

Positive Communication: It's Future Potential for the Education Sector

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ABSTRACT Recent researches on positive communication signal the potential it holds as a concept to be explored in an educational setting. The present research has elaborated the conceptual understanding of verbal and non-verbal components of positive communication and its interrelatedness with positive psychology constructs. A theoretical literature review has been performed using published abstracts, full-text papers, and articles from various databases. Since a classroom setting relies heavily on interpersonal relationships, execution of positive communication skills can benefit the teacher as well as student. Thus, elucidating the immediate and urgent need in the current education system for developing this skill. The study also reflects upon the model of positive communication developed by JC Mirivel, and leads to the emergence of a theoretical model, which explains the core competencies of positive communication required by a teacher to generate a positive environment for the student in order to achieve wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

The earliest understanding of communication as a concept emerged from the Mathematical Theory of Communication. It explained communication as a channel consisting of components like source, transmitter, signal, and receiver (Shannon and Weaver 1949 as cited in Kubota 2019) ensuring the maximum amount of information transmission. As time advanced different interpretations and researches of communication emerged and they encapsulated the psychological and behavioural aspects attached to it. Social learning theory by Bandura (1971) explained how people observe and communicate by imitating the observed behaviour. Likewise, Vygotsky's theory unravelled how social communication is crucial for cognitive development (Nath 2010). Various studies have shown that from early childhood, through the elderly stage of life, human beings need to acquire efficient and effective communication processes with individuals in all contexts of life (Kapur 2022). These findings and many similar ones emphasised the relevance, role, and impact of communication in the teaching-learning process.

Current research in the field of communication has shed light on how various subfields of psy-

chology like social psychology, neuropsychology, personality psychology, and many more can be investigated and utilised to gain episteme. However, the domain of positive psychology has not been reviewed much in association with communication in regards to the education sector. One such construct of positive psychology, which holds massive potential is positive communication. Positive communication is a kind of communication that is best for social interactions, providing wellbeing, happiness, and awareness for common good. It ensures healthy, productive, and meaningful relationships through constructive, effective, supportive, and emotional interaction aimed at mutual understanding and satisfaction for all the parties involved (Leontovich 2014). Positive communication is considered to create contact, understand self, provide support, deepen interpersonal relationships and positively impact others (Mirivel 2014). Therefore, it will help teachers to develop understandings of social-emotional wellbeing and in developing ways that they can use to engage with students in order to develop their social-emotional skills (Denston et al. 2022). Along with enhancing well-being it will also help in enhancing the academic performance as research has shown positive correlation between

the teacher's use of engaging messages and student performance (Falcon et al. 2023). These findings explain the relevance of positive communication as a unique and separate concept to be studied in various educational settings. Various researches in the field of communication, psychology, and linguistics have considered positive communication to have features like:

- Constructive, meaningful, creates a positive impression, and renovates negative feelings (Ahmed 2019)
- Positive intention, initiative, empathetic listening, social support (Mirivel 2014)
- Selection of positive words, providing options, positive direction

Developing the skill of positive communication among educators is an immediate and urgent need in the current education system. Despite the existence of voluminous literature devoted to different aspects of communication, positive communication in context to an educational setting remains very under-researched. An important characteristic of an efficient educator and also the elemental duty of an educator is to use not only verbal communication but also non-verbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, and body movements (Rodrigues and Baptista 2023). An effective communicator must develop a classroom setting that relies heavily on interpersonal relationships, as execution of positive communication skills can benefit the teacher as communication can be considered as a potential predictor for an individual's physical and mental health

Objective of the Study

Practising usage of positive words or communication has been found to have transformational capacity at an individual level. Researches have brought forward the power of positive communication and thus ascertaining that educators executing competent communication skills aids in easier and better understanding for a student. This paper attempts to review the less investigated concept of positive communication in relation to education and the relevance of introducing it as a key concept for teacher training programs.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A theoretical literature review was performed so as to attain a deeper knowledge about the emerg-

ing concept of positive communication. Published abstracts, full-text papers, and articles from databases like Emerald Insights, Scopus, Taylor and Francis, Sage, and other established journals were referenced.

For incorporation into the study, the criteria that a text had to meet were that it was principally talking about positive communication, explaining the role of communication in the education sector, and containing variables related to the interpersonal relationship of a teacher and a student. Apart from these central inclusion criteria the other two mandates that were applied for every text were that it had to be published and in the English language. Research work that did not fulfil the inclusion criteria was not referred for the present study.

RESULT

The reviewing and evaluation of existing descriptions/definitions/models of positive communication have unveiled the ground for it to be investigated in context to an educational setting. Simultaneously bringing light to the various positive psychological constructs, which have interrelatedness to positive communication. The network of verbal, non-verbal and positive psychological constructs of positive communication, which leads to the development of a positive environment and overall, wellbeing of a student has been summarised in the form of a theoretical model (Fig. 1). In addition to the conceptual model the core findings of the literature review have also been discussed in detail

Components of Positive Communication

"Our bodies can have subtle and sometimes subconscious effects on the way that we communicate" (Riding et al. 2006). For instance, research by Hughes (2012) recorded the effect that direct manipulation of vocal cues had on the other person, indicating the need to study aspects of communication as a skill for coherent daily functioning. Likewise, Mirivel (2014) mentioned that positive communication should be studied and understood deeply as a skill in order to sail through different walks of life. In order to achieve this proficiency, conscious efforts are required as it has not been considered a natural mode of human behavior (Ahmed 2019). Thus, this study seeks to

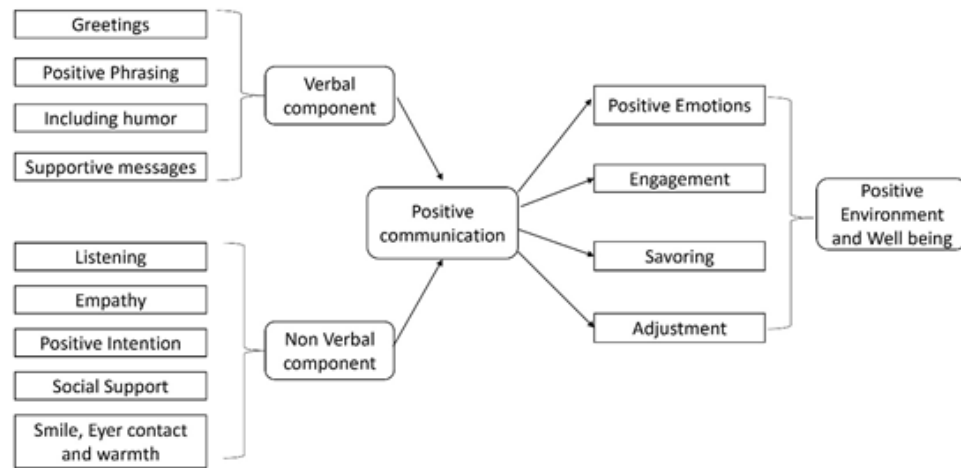


Fig. 1. Theoretical Model of Positive communication

review and elucidate the core structure of positive communication and its capacity for inclusion into teacher training programs.

Verbal Component

Reviewing the scant literature corresponding to positive communication, the verbal components which help in building the overall experience of it are listed below:

- ♦ Greeting, asking, and complimenting; creates contact (Mirivel 2014)
- ♦ Positive phrasing that conveys positive action and encouragement (Robert Bacal 2011)
- ♦ Including humour (Pitts 2019)
- ♦ Adding supportive messages that maintain positive emotions (Ahmed 2019)

Non-verbal Component

Non-verbal communication is the hidden yet impactful aspect of communication that is present in every face-to-face interaction (Chaudhry and Arif 2012). The non-verbal components of positive communication which were listed after reviewing the available literature are as below:

- ♦ Listening: transcends human separateness (Mirivel 2014)
- ♦ Empathy: Enhancing the feeling of being understood (Bodie 2014)

- ♦ Positive intention: The starting point of positive communication (Leontovich 2014)
- ♦ Social support: Expression of sympathy, encouragement, reassurance (Leontovich 2014)
- ♦ Other established components such as smile, eye contact, and warmth.

Evaluation of Interrelation Between Positive Communication, Positive Psychology Constructs

Positive Emotions

Words being one of the catalysts to the entire process of communication hold immense power in enabling individuals to not only showcase creativity but also support in shaping their lives

(Armenakis and Harris 2002, 2009; Elving 2005; Lewis 2011; Marshalk 1993; Morgan 2006; Weick et al. 2005). Ideas like these have been confirmed in various past research endeavours as well, for instance, Andersen and Guerrero (1996) in their book "Handbook of Communication and Emotion" have emphasised that social interactions are the primary elicitor of a majority of emotions. On a similar thread, Muthusamy (2019) has explained how positive communication can diffuse emotional attributes and proved to be transformational in an organisation. These researches and other such literature available direct one towards the evident relationship that communication and emotions hold. Thus, making it an area to be studied and investi-

gated pertaining not just to fields like organisation or industry but in the realm of education as well.

Engagement

The engagement of a student in a classroom is a multidimensional construct (Martin and Torres 2016). It depends on aspects like teacher-student relationship (Roorda et al. 2011), connective instructions with lively teaching (Cooper 2014), interpersonal relationship (Martin and Dowson 2009), teachers emotional support (Patrick et al. 2007), and many other aspects, which are centred towards a teacher and the skills they demonstrate in a classroom. Out of the various skills that a teacher demonstrates, communication skills hold a major share for inducing engagement within a student as the way a teacher interacts with students daily could influence student engagement (Kim 2020). Shreds of evidence like these present the urgency to explore and develop training for positive communication for an educational setting.

Savouring

Savouring has been defined by Bryant and Veroff (2007) in their book “*Savouring a New Model of Positive Experience*” as, “Savouring can help us counteract the natural human tendency to focus more of our attention on negative things in our lives than on positive things”. They have considered this ability to be a mediator between positive events and happiness. Also, they have agreed that savouring is a trait component but it also reflects reactions to situational characteristics. A construct emerging from the conceptual framework of savouring is Pitts’s ‘communication savouring’. He described it as, “The process of mindfully attending to pleasurable or meaningful social interaction in real, remembered, or anticipated/imagined encounters and enhancing or prolonging the positive effect” (Pitts 2019). Individuals who savour positive experiences of life lead a more enjoyable life (Bryant 2003; Langston 1994). The diverse and empirical literature on savouring yet again renews the credibility that positive communication holds to be included in future researches of the education sector.

Adjustment

Adjustment through different levels and environments of school might be perceived as stressful (Quaglia et al. 2013; Wong 2018; Wong and Power

2019). Poor school adjustment lowers academic performance, creates negative school attitudes, and decreases the positive engagement of students (Birch and Ladd 1997). School adjustment requires the student to establish interpersonal relationships with teachers and other students thus promoting a positive classroom environment (Wentzel 2003). Teacher-student relationships which are conflictual in nature can reduce the prosocial behaviours of a student towards peers (Birch and Ladd 1997; Wentzel 2002; Marengo et al. 2018).

Acknowledging the existing research on school adjustment, it can be enunciated that teacher-student relationship and school adjustment are associated and both these factors lean on communication. Therefore, positive communication qualifies as an inevitable variable to be studied concerning educational setup.

The encapsulation of components of positive communication in the current model is stimulated from the model developed by Mirivel (2014). It attempts to elucidate the interrelatedness of some of the positive psychology constructs with positive communication in context to a teacher and a student relationship. The overall organisation of the model tries to break down the core competencies of positive communication required by a teacher to generate a positive environment for the student to achieve their wellbeing. However, the genesis of this model is a priori work of the researcher thus limiting its scope.

DISCUSSION

Positive teacher-student relationships are foundational to creating a supportive learning environment. One of the primary areas where communication influences education is within the classroom, where clear and empathetic dialogue between teachers and students enhances engagement and learning outcomes (Smith and Kumar 2025). This supports the growing body of evidence that communication strategies tailored to diverse learner needs significantly improve comprehension and motivation. Teachers hold an instrumental position in assisting a child to develop and regulate their emotions (Smith and Hollinger-Smith 2015), and one skill occupying a paramount role in how teachers deliver, manage and interact in a classroom to achieve such goals is communication skills. Fatima et al. (2024) emphasize that communication

extends beyond verbal exchanges, incorporating non-verbal cues, teaching resources, and digital technologies to promote understanding and achieve learning outcomes. In addition to classroom dynamics, positive communication is pivotal in strengthening school-parent partnerships. The present research findings echo the view that transparent and timely communication channels empower parents to become active participants in their children's education (Garcia and Patel 2025). This multifaceted approach fosters positive learning experiences and builds rapport between instructors and learners from diverse backgrounds. Verbal communication devoid of threat or judgment and characterized by empathetic and appreciative tones that convey goodwill and acceptance is a powerful tool available to teachers (Rotschild 2024). The role of positive communication in developing soft skills is also evident, as educational institutions increasingly incorporate collaborative and communicative activities into curricula (Miller 2025). National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE 2009) also emphasises the goal of emotional wellbeing, and mentions, "Making the child free of fear, trauma, and anxiety and helping the child to express views freely", and considers it as one of the major targets to be achieved through reforms in current teacher training programs. Therefore, the available and empirical nodes of positive communication, its impact on emotion, and its absence in the current trainee teacher curriculum can be interlinked to form a benignant network/model of positive communications for the education sector, which could be exercised at all levels. Supporting the above notion there have been recent researches which have presented findings regarding teacher participation in classroom management trainings and stated that such trainings help in reducing the disruptive student behavior (Black 2011).

Students need to experience learning as a joyful and participatory activity, which they can achieve by engaging in the classroom and constructing knowledge provided to them by the teacher (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009). Equipping an environment where the student feels engaged would lead up to improved performance as researchers have demonstrated engagement as a predictor for achievement and behaviour in school (Klem and Connell 2004). The Reduced Self System Model developed

by Connell and Wellborn (1991) describes how a teacher's involvement can create the action of engagement in students and lead to the outcome of improved test scores and attendance. Findings and descriptions of the impact of engagement on various achievement-related attributes of a student indicate yet again the importance of building positive communication skills as an important segment of teacher training programs.

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) describes current teacher education programs to possess scant scope for teachers to reflect on their experiences. This might limit the possibility for a teacher to understand and experience savouring during the training period. Understandably, it eventually becomes difficult for the teacher to create situations that might lead to savouring experiences for a student. Researches have revealed savouring leads to better performance and relationships. Similarly, a positive correlation has been established between savouring and life satisfaction (Smith and Hollinger-Smith 2015). Therefore, researches on savouring, affirm the inclusion of positive communication skill training in the teacher training programs.

Ensuring an environment that provides a student a supportive relationship with teachers, can have varied advantages. It helps in stress regulation, engagement, and a positive learning environment (Ahnert et al. 2012; Blair 2010). Besides these advantages, it also influences psychosocial adjustment (Pianta 1999). Additionally effective positive communication within educational institutions contributes to enhanced administrative efficiency and a positive organizational climate (Thompson and Green 2024). Building such an environment for a student will require exposition of skills explicitly positive communication skills by teachers. In doing so, it would make certain that the teacher is equipped not only to instruct but also to provide an environment where a student feels understood and heard, making them regular in school (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009).

CONCLUSION

School environments that are conducive to building social and emotional skills not only achieve the role of academic learning for a student but also support them in leading a meaningful life. This kind of an environment counts chiefly on the competencies of a teacher, of which communication

skill is supreme. Thus, implementation of such skills prepares a student to have efficient coping skills.

The theoretical model introduced by the researchers tries to expand the concept of positive communication in the realm of the education sector by asserting the need to develop focused training programs for teachers. Numerous findings in psychology and linguistics have also considered it as an art that demands conscious efforts from the learners' end to develop it as a skill. With the current teacher training programs looking for reforms, this model and future research in a similar context can assist in bridging the gap.

However, the framework introduced is solely based upon theoretical literature review thus limiting the robustness. Hence, giving an impetus for future research to explore the emerging concept of positive communication by exercising a systemic and dynamic approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current research holds enormous possibilities from both teachers' as well as students' perspective. A comprehensive positive communication model based on qualitative analysis will lay the foundation for an in-depth understanding of how teachers perceive communication as a crucial element of the student-teacher bond and their understanding of the skill of positive communication. Present study can help in developing the said model, which can be then appropriately modified from a curriculum point of view as existing micro skills taught to trainee teachers lack the component of positive communication. Therefore, making it a robust model for teacher training programs.

Future researches can incorporate an expanded version of positive communication model which address positive communication skills for faculties of universities. Thus, signaling the potential it holds for being included as an essential aspect in educational policies. The findings of current research can also direct research for different sectors of Indian context, which rely on communication such as hospital management and service industry.

STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

ETHICAL APPROVAL STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with the Academic Integrity Code of Amity University, Noida, India.

DECLARATION

Ms. Garima Patwari, Dr. Zuby Hasan and Dr. Navin Kumar

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