



Research Article



An Assessment of Communication Skills of Primary School Teachers in a Catholic Educational Institution

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Article Information

Article ID Number

202301032

Article History

Received	16	Jan	2023
Reviewed	31	Mar	2023
Revised	03	May	2023
Accepted	04	May	2023
Published	13	Jun	2023

Gunning Fog Index: 14.27

Similarity Index: < 20%

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Quick Response Code



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Abstract

Communication is indeed significant in our day-to-day interactions. It allows us to have a meaningful and successful dialogue when everyone engages in effective communication. Thus, this study is conducted to determine the communication skills of primary school teachers. Moreover, the descriptive-correlational method was used with 27 primary teachers from the elementary department. Primary school teachers have a high level of communication skills, particularly in speaking and listening, as well as in writing, body language proficiency, the use of daily and modern communication means, and observation skills. However, they have a moderate level of competence along with reading skills. This suggests that primary teachers are well-equipped to effectively communicate with their students, colleagues, and parents, which is essential in promoting a positive and conducive learning environment. The finding, which states that there is no significant difference in communication skill among primary teachers based on their profile variables, also indicates that regardless of their personal characteristics, teachers have a consistent level of communication competency that can be further developed and enhanced through training and professional development programs. Overall, this study underscores the importance of communication skills for primary teachers and highlights the need for continuous improvement in this area to ensure effective communication and positive outcomes in the classroom.

Keywords

Catholic educational institution, communication skills, primary school teachers

DOI 10.5281/zenodo.8031240

URL: <https://actonlineedu.org/ijaapr-v2i1-202301032>



Published by

Academic Course Tutorial Online Education Inc., Philippines

Philippine SEC Registration No. 2022090068590-16 Website: <https://actonlineedu.org/>



INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Communication is primordial important in the educational process. With effective communication, teachers are able to deliver quality instruction. Hence, communication becomes effective when a communicator is effective enough to communicate competently, simply, clearly, sincerely, and dynamically (Ahmad, 2016). Moreover, communication must be regarded as one of the most essential indicators of human communication, such that the success of educators, professors, and students aids in realizing the content and clarifying the needs (Rahmanzadeh and Najafi Naiser, 2013). The goal of learning a language is inextricably tied to the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Thus, communication is a universal process that has an impact on the actions of the human community (Ahmad, 2016). Moreover, communication is the exchange of feelings, ideas, and points of view with others. This can be academic, personal, verbal, or written. Hence, to communicate effectively, it is necessary to identify the least developed skills among teachers' communication skills.

Furthermore, communication skills may be described as the conveyance of a message with mutual understanding across the settings in which the communication occurs. Furthermore, teacher communication skills are vital in the delivery of education to learners (Khan, Zia-UI-Islam, & Khan, 2017). Communication skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A teacher must be highly skilled in all these areas to be an excellent teacher. A teacher who communicates well is usually successful, making things simpler and more understandable. Effective communication skills are critical for teachers in the transmission of education, teaching methods, and interaction with learners. The teacher must instruct learners in various ways of thinking. A teacher must adopt communication skills that drive learners to study in line with their abilities and potential (Sng Bee, 2012). Thus, teachers with strong communication skills may offer lessons in an aesthetic way (Moreno, 2009).

Moreover, poor communication skills might affect the teaching and learning process. Thus, it will lead to confusion and misunderstanding. On the other hand, good communication skills reduce the possibility of harsh feelings throughout the educational process. Thus, it will help them communicate smoothly and successfully (Khan, Zia-UI-Islam, & Khan, 2017). Effective communication is necessary for many facets of life, not just effective teaching. The effectiveness of teachers in the classroom is solely based on their communication abilities. As a result, an instructor with great communication skills will be able to easily convey their message or provide the lesson in an understandable way (Loss, 2000; Mushburn, 2008). Effective communication, particularly in the

educational profession, is built on the capacity to present one's own thoughts and points of view clearly, confidently, and simply while constantly tailoring one's material and style to the class (Muste, 2016).

Several studies have primarily focused on enhancing learners' communication skills, but they overlook the fact that teachers play a critical role in providing high-quality education, specifically in the delivery of quality information with confidence and accuracy through effective communication (Downing, 2005; Wagner, Lentz, & Heslop, 2002; Yusuf & Adeoye, 2012).

The communication skills of primary school teachers are an important area of research because they play a vital role in shaping the academic and social development of young children. Effective communication skills enable teachers to create positive learning environments, foster positive relationships with their students, and facilitate effective classroom management. However, research has shown that many primary school teachers struggle with communication skills. Some teachers may have difficulty explaining concepts clearly, engaging with students, or managing conflicts effectively. These communication difficulties can lead to negative outcomes such as low academic achievement, poor behavior, and low self-esteem among students. Additionally, in today's world, there is a growing emphasis on the importance of soft skills, including communication skills, in the workplace. Thus, developing effective communication skills among primary school teachers can benefit not only their students but also the teachers themselves in their future careers.

Therefore, studying the communication skills of primary school teachers is essential in identifying the specific areas in which teachers may need support and training to improve the academic and social outcomes of young students and to help teachers develop essential skills that will benefit them in their careers. Hence, the research was undertaken.

Literature Review

The Importance of Effective Communication Skills in Education

Effective communication skills play a critical role in promoting student learning and academic achievement in educational settings. Through effective communication, teachers can foster positive relationships with students, encourage student engagement and participation, and create a supportive classroom environment that promotes academic success (Khan et al., 2017).

Several studies have highlighted the importance of effective communication skills in education. Muste (2016) conducted a study and found that positive teacher-student relationships, facilitated by effective communication, promote engagement, motivation, and



academic achievement. Similarly, Khasawneh (2021) noted that effective communication skills are essential for teachers in primary schools, as they facilitate the development of positive relationships between teachers, students, and parents. Effective communication also helps to establish clear expectations and goals for students. For instance, Ahmed (2016) found that teachers who effectively communicate with their students can better set and communicate clear expectations for academic performance and behavior. As a result, students are more likely to understand what is expected of them and work towards achieving those goals.

Effective communication is also crucial to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. Teachers who communicate effectively can better recognize and respond to the diverse needs and backgrounds of their students. Choudhary and Gupta (2015) found that effective communication skills among teachers help create a positive classroom environment that fosters a sense of belonging and encourages students to participate in class activities. However, effective communication skills are not innate and require ongoing development and refinement. Several studies have explored the various strategies and approaches that can be used to enhance communication skills among educators. Abbasi et al. (2011) found that incorporating communication skills training into teacher education programs and professional development opportunities can be effective. Additionally, coaching and mentoring programs and peer feedback can help teachers develop and improve their communication skills (Yildashev & Yildasheva, 2019).

In summary, effective communication skills are essential in education, facilitating positive teacher-student relationships, promoting engagement and motivation, creating a supportive learning environment, and establishing clear expectations for academic performance and behavior. Ongoing professional development and training can help teachers enhance their communication skills and improve student outcomes.

Communication Skills of Teachers

Effective communication skills are an essential component of teaching and influence student learning and success. Teachers must communicate clearly and effectively with students, parents, and other professionals to facilitate learning and promote positive outcomes. Several studies have explored the various communication skills necessary for effective teaching. One critical communication skill for teachers is active listening. Active listening involves paying close attention to students, providing feedback, and showing empathy. Muste (2016) found that active listening is positively associated with student achievement, engagement, and positive attitudes towards learning.

Another critical communication skill is verbal communication. Verbal communication includes the use of language, tone, and pacing. Several studies have found that teachers who communicate clearly and effectively can positively influence student outcomes. Paolini (2015) noted that teachers' effective verbal communication skills are associated with students' academic success as well as improved relationships between teachers and students. Nonverbal communication, including body language and facial expressions, is also essential for effective teaching. Nonverbal communication can influence students' perceptions of their teachers and their learning environment. Good (2014) found that nonverbal communication plays a crucial role in building trust and rapport between teachers and students.

Moreover, technology-based communication is increasingly becoming an essential component of teaching. Many teachers now use digital technologies to communicate with students, parents, and colleagues. For example, email, video conferencing, and social media platforms are commonly used to provide feedback, share information, and collaborate with others. Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) found that technology-based communication can enhance the quality and effectiveness of communication between teachers, parents, and students.

However, effective communication skills are not innate and require ongoing development and refinement. Several studies have explored the various strategies and approaches that can be used to enhance communication skills among educators. For example, teacher training programs and professional development opportunities can be effective in improving communication skills (Gopang, 2016). Additionally, mentoring and coaching programs can help teachers develop and refine their communication skills (Kahraman & Abdullah, 2016).

Effective communication skills are an essential component of teaching and influence student learning and success. Active listening, verbal and nonverbal communication, and technology-based communication are all critical communication skills for teachers. Ongoing professional development and training can help teachers develop and refine their communication skills, improving student outcomes and promoting positive relationships between teachers, students, and parents.

Factors Affecting the Communication Skills of Teachers

Effective communication skills are essential for teachers to successfully engage with students, colleagues, and parents. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively can positively impact the learning outcomes of students and improve the overall classroom environment. However, several factors can affect the communication skills of teachers.



One significant factor is the teacher's background and training. According to Al-Musalli (2019), teachers who have received training on communication skills are more likely to possess effective communication skills. However, several studies have noted that many teachers lack adequate training in communication skills (Back et al., 2019; Bai & Yuan, 2019). Another factor that can affect communication skills is the teacher's personality traits. Several studies have found that personality traits, such as introversion, can negatively impact communication skills (Emirza & Sahril, 2021; Blevins et al., 2022; Tuovinen et al., 2020). Additionally, stress and anxiety can also affect communication skills among teachers (Ofiaz, 2019).

The classroom environment can also affect the communication skills of teachers. For example, large class sizes, disruptive student behavior, and limited resources can all impact a teacher's ability to communicate effectively (Shi, 2019; Islam & STapa, 2021). Furthermore, the cultural backgrounds of students can also impact communication, as teachers may need to adjust their communication styles to better engage with students from diverse backgrounds (Abacioglo et al., 2020). Finally, technological advancements have also influenced the communication skills of teachers. The increasing use of digital technologies in the classroom has introduced new communication channels, such as email, social media, and instant messaging (Bennett & McWhorther, 2020). However, technology can also present challenges, such as the risk of misinterpretation, the potential for distraction, and the need for teachers to develop new communication skills.

Several factors can affect the communication skills of teachers, including background and training, personality traits, classroom environment, cultural backgrounds, and technological advancements. Teachers who possess effective communication skills are better equipped to engage with students, colleagues, and parents, ultimately improving student outcomes and promoting positive relationships in the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Bandura's (1978) Social Learning Theory, which suggests that individuals learn new behaviors by observing others and modeling their behavior. This theory posits that people learn through a process of observation, imitation, and reinforcement. In the context of the communication skills of primary school teachers, social learning theory explains how teachers develop effective communication skills by observing and modeling the behavior of others. For example, teachers may learn effective communication techniques by observing other skilled teachers, attending workshops, or participating in mentoring programs.

Furthermore, social learning theory emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in shaping behavior. In the context of the communication skills of primary school teachers, reinforcement may come in the form of positive feedback from students and colleagues, increased student engagement and achievement, and a more positive classroom environment. Overall, social learning theory provides a useful framework for understanding how primary school teachers acquire and develop effective communication skills. By examining the role of observation, modeling, and reinforcement in the development of communication skills, researchers can identify strategies for improving communication skills training and support for primary school teachers.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the communication skills of primary teachers. Specifically, it addresses the following objectives:

1. What is the profile of the primary teachers, along with the following:
 - a. Sex
 - b. Age
 - c. Civil Status
 - d. Field of Specialization
 - e. Highest Educational Attainment
2. What is the communication skill of primary teachers, along with the following:
 - a. Writing skill
 - b. Speaking skill
 - c. Listening skill
 - d. Reading skill
 - e. Body language proficiency
 - f. Use of daily and modern communication means
 - g. Observation skill
3. Is there a significant difference in the communication skills of primary teachers when grouped according to their profile variables?

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative type of research employing a descriptive method to determine the communication skills of primary school teachers. The descriptive method involves describing a phenomenon or group of people in detail. In this case, the researchers aimed to describe the communication skills of primary school teachers in detail. This method is appropriate because the study focused on understanding the current state of primary school teachers' communication skills and did not attempt to establish cause-and-effect relationships or test hypotheses.



Sample and Sampling Technique

The respondents to the study were the 27 teachers of the Elementary Department at the University of Saint Louis. Hence, total enumeration was utilized in the study.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire with two parts was utilized in the study. The first part determines the profile of the respondents along with the following: sex, age, civil status, specialization, and highest educational attainment. The second part involves items measuring the communication skills of the respondents. Items were lifted from the Communication Skills Assessment developed by Williams and Crump (2019). The CSA is a self-report questionnaire that measures communication skills in the workplace. It includes items related to writing, speaking, listening, and observation skills. It also measures body language and the use of modern communication tools. Prior to the distribution of the tool, it underwent a process of expert validation for its contents. In addition, reliability testing was also conducted to ensure reliability and suitability for the target respondents. The results of the reliability test revealed a value of 0.850, which means that the tool is reliable and suitable.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study followed a systematic approach to data gathering. Initially, the researchers sent a letter of permission to the university president for the conduct of the study. After approval, questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents. After the data gathering, the researcher tallied the responses of the participants, and the collated data were given to the assigned data analyst for processing. It is important to note that ethical considerations were strictly employed by the researcher, such as keeping the confidentiality of the participants, and the letters and communications to proper authorities were observed. An informed consent form was also given to the participants prior to the distribution of the research questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were utilized in the study:

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents.

A weighted mean was used to determine the communication skills of the respondents using the following mean range and qualitative descriptions:

Range	Interpretation
4.50–5.00	Very High
3.50–4.49	High
2.50–3.49	Moderate
1.50–2.49	Low
1.00–1.49	Very Low

An independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance were used to determine significant differences in the communication skills of the respondents when grouped according to profile variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Primary Teachers

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	4	14.81
Female	23	85.19
Age		
23-25	12	44.44
26-29	5	18.52
30-35	1	3.70
36-39	2	7.41
40 and above	7	25.93
Age Mean: 29.30		
Civil Status		
Single	14	51.85
Married	13	48.15
Specialization		
BSEd	17	62.96
BEEd	10	37.04
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	21	77.78
Master's Degree	5	18.52
Doctoral Degree	1	3.70

Table 1 shows the profile variables of primary teachers along the following: sex, age, civil status, field of specialization, and highest educational attainment. It is shown on the table that the majority of the primary teachers were female, ages 23–25, single, and took up BSED as their program of specialization. Lastly, the majority of the primary teachers were bachelor's degree holders.

Primary School Teachers' Communication Skills

Table 2
Primary School Teachers' Communication Skills

Dimension	Mean	Qualitative Description
Writing Skill	4.09	High
Speaking Skill	4.70	Very High
Listening Skill	4.68	Very High
Reading Skill	2.99	Moderate
Body Language Proficiency	3.71	High
Use of Daily and Modern Communication Means	4.46	High
Observation Skills	4.27	High
Overall Mean	4.13	High

Table 2 presents the communication skills of primary teachers. The results show that primary teachers have a high level of writing skills. This finding highlights the importance of writing skills in the teaching profession, especially when constructing letters and other important documents. Writing is considered a productive skill that



every educator must possess. This finding is consistent with the study of Salem (2013), who identified that writing is one of the four basic language skills that requires special consideration. This highlights the significance of writing as an effective means of communicating one's ideas to others, promoting a sense of ownership, and allowing the expression of inner feelings. Furthermore, writing is an important component of classroom activities that reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary, as supported by the research conducted by Al-Saleem (2008). Helal (2003) further argues that challenging writing activities add variety to writing instruction and assist students in developing important literacy skills. Overall, the findings suggest that primary school teachers place high importance on writing skills, which are an essential component of their communication skills toolkit. Effective writing skills are crucial for communicating with parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders and for developing teaching materials and lesson plans. The emphasis on writing skills could be attributed to the academic nature of teaching, where written communication is a critical component of assessment and reporting. This highlights the need for teacher education programs to focus on developing writing skills among aspiring educators. Additionally, teacher professional development programs should be designed to provide opportunities for practicing and refining writing skills to further improve their communication abilities.

Meanwhile, it also reveals that primary teachers have a high level of speaking skill, which indicates that they often utilize this skill to support the teaching-learning process. This finding is consistent with the study of Rao (2019), which highlights the significance of speaking as a productive skill and essential for achieving success in all areas, particularly in today's global world. Speaking has the greatest degree of importance and usefulness among the four components of communication skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—with a significant impact on oral communication with the audience, according to Khabaz (2013). The importance of speaking skills for teachers is undeniable, as they are crucial for delivering instructions, explaining concepts, answering questions, and building rapport with students. Moreover, speaking skills are essential for effective communication with parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders. A teacher's speaking skills can impact student engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to choose their words carefully, as each word can evoke a specific emotion and serve a specific function in people. The high level of speaking skills among primary teachers indicates that they are equipped with the necessary communication skills to meet the demands of their profession effectively. However, it is essential to note that speaking skills require regular practice and refinement to maintain proficiency.

Therefore, teacher education programs and professional development initiatives should focus on providing opportunities for practicing and improving speaking skills to enhance communication abilities among teachers. Additionally, it is important to recognize the significance of speaking skills in the teaching profession and to provide support and resources to teachers to continually enhance their communication abilities.

Along with reading skills, primary teachers have a moderate level of competence. It is interesting to note that reading is one of the fundamental skills that teachers should possess. The importance of reading is reflected in the study of Shadiya and Wambai (2018), which stated that reading is an essential part of human life that enables individuals to gain knowledge, understand new concepts, and improve their communication skills. Reading can enhance teachers' knowledge and comprehension of various topics, which they can use in their teaching profession. It is important for teachers to be well-read in order to provide their students with a wide range of information and expose them to diverse ideas and perspectives. The moderate level of reading skill among primary teachers may be attributed to several factors, such as lack of time, inadequate access to reading materials, and limited interest in reading. To address this issue, schools can provide access to reading materials such as books and journals and encourage teachers to set aside time for reading.

In addition, professional development programs can be offered to help teachers improve their reading skills and develop a love for reading. It can then be concluded that reading is an essential skill for teachers that can greatly impact their communication skills and teaching effectiveness. It is important for schools and teachers to recognize the importance of reading and take steps to enhance their reading skills. By doing so, they can provide their students with a rich and diverse learning experience.

Meanwhile, the body language proficiency of primary teachers was assessed as high. This implies that primary teachers use non-verbal communication to convey meaning, which helps them get the attention of learners. Thus, primary teachers are exposed to non-verbal communication because of the nature of learners, which helps them manage learners. Effective communication requires both verbal and non-verbal communication in negotiating interactions and for meaningful dialogue (Gregersen, 2007). Communication is more than just words, and educators must grasp the nonverbal cues they transmit and receive in teaching. Facial expressions, eye contact or lack thereof, proximity and intimacy, hand gestures, and body language are all examples of nonverbal signals (Miller, 2005; Sutiyo, 2018). Furthermore, the table shows that the use of daily and modern communication means was high. This implies that primary teachers were technology-driven in their use of communication channels for effective communication and interaction.

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Thus, primary teachers use technology to enhance collaboration and communication through varied activities. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) generates a strong learning environment and alters the teaching and learning process by allowing people to engage with knowledge in an active, self-directed, and supportive environment (Volman & Van Eck, 2001; Afshari, Bakar, Luan, Samah, & Fooi, 2009). Thus, with technology becoming more prevalent in our daily lives, it is important to reconsider incorporating technology into instruction and instead try integrating technology into pedagogy to help the learning process. This suggests that technology becomes an inherent component of the learning experience and an important factor for teachers, beginning with the preparation of learning activities and continuing with the teaching and learning process (Eady & Lockyer, 2013).

Finally, it is clear from the results that the observation skills of primary teachers are high. This implies that observation skills are essential for quality interaction and communication in the delivery of effective instruction. Thus, in the educational process, this is highly observed to monitor individuals' communication, which shows how they behave in the interaction. Thus, observation is essential to facilitating learners' behavior and daily activities. Moreover, increasing their observation skills will help individuals' tolerance for uncertainty and desire to improve communication skills (Klugman, Peel, & Beckmann-Mendez, 2011). Hence, knowledge and skills in observation are required for a primary school teacher to become competent (Birkeland, 2019).

Significant Difference in the Communication Skill of Primary Teachers When Grouped According to their Profile Variables

Table 3
Significant Difference in the Communication Skill of Primary Teachers When Grouped According to their Profile Variables

Variables	t/F-value	p-value	Interpretation (Decision at 0.05)
Sex	.356	.382	Accept H_0
Age	1.173	.369	Accept H_0
Civil Status	-1.243	.480	Accept H_0
Program of Specialization	.531	.591	Accept H_0
Highest Educational Attainment	-.559	.642	Accept H_0

Table 3 shows the significant difference in the communication skills of primary teachers when grouped according to their profile variables. It can be gleaned from the table that there is no significant difference in the communication skills of primary teachers when grouped according to their profile variables. This implies that the communication skills of primary teachers do not vary regardless of their profile variables.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that primary teachers have a very high level of communication skills, including speaking and listening. Moreover, primary teachers frequently have a high level of communication skills, including writing, body language proficiency, use of daily and modern communication means, and observation skills. However, there is a moderate level of communication skills among teachers, along with reading skills. Lastly, there is no significant difference in the communication skills of primary teachers when grouped according to their profile variables.

Recommendations

This study highly recommends the following: (a) conduct programs or series of trainings that will help primary teachers boost interest in reading as a way to augment knowledge for effective communication; (b) conduct webinars that will primarily focus on the other indicators of communication skills for mastery since teachers should be holistic and versatile; and (c) conduct more research evaluating the effectiveness of the programs given to primary teachers for the enhancement of their communication.

IMPLICATIONS

The study results indicate that primary teachers have a high level of writing and speaking skills, while their reading skills are moderate. The findings highlight the importance of writing and speaking skills in the teaching profession, particularly for effective communication with students, parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Writing and speaking are also critical for developing teaching materials, lesson plans, and delivering instructions. The study highlights the need for teacher education programs to focus on developing writing and speaking skills among aspiring educators as well as providing opportunities for practicing and refining these skills. Meanwhile, the moderate level of reading skills among primary teachers may be addressed by providing access to reading materials and offering professional development programs to improve their reading skills and develop a love for reading. Overall, the study emphasizes the significance of communication skills in the teaching profession and the need for continuous improvement and refinement of these skills.

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Author(s)' Statements on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Ethics Statement	The author/s hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. The author/s take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.
Originality and Plagiarism Assessment	The manuscript has a similarity assessment of less than 20% in accordance with the publication ethics in terms of originality and plagiarism and the plagiarism policy of the journal.
Statement of Interest	The author/s have no conflict of interest to declare.
Funding	None

Suggested Citation

American Psychological Association (APA)	Mabborang, E., Langcay, M., & Tindowen, D. J. (2023). An assessment of communication skills of primary school teachers in a Catholic educational institution. <i>International Journal of Academic and Practical Research</i> , 2(1), 35-43.
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