
Teachers' Communication Skills and Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract: *This study investigated the influence of teachers' communication skills on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The research design was a descriptive research design using stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select a sample of 990 Senior Secondary (SSII) students from a population of 6420 students from the three Senatorial Districts of River State. Data collected through a researcher-developed structured questionnaire titled Teachers' Communication Skills and Students' Academic Performance (TCSSAP) with a reliability coefficient of 0.86, was analysed with mean, standard deviation and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). While mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, the ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. It was found that speaking, listening, attitude, gestures and facial expression as components of teachers' communication skills influence students' academic performance to a high extent. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that parents, teachers and education authorities should ensure that children, student teachers, and teachers are properly cultured on effective communication skills. While parents and teachers bring up their children and students in using positive, inspiring, motivating, and friendly words, education authorities must ensure that school curricula make adequate provision for the teaching of students and the training and retraining of teachers in effective communication skills.*

Key words: *Academic performance, attitude, communication, facial expression, gesture.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is at the centre of social, economic, and political development of any nation. According to Fanuel (2011), education is the process by which society transmits knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. It helps fight ignorance and the acquisition of knowledge creating a better citizenry in terms of prospects in life. Education is designed to guide the development of individuals in the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences, necessary for individuals to live decent lives as citizens and contribute to the development of the society (Fabunmi, 2004). The acquisition of these appropriate skills, abilities and competences is possible through effective communication and the teacher is at the centre of this acquisition, and thus at the centre of effective communication.

Thomas (1990) informed that communication is the lifeblood of any organization and that the survival and health of the organization depend on effective communication. The school, an educational organisation, is run through communication. Information flows through communication to and from head-teachers, teachers, and students. Communication is the transmission of a message that involves the shared understanding between the contexts in which the communication takes place (Saunders & Mills, 1999). In addition, teacher communication

skills are important for a teacher in the delivery of education to students (McCarthy & Carter, 2001). Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching a teacher need to be highly skilled in all these areas. Teachers with good communication skills always make learning easier and more understandable for students. Effective communication skills are really important for a teacher in the transmitting of education, classroom management and interaction with students in the class.

Good communication skills of teacher are the basic need of academic success of students, and their professional success in life. Fundamental to teacher and student success is the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students, parents and colleagues. Teachers must have good communication skills to help their students achieve academic success. Without good communication skills, teachers disable the teaching-learning process as well as their own career mobility. Teachers with poor communication skills may cause poor academic performance of students and lead to unstable professional life after school. Good communication minimises the potential of unkind feeling during the process of teaching and learning. For a teacher, it is very pertinent to have good communication skills to create good classroom environment for effective teacher-student interaction to promote effective learning by students and acquisition of desired professional goals. Good communication is not only needed for effective teaching and learning, but it is also very important in the effectiveness of every human concern in life (Batenburg & Smal, 1997).

Performance of teachers in the classroom totally depends upon their communication skills. If the teacher has good communication skills then he can easily convey his message/lecture in understandable manner to students (Maes, Weldy & Icenogle, 1997). Effective communication among head-teachers, teachers and students ensures that the language used is simple, influencing, inspiring, convincing, and friendly. When teachers used simple official language to communicate the school vision, mission and instructional objectives to students, the performance of students was enhanced. Proper communication between the teacher and students is the most important skill in teaching. If this relationship is appropriately established, educational goals are easily realised. The report of UNESCO (2009) pointed out the language of communication can be through: speech, the written word, visual displays, electronic devices and body languages (for example, non-verbal forms, tone of voices, etc.). The report further guided that communication should be clear, specific and understandable; it should be brief (should not include unnecessary information); and in delivering the message, the communicator must be aware of his speaking, listening, attitude, gestures and facial expressions.

Teachers must have good speaking ability to communicate their subject-matter to the students and facilitate classroom learning and participation. Students depend on their teachers to provide them with instruction, guidance and feedback throughout the learning process. When a teacher fails to communicate effectively with students, students' concentration level drops, and they eventually lose grasp of the subject matter which will lead to poor academic performance.

Verbal communication is the interaction achieved through speaking and conversation. Teachers must be effective in their speaking communication to be able to carry their students along and have good classroom management. In speaking, teachers should use their words carefully to be successful in teaching. Every spoken word provokes a feeling in people, specific emotions, and distinct function. If the teacher properly chooses words, they would inform the students appropriately. Therefore, the teacher must avoid the use of negative words in dealing with his students. A good teacher must be aware of the power of words and its impact on his

students and thus endeavour to use only positive words: words that encourage, motivate, and energise his students.

Expression of words clearly and eloquently by the educator causes the students to listen with dignity and willingness, sum up the facts, and think to solve the problem and supply the teacher's comment without any tension or boredom. But using biased phrases often raises a sense of stubbornness and humiliation in the students, puts them out of the cycle of learning, and leaves irreparable psychological effects on the students (Gholipour, 2007). In the selection of words, the intended concept must be exactly in the words of the teacher. It is appropriate to use clear, concise, accurate, polite, correct and rich expression in oral communication with the students to transmit properly the teacher's intentions to the students and enhance their academic performance (Najafi & Rahmazade, 2013).

Good speaking skill requires non-verbal communication such as listening, attitude, gestures, facial expression, and others to complete its impact on the audience. Non-verbal communication is often more subtle and more effective than verbal communication and can convey better meaning than words. When the teacher listens attentively while delivering his subject matter, he will easily know when the students are following his class and when they are not. He will recognise which areas require to be repeated, he will hear murmurs and accolades from his students, and his classroom management will be effective. All these improve the teaching-learning process and enhance students' academic performance. Friedman (1986) and Hunsaker (1991) observed that listening enhances students' academic performance because as a skill, listening involves receiving, attending, organizing, understanding, interpreting, and evaluating messages from the classroom environment and that listening is a learned behaviour that must be nurtured.

Attitude is manner, disposition, feeling and position with regard to a person or thing, tendency or orientation, especially in the mind. Attitude is a positive, negative or mixed evaluation of an object that is expressed at some level of intensity. It is an expression of a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of a person, place, thing, or event. According to Thurstone (1931), attitude denotes the total of a man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, and threats. Attitudes are learned predispositions towards our environment.

For the teacher, the right attitude is a positive attitude which is a very important aspect of communication in the classroom. The teacher must maintain an attitude of confidence all the time. This includes the display of good mastery of content delivered to the learners, friendly disposition towards students to enable them freely ask questions when in doubt, good command of the language of instruction, and unhindered teacher-students interaction. When the teacher's attitude is positive, students learn better and their performance is enhanced. Wirth and Perkins (2013) revealed that teacher's attitude contributed significantly to students' attention in classroom and influenced their academic performance. Mucella, Melis and Ahu (2011) investigated the effects of teachers' attitudes on students' personality and performance in Istanbul Turkey and found that teachers' positive attitudes have positive influence on students' personality as well as their academic and life performances.

Gesture is a motion of some or all parts of the body, especially during speech. It involves the use of hands, legs, eyes, head and other parts of the body to emphasise communication. *More than half of all human communication takes place nonverbally. The teacher is constantly sending nonverbal messages as he teaches in the classroom, even outside the classroom. When the*

teacher speaks in the classroom, the students judge him and his messages/lectures based on what they hear as well as on what they see. When the teacher presents a speech, he sends two kinds of messages to his audience: While his voice transmits a verbal message, a vast amount of information is being visually conveyed by his appearance, manner, and physical behaviour.

However, if the teacher's physical actions are distracting or suggest meanings that do not agree with your verbal message/lecture, his body language can defeat his words. Whether his purpose is to inform, persuade, motivate, or inspire the students, his body language and the personality he projects must be appropriate to what he says. The goal of the teacher in the classroom is to communicate the content of the subject matter to students. To be an effective teacher, he must project earnestness, enthusiasm, and sincerity by making his manner and actions affirm what he says. This will enhance students learning and promote great academic performance. If his gestures do not convey his words, the results can be disastrous. This is so because what the teacher is, is more clearly communicated through his nonverbal behaviour than through his words. Castellon and Enyedy (2006) argued that the unification of the teacher's gesture, in conjunction with speech and graphic resources, helped students grasp and discuss mathematical concepts. They found that teacher's gestures and talk assisted in clarifying, explaining, highlighting, and emphasizing mathematical concepts to his students and enhanced their performance in Mathematics. Additionally, gesture and talk resolved multiple meanings, elicited students' justification of their thinking, and advanced mathematical lessons.

Non-verbal communication such as facial expression can deliver volumes without words. For instance, a smile, an eye contact, a nod, and perhaps a frown convey our feeling much easier than words. Facial expression has the power to transfer the attitudes and feelings of people to others and in many cases can be even more effective than verbal messages (Farhangi, 1995). Facial expression, like eye contact and physical appearance, indicate a lot of emotions in communication. Facial expression is more effective than other modes of non-verbal cues and gives us a lot of information about the emotional status of others to the extent that some theorists believe that facial expression is the most important source of information after language (Najafi & Rahmazade, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Communication is important in all aspects of life. And effective communication is the pivot on which all education activities rotate. All education activities from policy formulation for schools, to development of instructional objectives, to delivery of instructions inside and outside the classroom, and to the reporting of results to learners, parents/guardians, education authorities, other stakeholders, and to the general public are carried out through communication.

In the classroom, instructions are delivered by communication: communication in terms of speaking to students to pass messages, listening to hear and understand students' reactions, gestures to emphasise importance of message, attitude to express feelings, prejudices, strengths and threats, and facial expression to inform like, dislike, acceptance and more. Teacher's good communication skills make for effective classroom management which leads to efficient teaching and learning, which in turn enhances students' academic performance. Unfortunately, teachers' communication skills in our secondary schools are suspect, ranging from poor use of language, shouting at students when they ask questions, not listening to appreciate students' concerns, improper use of gestures and facial expressions, to unfriendly attitude in the classroom leading to

poor teacher-students interaction. The study evaluated teachers' communication skills, with a view to improving on them, and thus enhance students' academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of teachers' communication skills on students' academic performance. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine how teachers' speaking skills influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Assess how teachers' listening skills influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Establish how teachers' attitudes influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Determine how teachers' gestures influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
5. Ascertain how teachers' facial expressions influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do teachers' speaking skills influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the extent to which teachers' listening skills influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. What is the extent to which teachers' attitudes influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
4. To what extent do teachers' gestures influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
5. To what extent do teachers' facial expressions influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of teachers' speaking skills on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant influence of teachers' listening skills on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant influence of teachers' attitudes on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant influence of teachers' gestures on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

5. There is no significant influence of teachers’ facial expressions on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. According to Kpolovie (2010) survey research is a developmental field investigation that systematically collects, analyses and synthesises quantitative data on a large representative sample of a given population. The population of the study comprised of 34168 Senior Secondary Two (SSII) students in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State in the 2018/2019 academic session (Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board: Planning, Research and Statistics Department, 2019). The sample size of the study was 990 accounting students in Rivers State obtained by applying the Taro Yamen’s formula in each of the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State. The sample was selected using the multistage sampling approach which involved proportional, stratified, and purposive sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire titled Teachers’ Communication Skills and Students’ Academic Performance (TCSSAP) with a reliability coefficient of 0.86 established using Cronbach Alpha.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent do teachers’ speaking skills influence students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic on the Extent of Influence of Teachers’ Speaking on Students Academic performance

S/No	Statement	East		South East		West		Decision
		[n ₁ = 353]		[n ₂ = 332]		[n ₃ = 307]		
		x	SD	x	SD	x	SD	
1	My teacher presents information in a way that is easy to understand.	3.62	0.82	3.54	0.97	3.66	0.84	Very High Extent
2	My teacher speaks clearly and tries to carry every student along.	3.55	0.64	3.67	0.68	3.58	0.57	High Extent
3	I admire the way my teacher speaks.	3.19	0.85	3.31	0.59	3.28	0.70	High Extent
4	My teacher guides students in a positive direction for their academic and personal growth	3.21	0.51	3.18	0.86	3.25	0.63	High Extent

5	My teacher provides high and clear explanations to enhance students' academic performance.	3.59	0.81	3.63	0.78	3.51	0.43	Very High Extent
Total		3.43	0.73	3.47	0.77	3.46	0.63	High Extent

The total sample of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West used for the study is 992, while n_1 , n_2 , and n_3 are the sub-samples of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West respectively.

Decision: Students' academic performance is influenced by speaking (as teachers' communication skill) to a High Extent (2.50 x 3.49).

The information in table 1 presents that SSII students of Rivers East have a total mean of 3.43 and standard deviation of 0.73, Rivers South-East have a total mean of 3.47 and standard deviation of 0.77, and Rivers West have a total mean of 3.46 and standard deviation of 0.63 on their rating of the extent of influence of speaking (as a communication skill) on academic performance of SSII students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The SSII students of the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State have total means that lie between 2.50–3.49 implying that speaking has high extent influence on academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the extent to which teachers' listening skills influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic on the Extent of Influence of Teachers' Listening on Students Academic performance.

S/No	Statement	East		South East		West		Decision
		[$n_1 = 353$]		[$n_2 = 332$]		[$n_3 = 307$]		
		x	SD	x	SD	x	SD	
6	My teacher encourages students' feedback.	3.20	0.27	3.15	0.84	3.18	0.76	High Extent
7	My teacher motivates students to learn by listening to their challenges.	3.77	0.21	3.58	0.43	3.69	0.61	Very High Extent
8	My teacher pays attention to students' concerns and challenges.	3.18	0.66	2.86	0.47	3.06	0.43	High Extent
9	My teacher encourages students to ask questions in	2.89	0.68	3.17	0.60	2.91	0.75	High Extent

class.								
10	My teacher takes his time to listen to individual students and help with their needs.	3.63	0.28	3.71	0.91	3.68	0.55	Very High Extent
	Total	3.33	0.42	3.29	0.65	3.30	0.62	High Extent

The total sample of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West used for the study is 992, while n_1 , n_2 , and n_3 are the sub-samples of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West respectively.

Decision: Students’ academic performance is influenced by listening (as teachers’ communication skill) to a High Extent (2.50 x 3.49).

Table 2 presents that SSII students of Rivers East have a total mean of 3.33 and standard deviation of 0.42, Rivers South-East have a total mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 0.65, and Rivers West have a total mean of 3.30 and standard deviation of 0.62 on their rating of the extent of influence of listening (as a communication skill) on academic performance of SSII students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The SSII students of the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State have total means that lie between 2.50–3.49 implying that listening has a high extent influence on academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What is the extent to which teachers’ attitudes influence students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Descriptive Statistic on the Extent of Influence of Teachers’ Attitude on Students’ Academic performance

S/No.	Statement	East		South East		West		Decision
		[$n_1 = 353$]		[$n_2 = 332$]		[$n_3 = 307$]		
		x	SD	x	SD	x	SD	
11	My teacher provides academic support for all students in the classroom.	3.72	0.95	3.61	0.67	3.75	0.48	Very High Extent
12	My teacher has a positive attitude towards students and other staff.	3.15	0.75	3.27	0.49	2.89	0.73	High Extent
13	My teacher views me as an important member of the	3.25	0.46	2.85	0.68	3.26	0.59	High Extent

	classroom.							
14	My teacher cares about my academic and social well-being which makes me enjoy school.	3.12	0.38	3.36	0.71	3.27	0.78	High Extent
15	I am able to take risks in the classroom without feeling embarrassed because of my teacher's attitude.	3.65	0.74	3.59	0.93	3.66	0.56	Very High Extent
	Total	3.38	0.66	3.34	0.70	3.37	0.63	High Extent

The total sample of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West used for the study is 992, while n_1 , n_2 , and n_3 are the sub-samples of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West respectively.

Decision: Students' academic performance is influenced by attitude (as teachers' communication skill) to a High Extent (2.50 x 3.49).

The information in table 3 presents that SSII students of Rivers East have a total mean of 3.38 and standard deviation of 0.66, Rivers South-East have a total mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.70, and Rivers West have a total mean of 3.37 and standard deviation of 0.63 on their rating of the extent of influence of attitude (as a communication skill) on academic performance of SSII students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The SSII students of the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State have total means that lie between 2.50–3.49 implying that attitude has a high extent influence on academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 4: To what extent do teachers' gestures influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistic on the Extent of Influence of Teachers' Gestures on Students' Academic performance

S/No.	Statement	East		South East		West		Decision
		[$n_1 = 353$]		[$n_2 = 332$]		[$n_3 = 307$]		
		x	SD	x	SD	x	SD	
16	My teacher uses his body movements to drive some lessons home for the	2.95	0.62	3.12	0.44	3.09	0.71	High Extent

	students.							
17	My teacher nods approval with his head when students get the right answers.	3.25	0.81	3.26	0.53	3.16	0.43	High Extent
18	Sometimes my teacher uses his eyes to communicate disapproval of students' conducts.	3.22	0.66	3.17	0.47	3.19	0.32	High Extent
19	When my teacher teaches in class he uses his hands, eyes and head to drive home his lessons.	3.24	0.52	2.98	0.36	3.32	0.24	High Extent
20	My teacher makes teaching attractive by demonstrating how school lessons apply in the life	3.14	0.47	3.53	0.93	3.12	0.85	High Extent
	Total	3.16	0.62	3.21	0.55	3.18	0.51	High Extent

The total sample of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West used for the study is 992, while n_1 , n_2 , and n_3 are the sub-samples of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West respectively.

Decision: Students' academic performance is influenced by gesture (as teachers' communication skill)

to a High Extent (2.50 x 3.49).

Table 4 presents that SSII students of Rivers East have a total mean of 3.16 and standard deviation of 0.62, Rivers South-East have a total mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.55, and Rivers West have a total mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 0.51 on their rating of the extent of influence of speaking (as a communication skill) on academic performance of SSII students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The SSII students of the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State have total means that lie between 2.50–3.49 implying that speaking has high extent influence on academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 5: To what extent do teachers' facial expressions influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 5: Descriptive Statistic on the Extent of Influence of Teachers’ Facial Expression on Students’ Academic performance

S/No.	Statement	East		South East		West		Decision
		[n ₁ = 353]		[n ₂ = 332]		[n ₃ = 307]		
		x	SD	x	SD	x	SD	
21	My teacher approves/disapproves students’ attitudes from the way he looks at students.	2.97	0.81	3.28	0.47	3.14	0.95	High Extent
22	My teacher smiles to encourage students to tackle difficult tasks.	3.24	0.57	3.19	0.76	3.28	0.83	High Extent
23	I have a positive view of the way my teacher conducts his class.	3.13	0.52	2.98	0.65	3.21	0.74	High Extent
24	My teacher’s confidence in class makes me work harder and desire to be like him.	2.99	0.68	3.08	0.72	3.43	0.66	High Extent
25	My teacher uses facial expression to manage class (makes students stop noise in class).	3.32	0.58	3.22	0.65	2.91	0.49	High Extent
	Total	3.13	0.63	3.15	0.65	3.19	0.73	High Extent

The total sample of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West used for the study is 992, while n₁, n₂, and n₃ are the sub-samples of Rivers East, Rivers South-East, and Rivers West respectively.

Decision: Students’ academic performance is influenced by facial expression (as teachers’ communication skill) to a High Extent (2.50 x 3.49).

The information in table 5 presents that SSII students of Rivers East have a total mean of 3.13 and standard deviation of 0.63, Rivers South-East have a total mean of 3.15 and standard deviation of 0.65, and Rivers West have a total mean of 3.19 and standard deviation of 0.73 on their rating of the extent of influence of facial expression (as a communication skill) on academic performance of SSII students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The SSII

students of the three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State have total means that lie between 2.50–3.49 implying that facial expression has a high extent influence on academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of teachers’ speaking skills on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of speaking on academic performance of students of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.306	2	.153	209.659	.000
Within Groups	.072	989	.000		
Total	.378	991			

$F(2, 0.153) = 209.659; p = 0.000 < 0.05: H_0$ is rejected

Table 6 presents the sum of squares of 0.306, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 0.153 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 0.72, degrees of freedom of 989, and a mean square of 0.000, while the total has 0.378 sum of squares and 991 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 209.659 which is statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that “there is no significant influence of teachers’ speaking skills on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is rejected: $F(2, 0.153) = 209.659, p < .05$. In other words, teachers’ speaking skills influence, to a High Extent, students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of teachers’ listening skills on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of listening on academic performance of students of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.883	2	.941	34.918	.011
Within Groups	26.665	989	.027		
Total	28.548	991			

$F(2, 0.941) = 34.918; p = 0.011 < 0.05: H_0$ is rejected

Table 7 presents the sum of squares of 1.883, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 0.941 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 26.665, degrees of freedom of 989, and a mean square of 0.027, while the total has 28.548 sum of squares and 991 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 34.918 which is statistically significant at .05. Thus the null

hypothesis that “there is no significant influence of teachers’ listening skills on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is rejected: $F(2, 0.941) = 34.918, p < .05$. In other words, teachers’ listening skills influence, to a High Extent, students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant influence of teachers’ attitudes on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of attitude on academic performance of students of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.301	2	.150	1341.287	.009
Within Groups	.111	989	.000		
Total	.412	991			

$F(2, 0.150) = 1342.287; p = 0.009 < 0.05$: H_0 is rejected

Table 8 presents the sum of squares of 0.301, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 0.150 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 0.111, degrees of freedom of 989, and a mean square of 0.000, while the total has 0.412 sum of squares and 991 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 1341.287 which is statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that “there is no significant influence of teachers’ attitude on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is rejected: $F(2, 0.150) = 1341, p < .05$. In other words, teachers’ attitude influences, to a High Extent, students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant influence of teachers’ gestures on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 9: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of gesture on academic performance of students of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.458	2	.229	177.804	.017
Within Groups	1.273	989	.001		
Total	1.731	991			

$F(2, 0.229) = 177.804; p = 0.017 < 0.05$: H_0 is rejected

Table 9 presents the sum of squares of 0.458, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 0.229 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 1.273, degrees of freedom of 989, and a mean square of 0.001, while the total has 1.731 sum of squares and 991 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 177.804 which is statistically significant at .05. Thus the null

hypothesis that “there is no significant influence of teachers’ gestures on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is rejected: $F(2, 0.229) = 177.804, p < .05$. In other words, teachers’ gestures influence, to a High Extent, students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant influence of teachers’ facial expressions on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 10: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of facial expression on academic performance of students of senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.580	2	.290	585.794	.007
Within Groups	.489	989	.017		
Total	1.069	991			

$F(2, 0.290) = 585.794; p = 0.007 < 0.05$: H_0 is rejected

Table 10 presents the sum of squares of 0.580, with 2 degrees of freedom, and a mean square of 0.290 for between groups. Within groups has the sum of squares of 0.489, degrees of freedom of 989, and a mean square of 0.017, while the total has 1.069 sum of squares and 991 degrees of freedom. The computed F is 585.794 which is statistically significant at .05. Thus the null hypothesis that “there is no significant influence of teachers’ facial expressions on students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is rejected: $F(2, 0.290) = 585.794, p < .05$. In other words, teachers’ facial expressions influence to a High Extent students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study examined the influence of teachers’ communication skills on students’ academic performance and found that teachers’ speaking skills, listening skills, attitude, gestures, and facial expressions, as components of teachers’ communication skills, influence to a high extent academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The findings of high extent influence of teachers’ speaking skills and listening skills on students’ academic performance are supported respectively by Najafi and Rahmazade (2013) when they opined that teachers appropriate use clear, concise, accurate, polite, correct and rich expression in oral communication with the students to transmit properly the teacher's intentions enhance the students’ academic performance and Friedman (1986) and Hunsaker (1991) observed that listening enhances students’ academic performance because as a skill, listening involves receiving, attending, organizing, understanding, interpreting, and evaluating messages from the classroom environment and that listening is a learned behaviour that must be nurtured.

The study further found that teachers’ attitude, gestures, and facial expressions influence students’ academic performance to a high extent. In consonance with these findings, Farhangi (1995) found facial expression to have the power to transfer the attitudes and feelings of people to others and in many cases facial expression is even more effective than verbal messages. Wirth

and Perkins (2013) revealed that teacher's attitude contributed significantly to students' attention in classroom and influenced their academic performance. Mucella, Melis and Ahu (2011) investigated the effects of teachers' attitudes on students' personality and performance in Istanbul Turkey and found that teachers' positive attitudes have positively influence students' personality as well as their academic and life performances. Castellon and Enyedy (2006) argued that the unification of the teacher's gesture, in conjunction with speech and graphic resources, helped students grasp and discuss mathematical concepts. They found that teacher's gestures and talk assisted in clarifying, explaining, highlighting, and emphasizing mathematical concepts to his students and enhanced their performance in Mathematics.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have shown that students' academic performance is influenced to a high extent by teachers' communication skills of speaking, listening, attitude, gestures and facial expressions. It is imperative therefore, that the school curriculum should make adequate provision for student teachers to learn effective communication skills, and practicing teachers to be trained and retrained to cultivate good communication skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication skills are learnt from the home to the school. In other words, the learning of effective communications skills starts from birth through school days and onto adult work life. Therefore, parents, teachers and education authorities should ensure that children, student teachers, and teachers are properly cultured on effective communication skills. While parents and teachers bring up their children and students in using positive, inspiring, motivating, and friendly words, education authorities must ensure that school curricula make adequate provision for the teaching of students and the training and retraining of teachers.

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