Question Two

What are the students' attitude towards students-teacher communication and their academic achievement?

Entries in Table 2 shows that respondents agreed that Student-teacher communication is always interesting (mean=3.69; SD=3.33), also that they don't have passion for student-teacher communication (mean=3.34; SD=039), respondent agreed that they have positive attitude towards communication with teachers (mean=3.54; SD=0.58), they also disagree that Student-teacher communication distract their attention during learning (mean=2.42; SD=0.14). Respondents agreed that communication is made easy with student-teacher communication system (mean=3.84; SD=0.35), Student-teacher communication offers new educational experience for both teachers and students (mean=3.72; SD=0.55), student-teacher communication promote non-formal education (mean=3.79; SD=0.40). Respondents also agreed that they are highly motivated to learn when they communicate with their teachers (mean=3.66; SD=0.32), they disagreed that student-teacher communication promotes abuse among learners (mean=2.24; SD=0.09), also they disagreed that they are always scared of communicating with their teachers (mean=2.39; SD=0.13).

5.3. Research Question Three

What are the benefits of student-teacher communication and their academic achievement?

Entries in Table 3 shows that respondents agreed that student-teacher communication improves their interaction with colleagues (mean=3.70; SD=0.45), also student-teacher communication promote formal learning (mean=3.64; SD=0.45). Respondents also agreed that multi-tasking questions are solve through student-teacher communication (mean=3.70; SD=0.45), student-teacher communication improves their class interaction (mean=3.77; SD=0.42), student-teacher communication facilitate learning (mean=3.84; SD=0.86). Respondents also agreed that collaboration can be achieved through student-teacher communication (mean=3.81; SD=0.41), student-teacher communication can be used to fine jobs and business opportunities (mean=3.77; SD=0.44), Student-teacher communication is knowledge engagement (mean=3.47; SD=0.57). Respondents also agreed that student-teacher communication helps students correct their mistakes (mean= 3.70; SD=0.45), also that student-teacher communication provides feedback and performance reports for both students and teachers (mean=4.02; SD=SD=3.04).

Table 1. Extent of student-teacher communication

S/n	Extent of student-teacher communication	Mean score	Standard deviation	Remark
1	I exchange ideas with my teachers only in classroom communication.	3.52	0.53	Agree
2	I engage in dialog with teachers to upgrade my knowledge.	3.75	0.54	Agree
3	Student-teacher communication enhances my communication skills.	3.64	0.48	Agree
4	Communication in classroom has improved with my teachers.	3.65	0.47	Agree
5	Student-teacher communication is a distraction to effective learning.	2.43	0.40	disagree
6	Student-teacher communication provides enough information to complete classroom assignment.	3.74	0.43	Agree
7	Involvement in student-teacher communication improves my level of motivation for learning.	3.25	0.42	Agree
8	Student-teacher communication has help me connect with colleague outside class.	3.60	0.59	Agree
9	Student-teacher communication improves my level of understanding of courses.	3.53	0.54	Agree
10	Student-teacher communication create meaningful dialogue among learners.	3.00	0.20	Agree

Midpoint = 2.50; any mean score < 2.50 suggest disagreement; any mean score > 2.50 suggest agreement.

Table 2. Attitudes of students on student-teacher communication

S/N	Attitude of students on student-teacher communication.	Mean score	Standard deviation	Remark
1	Student-teacher communication is always interesting.	3.69	3.43	Agree
2	I don't have passion for student-teacher communication.	3.84	0.39	Agree
3	I have positive attitude towards communication with my teachers.	3.54	0.58	Agree
4	Student-teacher communication distract my attention during learning.	2.42	0.14	Disagree
5	Communication is made easy with student-teacher communication system.	3.84	0.35	Agree
6	Student-teacher communication offers new educational experience for both teachers and students.	3.72	0.58	Agree
7	Student-teacher communication promotes non-formal education.	3.79	0.40	Agree
8	Students are highly motivated to learn when they communicate with their teachers.	3.66	0.32	Agree
9	Student-teacher communication promotes abuse among learners.	2.24	0.09	Disagree
10	Am always scared of communicating with my teachers.	2.39	0.13	Disagree

Midpoint = 2.50; any mean score < 2.50 suggest disagreement; any mean score > 2.50 suggest agreement.

Table 3. Benefits of students on student-teacher communication

S/N	Benefits of student-teacher communication by students	Mean score	Standard deviation	Remark
1	Student-teacher communication improves their interaction with colleagues.	3.70	0.45	Agree
2	Student-teacher communication promotes formal learning.	3.64	0.48	Agree
3	Multi-tasking questions are solved through student-teacher communication.	3.70	0.45	Agree
4	Student-teacher communication improves students class interaction	3.77	0.42	Agree
5	Student-teacher communication facilitates learning.	3.84	0.36	Agree
6	Collaboration can be achieved through student-teacher communication.	3.81	0.41	Agree
7	Student-teacher communication can be used to find jobs and business opportunities.	3.77	0.44	Agree
8	Student-teacher communication is knowledge engagement.	3.47	0.57	Agree
9	Student-teacher communication helps students correct their mistakes.	3.70	0.45	Agree
10	Student-teacher communication provides feedback and performance reports for both students and teachers.	4.02	3.04	Agree

Midpoint = 2.50; any mean score < 2.50 suggest disagreement; any mean score > 2.50 suggest agreement.

5.4. Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between students' level of communication with teachers and their academic achievement.

Table 4. Regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.072[a]	.004	.000	.75080
Predictors: (Constant), student-teacher communication.				

Table 4 reveals a coefficient of relationship of 0.072 between students' level of communication and academic achievement. This implies a strong positive relationship between students' level of communication and their academic achievement. Thus, there is a significant relationship between students' level of communication with teachers and their academic achievement.

5.5. Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between students' attitude on student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.

Table 5. Regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.052[a]	.004	.000	.52080
Predictors: (Constant), student attitude on teacher communication.				

Table 5 reveals a coefficient of relationship of 0.052 between students' attitude towards students-teacher communication and their academic achievement. This implies a very weak positive relationship between students' attitude and their academic achievement. There is a significant relationship between students' attitude on student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.

5.6. Hypothesis three

There is no significant relationship between the benefit of student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.

Table 6. Regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.093[a]	.006	.000	.74060
Predictors: (Constant), student benefit on student-teacher communication.				

Table 6 reveals a coefficient of relationship of 0.093 between students' benefits on students-teacher communication and their academic achievement. This implies a very strong positive relationship between students' benefits on student-teacher communication and their academic achievement. Therefore there is a significant relationship between the benefit of student-teacher communication and their academic achievement.

6. Discussion of Findings

From the above analysis, it reveals that students have a strong positive relationship between their level of

communication and their academic achievement in schools. The result suggests that there is a significant relationship between students' level of communication with teachers and their academic achievement in the department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling University of Port Harcourt. Also that student have a very weak positive relationship between their attitude and their academic achievement in school. The result of this study is in agreement with that of Carlivati [11] who opined that adolescent attachment, peer relationships and school success is a predictor, mediator, and moderator to student-teacher relationship. The findings also revealed a very strong positive relationship between students' benefits on student-teacher communication and their academic achievement in the department. This result also tally with those of Roorda, Koomen, Spilt and Oort [12] who opined that students derive an effective benefits from quality teacher-student relationships and students' school engagement in the high school.

7. Conclusion

Student-teacher communication have greatly enhance teaching and learning among the under graduate students in the Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt. The researchers noticed that undergraduate students have a positive relationship with their lectures through student-teacher communication which in turn affect their academic achievement in the department, also a very strong positive relationship between students' benefits on student-teacher relationship and their academic achievement in the department.

8. Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are put forward.
1. It is clear that student-teacher communication can greatly influence learning, therefore the department should encourage student-teacher relationship among under graduate students.
2. It is important for the undergraduate students to improve their attitude towards student-teacher relationship in the department for improve academic achievement.

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