IJEVS

Proper Communication Styles in Educational Setting from Lecturers' Perspectives

Balen M. Muhammed Sdeeq[1a], Evie Farida Sulaiman[1b], Chnar Zrar Hamad[1c], & Zhwan Dalshad Abdullah[1d*],

[1]Department of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Science and Health, Koya University, Koya KOY45, Kurdistan Region - F.R. Iraq; Faculty of Education, Tishik International University, Erbil-Iraq

[a] balen.muhammad@koyauniversity.org; [b] evie.farida@tiu.edu.iq; [c] chnar.zrar@koyauniversity.org;

[d] zhwan.dalshad@koyauniversity.org;

*Corresponding Author: zhwan.dalshad@koyauniversity.org | Phone Number: +9647501184542

Abstract

This study aims to find out the underlying factors of proper communication styles in educational settings from lecturers' perspectives. It also tries to find out if there is any significant difference between male and female lecturers' perspectives towards proper communication styles, and attempts to determine if there are differences between the private and public universities. Analyzing the data from self-developed questionnaire, yielded four factors; namely (listening, oral, writing, and body language) were derived from the varimax rotated matrix. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the private and public universities lecturers' perspectives towards proper communication. While, no statistically significant difference was found between male and female lecturers in their perspective towards listening, oral, and writing proper communication. The only difference found was in body language communication and it was in favor of female lecturers. The findings of this study will contribute in understanding factors of proper communication styles in educational setting.

Keywords: Proper communication; Perspective; Oral communication; Listening communication; Body language communication; Writing communication

1. Introduction

Communication style means a group of speech features of an individual in the act of communication. Style is specific methods of receiving the message, personal methods of interpreting the messages; and expressing the response and feedback (Duta et al., 2015). Norton (1975) defines a communication style as "the method a person uses verbal and nonverbal communicative acts to indicate how others should interpret a message. Novinger (2001) also has stated that any act is considered as a type of u communication, as it occurs in a social context . Based on Huble y's (1993) opinion, at any level of communication process things may go wrong, which makes the communication less effective. For example, the senders may not express what they want to say clearly; or the receivers may not understand the words the senders use. Many studies paid attention to how teachers communicate properly with the students inside class with the use of their tone of voice and bcdy language (Prozesky, 2000). Nevertheless, the communication between teachers and students is one of the main areas in teaching process, and it should be in a respective manner. For that matter, many studies have addressed the essential of teacher-student relationship in pr euniversity settings (Roorda et al., 201 1). According to Rowicki, and Mark (1999), communication is the heart of education which is a two-way process.

However, in this current study the purposes and research questions are presented with a detailed description of the study's methods. Results are discussed in terms of participants' perspectives, dimensions assessing the proper communication styles, and the difference between private and government universities. Last, practical and theoretical implications of the study, as well as future research, are considered. For the personality of the young people, the communication skills are essentially crucial (Pânișoară et al., 2015). However, studies on lecturer-student relationships at higher education settings are rare. One reason could be lack of a clear theoretical conceptual framework (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014).

We usually communicate in a variety way, either through oral communication, or listening, body language, and the written words. According to McKay et al. (2009), oral communication style (OCS) refers to spoken words and their meanings and the message that is intended or implied by the spoken words. The

ability to communicate orally is a fundamental competency for students in university , in addition , the development of sufficient communication skills are vital for success in future career (Al-Nouh et al., 2015). A lecturer's perception of a student's behavior may be influenced by some factors, such as interactions between the student and teacher, and general student performance (Murphy, 2007).

Moreover, the use of email as a means of workplace communication plays an effective role in information transmissions which deal with every day work requirements (Waldvogel, 2007). Specialists and academicians showed raising concerns about ethical problems in the use of the information communication technology (Harncharnchai & Inplao, 2015), and proper communication through emails has become a topic in many learning areas (Murphy & Matas, 2006). Studies showed that students use appropriate communication strategies in their academic setting to decrease the gaps between them and their teachers (Faiz & Suhaila, 2013). Whereas, other studies mentioned that there are many students who are not knowledgeable regarding the use of e-mail effectively or manage the interpersonal dynamics through email communication (Murphy & Matas, 2006). Likewise, Merdian and Warrior (2015) Merdian and Warrior (2015) stated that although the researches showed that digital communication have changed the ways how teachers and learners communicate for academic purposes, but also showed some shortcomings in the implementation of these tools.

However, to determine what is proper and what is not, is related to many factors such as specific cultures and gender. That is, what might be considered proper method of communication, whether written, oral or nonverbal, in a culture might be improper method in another culture. Merchant (2012) stated that males and females are different in the way they communicate and influence others. As explained by Leaper (1991), males and females use language communication for different reasons, women use language for enhancing social relations also to be more expressive, tentative and polite in conversations, while men use communication to practice power and dominance and also men are more dominant and assertive.

Bowles (2008) conducted a study on profiling year level and gender differences in adolescent communication styles. The findings showed that females were more withdrawing, concession and less confusion focused than males. The findings of this current study addressing the issues of proper communication style might be helpful in educational setting in terms of teaching process. Having positive interactions and relationships between lecturers and students have positive effects on the teachers themselves. When teachers feel respected by their students, a sense of belonging to their institutions or universities will grow. This will also influence the teaching process. Roorda et al. (2011) have found that teacher-student relationship affects both students' achievement and involvement. Thus, this present study examines the underlying dimensions of proper communication styles, and determines the difference between private and government university lecturers in their perspectives towards proper communication styles. This study also tries to determine the difference between male and female lecturers' perspectives towards proper communication styles.

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:
RQ1: What are the underlying dimensions of proper communication styles ?.
RQ2: Is there any significant difference between male and female lecturers' perspectives towards proper communication styles ?.
RQ3: Is there any significant difference between universities lecturers' perspectives towards proper communication styles from both private and government universities ?.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Participants

The participants of this study were selected based on convenient sampling technique. Lecturers from four different private and government universities served as participants of this study, including Koya University (KU), Salahaddin University (SU), Cihan University (CU), and Lebanese French University (LFU). Although three hundred 300 participants took part in this study, but the usable sample consisted of 268 participants. Among them, 81 were female and 187 were male.

2.2 Measurement

This study method was quantitative approach with a survey design. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers so as to examine the underlying factors of proper communication styles. The study measures were answered using a five-point response scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), the specialists and experts have validated the measure. The instrument was pilot tested on a broad sample (n=190). To decide the number of components for each factor, principal component analyses (PCA) was conducted. Consisting forty items and 4 hypothesized dimensions, the first dimension represents the students' body language communication style (BLCS), which is related to their appropriate facial expression, gesture, body posture,

and attendance behavior, in and outside classes while communicating with their teachers.

The second was geared towards measuring students' listening communication style (LCS), which is describing how skillful they are in listening when they communicate with their teachers, by paying attention, without interruption, receiving and responding to spoken/unspoken messages. The third dimension concerned the oral communication style (OCS) which is related to student's ability to hold a discussion and relevant conversation with their teachers in a respectful manner, by accepting the critical feedbacks, admitting their mistakes and the ability to complaint their teachers respectfully. The fourth dimension represents students' written communication style (WCS) through technology and internet in order to carefully tempering the content of formality, avoiding the use of jargon, and choosing the convenient time to send the messages.

After conducting the PCA exploratory within each block, reliability testing and a careful examination of the correlations, items were deleted and modified. Thus, 23 items were deleted from the instrument and only 17 items were remained. By calculating Coefficient Alpha, reliability was obtained, and to provide further evidence of construct validity and to illustrate the factorial structure of the instrument, a factor analysis was performed.

3. Results and Discussions

Principal component analysis was applied to examine the construct of proper communication styles, according to the data collected from the participants (n = 268) at public and private universities. The analysis confined to four dimensions, in Table 1 the Kaier-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy among the variables was high (.841) which is well above the recommended threshold of (.6) (Kaiser, 1974) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (941.797) reached statistical significance (p=0.000), indicating that the correlations were sufficiently large. The varimax rotation method was applied to the relevant data, to obtain sufficient factor solution. The items to be retained were selected on the basis of the following criteria: the solution was constrained using the criterion of eigenvalue ≥ 1.0 (Fabrigar et al., 1999) and meeting the criterion of factor loading generally not less than (.34) on the defining component (Hair et al., 1998).

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.841
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	941.797
	Df	136
	Sig.	.000

The analysis confined to four components has met the above criteria that explained a total of (56.7 %) of the variance. The variance of the first dimension was (21.5 %), the second (14.2%), the third was (10.7%) and the last was (10.2 %). The largest eigenvalue was (4.48) for the first dimension, while the other subsequent eigenvalues were (1.59), and (1.41), Table 2.

Table 2 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.683	27.550	27.550	3.657	21.513	21.513
2	2.393	14.075	41.625	2.419	14.229	35.743
3	1.488	8.751	50.376	1.833	10.781	46.524
4	1.088	6.402	56.778	1.743	10.255	56.778

According to Table 3, the analysis extracted four factor solutions, and the 17 items measured four underlying dimensions. The results suggest the existence of four common elements of the proper communication styles namely BLCS, LCS, OCS, and WCS. The empirical grouping of the items loaded on this factor reasons that the high scores on these dimensions imply that the proper communication styles are highly correlated with the BLCS, LCS, OCS, and WCS. These significant 17-items loading on the four components are represented as being initially hypothesized as a proper communication style.

In order to estimate the reliability for the four dimensions of the proper communication styles, Cronbach's alpha formula was used; see Table 3. The internal consistency indices for this scale were (0.58) for BLCS, (0.62) for OCS, (0.88) for LCS, and (0.76) for WCS. The overall Cronbach's alpha for this scale was (0.85). The varimax rotation indicates that four dimensions of the proper communication styles were moderately correlated.

Table 3. Loading for four factor rotated solution of proper communication styles and the alpha coefficient

Factor	Item	Factor loading				Cronbach's alpha coefficient
		F1	F2	F3	F4	
PCS	**BLCS**					.58
	1. Students directly looking into my eyes when they talk to me.	.728				
	2. Students Eat/Drink/ chew gum in my class.	.671				
	3. Students using mobile during the lecture.	.668				
	OCS					.62
	4. Some of students coming late to my class by giving the same reasons.		.752			
	5. Students admit their mistakes when they commit any, in or outside class.		.566			
	6. Students confronting lecturers in and outside class.		.515			
	7. Students hold their comments until I finish talking.		.487			
	LCS					.88
	8. Students listen to me calmly, while I am speaking.			.821		
	9. Students tend to listen to me seriously.			.809		
	10. Students listen to me, paying attention to my unexpressed feelings.			.746		
	11. Students listen to the complete message before making judgments about what I have said.			.717		
	12. Students show respect while I am talking to them.			.693		
	13. Students appear to enjoy listening to me.			.518		
	WCS					.76
	14. Students add emoji in their emails and SMS.				.749	
	15. Students send SMS in inappropriate time				.825	
	16. Students sending me SMS in the weekends.				.706	
	17. Students blaming me via their emails and SMS				.700	
Total sub-scale						.85

To determine if there is any significant difference between male and female lecturers' perspectives towards proper communication styles, the independent sample t.test was applied. The findings in Table 4 show that there is no statistically significant difference found between male (M= 22.51, SD= 4.77) and female lecturers (M= 23.33, SD= 4.75) t (26) =-1.27, p= 0.2 in their perspective towards LCS scores. Likewise, no statistically significant difference found between male (M= 15.77, SD= 2.88) and female lecturers (M= 16.15, SD= 3.31) t(24) =-.90, p= 0.2 in their perspective towards OCS, and WCS; male (M= 22.51, SD= 4.77) and female lecturers (M= 23.33, SD= 4.75) t(26) =-1.27, p= 0.3 , the difference between the two groups' means was not

significant ($p > 0.05$). The only difference found was in BLCS for male (M= 11.53, SD= 1.98) and female lecturers (M= 12.20, SD= 1.78) t (16) =-2.71, p= 0.007 and it was in favor of female lecturers. This finding was consistent with Bowles (2008) and this may suggest that the female lecturers are more sensitive to the interests and needs of their students and more understanding in comparison with male lecturers, in return students communicating with their female lecturers in more appropriate way.

Table 4 The t-Test for Differences in External Factor proper communication style between Female and Male Lecturer.

Variable	Group	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig
LCS	Male	182	22.51	4.77	1.27	26	0.20
	Female	80	23.33				
OCS	Male	175	15.04	2.88	-.90	24	0.25
	Female	71	15.48				
WCS	Male	170	15.77	4.77	-1.27	26	0.36
	Female	72	16.15				
BLCS	Male	182	11.53	1.78	-2.71	16	0.007
	Female	81	12.20				

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was subsequently performed to compare the differences between universities lecturers' perspective towards proper communication styles (OCS, LCS, WCS, and BLCS) from both private universities (Cihan, and Lebanese French) and public universities (Koya, and Salahaddin). As shown in Table 5, the results suggest that there was a significant deference in LCS, $F(3,258) = 8.369$, $p = 0.00$ and BLCS, $F(3,259) = 5.592$, $p = 0.00$, the university lecturers differ in their perspective. While the OCS, $F(3, 242) = 2.508$, p = n.s and WCS $F(3,238) = 2.127$, p = n.s, was not significant, Koya University, Salahaddin University, Cihan University, and Lebanese French University lecturers did not differ on the reported amounts of their perspective.

Table 5. One-way analysis of variance of lecturers' perspective towards proper communication styles

	Source	df	ss	MS	F	P
OCS	Between Groups	3	56.085	18.696	2.508	.060
	Within Groups	242	1804.081	7.455		
	Total	245	1860.167			
LCS	Between Groups	3	527.466			
	Within Groups	258	5420.385	175.822	8.369	.000
	Total	261	5947.851	21.009		
WCS	Between Groups	3	57.294	19.098	2.127	.098
	Within Groups	238	2137.466	8.981		
	Total	241	2194.760			
BLCS	Between Groups	3	60.303	20.101	5.592	.001
	Within Groups	259	931.066	3.595		
	Total	262	991.369			

Post hoc tests were conducted and revealed that the mean score of Koya University (M= 21.11, SD= 5.112) was significantly different than the mean scores of Salahaddin University (M=23.85, SD= 4.411) , p = 0.00 in favor of Salahaddin University, and Cihan University (M=24.79, SD=3.378), p = 0.02 in favor of Cihan University and Lebanese French University (M=23.96, SD=3.350) , p = 0.01 in favor of Lebanese French University in their LCS. In comparison, in terms of BLCS Koya University (M= 11.18, SD= 2.046) was significantly different than the mean scores of Salahaddin University (M= 12.08, SD= 1.706), p = 0.00 in favor of Salahaddin University, and Lebanese French University (M= 12.26, SD= 2.086), p = 0.04 in favor of Lebanese French University, but did not significantly differ from Cihan University (M=12.36, SD=1.692) p = 0.12. This shows that the communication between lecturers and students at Koya University is not appropriate, this might refer to the weak relationship among organization members, whether between lecturers and students, lecturers and their colleagues, lecturers and administrators. This finding was consistent with (Abdullah & Jasmi, 2016).

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study provide evidence of the proper communication styles in educational settings which might be helpful in education in terms of teaching process. The findings provide important insights into the interactions and relationships between lecturers and students in an appropriate style to be more effective. When teachers feel respected by their students, a sense of belonging to their institutions or universities will grow. Thus, the effective communication will be constructed if there is a good relationship among organization members, such as students and lecturers, lecturers and their colleagues, administrators and lecturers. Future research to investigate the students' perspective towards lecturers' proper communication styles is recommended.

5. Acknowledgement

6. Author's Contributions

All authors discussed the results and contributed to from the start to final manuscript.

7. Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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