RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER IMMEDIACY AND CLASSROOM CIVILITY AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

Rosamma Philip, Ph.D.

Professor, Mount Tabor Training College, Pathanapuram   Kollam, University of Kerala
roseappachi@gmail.com

Abstract

Teacher immediacy, which refers to the verbal and nonverbal behaviours that communicate approachability, availability, and involvement, has been found to have a positive impact on learner performance. Teachers need to promote and maintain classroom civility to improve their self-efficacy and effectiveness as educators. By creating a positive and respectful classroom environment where students feel valued and supported, teachers can feel more confident and effective in their teaching, leading to improved learning outcomes. This study investigates the relationship between teacher immediacy and classroom civility at undergraduate level. The study shows that there exist positive and significant relationship between teacher immediacy and classroom civility. Teacher immediacy has a positive impact on classroom civility by creating a more positive classroom climate and promoting respectful interactions between students and the teacher. Teacher behaviour is a regulating factor that decides the student behaviour. The paper highlights the importance of teacher training in enhancing teacher immediacy and promoting classroom civility.

Keywords: Teacher immediacy, Classroom civility, Teacher training

Introduction

Classroom civility and academic climate are closely related and can have a significant impact on each other. A positive academic climate is characterized by a safe, supportive, and respectful learning environment, where students feel valued, engaged, and motivated. Civility, refers to the respectful and courteous behaviour of individuals towards each other. When students feel safe, respected, and valued, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated in their learning, leading to better academic outcomes. Students are also more likely to participate in class discussions, ask questions, and seek help from their teachers and peers when they feel comfortable and respected. it is essential for teachers to promote and maintain classroom civility to create a positive academic climate that fosters learning, growth, and development. By creating a respectful and inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and supported, teachers can help students achieve their academic goals and reach their full potential.

 Anecdotal reports of child and adolescent behaviour suggest that incivility has increased in the schools and in society in general (Forni, 2002). Disrespect hurts the true spirit of the learning classroom (Swinney, Elder and Seaton, 2010). Incivility, disrespect, and lack of support, can have a detrimental effect on students' academic achievement and well-being. Students who experience bullying, harassment, or discrimination are more likely to have lower academic achievement and lower levels of engagement and motivation. Teachers can model the type of behavior they want to see from their students. This includes treating all students with respect and kindness, listening to their opinions, and speaking in a calm and respectful tone. the verbal and nonverbal behaviours that communicate approachability, availability, and involvement, has been found to have a positive impact on learner performance. Thus, teacher immediacy is an intervention style to maintain classroom civility.

Background of the study

According to Social Learning Theory, students learn by observation. (Trevino,2014) Teaching by example is an effective way to promote civility. For civility to change the world, we must first allow civility to change the way we view ourselves and each other. (Hughes, J. 2015). Hence civility is to be demonstrated in the interactions of teachers because role models are effective in imparting civility. Students comply with or conform to the wishes of the more immediate teachers because the perception of immediacy generates more referent, respect, or liking power (Richmond & McCroskey, 2000). Immediate behaviours are seen as triggers to generate student arousal, contributing to student learning. When teachers employ verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviours, students indicate increased perceptions of having learned from the course (Witt & Wheeless,2001) Wiener and Mehrabian (1968) pioneered the research on immediacy proposed that it is a communicative concept highly helpful for creating supportive class environment.

The immediacy behaviour can be classified to verbal and nonverbal. Andersen and Andersen (1982) discuss seven categories -proxemics, haptics, vocalics, kinesics, oculesics, classroom environment, and chronemics of nonverbal immediacy. By using these behaviours, students believe teachers' desire to engage with them in the learning environment. Kramer and Pier (1999) found students associated instructors who knew student names with being student-cantered. When a teacher uses student name that reflects a closeness and care. Humour is a verbal immediacy behaviour which engages students in the classroom which may result in more effective teaching. Wanzer & Frymier (1999) found that students indicated that they learned more from instructors perceived as high humour oriented. Reinforcing language is essential for student participation within classroom and outside classrooms. Praise words are the motivational components for students' accomplishments. The learner participation can be enhanced through the positive strokes of teachers. The sharing of personal experiences also promotes teacher-student cooperation and closeness. a teacher's self-disclosure signals a personal investment in interaction, the creating of connections, and reductions in teacher–student distance (Cayanus, Martin, Myers2008).

The behaviour against civility that occurs often and negatively influence teaching learning process are inappropriate comments, ignoring classwork, entering class late, skip from group tasks, cheating, lying and emotionally disturbed reactions. The uncivil student behaviour that sometimes observable and making teaching stressful are using hate speech, sleeping during

teaching, reading other materials while teaching, giving wrong personal information and damaging other's properties. When teachers display high levels of immediacy, they create a warm and supportive classroom environment that promotes student engagement, motivation, and participation. Immediacy behaviours such as eye contact, smiling, using students' names, and giving positive feedback can help students feel comfortable and inspire them to maintain civic behaviour. Teacher immediacy encourages students to engage in the teaching and learning processes and enables them to participate actively in the pedagogical processes (Rocca, 2008) found that teacher immediacy behaviours contribute to the emotional change in classroom and are positively correlated with the cohesion between teachers and students. For building a solid foundation of knowledge, preparing for future careers, developing critical skills, broadening perspectives, and fostering personal and professional growth, learning at undergraduate level is important. The present study aims to explore the relationship between teacher immediacy and classroom civility at undergraduate level.

Objectives

(i) To find out the extent of verbal and nonverbal teacher immediacy as perceived by undergraduate students

(ii) To find out the nature of classroom civility perceived by undergraduate students

(iii) To find out the relationship between teacher immediacy and classroom civility at undergraduate level.

Methodology

The study used survey method to collect the relevant date from a sample of 410 undergraduate students. Teacher Immediacy Scale and Classroom Civility Scale were used for collecting data. Teacher Immediacy scale consist of 22 items of which 12 components are verbal immediacy and 10 are nonverbal immediacy. A 5-point Likert type scale was prepared and the reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.79. Example for verbal immediacy; My teacher knows the names of all students in the class and call each of us by names. (Strongly disagree to strongly agree) Example for nonverbal immediacy: My teacher tries to maintain attentive eye contact while interacting in class. The total score for the scale is 110. The students are directed to complete the scale with r perceptions related to immediacy behaviour of their class charge-teacher.

Classroom civility scale contains 15 behaviour components and is a three-point scale with Always, Sometimes and Never responses. The total score is 45 and the reliability coefficient obtained is 0.74. Example for Classroom civility scale items: (i) In my class all students communicate with mutual respect. (ii) While teaching, we don't engage in activities disturbing the class.

Findings

The collected data was analysed and the findings are as follows.

Table1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Teacher Immediacy and Classroom civility.

Sl No.	Variable	Mean	S.D
1.	Nonverbal Teacher immediacy	23.52	5.21
2.	Verbal Teacher immediacy	42.43	8.24
3.	Teacher Immediacy (Total)	63.78	14.52
4.	Classroom civility	23.42	8.48

The above table shows that the mean score of nonverbal teacher immediacy is 23.52 with a standard deviation 5.21and that of verbal teacher immediacy is 42.43 with a standard deviation of 8.24. The mean score of the total teacher immediacy is 63.78 with a standard deviation 14.52. The perceptions of undergraduate students regarding the teacher immediacy are moderately favourable.

The mean score of perceptions regarding classroom civility is 23.42 and the standard deviation is 8.48. The undergraduate students believe that they maintain classroom civility to somewhat satisfactory level.

The relationship between Teacher immediacy and Classroom civility is given in table 2.

Table 2. Coefficient of correlation between Teacher immediacy and Classroom civility

Sl No. Classroom civility	Correlation with r	Significant*
1. Nonverbal Teacher immediacy	0.73	Significant
2. Verbal Teacher immediacy	0.69	Significant
3. Teacher Immediacy (Total)	0.71	Significant

*P<0.01

The results of table 2 indicate that there exists high positive significant relationship between Nonverbal teacher immediacy and classroom civility (0.73), high positive significant relationship between verbal teacher immediacy and classroom civility (0.69) and high positive significant relationship between teacher immediacy (total) and classroom civility (0.71). Thus, better teacher immediacy results in better classroom civility.

Conclusion

Teachers play a crucial role in promoting and maintaining classroom civility. When classroom civility is not maintained, teachers may feel overwhelmed, stressed, and ineffective in their teaching. When teachers feel that they do not have control over their classroom environment and that they are unable to manage student behaviour, their self-efficacy can be negatively impacted, leading to a decreased sense of confidence in their teaching abilities. It is essential for teachers to be aware of their barriers in teacher immediacy and work to overcome them to promote and maintain classroom civility. Students appreciate the supportive and engaging classroom atmosphere created by teachers who demonstrate immediacy. Higher student satisfaction levels contribute to increased motivation, enjoyment of learning and overall academic success. At teacher education level, the training is essential for students to understand the causes, consequences and remedies of incivility and the mode of using teacher immediacy as a remedy for incivility.

Teacher immediacy in higher education is essential for promoting student engagement, creating a supportive learning environment, building positive relationships, enhancing learning outcomes, increasing student satisfaction, and modelling professional behaviour. Establishing and nurturing a culture of civility requires that the civility be integrated into teacher's regular interactions with students. The theoretical and practical elements of civility need to be integrated in the teacher education curriculum to transform prospective teachers as positive role models (Philip. R.,2023). By incorporating immediacy behaviours into teaching practices, teacher can foster an inclusive and effective learning environment that benefits students' overall

academic and personal development. Undergraduate education offers a transformative experience for many students. It needs to provide opportunities for personal growth, self-discovery, and the pursuit of intellectual passions. Students often develop a sense of achievement, satisfaction, and fulfilment as they acquire knowledge and skills in their chosen field. Hence teacher immediacy should act as a catalyst to better student behaviour in classroom that empowers them to contribute meaningfully to society.

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