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A Study Role of Teacher Immediacy, Academic Engagement, and Academic Achievement among University Students: A Gender-Based Comparative Study

Aysha Ramzan
M.Phil Student, Department of Education, Government College University Faisalabad.
rayeaharamzan030@gmail.com
Talia Khalid
B. Ed (Hons) Elementary, Department of Education, Government College University Faisalabad.
Onlystudy9837@gmail.com
Dr. Muhammad Shabbir
Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Government College University, Faisalabad.
drmuhammadshabbir@gcuf.edu.pk
Rufile Khalid
B. Ed (Hons) Elementary, Department of Education, Government College University Faisalabad.
rufile80@gmail.com
Ms Asma Ishtiaq (Corresponding Author)
Lecturer (BPS-18), Department of Education
ishtiaqrajpoot1122@gmail.com

Abstract
Teacher immediacy is an important aspect of classroom communication that may contribute to students' academic experiences and educational outcomes. This study examines teacher immediacy, academic engagement, and academic achievement among university students, with particular attention to gender-based differences. A quantitative research approach was adopted, involving 400 university students, including 198 male and 202 female participants. Descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests were used to analyze the available data. The descriptive findings indicated that academic achievement had the highest mean score (M = 84.20, SD = 6.26), followed by academic engagement (M = 79.44, SD = 5.41) and teacher immediacy (M = 78.52, SD = 5.07). Gender-based comparisons revealed no statistically significant differences between male and female students in teacher immediacy, academic engagement, or academic achievement. The findings suggest that students' scores on these variables were broadly comparable across gender groups. The study highlights the importance of examining classroom communication and student engagement as relevant dimensions of higher education. Further research using correlation and regression analyses is recommended to establish the associations among these variables.

Keywords: *Teacher Immediacy, Academic Engagement, Academic Achievement, Gender Differences, Higher Education, University Students.*

1.Introduction

Teacher effectiveness can have an impact on student learning behaviour. Within teacher effectiveness, teacher immediacy is an important concept. Teacher immediacy describes behaviours that reduce psychological and physical distance between students and teachers. Verbal immediacy includes behaviours such as encouraging communication, using students' names, showing interest in students' views and giving positive support. Non-verbal immediacy includes maintaining eye contact, displaying a positive smile, movement, natural gestures and positive expressions. Academic engagement describes the extent students are involved within educational activities. This can include participating in class discussion, showing focus on learning, interest in learning, and commitment to academic activities. On the other hand, academic achievement describes how well students do in achieving their educational goals. This can be determined by grades, exam results and various other academic measurements. This research looks at teacher immediacy, academic engagement and academic achievement in a sample of students in higher education. In addition, it explores whether there are significant differences in teacher immediacy, academic engagement and academic achievement in male and female students.

2.Literature Review

2.1Teacher Immediacy

When teachers display positive verbal and non-verbal immediacies, a more supportive learning environment can be created. Students may therefore be more inclined to express their views and engage within learning activities. As a result, teacher immediacy is considered an important aspect of effective teaching.

2.2 Academic Engagement

Academic engagement describes the extent to which students are engaged in learning. It can be broken down into behaviour, affective engagement and cognitive engagement. Behavioural engagement describes students' participation in learning in class and completing learning tasks. Affective engagement describes students' interest in learning and feelings towards learning. Cognitive engagement describes students' focus, critical thinking and utilisation of learning strategies. These 3 types of engagement have been identified as key factors of engagement within students. (Fredricks et al., 2004)

2.3 Academic Achievement

Academic achievement describes how well students have done in education. This can be measured based on exam results, grades, overall grade point averages. Academic achievement is affected by many factors, such as individual ability, motivation to learn, teaching methods and learning environments.

2.4 Differences in Academic Variables by Gender

Research has been conducted to identify differences in educational experiences by gender. Males and females may experience different learning environments, participate in learning differently and perceive teaching differently. However, it must be shown empirically that differences exist and cannot be assumed. Therefore, this research will look at differences in teacher immediacy, academic engagement and academic achievement between male and female students in higher education.

3.Theoretical Background

Social Constructivism

This theory highlights the importance of social interaction in learning. Effective learning can occur in students when teachers guide them and provide interaction within classes.

Student Engagement

Student engagement describes how engaged students are in learning in behavioural, affective and cognitive ways. These 3 types of engagement have been identified as key factors of student engagement. (Fredricks et al., 2004)

Instructional Communication

This theory focuses on effective relationships in classrooms through teacher communication. Teacher immediacy can be seen as behaviours within communication which reduce psychological distance between students and teachers. As a whole, these theories can help understand teacher immediacy, academic engagement and academic achievement.

4.Aims

1. The level of teacher immediacy experienced by students in higher education.
2. The level of academic engagement in students in higher education.
3. The level of academic achievement in students in higher education.
4. Whether there is a difference in teacher immediacy in male and female students in higher education.
5. Whether there is a difference in academic engagement in male and female students in higher education.
6. Whether there is a difference in academic achievement in male and female students in higher education.

5.Research Hypotheses

1. H01. There is no significant difference in teacher immediacy in male and female students in higher education.
2. H02. There is no significant difference in academic engagement in male and female students in higher education.
3. H03. There is no significant difference in academic achievement in male and female students in higher education.

6.Research Methodology

6.1Design

This study was a quantitive, comparative study. Descriptive statistics were used to determine overall variable scores. Independent samples t-tests were performed to determine differences between genders.

6.2Participants

The target population was university students. A total of 400 participants were used in this study. Of these, 198 were male students and 202 were female students.

6.3Measures

Data was obtained on teacher immediacy, academic involvement and academic success. Overall scores for each variable were included in statistical analysis. Please include measure

names, authors, number of items, scoring methods and reliability scores from the questionnaires and data.

6.4 Data Analysis

Various descriptive and inferential analyses were performed on the data. The minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation for study variables was determined. An independent samples t-test was used in order to assess gender differences. The significance level used was 0.05.

7.Data Analysis and Results

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for Overall Study Variables (n=400)

Variable	*N*	*Min*	*Max*	*M*	*SD*
Teacher immediacy	400	53.00	92.00	78.52	5.07
Academic engagement	400	54.00	95.00	79.44	5.41
Academic achievement	400	51.00	100.00	84.20	6.26

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 1. Students had the highest mean scores for academic achievement (M = 84.20; SD = 6.26), followed by academic engagement (M = 79.44; SD = 5.41) and teacher immediacy (M = 78.52; SD = 5.07). It is important to consider how students scored in relation to the scale and scoring criteria for each measure.

Table 2

Gender-Based Comparison of Teacher Immediacy, Academic Engagement, and Academic Achievement

Variable	*Gender*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Teacher immediacy	Male	198	78.25	5.35	-1.07	398	.28
	Female	202	78.80	4.79			
Academic engagement	Male	198	79.30	5.94	-0.51	398	.61
	Female	202	79.58	4.85			
Academic achievement	Male	198	84.23	6.62	0.09	398	.92
	Female	202	84.17	5.91			

The results from comparing male and female students for teacher immediacy, academic engagement and achievement are displayed in Table 2. There was no significant difference in teacher immediacy between male and female students (t (398) = -1.07, p= .28). Furthermore, there was no significant difference in academic engagement between males and females (t (398) = -0.51, p= .61), nor was there a significant difference in academic achievement (t (398) = 0.09, p= .92). Although females had slightly higher means for teacher immediacy and academic engagement, and males had slightly higher means for academic achievement, none of these differences were significant. Therefore, none of the null hypotheses were rejected.

8.Discussion

It can be concluded that academic achievement recorded the highest average score, compared to academic engagement and teacher immediacy. All values show significant scores. However, comparisons must be made carefully, considering the range of scores possible from each measure. Results grouped by gender do not show any significant differences in teacher immediacy for males and females. Therefore, males and females in the sample achieved very similar scores. Similarly, academic engagement does not significantly differ between males and females. Female students have a slightly higher average score, but this difference is not significant. Lastly, there is no significant difference in academic achievement between males and females in the sample. Both males and females achieved almost identical average scores. These results should be considered with consideration to the analysis performed. As correlation and regression analysis has not been provided in the results, it cannot be concluded if teacher immediacy has a relationship, or predicts, academic engagement and academic achievement.

9.Conclusion

This study found that, out of 400 university students, academic achievement was highest, followed by academic engagement, and then teacher immediacy. From comparison of data between males and females, there are no significant differences in teacher immediacy, academic engagement or academic achievement. Therefore, it appears that there are no significant differences in the scores for males and females in this sample, based on gender. Further research into the relationships between teacher communication, student engagement, and academic achievement could be conducted.

10.Recommendations

1. Ensure effective verbal and non-verbal communication to create positive relationships in the classroom.
2. Encourage discussion, group work, questions and participation in class.
3. Academic support, positive feedback and support should be given to students at universities to improve their overall experience in education.
4. Equal learning opportunities should be provided to all students. Assumptions should not be made based on gender.
5. Professional development sessions should be organised within higher education establishments to improve teacher immediacy, communication and student engagement.
6. In future research, correlation, regression and mediation analysis should be conducted to understand relationships between teacher immediacy, academic engagement and academic achievement.

11.Limitations

There are limitations to this study. Firstly, only 400 university students were used in this study. Therefore, generalisation of results to wider educational populations may not be appropriate. Secondly, only descriptive analysis was carried out, and comparisons between genders. As correlation and regression analysis was not carried out, it cannot be concluded that there are relationships between variables, nor can predictive effects be determined. Lastly, information relating to characteristics of the institution, area of study, sampling method, and other

demographic information was not included. In further research these limitations should be addressed by sampling a larger amount of people, and including further statistical analysis.

12.References

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