

The Effects of Teachers' Pedagogical Communicative Practices on Students' Learning Experiences

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of teachers' Pedagogical Communicative Practices (PCP) on students' academic achievement. It employed the concurrent nested mixed methods design. A questionnaire and observation guide were used to collect data from 481 respondents (made up of two heads of schools, 54 teachers, and 425 students) selected from 34 senior high schools in the Ahafo, Bono and Bono East Regions of Ghana. These were analysed using means and standard deviation. Findings from the study showed that practices employed by teachers help students to feel comfortable in class, increase their participation and engagement, take risks, and achieve better academic performance. Teachers are seen as role models and mentors in the classroom. The selection of appropriate pedagogical communicative practices has much impact on students' learning experiences and every action taken by teachers has a lasting effect on their students' academic life and beyond. Teachers are expected to adopt practices that will instigate higher academic achievement and better social behaviour in the lives of their students.

Introduction

The ability and wisdom of teachers in handling learning activities in school will have a direct impact on learners' active involvement in learning activities (Copriady, 2014). Pedagogical competency refers to the skills and personality of a teacher in handling the instructional process with the help of instructional methods, teaching aids and resource (Ugbe, 2000). The competencies of teachers incorporate a range of subject knowledge content, an understanding of learning styles and methods, and how to translate such knowledge into effective instructional methods while developing an ability to comprehend and nurture the unique person in every learner (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Noddings, 2007). According to Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005), various factors influence academic performance of students in schools, including, among others, teaching methods and the utilisation of instructional resources.

Teachers' pedagogical communicative practice refers to all the

classroom discourse strategies and language behaviours of the teacher to facilitate effective transmission of messages and instructions to students to enable them gain access to knowledge and opportunities to advance their learning. Research examining teacher characteristics confirms the logical conclusion that poor academic performance of pupils correlates strongly with poor quality of teachers teaching them in school (Anselmus, 2011). Effective student learning and academic performance are hampered by weaknesses in teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and classroom behaviours including their communicative practices (Akyeampong, Pryor & Ampiah, 2006). For instance, whereas appropriate instructional methods would facilitate grasping of new concepts, inappropriate methods are likely to constrain knowledge retention and application, leading consequently to poor academic performance by students (Chang, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Although several factors contribute to student learning and success, the teacher's role in this learning process is pivotal. Teachers are the direct implementers of the school curriculum and, hence, wield an invaluable influence in the provision of education. Indeed, much rests on the shoulders of teachers, as they directly impart knowledge to students. The general expectation from both parents and the general public has, thus, been for teachers to ensure that the students they teach perform well academically, and often, they receive blame for the academic failures of their students. One major aspect of teachers' engagement with students during the curriculum implementation process is their pedagogical communication. This is the primary tool by which the teacher interacts with the students to facilitate their learning. A cursory look at the performance statistics of students in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in the Ahafo, Bono and Bono East Regions indicates that between 2015 and 2018, some schools consistently obtained 100 per cent pass while others struggled in respect of their students' performance. (The three regions, which until recently were together as one region are somehow considered as the middle belt of Ghana in terms of geographical location.) It appears no direct study has been conducted on the connection between teachers' pedagogical communicative practices and student learning and particularly in the three regions. It is, therefore, considered worthwhile to examine the connection between teachers' pedagogical communicative practices and students'

academic achievement, and the extent to which the former influences the latter in those three medial regions of Ghana.

Literature Review

Research suggests that competent teachers set the tone of the classroom by developing encouraging relationships with their students and designing lessons that build on students' strengths and abilities (Ubit, 2017). They establish and implement behavioural guidelines in ways that promote intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, they coach students through conflict situations, encouraging cooperation among the students and acting as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication and exhibitions of pro-social behaviour (Ubit, 2017).

The study by Ubit (2017) further revealed that the pedagogical communicative practices (PCPs) adopted by Accounting teachers in the discharge of their duties as implementers of the curriculum, help keep students focused on what is being taught in class, increase their participation and engagement and achieve better academic performance. Again, the study emphasised that Accounting teachers acknowledge and publicly appreciate diverse cultural and social points of view of students. This helps build students' confidence in order that they would see the importance of endeavouring to discover new Accounting knowledge virtually on their own. Sharing a similar perspective, Varga (2017) argues that if student perceive that they are welcomed and wanted in the classroom, they become motivated and participate freely in the class. Thus, the role the teacher plays in the classroom affects the perception students have on the relationship and the classroom environment, which ultimately contributes to achievement. Again, Ubit (2017) specified that although students were hesitant to speak in the classroom they generally expected teachers to deliver their lessons in a way that is easy for them to understand, with some humour so they would not be bored. Again, they expect teachers to explain the lesson first to them until they understand and also willing to repeat if they do not understand.

In addition, Accounting teachers are able to adopt practices that motivate students to strive to be the best, enjoy studying, build their confidence to take risk and encourage them to take ownership of outcomes of their actions and behaviour in the classroom. The teachers do this through the use of body gestures to make students feel comfortable in class to ask and answer questions, and through the use of appropriate teaching and

learning resources that help students to understand Accounting concepts, among others. Also, Accounting teachers ensure that students remain on task, pay attention and show interest in Accounting lesson and relate Accounting concepts to practical things outside the classroom.

Varga (2017) suggests that the most powerful predictor of a learner's motivation is their perception of control. He notes that because students already have a history of experiences on whether adults are attuned to their needs, teachers build on these experiences and that a student's perception of the teacher's behaviour impacts the relationship. Consequently, students who feel their teacher is not supportive towards them have less interest in learning and are less engaged in the classroom. According to Morayo (2015), the interaction in the classroom entails an active encounter of the teacher and the learner through verbal, gestural and resource instrumentality to bring about effective communication in the teaching-learning process. She added that the form of the teacher's initiation will go a long way to influence the kind of activities or interaction that will go on in the classroom (Morayo, 2015).

Research Method

The study adopted the concurrent nested mixed methods design, which was anchored as an embedded design through concurrent nested strategy. This design allows a researcher to use one dataset to play an auxiliary role to the primary data type (Creswell, Plano, Clark, *et al.*, 2003). This means that in a pure quantitative research, qualitative data can be gathered to address some research issues and vice versa. The basis for using the embedded design is the assumption that a single data type is not sufficient to address all the research questions (Creswell, *et al.*, 2003).

The target population of the study comprised teachers and students of senior high schools (SHSs) that offer Accounting in the Ahafo, Bono and Bono East Regions of Ghana. Currently, there are 72 public senior high schools within 27 districts in the Ahafo, Bono and Bono East Regions. In order to make the study more representative and authentic, out of these 72 public senior high schools, 34 senior high schools offering Accounting were randomly selected. The population in these 34 SHS constituted 425 students and 54 teachers. All the Accounting teachers in the selected schools were included in this study using a census survey. Forms two and three students were directly involved in the study and were randomly selected. This was

to ensure that the students had gained at least one-year experience to be able to speak to that experience sufficiently.

Results

The study had the main objective of describing the effects of teachers' pedagogical communicative practices on students learning experiences. The teachers and students sampled provided responses to the survey items related to the effects of pedagogical communicative practices. Table 1 presents a summary of the responses and observation results of the Accounting teachers on their pedagogical communicative practices and their effects.

Pedagogical Communicative Practices of Teachers and their Effects

Three pedagogical communicative practices (PCPs) and their effects recorded mean values of 4.5 and higher as noted from Table 1. These PCPs and their effects are: "It is ensured that students remain on task, pay attention and show interest during teaching for them to get the understanding of the concepts in the lesson" ($M = 4.54$, $SD = .54$), "Accounting concepts are related to practical things outside the classroom to help students see the usefulness of the information given in class" ($M = 4.70$, $SD = .46$) and "What students have learned and the general things they already know are used to help them understand new concepts in Accounting" ($M = 4.66$, $SD = .62$). The standard deviation of the three responses indicated the homogeneity in their responses. On the issue of relating Accounting concepts to practical things outside the classroom by teachers in making students see the usefulness of their information which was the highest, it was confirmed by the result from the observation results of $M = 3.86$ and $SD = 0.86$. Other effects from the responses includes teachers agreeing to the use of teaching and learning resources to help students understand the Accounting content (mean = 4.20, $SD = 0.79$). A standard deviation of 0.79 indicated that teachers have similar responses.

Teachers agreed strongly that they acknowledge and publicly appreciate diverse cultural and social points of view which enables students to participate in class discussions ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.57$). A Standard deviation of 0.57 indicated that teachers were homogeneous in their responses. With a mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 1.23, teacher responses were confirmed by the result from the observation that teachers sometimes publicly

Table 1: Teachers' Pedagogical Communicative Practices and Effects

No. Responses	Teachers			
	Responses		Observation	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Tone of teaching voice indicates seriousness and mastery of the core Accounting concepts	4.34	1.00	3.21	1.67
2. Criteria to be used for assessment are clearly communicated to students for them to prepare for lessons	3.59	1.21	–	–
3. Body gestures make students feel comfortable to contribute in class	4.44	0.57	–	–
4. Teaching and learning resources that help students to understand the Accounting concepts are used	4.20	0.79	3.9	0.83
5. It is ensured that students remain on task, pay attention and show interest during teaching for them to get the understanding of the concepts in the lesson	4.54	0.54	–	–
6. Accounting concepts are related to practical things outside the classroom to help students see the usefulness of the information given in class	4.70	0.46	3.86	0.86
7. Teachers' attractive and smart dressing encourages students pay attention in class	3.94	1.07	–	–
8. Diverse cultural and social points of view are acknowledged and publicly appreciated from which students participate in class discussions	4.41	0.57	3.14	1.23
9. Students are assisted by Teacher to uncover the knowledge construction process involved in learning and to discover new knowledge	–	–	3.93	0.62
10. What students have learned and things they already know are used to help them understand new concepts in Accounting	4.66	0.62	–	–
Mean of Means/Average Std Dev	4.31	0.7	3.61	1.04

Source: Fieldwork (2018).

Mean values: *Strong Disagree* (1); *Disagree* (2); *Uncertain* (3); *Agree* (4); *Strongly Agree* (5).

appreciate diverse cultural and social points of views of students. Again, teachers agreed that the tone of voice used in teaching indicates seriousness and mastery of the core Accounting content. (M=4.34, SD=1.00). The standard deviation value of 1.0 indicates that teachers were heterogeneous in their responses.

In sum, the results implied that teachers have a clear knowledge of the perceived effects of the pedagogical communicative practices (Mean of means=4.31, average standard deviation=0.70). However, the average standard deviation of 0.70 indicated that the teachers' responses were homogeneous. As such, they affirmed that they have a clear perception of the effect of their pedagogical communicative practices. This was supported by the results from the observation where it was observed that Accounting teachers frequently adopt practices that have positive influence on their students' achievement. This came with a mean of (3.61) and an average standard deviation of 1.04. Table 2 presents a summary of views of students on the effects of teachers' pedagogical communicative practices.

The results from Table 2 showed that the student respondents agreed that teachers use resources that help them to understand Accounting concepts (Mean=4.27, SD=1.01). The standard deviation value of 1.01 indicates that students had varied responses regarding teachers' use of teaching and learning resources in teaching Accounting, with all their responses showing teachers making good use of teaching and learning resources to teach Accounting concepts.

Students affirmed the responses from the teachers that Accounting teachers relate Accounting concepts to practical things outside the classroom and also help them to see the usefulness of the information they give in class (Mean=4.25, SD=0.97). The standard deviation value of (0.97) showed that the students had homogeneous responses.

In addition, mean scores for students reveal that teachers' tone of voice in teaching indicates seriousness and mastery of the core Accounting concepts (Mean=3.01, SD=1.40). Standard deviation value of 1.40 indicated that students had heterogeneous responses hence disagreed.

Furthermore, with a mean of 4.07 and standard deviation value of (1.09), students agreed the teachers constantly review their previous knowledge and use the general things they already know to help them understand new concepts in Accounting. The standard deviation value of 1.09 indicates the differences in students' responses. Students, just like the teachers, also agreed that teachers ensure that students remain on task, pay

Table 2: Views of students on the Effects of Teachers' Pedagogical Communicative Practices

<i>No. Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Teacher uses teaching and learning resources that helps me to understand Accounting concepts	4.27	1.01
2. Teacher ensures that you remain on task, pay attention and show interest when he/she is teaching so that you get the understanding of the concepts in the lesson	3.73	1.36
3. Teacher constantly gives the assurance that students are good so we always contribute in the Accounting class	3.90	1.15
4. Teacher relates Accounting concepts to practical things outside the classroom which enable us to see the usefulness of the information he/she gives in class	4.25	0.97
5. Teacher publicly values different cultural and social points of view from the class so we do not feel intimidated	3.79	1.23
6. Teacher communicates clearly to us the criteria that would be used for assessment for us to prepare for lessons	3.91	1.17
7. Teacher's tone of voice in teaching indicates seriousness and mastery of the core Accounting concepts	3.01	1.40
8. Teacher's dressing shows how seriously he/she takes the profession and the impact it has on us to become Accounting teachers	3.71	1.36
9. Teacher is always attractively and smartly dressed so I pay attention to him/her in class	3.85	1.21
10. Teacher's body gestures make me feel comfortable to speak during instructional hours	3.45	1.29
11. Teacher constantly reviews your previous knowledge and use the general things you already know to help you understand new concepts in Accounting	4.07	1.09
12. Teacher's continuously use of integrating core concepts from various subject areas helps you understand concepts you learn in Accounting	4.21	0.96
Mean of Means/Average Std Dev	3.85	1.18

Source: Fieldwork (2018).

Mean values: *Strong Disagree* (1); *Disagree* (2); *Uncertain* (3); *Agree* (4); *Strongly Agree* (5).

attention and show interest when they are teaching to get the understanding of the concepts ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.36$). The standard deviation value of (1.36) indicates that the students were heterogeneous in their responses.

In short, the results implied that students have unclear perceived effects about teachers' pedagogical communicative practices (Mean of means=3.85, Average Standard Deviation=1.18). The average standard deviation of 1.18 indicates that the students' responses could be interpreted as heterogeneous as they affirmed that their views on the effects of teachers' pedagogical communicative practices are unclear.

Discussion

This study sought to solicit the views of students on the effect of pedagogical communicative strategies adopted by teachers during lesson delivery. It was found that practices employed by teachers help students to feel comfortable in class, increase students' participation and students' engagement, achieve better academic performance and help students to take risk.

Teachers are seen as role models and mentors in the classroom. Therefore, every action taken by teachers has a lasting effect on their students' academic life and beyond. Teachers are expected to adopt practices that will instigate higher academic achievement and better social behaviour in the lives of their students. Alluding to research findings, Ubit (2017) makes it clear that competent teachers set the tone of the classroom by developing and encouraging relationships with their students. They design lessons that build on students' strength and abilities, establishing and implementing behavioural guidelines in ways that promote intrinsic motivation. They also coach students through conflict situations, encouraging cooperation among students and act as role models for respectful and appropriate communication and exhibitions of pro-social behaviour.

Both teachers and students in the current study shared the view that pedagogical communicative practices adopted by Accounting teachers in the instructional process, help students to feel comfortable in class, increase students' participation and their engagement and achieve better academic performance. They also emphasised that Accounting teachers acknowledge and publicly appreciate diverse cultural and social points of view from students and help students to discover new Accounting knowledge on their own.

Buttressing this finding, Varga (2017) postulates that it becomes clear that if students perceive that they are welcomed and wanted in the classroom, they become motivated and participate effectively in the class. Thus, the role the teacher plays in the classroom affects the perception the students have on the relationship and the classroom environment, which ultimately contribute to achievement. Ubit (2017) specifies that although students found it difficult to express themselves, they generally expected teachers to deliver their lessons in a way that was easy for them to understand and to teach with some humour so they would not be bored. Again, they expect the teachers to explain the lesson first to them until they understand, and are willing to repeat if students do not understand.

In addition, Accounting teachers are able to adopt practices that motivate students to strive to be the best, enjoy studying, build their confidence to take risk and encourage them to take ownership of outcomes of their actions and behaviour in the classroom. They do this through the use of their body gestures to make students feel comfortable in class to ask and answer questions, appropriate teaching and learning resources that help students to understand Accounting concepts. Accounting teachers ensure that students remain on task, pay attention and show interest in the Accounting lesson and relate Accounting concepts to practical things outside the classroom.

In affirmation of this current finding, Varga (2017) suggests that the most powerful predictor of a child's motivation is the child's perception of control. He notes that because students already have a history of experiences with whether adults are attuned to their needs, teachers build on these experiences and that a student's perception of the teacher's behaviour impacts the relationship. In other words, students who feel their teachers are not supportive towards them have less interest in learning and are less engaged in the classroom. According to Morayo (2015), the interaction in the classroom entails an active encounter of the teacher and the learner through verbal, gestural and resource instrumentality to bring about effective communication in the teaching and learning process. She adds that the form of teacher initiation will go a long way to influence the kind of activities and interactions that will prevail in the classroom.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Established on the results of the study, the following conclusions are drawn

that the selection of appropriate pedagogical communicative practices have much impact on students' learning experiences. This is where the training that teachers have received is activated. At this point, teachers ought to fall on their professional skillset in order to deliver on the mandate for which their services are engaged. Students' learning experiences are further enhanced for utmost academic achievement if teachers are able to employ the most appropriate pedagogical communicative practices. Accounting teachers who are able to engage in the most appropriate pedagogical communicative practices enhance Accounting students' learning experiences, thereby ensuring academic success.

The effectiveness of Accounting teachers' pedagogical communicative practices contributes to students' academic performance. Teachers may engage in one form or another pedagogical communicative practice during their engagement with their students. But if these practices are not effective enough, the academic success of the students may not be guaranteed. Pedagogical communicative practices need to form part of the training of teachers for the senior high schools in order to prepare the teachers adequately for their assignments. Teachers are also expected to adopt practices that will instigate higher academic achievement and better social behaviour in the lives of their students.

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