

Teacher Communication Styles on Learners' Confidence and Participation in Public Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Purposeful communication can shape whether elementary learners feel secure, confident, and willing to participate in classroom activities. This study examined teacher communication styles and learners' confidence and participation in public elementary schools in Bongabon District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija. It used a quantitative descriptive-correlational and comparative design. Seventy elementary teachers were selected through simple random sampling and completed a structured questionnaire covering demographic profile, authoritative, facilitative, and passive communication styles, and learner indicators involving confidence, verbal participation, and collaborative participation. Responses were rated using a four-point Likert scale and analyzed using frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, and

analysis of variance. Results showed that facilitative communication ($M = 3.90$) and authoritative communication ($M = 3.88$) were consistently practiced, while passive communication occurred only sometimes ($M = 2.70$). Learners were perceived to demonstrate confidence ($M = 3.66$), verbal participation ($M = 3.70$), and collaborative participation ($M = 3.72$) consistently. Significant differences in learner confidence, verbal participation, and collaborative participation were reported across teachers' age, sex, educational attainment, designation, and years of teaching experience (all $p < .001$). These findings indicate that clear, encouraging, responsive, and participatory teacher communication is associated with a classroom environment that supports learner confidence and engagement. Professional development should strengthen inclusive communication strategies while reducing passive classroom practices.

Keywords: *authoritative communication; classroom engagement; facilitative communication; learner confidence; learner participation; teacher communication styles*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is central to teaching and learning because it connects instructional goals with learners' willingness to listen, respond, ask questions, and collaborate. In elementary classrooms, teacher communication influences not only how lessons are understood but also whether learners feel safe enough to take academic risks. Clear explanations, respectful responses, constructive feedback, and encouragement can foster confidence and active participation, whereas unclear expectations or limited feedback may discourage engagement.

Teacher communication style refers to the manner in which teachers provide directions, establish expectations, respond to learner concerns, and facilitate classroom interaction. Authoritative communication combines structure and warmth. Facilitative communication promotes learner voice, active listening, dialogue, autonomy, and collaboration. Passive communication is characterized by limited guidance, weak intervention, or insufficient feedback. Learner-centered teacher-student relationships are generally associated with positive educational outcomes because they create conditions for trust, motivation, and participation (Cornelius-White,

2007). Classroom environment is also linked with learner outcomes, making communication practices an important dimension of instruction (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016).

Learner confidence involves a student's willingness to speak, ask questions, share opinions, present work, and persist after mistakes. Participation includes verbal contributions during lessons and collaborative engagement with peers. These behaviors matter because school engagement is multidimensional and includes active behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning (Fredricks et al., 2004). Teacher immediacy, responsiveness, and supportive feedback may strengthen motivation and learner involvement (Baker & Martin, 2017; Johnson, 2021).

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in Bongabon District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija. The district represents a relevant setting because learners come from varied backgrounds and may respond differently to teachers' classroom communication. This study described the communication styles practiced by teachers, assessed perceived learner confidence and participation, and examined whether learner outcomes varied across teacher demographic characteristics. The findings provide a basis for strengthening inclusive and effective communication practices in elementary classrooms.

Literature Review

Teacher Communication and Classroom Climate

Effective communication supports a classroom climate in which expectations are clear and learners feel respected. Communication involves both verbal and non-verbal interaction, feedback, tone, responsiveness, and the manner in which teachers manage classroom behavior. Brookfield (2015) emphasized trust and responsiveness as important dimensions of effective teaching, while Brown (2001) highlighted interaction as an essential component of learner-centered instruction. These perspectives suggest that communication is not a secondary teaching skill but a core instructional practice.

Authoritative communication is characterized by clear guidance, consistent expectations, constructive correction, and warmth. This approach can help learners understand boundaries while maintaining a respectful relationship with the teacher. Facilitative communication emphasizes open-ended questioning, active listening, collaborative activities, and learner autonomy. Both styles are compatible with an inclusive classroom environment because they encourage participation while maintaining instructional direction. By contrast, passive communication may leave learners without adequate guidance, feedback, or behavioral support. Johnson and Clark (2020) noted that passive classroom communication can reduce engagement when learners perceive expectations and support as unclear.

Learner Confidence and Participation

Confidence supports learners' readiness to answer questions, ask for clarification, share ideas, and recover from errors. From a self-efficacy perspective, learners who believe they can perform academic tasks are more likely to attempt challenging activities and sustain their effort (Nguyen, 2020). Constructive feedback is particularly relevant because it helps learners understand how to improve without interpreting mistakes as failure (Johnson, 2021). Participation is expressed through oral interaction and collaborative work. Verbal participation includes answering questions, offering examples, expressing opinions, and explaining concepts. Collaborative participation includes respectful listening, peer assistance, shared responsibility, and constructive conflict resolution. Learner participation tends to improve when classroom communication is open, responsive, and culturally sensitive (Ahmed & Rahman, 2022; Kim & Seo, 2021).

Teacher Characteristics and Communication Effectiveness

Teachers' age, sex, educational attainment, designation, and years of experience may shape classroom communication because these characteristics are associated with professional exposure, pedagogical knowledge, confidence, and familiarity with diverse learner needs. More experienced teachers may draw on a wider range of interactional strategies, while advanced academic preparation may support reflective and differentiated

communication. The present study examined whether perceived learner confidence and participation differed across these profile variables without assuming that demographic characteristics alone determine instructional quality.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational and comparative research design. The descriptive component identified prevalent teacher communication styles and perceived learner confidence and participation. The comparative component tested whether perceived learner outcomes differed across selected teacher profile variables. Although the source manuscript described the design as correlational, it did not report a correlation matrix or coefficient table linking the communication-style dimensions directly with the learner outcomes. Therefore, the article reports only the descriptive and comparative statistical results explicitly provided in the manuscript.

Research Locale and Participants

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in Bongabon District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija. The respondents were 70 elementary teachers selected through simple random sampling. The sampling approach was intended to give eligible teachers within the target population an equal opportunity for selection and to minimize selection bias.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire. The instrument included the respondents' demographic profile; teacher communication styles classified as authoritative, facilitative, and passive; and learner indicators classified as confidence, verbal participation, and collaborative participation or inclusive and supportive practices. Responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale: 1.00-1.75 = Never, 1.76-2.50 = Rarely, 2.51-3.25 = Sometimes, and 3.26-4.00 = Always.

Data Gathering Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to the selected teachers after coordination with the concerned public elementary schools. Respondents completed the instrument based on their classroom communication practices and observations of learner confidence and participation. The responses were consolidated, encoded, and analyzed according to the study objectives.

Data Analysis

Frequency count and percentage were used to describe the teacher profile. Weighted means summarized the communication-style dimensions and learner outcomes. Analysis of variance was used to test differences in learner confidence, verbal participation, and collaborative participation across teacher age, sex, educational attainment, designation, and years of teaching experience. Statistical significance was evaluated at the .05 level.

Ethical Consideration

Participation was voluntary. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and the data were treated confidentially. Responses were used only for research purposes and reported in aggregate form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Teacher-Respondents

The respondents represented different age groups, teaching ranks, levels of academic preparation, and years of professional experience. Female teachers comprised the majority of the sample (88.57%). More than half were

Teacher III (51.43%), and most had earned units toward a master's degree (71.43%). A substantial proportion had more than 10 years of teaching experience (44.29%). These characteristics indicate that the sample included many professionally experienced teachers who may have developed a broad repertoire of classroom communication strategies.

Table 1. *Profile of the Teacher-Respondents (N = 70)*

Profile variable	Category	f	%
Age	25-30 years	22	31.43
	31-40 years	17	24.29
	41-50 years	16	22.86
	51-60 years	15	21.43
Sex	Male	8	11.43
	Female	62	88.57
Educational attainment	Bachelor's degree	3	4.29
	With units in master's degree	50	71.43
	Master's degree	15	21.43
	With units in doctorate degree	1	1.43
	Doctorate degree	1	1.43
Designation	Teacher I	17	24.29
	Teacher II	8	11.43
	Teacher III	36	51.43
	Master Teacher I	6	8.57
	Master Teacher II	3	4.29
Years of teaching	1-3 years	11	15.71
	4-10 years	28	40.00
	More than 10 years	31	44.29

Teacher Communication Styles

Facilitative communication obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.90$), followed closely by authoritative communication ($M = 3.88$). Both were interpreted as Always. Passive communication obtained a lower mean ($M = 2.70$), interpreted as Sometimes. The results indicate that the teachers generally maintained clear expectations while encouraging learner voice, collaboration, and positive reinforcement. The continued presence of passive practices, although less frequent, suggests a need to reduce instances of delayed feedback, limited intervention, or inadequate guidance.

Table 2. *Summary of Teacher Communication Styles*

Communication style	Mean	Interpretation	Selected highest-rated practices
Facilitative	3.90	Always	Encourages ideas and opinions; listens actively; uses positive reinforcement (each $M = 3.93$)
Authoritative	3.88	Always	Listens respectfully and recognizes positive behavior (each $M = 3.93$)
Passive	2.70	Sometimes	Allows disruption without intervening ($M = 2.87$); avoids challenging discussions ($M = 2.80$)

The pattern is consistent with literature emphasizing the value of supportive teacher-student relationships and clear classroom environments (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Cornelius-White, 2007). Facilitative and authoritative approaches are not opposites: both can support participation when they combine responsiveness with meaningful structure. Passive communication should be minimized because unclear expectations and limited feedback may weaken learner motivation and engagement (Johnson & Clark, 2020).

Learners' Confidence and Participation

Teachers perceived that learners consistently demonstrated confidence, verbal participation, and collaborative participation. Collaborative participation obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.72$), followed by verbal participation ($M = 3.70$) and learner confidence ($M = 3.66$). These findings suggest that learners were willing to work with peers, participate in discussions, ask for clarification, and share ideas. Such behaviors reflect an environment in which learners are given opportunities to express themselves and contribute to classroom activities.

Table 3. *Summary of Learners' Confidence and Participation*

Learner outcome	Mean	Interpretation	Selected highest-rated indicators
Learner confidence	3.66	Always	Interacts confidently with peers and teacher; participates in group activities (each $M = 3.71$)
Verbal participation	3.70	Always	Engages verbally with peers during collaborative tasks ($M = 3.79$)
Collaborative participation	3.72	Always	Willingly works with peers in group activities ($M = 3.81$)

Learner confidence and participation are mutually reinforcing. When learners feel respected and supported, they may be more willing to answer questions, interact with peers, and recover from mistakes. These outcomes are consistent with evidence linking supportive communication, constructive feedback, and engagement with a stronger classroom learning environment (Baker & Martin, 2017; Fredricks et al., 2004; Johnson, 2021).

Differences in Learner Outcomes Across Teacher Profile Variables

Significant differences were reported in learner confidence, verbal participation, and collaborative participation across teachers' age, sex, educational attainment, designation, and years of teaching experience. All reported p -values were below .001. The largest F -ratio was observed for learner confidence across age groups, $F(3, 66) = 217.23$, $p < .001$. The manuscript interpreted the findings as indicating stronger learner outcomes among older, more experienced, academically advanced, and higher-ranked teachers, as well as female teachers. These interpretations should be read cautiously because the reported ANOVA tables establish group differences but do not provide post hoc comparisons for every category or demonstrate causality.

Table 4. *ANOVA Results for Learner Outcomes Across Teacher Profile Variables*

Profile variable	Learner confidence F	Verbal participation F	Collaborative participation F	p
Age	217.234	73.214	82.971	< .001
Sex	40.963	58.217	48.112	< .001
Educational attainment	9.563	14.806	9.842	< .001
Designation	72.022	63.934	68.961	< .001
Years of teaching experience	46.157	53.162	49.069	< .001

All reported differences were statistically significant at $p < .001$. The source manuscript did not provide post hoc comparisons or direct correlation coefficients between communication-style scores and learner-outcome scores.

The findings suggest that communication effectiveness may be shaped by professional development and teaching experience. Teachers who have spent more time managing classrooms or pursuing advanced studies may have more opportunities to refine how they explain expectations, listen to learners, and facilitate interaction. However, effective communication should not be treated as a fixed characteristic of age, sex, or rank. It is a professional competency that can be deliberately strengthened through training, coaching, reflective practice, and peer learning.

Implications for Classroom Practice

Table 5. *Communication Priorities for Strengthening Learner Confidence and Participation*

Priority area	Evidence from the study	Recommended classroom practice
Maintain facilitative communication	Highest communication-style mean: $M = 3.90$	Use open-ended questions, active listening, learner choices, collaboration, and positive reinforcement
Sustain authoritative communication	Consistently practiced: $M = 3.88$	Clarify expectations, explain rules, correct behavior respectfully, and provide constructive feedback
Reduce passive communication	Still observed sometimes: $M = 2.70$	Respond promptly, intervene constructively, provide clear guidance, and avoid minimal feedback
Support learner confidence	Confidence consistently observed: $M = 3.66$	Normalize questions and mistakes, encourage clarification, and acknowledge effort
Expand active participation	Verbal $M = 3.70$; collaborative $M = 3.72$	Use structured discussion, group roles, peer explanation, and inclusive cooperative tasks

The evidence supports a professional-development agenda that treats communication as a practical instructional skill. Teachers can strengthen classroom engagement by combining clear guidance with empathy, encouraging participation without fear of judgment, and ensuring that all learners receive timely responses and constructive feedback.

CONCLUSION

Teachers in the public elementary schools surveyed in Bongabon District consistently practiced facilitative and authoritative communication, while passive communication occurred less frequently. Learners were perceived to demonstrate confidence, verbal participation, and collaborative participation consistently. Significant differences in learner outcomes were reported across teacher age, sex, educational attainment, designation, and years of teaching experience. The findings highlight that effective classroom communication involves both structure and responsiveness: learners benefit when teachers clearly communicate expectations, listen attentively, provide constructive feedback, invite questions, and create opportunities for collaboration. Because the source manuscript did not report direct correlation coefficients or complete post hoc comparisons, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of strong descriptive patterns and significant group differences rather than causal proof.

Recommendations

1. School administrators should provide sustained professional development on authoritative and facilitative communication, including active listening, constructive feedback, questioning techniques, respectful classroom management, and inclusive group facilitation.
2. Teachers should regularly reflect on passive communication tendencies, particularly delayed responses, minimal feedback, limited intervention, and unclear expectations, and replace these practices with timely and supportive guidance.
3. Learning action cells and peer-coaching sessions should be used to share communication strategies among teachers with varying levels of experience, academic preparation, and designation.
4. Classroom activities should provide structured opportunities for learners to ask questions, express opinions, work collaboratively, and recover constructively from mistakes.
5. Future studies should include learner respondents, classroom observations, validated reliability statistics, direct correlation coefficients, and post hoc analyses to clarify how specific communication styles relate to learner confidence and participation.

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