

Teacher Communication Behavior and Classroom Learning Environment of Public Elementary Schools in Davao del Norte Division

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Published: July 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Teacher communication behavior Classroom learning environment Elementary teachers Interpersonal behavior Davao del Norte Division</p>	<p>The study explored the relationship between teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment in public elementary schools of Davao del Norte Division. It also investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of teacher communication behavior that significantly influence classroom learning environment. Using probability sampling, 115 public elementary teachers were selected as respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, data were analyzed through Mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and Regression Analysis. Results revealed a high level of teacher communication behavior and a very high level of classroom learning environment among the respondents. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment. Moreover, all domains of teacher communication behavior – challenging, encouragement and praise, non-verbal support, understanding and friendly, and controlling – were found to significantly influence classroom learning environment. Based on the findings, it is recommended that officials of the Department of Education and school heads work together to create programs and interventions that strengthen teacher communication behavior to further enhance classroom learning environment. Future researchers may explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.</p>

1. Introduction

Effective classroom communication is central to teaching and learning, shaping how pupils perceive their teachers, engage with lessons, and experience the classroom as a safe and supportive space (Wubbels & Levy, 1993). In the elementary setting, where learners are still developing self-regulation and social skills, the way teachers speak, listen, encourage, and respond carries particular weight in forming the emotional and academic climate of the classroom. Teacher communication behavior, understood as the verbal and non-verbal ways in which teachers interact with learners, has been consistently linked to classroom learning environment, motivation, and achievement (den Brok, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2004).

Within the Philippine basic education context, the Department of Education (DepEd) places strong emphasis on positive classroom climate and learner-centered pedagogy through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, which explicitly cites communication and interpersonal skills as core teaching competencies. Despite this policy emphasis, empirical, locale-specific evidence on how teacher communication behavior actually relates to classroom learning environment at the elementary level, particularly in the Division of Davao del Norte, remains limited. This study addressed that gap by examining the relationship between teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment among public elementary school teachers in Davao del Norte Division.

1.1 Background of the Study

Interpersonal teacher behavior has long been studied through models such as Wubbels and Levy's (1993) Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behavior (MITB), which maps teacher-student interaction along dimensions of influence and proximity, and which underlies the challenging, encouragement and praise, non-verbal support, understanding and friendly, and controlling domains examined in this study. Much of this research, however, has been conducted in secondary and higher education settings, with comparatively fewer studies focusing on elementary classrooms where teacher communication style may play an even more formative role in shaping how young learners relate to school.

Locally, teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte manage classrooms marked by diverse learner needs, large class sizes, and varying degrees of parental involvement, all of which make the teacher's communication behavior a critical, everyday determinant of classroom climate. This study was undertaken to generate contextualized evidence on how public elementary teachers in the Division communicate with their learners and how this behavior relates to the learning environment they create.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the level of teacher communication behavior among public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division in terms of challenging, encouragement and praise, non-verbal support, understanding and friendly, and controlling? (2) What is the level of classroom learning environment among the respondents? (3) Is there a significant relationship between teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment? (4) Which domains of teacher communication behavior significantly influence classroom learning environment?

2. Literature Review

This section situates the study within existing scholarship on teacher-student communication and classroom environment, drawing primarily on the interpersonal teacher behavior tradition and the classroom environment research tradition, both of which inform the variables examined in this study.

2.1 Teacher Communication Behavior

Teacher communication behavior refers to the observable verbal and non-verbal ways teachers relate to learners in the classroom. Wubbels and Levy's (1993) Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behavior conceptualizes this behavior along two axes, influence (dominance-submission) and proximity (cooperation-opposition), giving rise to distinct behavioral sectors that later studies operationalized into domains such as leadership, helping and friendly, understanding, giving freedom, uncertain, dissatisfied, admonishing, and strict behavior. Building on this tradition, subsequent instruments have grouped these behaviors into domains including challenging, encouragement and praise, non-verbal support, understanding and friendly, and controlling, which together capture how a teacher balances warmth and structure in daily interaction (den Brok, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2004).

Research consistently links favorable teacher communication behavior, marked by warmth, encouragement, and appropriate structure, to better student motivation, participation, and achievement, while communication marked by excessive control or coldness tends to correlate with lower engagement (den Brok et al., 2004). These findings underscore the relevance of examining teacher communication behavior as a multidimensional construct rather than a single global trait.

2.2 Classroom Learning Environment

Classroom learning environment refers to the social, psychological, and physical climate within which teaching and learning take place, encompassing learners' perceptions of cohesiveness, involvement, teacher support, task orientation, and cooperation (Fraser, 1998). Decades of classroom environment research have shown that a positive learning environment is associated with improved student attitudes, engagement, and academic performance, making it a key outcome variable in studies of teacher effectiveness.

Because classroom learning environment is shaped substantially by the quality of teacher-student interaction, teacher communication behavior is frequently examined as a predictor of learners' perceptions of their classroom climate. In the Philippine setting, where the Department of Education has institutionalized learner-centered and psychologically safe classrooms as a policy priority, understanding this link at the elementary level provides evidence that can inform teacher development programs and school-based interventions.

3. Methodology

This section describes the research design, respondents and sampling procedure, research instrument, and statistical treatment used to examine teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment among public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, non-experimental design using the descriptive-correlational survey method. This design was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researcher to describe the levels of teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment as perceived by the respondents, and to determine the relationship and predictive influence between the two variables without manipulating any conditions in the actual classroom setting.

3.2 Respondents and Sampling Procedure

Respondents of the study were 115 public elementary school teachers drawn from schools within the Division of Davao del Norte. Probability sampling was employed to ensure that every teacher in the population had a known, non-zero chance of being selected, thereby strengthening the generalizability of the findings within the Division. A researcher-adapted survey questionnaire, anchored on the domains of teacher communication behavior (challenging, encouragement and praise, non-verbal support, understanding and friendly, and controlling) and the dimensions of classroom learning environment, served as the primary data-gathering instrument. Data were analyzed using Mean to describe the levels of the two variables, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to test the significance of their relationship, and Regression Analysis to determine which domains of teacher communication behavior significantly predicted classroom learning environment.

4. Findings

This section presents the results on the level of teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment among the respondents, together with the relationship and predictive influence between the two variables.

4.1 Level of Teacher Communication Behavior and Classroom Learning Environment

As shown in Table 1, teacher communication behavior obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.21, described as high, while classroom learning environment obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.53, described as very high. Among the domains of teacher communication behavior, encouragement and praise obtained the highest mean, followed by understanding and friendly, non-verbal support, challenging, and controlling. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between teacher communication behavior and classroom learning environment ($r = .68, p < .01$), indicating that teachers who exhibited more favorable communication behavior tended to be perceived by their peers and administrators as fostering a more positive classroom climate. Regression analysis further showed that all five domains of teacher communication behavior, challenging, encouragement and praise, non-verbal support, understanding and friendly, and controlling, significantly predicted classroom learning environment, with encouragement and praise emerging as the strongest predictor.

Table 1: Level of Teacher Communication Behavior and Classroom Learning Environment

Domain	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating
Challenging	3.98	High
Encouragement and Praise	4.42	Very High
Non-verbal Support	4.25	Very High
Understanding and Friendly	4.30	Very High
Controlling	4.10	High
Overall Teacher Communication Behavior	4.21	High
Classroom Learning Environment	4.53	Very High

Source: Survey Data, 2026

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This section presents the conclusion drawn from the findings and the recommendations for practice and future research.

5.1 Conclusion

Public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division exhibited a high level of teacher communication behavior and fostered a very high level of classroom learning environment. A significant relationship was found between the two variables, and all five domains of teacher communication behavior, challenging, encouragement and praise, non-verbal support, understanding and friendly, and controlling, significantly influenced classroom learning environment. These findings affirm that the manner in which elementary teachers communicate with their learners is a substantive driver of the classroom climate learners experience daily.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, officials of the Department of Education and school heads in the Division of Davao del Norte may design and sustain programs, such as coaching, mentoring, and Learning Action Cell sessions, that strengthen teacher communication behavior, particularly in domains found to have relatively lower ratings such as challenging and controlling. School heads may likewise recognize and share the practices of teachers who demonstrate strong encouragement and praise behavior, given its emergence as the strongest predictor of classroom learning environment. Future researchers may replicate this study across other divisions or grade levels, incorporate qualitative approaches to enrich the quantitative findings, and examine additional variables such as learner outcomes or teacher well-being in relation to communication behavior and classroom learning environment.

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