

INFLUENCE OF LECTURERS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE

By

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of lecturers' communication skills on students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 190 respondents (93 lecturers and 97 students) from the three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size for the study consisted of 76 respondents (37 lecturers and 39 students); representing 40% of the total population size, simple random sample technique was used. A self-structured questionnaire items structured on a validated four-point rating scales was used. The reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. Data obtained was analyzed using the mean (\bar{x}) and Z-test. Specifically, the (\bar{x}) was used to answer the research questions while the Z-test was to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was recommended that the lecturers' incentive should always be given to them in order for them to put in their best for the betterment of the students and it will enhance and ensure and quality educational assessment in the universities. The welfare of the lecturers will strengthen them for effectiveness, for instance, if they are promoted as when due, they are given opportunities for their professional growth, provision of welfare services that are currently lacking optimal performance of the lecturers and students in public universities in Rivers State.

Keywords: Communication skills, Academic performance, Lecturers, Students, Universities, Rivers State.

Introduction

University education occupies a strategic position in educational structure of any nation. It contributes significantly to the inculcation of skills and values needed for national growth and manpower development. These goals and objectives can only be meaningfully achieved if the academic staff who are at the center of educational activities are proactive in their service delivery. Osage and Akin Losotu (2017) stated that “The importance of academic staff in an institution cannot be overemphasized. This is because of the central role they play as implementers of the curriculum at the classroom. Similarly, they are saddled with other administrative responsibilities needed for the smooth administration of the institution. Lecturers has a strong influence on students in-terms of their academic performance, this means that, it is not the quality or how wealthy of the parents of a student, their involvement, or even the administration that makes most impact, but the lecturers’ attitude and the positive input they make on the cause of delivery their lectures to the students. Newshom and Davis (2015), communication is also a process through which information is passed and understood from one person to another, it is used to elicit actions and response on the part of the receiver, and this requires understanding. It is very important and influential in every organizational setting, be it school, business others. It has to do with day to day activities, communication between the lecturers and the students is the medium through which the lecturer displays his or her bodies’ knowledge and skills already acquired.

Communication skills are developed to helping many aspects of human life and career, from professional career to social gatherings, to family life, teaching and learning and so on. In today’s hectic world, we rely heavily on sharing information, resulting in greater emphasis being placed on having good communication skills. Good verbal/non-verbal and written communication is very essential in order to deliver and understand information quickly and accurately. Being able to communicate effectively is a vital life skill that should not be overlooked. In contrast, lecturers’ poor and inconsistent communication skills on deliveries of his or her lectures will probably affect the students’ academic performance negatively, since they are not consistent to deliver to the students all that could help them to be grounded in the field of study. Thus, poor communication skills could cause a poorly delivered lecture that may result to frustration in most cases. Hence, effective communication skills are very important in the day-to-day delivery of lectures in the university system of education which involves the lecturers and the students mostly.

Therefore, communications play vital and central roles between the lecturers and the students for efficient and effective academic performance of the students in the universities (Asodike, 2017). Communication between the lecturers and students goes on constantly as responsive, interactive or initiatory acts. This kind of communication is known as “interaction”

Reichard et al (2014) defined it as the patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication and the type of social relationship which occurs during the teaching and learning. According to Tickoo (2009), what happens in a productive and proactive class hour is described as follows;

Discussion or interaction of the lecturers with the students, the lecturers communicate with the students, either by group or individual, the students in turn interact with each other either in group, as friends or as course mates. But the quality of their performance is dependent on the quality of the lecturers, it has been noticed that some of our graduates today in the society cannot express their selves in public. Lecturers should be encouraged to play vital roles in terms of enlightening the students with the programme of study.

Statement of the Problem

The ultimate goal of a university is to develop the students’ mental capacity, both in learning and in character to be useful to themselves, family and to the society. These objectives place enormous task and burden on lecturers from the university authority, whose responsibilities through the department, faculty and other examination bodies are

planning, coordinating, monitoring, assessing and evaluation of both the lecturers and the students for efficient and effective academic performance. It is widely known that lecturers' communication skills have a great influence on students' academic performance, hence the success of any student in terms of his or her academic performance, stems from the attribute of good communication skills the lecturers possess. The problem of this study is based on the fact that the researcher wants to discover why most students of the universities presently seems to be grossly inadequate academically, especially when it calls for expression (speeches). And most lecturers' attention is divided because he or she wants to meet up with other business engagement in order to be able to provide for the needs of the family.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to access the lecturers' communication skills on students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Access the extent verbal and non-verbal as communication skills influence student's academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent interpersonal as communication skills influence student's academic in public universities in Rivers State.

Research questions

1. To what extent does verbal and non-verbal as communication influence students' academic performance in the public universities in Rivers State.
2. To what extent does interpersonal as communication skills influence student's academic performance in the public universities in Rivers State.

Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean response of lecturers and students regarding the extent verbal and non-verbal as communication skills influence student's academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean response of lecturers and students regarding the extent interpersonal as communication skill influence student's academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research survey design. The population of the study consisted of 190 lecturers (lecturers 93 and 97 students) from the 3 public universities in Rivers State. The sample consisted of 76 respondents (37 lecturer and 39 students) representing 40% of the total population size (190). The study was randomly selected and drawn using a sample random sampling technique. The instruments are self-structural questionnaires titled "Influence of lecturers' communication skill on students' academic performance questionnaire (ILCSSAPQ)". The instrument was structured on a validated modified four-point rating scale response options of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High. Extent (HE) = 3 points, low Extent (LE) = 2 points, Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted a pilot study of 20 respondent (10 lecturers and 10 students) not part of the sample size but from other tertiary institutions, including Nigerian Open University in Rivers State. The reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. Data obtained was analyzed using the mean (\bar{x}) and Z-test specifically, the mean (\bar{x}) was used to answer the research questions while the z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of results

Research questions 1: To what extent does verbal and non-verbal as communication skills influence students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State?

Table1: Mean for Verbal/non-verbal as Communication Skill on Students' Academic Performance
Lecturers (N=37), Student (N=39)

S/N	Statements	M	SD	RMK	M	SD	RMK
1	Verbal/non-verbal as communication skills motivates students' aspiration towards solving academic problems	3.45	0.59	HE	3.09	0.91	HE
2	Verbal/non-verbal as communication skill encourages responses between the lecturer and students	3.37	0.55	HE	3.09	0.91	HE
3	It helps lecturers for self critique	3.47	0.58	HE	3.12	0.91	HE
4	Encourages students for clarity on the bases for their assessment	3.22	0.70	HE	3.13	0.89	HE
5	Helps lecturers in speaking/articulation of words before going for lecture	1.56	0.63	LE	1.70	0.79	LE
6	Helps lecturers to acquire more information if the students understands him/her	3.19	0.75	HE	3.11	0.90	HE
7	It stimulates active teaching, learning and long-term retention of information	3.37	0.57	HE	3.07	0.90	HE
8	It combines explanation by handling or manipulation of real things, equipments or materials	3.53	0.58	HE	3.12	0.86	HE
9	It helps to engage actively in practical strategy for better academic performance	3.41	0.59	HE	3.09	0.92	HE
10	It encourages students to evaluate events, topics for clarity on bases for their judgements	1.48	0.51	LE	1.40	LE	
	Grand Mean	3.01	0.60	HE	2.79	0.85	HE

Field data 2023 (HE=High Extent; LE = Low Extent)

Result from Table 1 shows the mean responses of Lecturers and students regarding to how verbal and non-verbal communication skills influenced students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. As shown, the grand mean response for lecturers is 3.01 while the students are 2.79. The result shown that male and female lectures regarding to how verbal and non-verbal as communication skill influence students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: To what extent does interpersonal relationship skill influence students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Table2:Mean for InterpersonalSkill on Students' Academic Performance
Lecturers (N=37), Student (N=39)

S/N	Statements	M	SD	RMK	M	SD	RMK
11	Interpersonal as communication skills strengthens the relationship between the Lecturers and students in terms teaching and learning	3.52	0.50	HE	3.52	0.50	HE
12	It creates an atmosphere for interdependent by probing into students' intellectual aptitude at the onset	3.47	0.50	HE	3.65	0.48	HE
13	It facilities learning capacity for essential academic performance	3.51	0.50	HE	3.67	0.47	HE
14	It enhances cooperative learning for expected student academic performance	1.52	0.50	LE	1.57	0.50	LE

15	Interpersonal skills as a communication skill helps the lecturers to understand the basic of influence for students' academic performance	3.30	0.46	HE	3.53	0.50	HE
16	It makes use of gesture to influence student's academic performance	3.33	0.73	HE	3.43	0.50	HE
17	It helps to create awareness on the area of weakness for the lecturers to improve either on his own side or for the students	3.44	0.50	HE	3.49	0.50	HE
18	It makes harmonies for better understanding of each other's attitudes in teaching and learning processes	3.44	0.50	HE	3.69	0.46	HE
19	It enables both lecturers and the students to work effectively	1.73	0.53	LE	1.61	0.49	LE
20	It encourages mutual responses between the lecturers and the students	3.29	0.45	HE	3.61	0.49	HE
	Grand Mean	3.06	0.52	HE	3.18	0.49	HE

Field data 2023 (HE=High Extent; LE = Low Extent)

Result from Table 2 shows the mean responses of lectures and students regarding to how interpersonal as communicationskill influence students' academic performance. As shown, in the grand mean response for lecturers 3.06 while the students are 3.18.This result shows the differences between the lecturers and the students regarding to how interpersonal as a communication skill influence students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean response of lectures and students regarding the extent verbal and nonverbal as communication skill influence students' academic performance in public universities: R/S.

Table:3 test for verbal and non-verbal skills on students' academic performance.

Group	N	M	S.D	Z-Cal	Z-Crit	Decision
Lectures	37	3.01	0.60	-3.70	1. 96	Rejected
Students	39	2.79	0.85			

Field data 2023

Results from tables 3 shows the z-test analysis far the hypothesis, there is no significant difference between the mean response ofLectures and Student regarding the extent verbal and non-verbal as communication skills influence students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. The result shows a calculated z-test value of -3.70 (negative sign not important). The critical value of Z is 1.96. Since the calculated value Z is greater than the critical value of Z, the hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of lecturers and students regarding the extent verbal/non- verbal as a communication skills influence students' Academic in Public Universities in Rivers State. The significance difference is however due to the extent between the two groups of respondents because the grand mean scores shows that both Lecturers and Students perceived to a high extent the verbal and non-verbalas a communication skillsinfluence Students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of Lectures and Students regarding the extent interpersonal as a communication skill influence students' Academic performance in public universities in R/S.

Table:4 test for interpersonal as a communication skill influence Students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Group	N	M	S.D	Z-Cal	Z-Crit	Decision
Lectures	37	3.06	0.52	2.91	1. 96	Rejected
Students	39	3.18	0.49			

Field data 2023

Result from table 4 show the z- test analysis for the hypothesis, there is no significant difference between the mean response of Lecturers and Students regarding the extent interpersonal as a communication skill influence students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. This significant difference is however, due to the extent between the two groups of respondents because the grand mean scores shows that both Lectures and Students perceived to a high extent that interpersonal as a communication skill influence students' Academic performance in Public Universities in Rivers State. The result shows a calculated z-test value of 2.91. The critical value of Z is 1.96. Since the calculated value of Z is greater than the critical value of Z, hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was a significant difference between the scores of Lectures and Students regarding the extent interpersonal as a communication skill influences students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

1. The extent verbal and non- verbal as communication skills influence students' Academic performance.

Research question one sought to find out how verbal and non- verbal as communication skills influence students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State, to a high extent, the result shows that both Lecturers and Students promotes verbal and non-verbal aspect part of communication skills. It is a means to exhibit discipline in students in the university community, it also helps lazy/slothful students, it helps the students to develop plans to achieve their aims as students, it provides sufficient information about the course of study. It improves a better understanding between the Lecturers and Students, directs communication is the ability to communicate effectively with the students and is essential, verbal and non-verbal communication skills improves the well meaning of a topic and inspires high performance and enhances good relationship between the Lecturers and Students.

Thus, verbal and non-verbal as communication skills according to Bamidele (2014) is more effective because it has several important features, especially when it has to be candid, clear, complex, concise, concrete, correct and courteous. But whether Lectures has good relationships with the student's Academic performance, is an issue that requires frequent investigation by academic management of the department, faculty and the university. Verbal and non- verbal communication is vital in education as it facilitates teaching and learning understanding between the Lectures and Students.

Again, Students process in verbal communication with the lectures can also increase their presentation skills, and the Students will be able to interact confidently in a variety of course work requiring personal academic performance.

2. The extent interpersonal as a communication skill influence Students' Academic performance. Research question 2 sought to find out that interpersonal as communication skill influence Students' Academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. The results shows that both Lectures and Students influence the Students' Academic Performance regarding interpersonal relationship between the Lecturers and Students academic performance. Lecturers' interpersonal relationship with the students have a great influence on their academic performance, that is to say that the student's positive academic achievement is dependent on the effective and efficient interpersonal communication skill between the Lectures and the Students.

Interpersonal as a communication skill is the process by which people creates relationship, feelings and meaning, which involves physical presence: Modanisi (2009).It is a medium through which the Lectures get to express and direct his or her lessons to the students. It's also a means to assess the students works one on one. (Lecturers-Students expression).Interpersonal as a communication skill is effective at every phase of the Lecturing as it build a strong relationship and trust, fostering a positive learning environment.

Conclusion:

Based on the finding, it is therefore concluded that there was little verbal and non- verbal and interpersonal communication skills that exist between Lecturers and Students resulting in the average relationship, the prevailing relationship was not story enough to influence high academic and high level of attainment, but rather encouraged high self esteem which in turn stimulated better performance in their academic works, communication remain the process medium through which idea, concept and other information's are passed from one person to the other. Thus, the major objective of this study is to explore the various skills of communication for effective and efficient teaching and learning that would guarantee good academic performance of the students.

Recommendations:

The study made the following recommendations thus:

1. When the Lectures incentives for under taking self development programs as a way of meeting their self – actualization need is met, effective and efficient communication skills will definitely be rated high to in term of Lecture delivery.
2. Emphases should be made to limit the extend by which the students criticize Lecturers.
3. There need for Lecturer to cultivate the habit of communicating more effectively with the Students in order to find out the area of their weakness in their academic performance: which can be achieved by showing personal interest on the case teaching and learning.
4. Government should ensure that the welfare programs university employees, especially the Lecturers are effectively toiled commitment and undivided loyalty, encouraged in delivery or discharging their duties.

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