# TEACHERS COMMUNICATION PATTERN AS PREDICTOR OF STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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#### **Abstract**

The study investigated teachers' communication pattern as predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 21,272 SS2 students in the 2023/2024 academic session in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample of the study comprised 361 SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument for data collection were three instruments: Teachers Communication Patterns Questionnaire (TCPQ) and Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS). The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instruments were ascertained through a pilot test. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to analyze the data collected. The reliability coefficient values of 0.80 and 0.82 were obtained for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.81 for Teachers Communication Patterns Questionnaire (TCPQ). Simple regression was used to analyze data for the study. Findings of the study revealed that teachers' verbal communication, teachers' non-verbal communication positively predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding further showed that teachers' verbal communication, teachers' non-verbal communication significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that teachers communication pattern predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on these findings, the researcher concludes among others, that the Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC) should organize regular training on effective verbal communication strategies, focusing on clarity, tone and engagement for teachers.

Keywords: Teachers, Communication Pattern, Students, Academic Performance

## Introduction

Academic performance is often represented by scores or grades assigned to students through tests and examinations conducted by their teachers. It can be understood as any metric that reflects a student's scholastic performance (Ohamobi & Ezeaku, 2015). Secondary school students' academic performance serves as a measure of school effectiveness and plays a vital role in shaping both individual and national well-being (Onyejekwe et al., 2025). Similarly, Adepoju and Akinwumi (2019) described academic performance as a multifaceted concept encompassing not only academic excellence but also positive behaviour, confidence, communication skills, punctuality, and engagement in arts and culture. It represents the outcomes of education and evaluates how well students, teachers, or institutions have met their educational objectives, typically assessed through examinations or ongoing evaluations (Ifelunni et al., 2019). Poor academic performance in certain subjects among secondary school students in Anambra State has become an increasingly pressing issue. This underperformance stems from various factors, including inadequate instructional materials, substandard school infrastructure, and socio-economic difficulties. However, a critical yet often underestimated factor contributing to this problem is the communication patterns of teachers.

Teacher communication patterns refer to the typical methods through which educators share information, ideas, and messages with students, parents, and colleagues to achieve educational objectives and support student success (Hanafi & Kristi, 2019). These patterns act as the framework for interactions between teachers and students, encompassing the types of messages exchanged—such as instructions, questions, and responses—that shape the classroom environment and influence learning outcomes. Abiodun-

Oyebanji (2019) described teacher communication patterns as the verbal and nonverbal methods teachers use to engage with students, facilitate learning, and build positive relationships in the classroom. Similarly, Sukris (2018) emphasized that the way teachers communicate plays a significant role in determining the effectiveness of teaching. Students' perceptions of their teachers' communication can impact their cognitive learning, engagement, and overall emotional experience during the learning process. Harilama et al. (2023) stated that communication pattern is an ongoing process characterized by the perpetual exchange of messages, encompassing both verbal and nonverbal components. Sophia et al. (2024) stated that there are two types of communication: verbal and nonverbal. In the context of the study, communication pattern is defined as the teacher's ability to effectively communicate with their students in order to improve their academic performance and manage their behaviour. Teachers communication pattern are verbal and nonverbal.

Verbal communication is seen to be the most basic kind of communication since it allows both the presenter and the listener to communicate the entire message right away. Verbal Communication requires the use of words, vocabulary, numbers and symbols and is organized in sentences using language. Awujo and Onwukwe (2019) defined verbal communication as the human vocal sounds or the arbitrary graphic presentation of these sounds in writing, used systematically and conventionally by a speech community for purpose of communication. Xie and Derakhshan (2021) defined verbal communication as the act of communicating verbally in a real-world context, using spoken words as a medium of exchange of information between the sender and the recipient. Verbal communication is also the most evident type of communication. Muklis et al. (2024) stated that effective verbal communication pattern includes not only the use of appropriate words, but also attention to communication style, and intonation, as well as the ability to capture students' attention and maintain interest during the learning process. The teacher is the one who always provides an explanation in the class. Awujo and Onwukwe (2019) opined that teachers' verbal communication ability refers to one's skills to make use of ideas through words, either oral or written. These skills involve vocabulary mastery to be able to choose the right words to give meaning to the audience. Verbal communication concerns the ability to organize the words in a way that is logical. Wahyuni (2017) asserted that good teachers are teachers who become role models in speaking and have good writing skills. Muklis et al. (2024) opined that just like verbal communication, non-verbal communication patterns of the teacher enhance positive and effective instructional interaction, which has direct effects on the students' attitude towards the teacher and the course and the students' willingness to learn.

Nonverbal communication encompasses a wide range of behaviors including facial expressions, vocal qualities, body movements, touch, proxemics, physical appearance, and even material objects. Idowu and Esere in Awoju and Onwukwe (2019) defined non-verbal communication as "body language." Awoju and Onwukwe stated that non-verbal communication involves all unspoken and unwritten messages that may be transmitted with intentions or by default. In nonverbal expression, we communicate with our body gestures, eye motion, and skin/touch sensations, space (standing, sitting, near or far apart) and smell. Nonverbal communication is the transmission of messages or signals through a nonverbal platform such as eye contact (oculesics), body language (kinesics), social distance (proxemics), touch (haptics), voice (paralanguage), physical environments/appearance, and use of objects. Hanafi and Kristi (2019) defined non-verbal communications as kinesics, proxemics, haptics (use of touch), vocalics (use of voice), chronemics (use of time) and artifacts (use of object). Khuman (2024) opined that non-verbal communication in teaching plays a crucial role in conveying messages, establishing relationships, and creating a positive and engaging learning environment. Khuman further stated that teachers communicate not only through words but also through various non-verbal cues like body language, facial expressions, eye contact and posture among others. Sukris (2018) opined that teachers who effectively use nonverbal cues, such as maintaining eye contact and using expressive body language, can create a more engaging classroom atmosphere. This engagement encourages students to participate actively, which is linked to better academic performance. Abdelmjeed and Mohammed (2022) noted that positive nonverbal communication fosters trust and rapport between teachers and students. When teachers display warmth and approachability through their nonverbal signals, students are more likely to feel comfortable seeking help and expressing their thoughts, leading to improved learning outcomes (Akulue et al., 2025). These views regarding the predictive value of teachers' communication pattern on students' academic performance have not been substantiated by empirical research. Therefore, the researcher sought to address this gap by conducting a study to investigate teachers' communication pattern as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State, particularly in subjects like Mathematics, has been on a steady decline in internal examinations. This trend raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of teaching and learning in public secondary schools. Despite various interventions aimed at improving students' performance, the persistent underperformance suggests that underlying factors may still need to be addressed. Field observations and interactions with students by the researcher reveal that some students are dissatisfied with their teachers' mode of communication in the classroom. Many students feel that certain teachers adopt harsh communication patterns, which may hinder effective learning and create a hostile classroom environment. Such observations raise the question of whether teachers' communication pattern predicts academic performance of public secondary school students in Anambra State.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' communication pattern as predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1. investigate the predictive value of teachers' verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
- 2. examine the predictive value of teachers' non-verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1. What is the predictive value of teachers' verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
- 2. What is the predictive value of teachers' non-verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1. Teachers' verbal communication pattern does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
- 2. Teachers' non-verbal communication pattern does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Methodology

The study adopted the correlational research design. The area of the study was Anambra State. Anambra State is a state located in southeastern Nigeria. The choice of Anambra State for this study is due to its reputation as one of the educationally advantaged states in Nigeria. Historically, Anambra State has consistently ranked first in external examinations such as WAEC. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable decline in the state's overall performance. In the past two WAEC examinations, the state has dropped from its top position, raising concerns about the factors contributing to this decline. The population of the study comprised 21,272 senior secondary school students in form 2 (SS2) in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The population comprised of 9550 male students and 11,722 female students in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample of the study was 400 (200 male and 200 female) secondary school students from the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. A multistage sampling technique was employed to determine the sample of the study. In the first stage, simple random sampling was used to select two education zones (Awka and Nnewi Education Zones). In the second stage, stratified random sampling was used to pick five public secondary schools from each education zone, making a total of 10 schools. Using cluster sampling technique in the third stage, the first arm of SS2 students in the 10 selected schools were participants in the study. Each arm of SS2 class had 40 students, and the 10 classes vielded a total of 400 students.

The instrument for data collection was questionnaire divided into two: Teachers Communication Patterns Questionnaire (TCPQ) and Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS). The Teachers Communication Patterns Questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The instrument contains 20 items spread in two Clusters; B1 and B2. Cluster 'B1 contains 10 items on teachers' verbal communication and Cluster B2 contains 10 items on teachers' non-verbal communication.

The Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was assessed using SS 2 students' scores in English Language which was collected from Recording Department, Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC), Awka Anambra State (2024). English Language was used for this study because it is a general and compulsory subject that determines the extent of students' academic performance.

The face validity of the instruments was ascertained by submitting the instruments together with the research topic, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses to three experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, all from the Faculty of Education, ChukwuemekaOdumegwuOjukwu University, Igbariam. The experts determined the face and construct validity of the questionnaires by vetting the items in terms of clarity of the words used, whether the items are easily understandable, relevance of items to the subject matter and content coverage of the questionnaire. The topic of study, statement of problem, purpose of study, research questions and hypotheses were attached to the copies of questionnaire that were given to the experts. These helped to serve as a guide for them to make their inputs. The experts corrected some item statements and instructions to make them clearer and straight forward. The researcher was asked to give appropriate title to the clusters. The researcher was also asked to separate double-barrel items, include source of questionnaire. Based on the suggestions, comments and corrections of the experts, the final version of the instrument was produced. Furthermore, the construct validity of the instruments were ascertained using the Principal Component Analysis approach with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) as a measure of sampling adequacy. The coefficient value of 0.83 was obtained.

The reliability of the instruments were established through a trial test. The questionnaires were administered on 20 SS2 students in Enugu State who were not included in the population of the study. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient values of 0.80 and 0.82 were obtained for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall reliability coefficient value of 0.81 for Teachers Communication Patterns Questionnaire (TCPQ). These coefficient values indicated that the instrument is reliable for the study. The research questions were answered using simple regression to evaluate the extent to which teachers' communication patterns predict students' performance scores. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance using SPSS version 26 for data analysis. Very High A positive coefficient (+) indicates a positive prediction between variables, while a negative coefficient (-) indicates a negative prediction. In testing the null hypotheses, simple regression was used to assess the predictive value of the independent variables (teachers' communication patterns) on the dependent variable (students' performance scores). If the p-value was  $\leq 0.05$ , the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant predictive effect. Conversely, if the p-value was > 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating no significant predictive effect.

## Results

# **Analysis of Research Questions**

**Research Question One:** What is the predictive value of teachers' verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1:Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on the Predictive Value of Teachers' Verbal Communication on Predict Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

		Unstandardized	Std. Dev.	Standardized
		β	β	β
Constant		38.147	6.245	_
Teachers' Verbal		.781	.312	.724
Communication Pa	ttern			
R	.724			
$\mathbb{R}^2$	.651			
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.623			

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 1 indicated that teachers' verbal communication pattern highly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient (R = .724). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), .651, showed that the explanatory power of the variable was highly strong. This implies that 65% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teachers' verbal communication pattern. The adjusted  $R^2$  supported the claim of the  $R^2$  with a value of .623 indicating that 62% of the total variation in the dependent variable (students' academic performance) was explained by the independent variable (teachers' verbal communication

pattern). Thus, adjusted  $R^2$  supports the statement that the explanatory power of teachers' verbal communication pattern is highly strong in determining the students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Nevertheless, the standardized beta weight ( $\beta$  = .781) showed that teachers' verbal communication pattern is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Hence, when teachers' use appropriate verbal communication pattern, it would improve the academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State.

**Research Question Two:** What is the predictive value of teachers' non-verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2:Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on the Predictive Value of Teachers' Non-Verbal Communication Pattern on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

		Unstandardized	Std. Dev.	Standardized
		β	β	β
Constant		24.281	3.072	
Teachers' Non-Verbal		.678	.349	.651
Communication Pattern				
R	.651			
$\mathbb{R}^2$	.627			
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.613			

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 2 indicated that teachers' nonverbal communication pattern highly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient (R = .651). The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>), .627, showed that the explanatory power of the variable was highly strong. This implies that 63% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teachers' non-verbal communication pattern. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> supported the claim of the R<sup>2</sup> with a value of .613 indicating that 61% of the total variation in the dependent variable (students' academic performance) was explained by the independent variable (teachers' non-verbal communication pattern). Thus, adjusted R<sup>2</sup> supports the statement that the explanatory power of teachers' non-verbal communication pattern is highly strong in determining the students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. However, the standardized beta weight ( $\beta$  = .651) showed that teachers' non-verbal communication pattern is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Hence, when teachers' use non-verbal communication pattern, it would improve students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis One:** Teachers' verbal communication pattern does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3:Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis on the Predictive Value of Teachers' Verbal Communication Pattern on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

		Unstandardized	Std. Dev.	Standardized	t-	p-
		β	β	β	value	value
Constant		38.147	6.245		49.847	0.000
<b>Teachers' Verbal</b>		0.781	0.312	0.724	52.683	0.000
<b>Communication P</b>	attern					
R	0.724					
$\mathbb{R}^2$	0.651					
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.623					
F	54.128					0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 revealed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.724 while the  $R^2$  is 0.651 and Adjust  $R^2$  is 0.623. The F-ratio associated with regression is 54.128, the t-test is 52.683 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05. This means that the effect of teachers' verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance is statistically significant. Thus, teachers' verbal communication pattern significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** Teachers' non-verbal communication pattern does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4:Test of Significance of Simple Regression Analysis on the Predictive Value of Teachers' Non Verbal Communication Pattern on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

		Unstandardized	Std. Dev.	Standardized	t- value	p-
<b>Q</b>		<u> </u>	p	р		value
Constant		34.281	5.972		21.094	0.000
Teachers' Non-Verbal		0.678	0.349	0.651	29.185	0.000
Communication						
R	0.651					
$\mathbb{R}^2$	0.627					
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.613					
F	33.459					.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 4 revealed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.651 while the  $R^2$  is 0.627 and Adjust  $R^2$  is 0.613. The F-ratio associated with regression is 33.459, the t-test is 29.185 and the P-value = .000. Since p-value (.000) is less than the specified level of significance .05. This means that the effect of teachers' nonverbal communication pattern on students' academic performance is statistically significant. Thus, teachers' nonverbal communication pattern significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that teachers' verbal communication predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding might have resulted because teachers who communicate clearly and effectively help students understand complex concepts better, leading to improved academic performance. Teachers who use verbal communication skillfully can create a more engaging learning environment. Motivational language can inspire students to focus, participate, and put in more effort, positively impacting their performance. This finding is in agreement with Obilor (2020) who found that teachers' verbal communication pattern influence students' academic performance to a high extent. Obilor reported that the way a teacher speaks and listens to their students influenced students' academic performance. However, Tariq and Ullah (2024) reported a positive but insignificant impact of teachers' communication skills on the academic performance of students at the secondary school level. The studies may have been conducted in different cultural or educational contexts, where communication styles, student expectations, or teacher-student relationships vary. What works in one context might not have the same impact in another. Similar study in Nigeria by Amadi (202) reported that principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State are in consensus that communication to a very high extent influences students' academic performance in public schools. In the same vein, Ebizie et al. (2020) reported that teachers need the following communication skills: listening to the pupils attentively when they ask questions; giving proper feedback to the questions raised by the pupils; repeating instructions orally or in writing and so on.

Furthermore, finding of the study revealed that teachers' verbal communication significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is because through verbal communication teachers can provide explanations on concepts and topics and give appropriate instructions that will guide students learning and this can ultimately predict students' academic performance. This is in agreement with Obilor (2020) who reported significant influence of teachers' verbal communication pattern on students' academic performance.

The finding of the study revealed that teachers' non-verbal communication predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding might have resulted because teachers' non-verbal communication, such as eye contact, facial expressions and gestures, can reinforce positive student behaviour and engagement. These cues can motivate students, making them feel more confident and valued in the learning process, which in turn improves their academic performance.

Also, non-verbal communication helps create a supportive and interactive classroom atmosphere. When teachers use positive body language, it fosters better student-teacher relationships, reducing anxiety and encouraging active participation, which can lead to improved academic performance. This is in line with Uleanya et al. (2020) who reported that non-verbal communication influenced students' academic performance. Tariq and Ullah (2024) reported that teachers' body language skills predicts the academic performance of students to a low extent. Nyarks and Enang (2020) revealed that teacher's communication skills play a very crucial role in building the student academic performances. Teachers communication skill motivates the students to enhances their abilities in subject matter like linguistic. Nyarks and Enang concluded that student academic performance is highly influenced by the teacher's communication skills of gestures and facial expressions.

Furthermore, finding of the study revealed that teachers' non-verbal communication significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is because nonverbal communication helps create a supportive and interactive classroom teachers' non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures, conveys emotions and attitudes that can significantly influence students' learning. Positive emotional expressions can create an encouraging learning environment, making students feel more engaged and motivated, which ultimately enhances their academic performance. Non-verbal cues, like hand gestures and body movement, help clarify and emphasise important points during instruction. This is in agreement Nyarks and Enang (2020) who found that nonverbal communication significantly influence students' academic performance. Yasmin et al. (2021) revealed that there is a significant impact of teachers' communication skills like facial expression, body and hand gestures on the students' academic performance. This form of communication supplements verbal explanations, making lessons more comprehensible for students, especially those who struggle with traditional verbal instruction. As a result, students are better able to grasp concepts, leading to improved academic performance. When teachers use positive body language, it fosters better student-teacher relationships, reducing anxiety and encouraging active participation, which can lead to improved academic performance.

#### Conclusion

The researcher concludes based on the findings of the study that teachers' communication pattern positively predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The appropriate use of communication patterns (verbal and non-verbal) in public secondary schools would significantly improve students' academic performance. It is therefore pertinent that public secondary school teachers take into cognizance the need to utilize appropriate communication pattern so as to improve students' academic performance.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

- 1. The Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC) should organize regular training on effective verbal communication strategies, focusing on clarity, tone, and engagement for teachers. Workshops and seminars should be organised to help teachers improve their verbal delivery of lessons, ensuring they communicate concepts effectively and foster student understanding.
- 2. Principals should also provide feedback mechanisms where teachers can receive constructive feedback on their nonverbal communication from peers, supervisors, and students. This will enable teachers to effectively use nonverbal cues to improve student engagement and performance.

165

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