

## Effect of Teacher's Communication Styles on Students' Engagement

Ayesha Afzal<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Seema Arif<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Irfana Rasul<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Chaudhry<sup>4\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD Scholar, University of Management & Technology, Lahore

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, University of Management & Technology, Lahore

<sup>3</sup> University of Management & Technology, Lahore

<sup>4</sup> Government College University, Lahore (\*Corresponding Author)

Email: <sup>1</sup>ayeshaafzal@umt.edu.pk, <sup>2</sup>seema.arif@umt.edu.pk, <sup>3</sup>irfana.omer1@gmail.com, <sup>4</sup>almoeed@hotmail.com

---

### ABSTRACT

Teachers have an important role in the life of students. The central premise of this study is to ascertain the effect of teachers' communication style on students' engagement in higher education. The study attempts to corroborate that how teachers 'walk and talk' in the academic matters of their students. A quantitative survey comprising 40 items was used to know students' perceptions about teachers' communication style, which keeps them engaged in academic behaviors in the university in the context of Pakistani culture. The data was collected from three universities of Lahore, one public and two private. 521 students, both male and female participated in the survey and their responses were recorded and analyzed using SPSS 21. Descriptive and inferential analysis techniques were used to determine relationships among various constructs of communication styles of the university teachers. The objective was to find out what influences students and what disappoints them. Teachers' communication style enriched with empathy and genuine feedback were found to be the most influencing factors engaging students in constructive academic behaviors, whereas, strict behaviors and use of harsh and difficult words by the teachers disappoint students.

### Keywords

Teachers' communication style, Teachers' influence, University students, Student Academic Behaviour, Student Engagement

---

### Introduction

Language is what distinguishes humans from animals; and communication is the crown of language (Pasfield, Huang and Grant, 2015). Communication is one of the strongest channels through which knowledge, culture, religion, ethics, morality, and education are handed down from one generation to the next (Atiase and Appiah, 2015). The impoverishment of humanity can only be prevented through the use and development of language at all level (Pinnock and Vijayakumar, 2009).

The topic communication is getting importance rapidly in almost all the business and social organizations (Treem, Dailey, Pierce, & Leonardi, 2015). When words and expression do not get the desired results then usually, it is said that it was a failure of communication (Burgoon, Guerrero & Floyd, 2016). Communication studies have become the central part of education all around the world (Gee, 2015). Even Aristotle and his peers purported that an educated person must possess the quality of effective communication (Morreale, Backlund & Sparks, 2014). It is only because of this gift of communication that human beings are considered the more distinguished and accomplished than the other entire creatures (Cicero, 1876 and Sparks et al., 2014).

Communication is a complex process in which psychological and sociological aspects are intertwined (Beatty, McCroskey & Valencic, 2001; Horan & Afifi, 2014). Davis (2013) opined that in accomplishing positive outcomes, including high student achievement, teachers' guidance through interaction, non-verbal support and positive feedback play a dominant role. When students have open interaction with their teachers, they feel themselves an important part of the educational process and the valued member of the institution (Schrodt, Turman, & Witt, 2007).

Teachers having poor communication skills are also considered as poor listeners with whom students do not show much willingness to discuss their issues whether they are personal or related to their studies (LeFebvre and Allen, 2014; Glaser and Fub, 2008). In the teaching learning process, students have to indulge in question-answer sessions frequently with their teachers, and only with an empathic, trustworthy and supportive teacher, students can dare to ask questions repeatedly and can share their views and problems (Cruickshank, Jenkins, and Metcalf 2003). There are much expectations associated with teachers' communication style which students have and a teacher through the way of answering students' questions motivates them to know more about the

subject taught (Lawrence et al., 2008). Students want their teachers to be creative and knowledgeable who encourage healthy discussion in the classroom, infusing autonomy and self-reliance in them (Chory, Horan, Carton & Houser, 2014).

Teachers' effective communication style not only motivates students to show positive academic behavior in class rather it is a very meaningful factor behind students' cognitive and effective learning (Frisby & Myers, 2008; Frisby & Martin, 2010; Frisby et al., 2014). It is vital that the students exhibit the same degree of belongingness and comfort which they receive from the people with whom they have direct interaction. Teachers' empathetic, appreciating, and supporting communication style is appreciated most among students and they feel a high level of learning (Eccles & Wang, 2012; Bain, 2004). Teachers' poor competence for communication is perceived by students as a lack of social support as well as a lack of emotional work that a student need in the class (Joseph and Timothy et al., 2014; Edwards & Edwards, 2013).

When a teacher talks too loud, uses harsh and difficult words, a student perceives it as negative communication style of teacher and reacts in form of refusing to the instructions of teachers (Ball & Goodboy, 2014). Reeve (2009) and Finn & Ledbetter (2014) suggest that in the cases where teachers adopt a very directive style, and do not appreciate healthy discussion by providing students with positive and timely feedback, students do not give value to moral education and their obedience and respect towards a teacher become doubtful. Moreover there are many chances that those students who have negative perception of teachers' personality and communication style may become poor help seekers because usually such students do not try to approach teachers when they feel threatened to talk to them (Zhang & Zhang, 2013; Brophy ; 2013; Frymier, 2014; Hockley & Harkin , 2006)

Taking into account the main characteristics of adults (as they are fully-grown, assertive and responsible for their actions etc.), this research will try to explore the different attributes that contribute towards making teachers impressive and charismatic, and, consequently, influencing students to follow them. In doing so, the study aims to corroborate the key characteristics and behavior

of teachers that leave a long-term impact on students, specifically related to their communication style, command over English, and their outlook as appreciated by students.

### Literature Review

#### Effect of Teachers' Communication Styles on Students

According to Cayanus & Martin (2008) students' engagement is very much associated with university teachers' communication behavior. The influence of teachers' personality and communication style can be traced in the academic behavior of the student both at perceptible and imperceptible levels (Holmgren & Bolkan, 2014; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Students are individuals who are most affected by the reflection, discussion, dialogue and action of their teachers (Fielding & McGregor, 2005).

Soller (2001) and Jordan & Babrow (2013) described the qualities of a good teacher in the way that he/she through his/her instructional methods and skills provides students such an educational environment that ensures their active participation and learning. Students' understanding of teachers' communication styles helps them to improve their academic behaviors and eventually this understanding results in a better relationship between students and teachers (Jungert, Alm, & Thornberg, 2014; Ismail & Idris, 2009; Mazer, McKenna-Buchanan, Quinlan, & Titsworth, 2014).

Previous research suggests that there is a set of free behaviors and actions that every individual possesses regarding his/her resources, knowledge, and ability (Kokkonen, 2009). When the individual feels a threat for any of his/her free behaviors or actions, he/she experiences psychological reactance against these threats (Ball & Goodboy, 2014; Mazer, 2013). In the classroom context this theory suggests that when a teacher uses forceful and unclear language a student perceives it as negative communication style of teacher and reacts in form of refusing to the instructions of teachers (LaBelle, Martin, & Weber, 2013; Ball & Goodboy, 2014). Students get impressed by teachers' communication style in many ways. Sometime teachers' fluency and command over the English language inspire students. On the contrary, a teacher can exert such a strong effect to convince students even without speaking a single word

through his/her body language, using their hands or gesture (McCroskey, Valencic, & Richmond, 2004; Cruickshank, Jenkins, and Metcalf, 2003).

### **The Importance of Communication Skills for Teachers**

A teacher should learn to communicate realistic high expectations to the students then the students will also try to meet those expectations (Entwistle, Karagiannopoulou, Ólafsdóttir, & Walker, 2015). In this way, a student lives up to the teacher standard and earns his/her approval, and this approval creates self-confidence, motivation and persists in students' efforts to achieve high academic results (Urea, 2012/2013; Mulford and Silins, 2003). Students have a direct interaction with teachers and these verbal and nonverbal interactions with teachers affect students' feeling that is why teacher must possess good communication skills (McCroskey, Teven, Minielli, & Richmond McCroskey, 2014; Ferreira & Bosworth, 2001).

Teachers' poor competence for communication is perceived by students as the lack of social support as well as the lack of emotional work that a student need in the class (Joseph, 2014). When teachers communicate in an effective and impressive manner, students are more likely to enjoy learning and show a higher level of engagement. In this way, students find their teacher supportive of their needs and they feel no boredom and frustration in class (Skinner & Kindermann & Furrer, 2008). Psychological reactance theory (PRT) is about the reaction of students against teacher's threatening and unclear language. There are many theories that focus on the influence and effect of any persuasive message on individuals, but it is the uniqueness of Psychological reactance theory (PRT) that it explores the reasons that why any persuasive message could not be effective or influential (Brehm, 1966; Smith & Brehm, 1981; Ball & Goodboy, 2014).

## **Methodology**

### **Sampling**

For the present study, three reputed universities were selected as the sample spots. From these universities permission was sought to approach the undergraduate and graduate students.

### **Sampling technique**

Cluster sampling technique was used for this research. Cluster sampling is used when population size is large and its characteristics are homogeneous (Mills & Gay, 2015). Among many other reasons of using cluster sampling, the most important one is that in this technique intact groups, not individuals are randomly selected (Mills & Gay, 2015). Mangal (2002) has argued that it is very difficult for a researcher to approach every other person that fits in his/her research population. Therefore it becomes mandatory to search for a sample which can be approached easily and justify your research design (Farrokhi & Hamidabad, 2012). Lack of resources, time, and financial issues more than other reasons, led to this critical choice. Four departments of each university i.e. Education, psychology, sociology and English were selected randomly and considered a cluster. Permission was sought from these departments and they assigned the researcher one section of each department in which 50 to 60 senior students were enrolled. In order to retain uniformity, data of 50 students was collected from each cluster. Following the quantitative approach, the reliability of instruments has been obtained instead of the whole process. After the pilot testing of the research questionnaires for the reliability, the questionnaires were administered simultaneously at all universities.

### **Participants**

This study was about the effect of teachers' communication styles on students' engagement in the higher education of Pakistan, so university students were obviously the best choice to serve this purpose. Students' observation of teachers' typical behaviors is more powerful than that of a trained and experienced observer (Fraser, 2015; Stodolsky, 1984; Walberg & Haertel, 1980; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971). Berliner & Rosenshine (1976) described the importance of students' opinion regarding teachers' behavior in this way that a learner or student knows skilled teaching better than the researchers do.

Five hundred and twenty one students (both male and female) from the two private and one public university of Lahore participated and became the

sample of this research. The age of the respondents was 22 and above. Their academic level ranged from undergraduate to graduates. All of them were from the universities situated in Lahore.

### **Development of Research Instrument**

#### **Survey questionnaire**

A structured survey questionnaire was devised to use as the research tool in this study. The constructs used in the survey of this research have been well identified in the literature review phase of this study. Another reason for deciding the survey questionnaire as the research tool for this study was to get the perception of students. A survey is considered the best tool for getting perceptions/conceptions by many researchers (Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle, 2010). The basic purpose of survey research is to gather information from a selected sample of the target population using question-answer format or scale format. It is also the most used method in educational research along with the most suitable strategy to collect data from the large population (Krosnick & Alwin, 1987).

The survey questionnaire used in this study was divided into two independent segments. The questionnaire first part gathered information about students' background such as name, gender, program enrolled, CGPA and year spent in university since enrollment in the program. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of forty items to assess perceptions of students in eight major areas titled, Direction, Verbal Immediacy, Feedback, Non-Verbal Immediacy, Empathy and Moral Support, Disappoint and Discouraged, Influenced by the teacher, and Student Engagement (see Appendix A).

Scale for perceptions of students about the effect of teachers' personality and communication style on students' engagement was constructed on five points Likert Scale. This scale comprised 40 items and the response options for all items were 1="never," 2="sometimes," 3="often," 4="usually," and 5="always." The face validity of this survey questionnaire was determined by the experts. The clarity of the statement and ease of response were considered and where it was possible it was tried to make statements more easy and understandable.

#### **Pilot study**

The questionnaire was expert reviewed by four PhD professors with relevant expertise in the area to ensure content validity, and peer reviewed for the use of language and its understanding. Then the approved questionnaire was pilot tested with 100 students of The University of Management and Technology before administering for final data collection. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.91 for the pilot study.

#### **Data Collection**

The data time and venue were decided with the university management after seeking formal approval. On a specific day, the researcher remained at the universities for the all day long. The questionnaires were distributed to students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs in four departments of each university, Education, psychology, sociology, English at (1) The University of Management and Technology Lahore (2) The University of Education Lahore, (3) The University of Central Punjab Lahore.

600 questionnaires were distributed to students, 50 questionnaires in each cluster and as there were 4 clusters in each university so data of  $50 \times 4 = 200$  were collected from each university. All of the questionnaires were returned, but out of 600 only 521 were complete and were processed further to tabulate results. No prompting was done by the researcher and students were not compelled to finish their questionnaire the earliest.

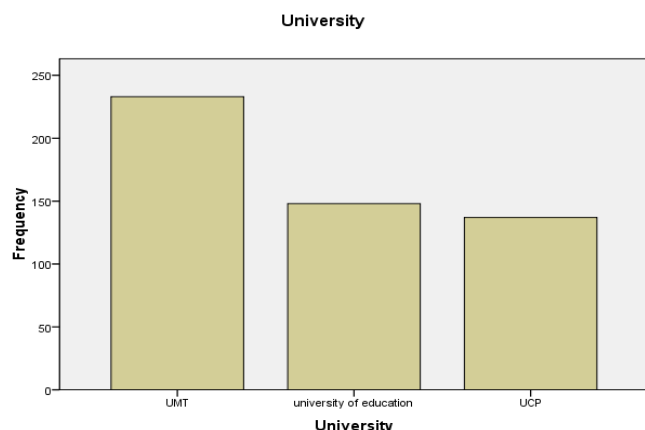
#### **Data organization**

Surveys were conducted independently with students of each university. The data collected were arranged, saved, and organized in electronic and hard forms to minimize data loss. Students' data were compiled and analyzed using statistical techniques of SPSS to identify the effect of teachers' communication style on students' engagement. It helped in maintaining the flow of the research and its timely completion.

#### **Data Analysis and Results**

Out of the total sample of 521 students 233 (including male and female students) belong to UMT, 148 (including male and female students) belong to University of Education, and 140 (including male and female students) belong to UCP.





**Fig Student sample distribution across universities**

**Table. Student demography across Universities**

Statistics	Gender	University	Program	Year	CGPA
N	521	521	521	521	521
M	1.45	1.82	2.02	2.46	3.48
Mode	1	1	3	2	4
SD	.49	.82	.82	.99	1.08
Variance	.24	.68	.67	.99	1.18
Range	1	2	2	4	4

**Showing Pearson's r correlation of teachers' communication style and students' academic behavior**  
**Pearson's r Correlation Matrix**

	Direct ion	Verbal immediacy	Feedback	NVimme diacy	Empathy	Disappoin tment	Influen ce	Engag ement
<b>Direction</b>	1	.353**	.383**	.307**	.322**	.156**	.268**	.355**
<b>Verbal immediacy</b>		1	.540**	.396**	.462**	.090*	.317**	.397**
<b>Feedback</b>			1	.485**	.530**	.216**	.351**	.466**
<b>NVimmediacy</b>				1	.435**	.146**	.342**	.401**
<b>Empathy</b>					1	.115**	.335**	.427**
<b>Disappointment</b>						1	.298**	.127**
<b>Influence</b>							1	.406**
<b>Engagement</b>								1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the correlation table it can be seen that direction, verbal immediacy, feedback, non-verbal immediacy, empathy and moral support, influence and engagement have a positive strong correlation with each other ( $n=521$ ,  $p<.000$ ). The strongest positive correlation is between verbal immediacy (1) Teacher asks questions that require me to give explanations in my own words; 2) Teacher asks questions that make me think hard about things that I have learned in class; 3) Teacher asks questions that require me to provide steps or ways of solving problems, 4) I learn new meanings of subjects

Most of the students stay for 2-4 years with a mode of two years. The majority of the students 181(34.7%) were enrolled in the program of Social Sciences, 171(32.8%) were enrolled in the program of Engineering and 169(32.4%) were enrolled in Business.

### Effect of Teachers' Communication Styles on Students

The fourth part of the questionnaire consisted of forty items to assess effect of teachers' communication style (grouped in five major constructs titled; Direction, Verbal immediacy, Feedback, Non-Verbal immediacy, Empathy and Moral Support) on students' academic behavior (grouped in three major constructs disappointment, influence and engagement)(see Appendix A).

Students were asked to evaluate their university teachers' communication behaviors on 5 points Likert type scale from 1 = never to 5 = always.

under study with the use of aids and multimedia resources by teacher; 5) My ideas about the subject taught become clearer after verbal immediacy on the topic in the classroom)and feedback (1) Teacher asks for my opinions during discussions; 2) Teacher encourages me to discuss my ideas with other students; 3) I feel valued when teacher gives prompt feedback on email or phone, 4) Teacher appreciates me on engagement in answer questions, 5) Teacher incorporates my ideas in the lesson ( $r =.540^{**}$ ) and feedback and empathy (1)Teacher is willing to explain things to me

repeatedly; 2) If I have something to say, the teacher will listen; 3) Teacher understands my confusion and elaborates the answers accordingly; 4) Teacher is someone I can depend on; 5) Teacher cares about me ( $r = .530^{**}$ ).

Disappointment has positive but weakest correlation with all the factors and relationship between disappointment (1) Teacher uses harsh words; 2) Teacher talks too loud; 3) Teacher uses difficult words; 4) Teacher does not listen to me; 5) Teacher gives others more attention than me) and verbal immediacy is  $r = .090^*$ .

#### Gender wise Differences in the Student Opinions about the University Teachers' Communication Styles and Students' Academic Behaviors

Independent sample t-test was performed on all the constructs of the teachers' communication styles

and students' academic behaviors, included in the survey questionnaire. No significant difference was found in direction, verbal immediacy, non-verbal immediacy, empathy and moral supports (teachers' communication styles) and disappointment, influence and engagement (students' academic behaviors). However, the significant difference was found in one construct only that is feedback (teachers' communication style).

There is a significant difference between the opinions of male and female students regarding proper feedback ( $F = 9.269$ ;  $t = -2.060$ ;  $Sig = .002$ ). Since the mean average of female students is greater than the male students, hence it is concluded that female students are more satisfied with the feedback than the male students.

**Table showing Mean difference between male and female students about feedback (teachers' communication style)**

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Feedback	Male	284	3.38	.71	.04
	Female	237	3.53	.85	.05

**Table showing student's preference for the qualities, which they like most in their teachers**

		<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>				<i>Sig. (2- M tailed)</i>	<i>(2- M Difference</i>	<i>Std. Error Difference</i>
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>			
Feedback	Equal variances assumed	9.26	.00	-2.06	519	.040	-.14	.06
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.02	460.88	.043	-.14	.07

#### University Wide Differences in the Student Opinions about the University Teachers' Communication Styles and Students' Academic Behaviors

ANOVA was performed on all the constructs of the teachers' communication styles and students' academic behaviors, included in the survey questionnaire, to find out the university wide differences in the opinions of students. No significant difference was found in direction, verbal immediacy, feedback, non-verbal immediacy, empathy and moral supports (teachers'

communication styles) and influence (students' academic behaviors). However, the significant difference was found in two constructs that are disappointment and engagement (students' academic behaviors).

To find out the difference in the mean score within groups Post Hoc comparison using LSD test was performed which indicated that there is a significant difference in the opinions of students university wide regarding disappointment (students' academic behavior) ( $F = 17.760$ ;  $p > .000$ ).

**Table One-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) for disappointment (students' academic behavior)**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Disappointment					
Between Groups	46.00	2	23.00	17.76	.00
Within Groups	670.82	519	1.29		
Total	716.82	521			

**Table Post Hoc Tests**

*disappointment*  
*LSD*

University	University	M Difference	Sig.
UMT	UE	-.56*	.00
	UCP	-.63*	.00
UE	UMT	.56*	.00
	UCP	-.06	.61
UCP	UMT	.63*	.00
	UE	.06	.61

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

To find out the difference in the mean score within groups Post Hoc comparison using LSD test was performed which indicated that there is a significant difference university wide in the opinions of students regarding engagement (students' academic behavior) ( $F = 3.539$ ;  $p = .030$ ).

**Table. One-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) for engagement (students' academic behavior)**

Engagement	df	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	3.53	.03
Within Groups	518		
Total	520		

**Table. Post Hoc Tests for engagement (students' academic behavior)**

*Engagement*  
*LSD*

University	University	M D	Sd. Err.	Sig.
UMT	UE	.23*	.09	.01
	UCP	.00	.09	.95
UE	UMT	-.23*	.09	.01
	UCP	-.22*	.10	.03
UCP	UMT	-.00	.09	.95
	UE	.22*	.10	.03

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

### Stepwise Regression

In order to further understand the results, stepwise regression was applied to identify the most significant factors associated with student engagement. The constant predictor factors are direction, verbal immediacy, feedback, non-verbal immediacy, empathy and moral support, to explain the variance in student engagement (dependent factor). The analysis of this stepwise regression resulted in five different models (see Appendix, Table 4.7). Feedback was correlated most significantly with student engagement ( $r = .466$ ,  $p < .000$ ), with influence ( $r = .533$ ,  $p < .000$ ), with empathy ( $r = .559$ ,  $p < .000$ ), with direction ( $r = .574$ ,  $p < .000$ ), and with non-verbal support ( $r = .584$ ,  $p < .004$ ). Results of stepwise regression model summary show that all the five factors are entered into the prediction model with the multiple R of .584 and  $R^2$  of 0.341. No factor is eliminated because no factor has the insignificant correlation with any other factor.

According to this Model-1 teachers' feedback singularly explained 21.5% of the variation in student engagement ( $\beta = 0.466$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ). Model-2 showed that teachers' feedback and influence collectively identified 28.1% of the variation in student engagement ( $\beta = 0.368$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.277$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ).

The Model-3 showed that teachers' feedback, influence and empathy collectively identified 30% of the variation in student engagement ( $\beta = 0.274$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.243$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.201$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). The Model-4 showed that teachers' feedback, influence, empathy and direction collectively identified 30.8% of the variation in student engagement ( $\beta = 0.235$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.224$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.108$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.147$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). The Model-5 showed that teachers'

feedback, influence, empathy, direction and NV immediacy collectively identified 30.8%33.4% of the variation in student engagement ( $\beta = 0.199$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.205$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.155$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.136$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ;  $\beta = 0.125$ ,  $p < 0.004$ ). Thus, Model –1 ( $F (144.068) = p < 0.000$ ) and Model –2 ( $F (102.992) = p < 0.000$ )

and Model –3 ( $F (78.346) = p < 0.000$ ) and Model –4 ( $F (63.622) = p < 0.000$ ) and Model –5 ( $F (53.334) = p < 0.000$ ) are appropriate for the prediction of teachers' feedback associated with student engagement considering the amount of variation explained.

**Table: Stepwise Regression Results for Predicting Student Engagement**

No.	Predictor Variables	beta co- efficient ( $\beta$ )	t – value	p-value	R <sup>2</sup> (Adjusted)
1	Model - 1				
	Feedback	.466	12.003	.000	0.215
2	Model - 2				
	Feedback	0.368	9.289	.000	
	Influence	0.227	6.979	.000	0.281
3	Model- 3				
	Feedback	0.274	6.226	.000	
	Influence	0.243	6.126	.000	0.308
	Empathy	0.201	4.592	.000	
4	Model – 4				
	Feedback	0.235	5.257	.000	
	Influence	0.224	5.668	.000	0.325
	Empathy	0.180	4.140	.000	
	Direction	0.147	3.700	.000	
5	Model – 5				
	Feedback	.199	4.308	.000	
	Influence	.205	5.168	.000	.334
	Empathy	.155	3.515	.000	
	Direction	.136	3.424	.000	
	NV Immediacy	.125	2.914	.004	

## Discussion

Results indicate that the university teachers communication style have a positive effect on students' academic behaviors. Research also support that students get influence of teachers' way of communication (Miller, Katt, Brown, & Sivo, 2014). Generally, students are found to be satisfied with the communication styles of their university teachers. Students' perception regarding their university teachers' communication style has varied along two indicators (disappointment and engagement) across the universities under study. There is also a significant difference between opinions of male and female students regarding proper feedback. Female students are more satisfied with the feedback provided by teachers than the male students.

Overall results demonstrate that feedback and verbal immediacy of the university teacher are the most important factors which have a positive influence on student engagement. The weak link is found between the university teachers' communication styles and its effect on students' disappointment (students' academic behavior). Generally, students seem to be very satisfied with the communication styles of their university teachers in the respective universities, since a very strong and positive correlation is evidenced between university teachers' communication behaviors and students' academic behaviors. The university teachers' communication behavior is a good mix of all necessary ingredients prescribed for communication in the higher education classroom. Student engagement has a strong correlation with feedback (.466\*\*) which

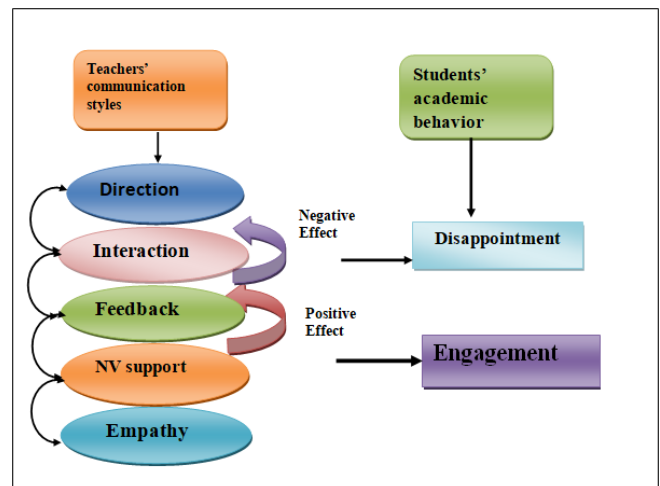


means that continuous positive feedback is that important factor of university teachers' communication styles that keep students most engaged, and they are more positively influenced. They think that university teachers interact with them positively, provide them with non-verbal support and empathize with them.


Strong correlation between verbal immediacy and feedback (.540\*\*) strengthen the view that students trust university teachers' feedback and they can freely interact with their teachers. Then a strong correlation between feedback and empathy (.530\*\*) also emphasizes that students have no reservation or complain regarding the university teachers' feedback and appreciate the empathic behaviors of their teachers. After that, a strong positive correlation between feedback and non-verbal support (.485\*\*) indicates that there are many possible ways of giving feedback and non-verbal support is one of them. Non-verbal support is such a strong tool of university teachers' communication styles through which students get very positive influence.

Verbal immediacy and empathy are also strongly correlated (.465\*\*) which means that students like soft and empathetic interactive style of university teachers. Positive correlation between feedback and influence (.351\*\*) is the indication of importance and power of positive feedback to extend university teachers' influence on students. Students also seek direction from their university teachers but the correlation between verbal immediacy and direction (.353\*\*) is weak. It means that students do not appreciate the directive style of university teachers and hesitate to follow their teachers if they are not listened empathetically.

Inability to engage or poor engagement is identified through disappointment and this is the only construct which has the weakest correlation with all the other factors, however not to develop feelings of discouragement and disappointment also go in favor of positive effect of university teachers' communication style.



**Fig. Proposed model for the effect of the university teachers' communication styles on students' academic behavior**

Key =  = Strong Positive Correlation

## References

- [1] Atiase, C. E. K., & Appiah, P. (2015). The Educational Implication of Symbols of the Central Ewes of Ghana. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 4(8).
- [2] Bain, K. (2004). What makes great teachers great. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 50(31), B7-B9.
- [3] Ball, H., & Goodboy, A. K. (2014). An Experimental Investigation of the Antecedents and Consequences of Psychological Reactance in the College Classroom. *Communication Education*, 63(3), 192-209.
- [4] Beatty, M. J., McCroskey, J. C., & Valencic, K. M. (2001). *The biology of communication: A communibiological perspective*. Hampton Press (NJ).
- [5] Berliner, D. C., & Rosenshine, B. (1976). *The acquisition of knowledge in the classroom*. ERIC.
- [6] Brehm, J. W. (1966). A theory of psychological reactance.
- [7] Brophy, J. E. (2013). *Motivating students to learn*. Routledge.
- [8] Burgoon, J. K., Guerrero, L. K., & Floyd, K. (2016). *Nonverbal communication*. Routledge

- [9] Cayanus, J. L., & Martin, M. M. (2008). Teacher self-disclosure: Amount, relevance, and negativity. *Communication Quarterly*, 56(3), 325-341.
- [10] Charalampous, K., & Kokkinos, C. M. (2014). Students' Big Three Personality Traits, Perceptions of Teacher Interpersonal Behavior, and Mathematics Achievement: An Application of the Model of Reciprocal Causation. *Communication Education*, 63(3), 235-258.
- [11] Chory, R. M., Horan, S. M., Carton, S. T., & Houser, M. L. (2014). Toward a further understanding of students' emotional responses to classroom injustice. *Communication Education*, 63(1), 41-62.
- [12] Cicero, M. S. (1876). *De Oratory* (J. S. Watson, Trans.). London: George Bell and Sons.
- [13] Cruickshank, D. R., Jenkins, D. B., & Metcalf, K. K. (2003). *教学行为指导: The act of teaching*. 中国轻工业出版社.
- [14] Davis, H. A. (2003). Conceptualizing the role and influence of student-teacher relationships on children's social and cognitive development. *Educational psychologist*, 38(4), 207-234.
- [15] Eccles, J., & Wang, M. T. (2012). Part I Commentary: So What Is Student Engagement Anyway?. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 133-145). Springer US
- [16] Edwards, A., & Edwards, C. (2013). Computer-mediated word-of-mouth communication: The influence of mixed reviews on student perceptions of instructors and courses. *Communication education*, 62(4), 412-424.
- [17] Entwistle, N., Karagiannopoulou, E., Ólafsdóttir, A., & Walker, P. (2015). 1– Research into student learning and university teaching. *Researching Higher Education: International Perspectives on Theory, Policy and Practice*, 190.
- [18] Farrokhi, F., & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, A. (2012). Rethinking convenience sampling: Defining quality criteria. *Theory and practice in language studies*, 2(4), 784.
- [19] Ferreira, M. M., & Bosworth, K. (2001). Defining caring teachers: Adolescents' perspectives. *The Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 24-30.
- [20] Fielding, M., & McGregor, J. (2005, April). Deconstructing student voice: new spaces for dialogue or new opportunities for surveillance. In *AERA conference, Montreal*.
- [21]
- [22] Finn, A. N., & Ledbetter, A. M. (2014). Teacher verbal aggressiveness and credibility mediate the relationship between teacher technology policies and perceived student learning. *Communication Education*, 63(3), 210-234.
- [23] Fisher, D., Fraser, B., & Cresswell, J. (1995). Using the "Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction" in the Professional Development of Teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 20(1), 2.
- [24] Fraser, B. (2015). Classroom learning environments. In *Encyclopedia of Science Education* (pp. 154-157). Springer Netherlands.
- [25] Frisby, B. N., & Martin, M. M. (2010). Interpersonal motives and supportive communication. *Communication Research Reports*, 27(4), 320-329.
- [26] Frisby, B. N., & Myers, S. A. (2008). The Relationships among Perceived Instructor Rapport, Student Participation, and Student Learning Outcomes. *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, 33(1).
- [27] Frisby, B. N., Berger, E., Burchett, M., Herovic, E., & Strawser, M. G. (2014). Participation apprehensive students: The influence of face support and instructor–student rapport on classroom participation. *Communication Education*, 63(2), 105-123.
- [28] Frymier, A. B. (2014). Special Issue: The Foundation and Future of Instructional Communication. *Communication Education*, 63(4), 281-282.
- [29] Gee, J. (2015). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Routledge.
- [30] Gläser-Zikuda, M., & Fuß, S. (2008). Impact of teacher competencies on student emotions: A multi-method approach. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 47(2), 136-147.

- [31] Hockley, M., & Harkin, J. (2006). Communicating with students with learning difficulties in further education. *Educational Action Research*, 8(2), 341-360.
- [32] Holmgren, J. L., & Bolkan, S. (2014). Instructor responses to rhetorical dissent: Student perceptions of justice and classroom outcomes. *Communication Education*, 63(1), 17-40.
- [33] Horan, S. M., & Afifi, T. D. (2014). Advancing instructional communication: Integrating a biosocial approach. *Communication Education*, 63(4), 383-404.
- [34] Ismail, N., & Idris, K. L. N. (2009). The Effects of Classroom Communication on Students' academic Performance at the International Islamic University Malaysia (Iium). *Unitar e-Journal*, 5(1), 37.
- [35] Jordan, M. E., & Babrow, A. S. (2013). Communication in creative collaborations: The challenges of uncertainty and desire related to task, identity, and relational goals. *Communication Education*, 62(2), 210-232.
- [36] Joseph, R. A. (2014). *Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria* (Vol. 56). Cambridge University Press.
- [37] Jungert, T., Alm, F., & Thornberg, R. (2014). Motives for becoming a teacher and their relations to academic engagement and dropout among student teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 40(2), 173-185.
- [38] Kokkonen, T. (2009). Discourse Between Teacher And Student: The effect of teacher's style of communication on learning environment as viewed in literature and the cinema.
- [39] Krosnick, J. A., & Alwin, D. F. (1987). An evaluation of a cognitive theory of response-order effects in survey measurement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51(2), 201-219.
- [40] LaBelle, S., Martin, M. M., & Weber, K. (2013). Instructional dissent in the college classroom: Using the instructional beliefs model as a framework. *Communication Education*, 62(2), 169-190.
- [41] Lawrence, R. C., Felson, D. T., Helmick, C. G., Arnold, L. M., Choi, H., Deyo, R. A., ... & Wolfe, F. (2008). Estimates of the prevalence of arthritis and other rheumatic conditions in the United States: Part II. *Arthritis & Rheumatism*, 58(1), 26-35.
- [42] LeFebvre, L., & Allen, M. (2014). Teacher immediacy and student learning: An examination of lecture/laboratory and self-contained course sections. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 14(2), 29-45.
- [43] Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning.
- [44] Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtle, K. H. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice* (Vol. 28). John Wiley & Sons.
- [45] Mangal, S. K. (2002). *STATISTICS IN PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION*. PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.
- [46] Mazer, J. P. (2013). Student emotional and cognitive interest as mediators of teacher communication behaviors and student engagement: An examination of direct and interaction effects. *Communication Education*, 62(3), 253-277.
- [47] Mazer, J. P., McKenna-Buchanan, T. P., Quinlan, M. M., & Titsworth, S. (2014). The dark side of emotion in the classroom: Emotional processes as mediators of teacher communication behaviors and student negative emotions. *Communication Education*, 63(3), 149-168.
- [48] McCroskey, J. C., Valencic, K. M., & Richmond, V. P. (2004). Toward a general model of instructional communication. *Communication quarterly*, 52(3), 197-210.
- [49] McCroskey, L. L., Teven, J. J., Minielli, M. C., & Richmond McCroskey, V. P. (2014). James C. McCroskey's instructional communication legacy: Collaborations, mentorships, teachers, and students. *Communication Education*, 63(4), 283-307.
- [50] Miller, A. N., Katt, J. A., Brown, T., & Sivo, S. A. (2014). The Relationship of Instructor Self-Disclosure, Nonverbal Immediacy, and Credibility to Student Incivility in the College Classroom. *Communication Education*, 63(1), 1-16.
- [51] Mills, G. E., & Gay, L. R. (2015). *Educational research: competencies for analysis and applications*. Pearson.

- [52] Morreale, S., Backlund, P., & Sparks, L. (2014). Communication Education and Instructional Communication: Genesis and Evolution as Fields of Inquiry. *Communication Education*, 63(4), 344-354.
- [53] Mulford, B., & Silins, H. (2003). Leadership for organisational learning and improved student outcomes—What do we know?. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(2), 175-195.
- [54] Pasfield-Neofitou, S., Huang, H., & Grant, S. (2015). Lost in second life: virtual embodiment and language learning via multimodal communication. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 63(5), 709-726.
- [55] Pinnock, H (2006) Language and Education; the missing link Retrieved from CfBt Education Trust.
- [56] Pinnock, H., & Vijayakumar, G. (2009). Language and education: The missing link. Available here: <http://www.unesco.org/education/EFAWG2009/LanguageEducation.pdf>.
- [57] Reeve, J. (2009). Why teachers adopt a controlling motivating style toward students and how they can become more autonomy supportive. *Educational Psychologist*, 44(3), 159-175.
- [58] Rosenshine, B., & Furst, N. (1971). Research on teacher performance criteria. In *Research in teacher education: a symposium*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall (pp. 37-72).
- [59] Schrodtt, P., Witt, P. L., & Turman, P. D. (2007). Reconsidering the measurement of teacher power use in the college classroom. *Communication Education*, 56(3), 308-332.
- [60] Skinner, E. A., Kindermann, T. A., & Furrer, C. J. (2008). A motivational perspective on engagement and disaffection: Conceptualization and assessment of children's behavioral and emotional participation in academic activities in the classroom. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*.
- [61] Smith, T. W., & Brehm, S. S. (1981). Cognitive correlates of the Type A coronary-prone behavior pattern. *Motivation and Emotion*, 5(3), 215-223.
- [62] Soller, A. (2001). Supporting social interaction in an intelligent collaborative learning system. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education (IJAIED)*, 12, 40-62.
- [63] Stodolsky, S. S. (1984). Teacher evaluation: The limits of looking. *Educational Researcher*, 13(9), 11-18.
- [64] Titsworth, S., Quinlan, M. M., & Mazer, J. P. (2010). Emotion in teaching and learning: Development and validation of the Classroom Emotions Scale. *Communication Education*, 59(4), 431-452.
- [65] Treem, J. W., Dailey, S. L., Pierce, C. S., & Leonardi, P. M. (2015). Bringing Technological Frames to Work: How Previous Experience with Social Media Shapes the Technology's Meaning in an Organization. *Journal of Communication*, 65(2), 396-422.
- [66] Urea, R. (2012).The Influence of the Teacher's Communication Style on the Pupil's Attitude towards the Learning Process.*Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 41-44.
- [67] Urea, R. (2013).The Impact of Teachers' Communication Styles on Pupils' Self-safety Throughout the Learning Process.*Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, 164-168.
- [68] Walberg, H. J., & Haertel, G. D. (1980). Evaluation reflections: Validity and use of educational environment assessments. *Studies in educational evaluation*, 6(3), 225-238.
- [69] Zhang, Q., & Zhang, J. (2013). Instructors' positive emotions: Effects on student engagement and critical thinking in US and Chinese classrooms. *Communication Education*, 62(4), 395-411.