Perceptions of Tay and Nung ethnic teachers and students regarding the importance of creative experiential activities in developing communication skills

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the nuances of creative experiential activities and their impact on communication skill development is paramount in tailoring education to meet the specific needs and expectations of ethnic communities. The research conducted in this study involved 300 students and 150 teachers from several different areas and schools within Thai Nguyen Province, Bac Can Province, and Cao Bang Province, Vietnam. The research methodology employed was structured around two distinct sets of questions, each serving a specific purpose. These sets of questions were meticulously designed to gather valuable information from the study participants, namely teachers and Tay and Nung secondary school students. The study revealed that both teachers and students prioritize holistic communication skills, and students highly value communication skills. Teachers emphasize student participation in experiential activities. Experiential activities, preferred by teachers and positively evaluated by students, hold the potential to enrich communication skills by offering opportunities for authentic, context-based learning. The detailed self-assessments of students and teachers' assessments of communication skills contribute to personalized and targeted communication skill development. This study highlights the value of recognizing the perspectives of both educators and students and tailoring communication skills education to address specific areas of improvement while building on existing strengths. The implications of this study extend to curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and policy decisions that can enrich the communication skills of students, thereby enhancing their academic, personal, and professional capabilities.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to theory and practice by highlighting the importance of experiential activities in enhancing communication skills. It underscores the need for personalized education tailored to individual needs and strengths, thereby enriching students' academic and professional capabilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, communication skills stand as a cornerstone for academic success, personal development, and future career prospects. Effective communication is a multifaceted ability that extends beyond the confines of language proficiency, encompassing the coordination of actions, gestures, and attitudes to achieve specific objectives. Within the intricate fabric of communication skills education, the perspectives of educators and students alike play a pivotal role in shaping the pedagogical approaches and curriculum design. This study focuses on the nuanced theme of perceptions of Tay and Nung ethnic teachers and students regarding the importance of creative experiential activities in developing communication skills. It delves into the distinct cultural

and educational context of the Tay and Nung ethnic groups, exploring how these communities perceive the nature and importance of communication skills.

Effective communication skills are widely recognized as fundamental to success in education, careers, and personal relationships (Bhatnagar, 2011). Communication encompasses not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to convey ideas, emotions, and information with clarity and precision (Armstrong & Ferguson, 2010). Consequently, educational institutions are constantly seeking innovative approaches to nurture these skills. One such approach that has gained prominence in recent years is the integration of creative experiential activities into the curriculum. This delves into the multifaceted relationship between creative experiential activities and the development of communication skills, exploring the theoretical underpinnings, pedagogical implications, and the impact of such activities. Creative experiential activities, a distinct pedagogical approach, hold the potential to transform the way communication skills are cultivated (Martinsons & Brivins Martinsons, 1996). These activities encompass practical, hands-on educational experiences that take place outside the conventional classroom setting. They are characterized by their dynamic and engaging nature, emphasizing direct participation and the application of knowledge in real-life contexts. This study explores how teachers and students from the Tay and Nung ethnic communities perceive the role of creative experiential activities in fostering effective communication skills within their unique cultural and educational contexts.

The theoretical foundation of creative experiential activities in communication skills development is rooted in constructivist learning theories. These theories emphasize the active engagement of learners in the construction of their knowledge. Experiential activities provide students with opportunities to interact with real-world contexts, allowing them to apply their theoretical knowledge practically (Spanjaard, Hall, & Stegemann, 2018). Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is particularly relevant in this context, as it posits that learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. By engaging in creative experiential activities, students experience this cycle, enhancing their communication skills as they reflect on and refine their communication techniques (Baker, Robinson, & Kolb, 2012; Sims, 1983).

The integration of creative experiential activities offers numerous pedagogical advantages for communication skills development. These activities are inherently student-centered and participatory, allowing learners to take ownership of their learning. Through role-playing, group discussions, simulations, and problem-solving exercises, students can practice and refine their communication skills in authentic contexts (Bhattacharjee & Ghosh, 2013; Tompkins, 1998). Such active engagement not only reinforces their theoretical knowledge but also helps bridge the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, experiential learning allows for personalized and differentiated instruction, enabling educators to tailor activities to students' specific needs and areas for improvement in their communication skills (Alamri, Watson, & Watson, 2021; Ginja & Chen, 2020; Zhu, Yu, & Riezebos, 2016).

The impact of creative experiential activities on communication skills is well documented. These activities foster the development of critical skills such as active listening, empathy, non-verbal communication, persuasion, and problem solving. Through experiential learning, students learn to adapt their communication style to different situations, cultures, and audiences (Boggs, Mickel, & Holtom, 2007). Additionally, they gain practical experience in resolving conflicts, receiving and providing feedback, and working collaboratively in teams. The dynamic nature of experiential activities not only enhances students' communication skills but also boosts their self-confidence as they witness the tangible outcomes of effective communication from the activities (Wang & Kang, 2006).

Understanding the nuances of these creative experiential activities and their impact on communication skill development is paramount in tailoring education to meet the specific needs and expectations of these ethnic communities. By unearthing these distinct perspectives, this study endeavors to provide insights that can inform educational practices, curriculum enhancements, and policy decisions that cater to the culturally rich and diverse educational landscape of the Tay and Nung ethnic groups. The study's focus on the creative and experiential

dimension of communication skill development is a significant contribution to the field of education, offering a deeper understanding of how innovative pedagogical methods can shape the communicative competence of learners in culturally diverse contexts.

2. METHODS

2.1. Participants

The research conducted in this study involved a diverse group of participants from several different areas and schools within Thai Nguyen province, Bac Can province, and Cao Bang province, Vietnam. In total, 450 individuals took part in this research, consisting of 150 teachers and 300 students, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of respondents.

Area	School	No. of teachers	No. of students
Thai Nguyen province	Nguyen Du secondary school	25	50
	Ha Thuong secondary school	25	50
Bac Can province	Cho Ra Village secondary school	30	40
	Ba Be secondary school for ethnic minorities	10	30
	Thuong Giao secondary school	10	30
Cao Bang province	Nuoc Hai secondary school	50	100
Total		150	300

In Thai Nguyen province, data was collected from two schools: Nguyen Du Secondary School and Ha Thuong Secondary School. At both of these schools, an equal number of participants, 25 teachers and 50 students, were involved in the study. These respondents played a crucial role in providing insights from this specific region. Bac Can province was also a significant area of focus for the research, with data collected from three different schools. Cho Ra Village Secondary School had 30 teachers and 40 students participating, Ba Be Secondary School for Ethnic Minorities had 10 teachers and 30 students taking part, and 10 teachers and 30 students from Thuong Giao Secondary School took part. The final region of interest was Cao Bang Province, where data was gathered from Nuoc Hai Secondary School. In this particular area, a substantial number of respondents were involved, with 50 teachers and 100 students participating, reflecting the unique characteristics of this region. The data collected from the respondents provided valuable insights into the scope and objectives of the research.

2.2. Measurement

The research methodology employed in this study was structured around two distinct sets of questions, each serving a specific purpose. These questions were carefully designed to gather valuable information from the participants, namely teachers and Tay and Nung secondary school students.

The first set of questions was tailored for teachers, with the primary objective of eliciting insights into their awareness of the pivotal role of experiential activities in nurturing students' communication skills. These questions encompassed a comprehensive range of topics, including the content and various methods used to organize students' experiential activities. Additionally, teachers were asked about the factors they perceived as influential in shaping the effectiveness of communication skills education activities through the incorporation of experiential activities. The second set of questions was aimed at Tay and Nung secondary school students. These questions were thoughtfully formulated to gauge the students' level of awareness concerning communication skills. The students were encouraged to express their understanding of their own communication skills, recognizing their strengths and areas that may require improvement. Furthermore, this set of questions inquired about the students' perceptions of the role, significance, content, and forms of experiential activities in the context of fostering effective communication skills development among children. These carefully designed sets of questions for both teachers and students served as the fundamental tools for data collection. They were crafted to provide a comprehensive and

well-rounded perspective on the awareness, beliefs, and experiences of the participants regarding communication skills development and the integration of experiential activities. The responses gathered from these questions were critical in shaping the study's findings and insights.

2.3. Procedures

The procedures undertaken in this research aimed to systematically collect data and insights from the participants. These procedures were conducted with a structured approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The first step in the research process involved selecting participants from specific schools in the provinces of Thai Nguyen, Bac Can, and Cao Bang. These schools were chosen to represent a diverse range of educational contexts, ensuring that the data collected would be reflective of different perspectives and experiences. After the questionnaires were finalized, data collection began. Teachers and students in the selected schools were provided with the respective sets of questions, and they were encouraged to respond thoughtfully and candidly. The data collection process was conducted in a manner that ensured confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. Once the data was collected, it was meticulously analyzed. The quantitative data, the responses to multiple-choice questions, was analyzed using statistical tools and software. Following the analysis, the research team interpreted the findings to extract meaningful insights. The responses from both teachers and students were compared and contrasted to identify commonalities and variations in their perceptions and experiences. The study's conclusions were drawn based on the analysis of the data, highlighting key findings and insights. Additionally, recommendations were formulated based on the findings, which could potentially inform educational practices and policies related to communication skills development through experiential activities. These well-structured procedures ensured that the research was conducted systematically and rigorously, allowing for a thorough exploration of the awareness and perspectives of teachers and students regarding communication skills and the role of experiential activities in their development.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study involved a strategic combination of Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 software, both of which are widely used for data processing, statistical computations, and interpretation of research findings. This dual platform approach was chosen for its ability to provide a robust and comprehensive analysis of the data obtained from the study.

3. RESULTS

Table 2 presents the results of the teachers' and students' perceptions of the concept of communication skills. The table includes three distinct definitions of communication skills, and the participants' responses are summarized in terms of the number and the percentage of participants who agreed with each definition.

Table 2. Teachers' and students' perceptions of the concept of communication skills.

No.	Definition of communication skills	Teachers		Students	
		N	%	N	%
1	Communication skills is the application of personal knowledge and experience in specific communication situations to effectively achieve communication goals.	30	20.0	58	19.3
2	Communication skills is a way to talk to others in an engaging and attractive way to achieve effective communication.	8	5.3	17	5.7
3	Communication skills include the ability to harmoniously and reasonably coordinate actions, gestures, attitudes, and language in communication to achieve communication goals.	112	74.7	225	75.0
Total		150	100.0	300	100.0

The first definition, which characterizes communication skills as the application of personal knowledge and experience in specific communication situations to effectively achieve communication goals, received the agreement of 30 teachers, representing 20.0% of the teacher respondents. Among the students, 58 (19.3%) concurred with this definition, which emphasizes the role of personal knowledge and experience in effective communication. The second definition, which describes communication skills as a means to engage and attract others for effective communication, was supported by eight teachers (5.3%) and 17 students (5.7%). While this definition underscores the importance of engaging communication, it was favored by a smaller proportion of respondents. The third definition, which highlights communication skills as the ability to harmoniously and reasonably coordinate actions, gestures, attitudes, and language to achieve communication goals, received the highest level of agreement. A substantial majority of teachers (112, 74.7%) and students (225, 75.0%), endorsed this definition. This underscores the holistic nature of communication skills, emphasizing the need for a harmonious coordination of various elements in communication. The responses of all 450 participants illustrate a predominant agreement with the third definition. This indicates that both teachers and students view communication skills as a complex set of abilities that involve coordination of various elements to achieve effective communication. While the other definitions received some support, they were less widely embraced by the participants. These findings provide valuable insights into how communication skills are perceived by educators and students, which are crucial for shaping communication skills education and training programs.

Table 3 presents the results of the students' assessments of the importance of communication skills. The table categorizes the levels of importance, and the participants' responses are summarized in terms of the number and percentage of students for each assessment.

Table 3. Students' assessment of the role of communication skills.

No.	Level of importance	N	%
1	Very important	243	81
2	Important	52	17.3
3	Neutral	1	0.3
4	Less important	1	0.3
5	Not important	3	1.0
Total		300	100.0

The highest level of importance, "Very important," was chosen by a significant majority of the students. A total of 243 students, accounting for 81%, considered communication skills to be of utmost importance. This overwhelming endorsement highlights the significance of effective communication in the eyes of the student participants. The second level of importance, "Important", was selected by 52 students, representing 17.3% of the participants. This group also recognized the importance of communication skills but to a slightly lesser extent. Only one student (0.3%) marked "Neutral", indicating the lack of a strong opinion regarding the importance of communication skills. This response was relatively rare and suggests that a limited number of students were uncertain about the significance of these skills. Similarly, only one student (0.3%) indicated that communication skills were "Less important". This response reflects a minority perspective within the surveyed student group. Lastly, "Not important" was selected by three students, constituting 1.0%. This response category was the least favored among the students, suggesting that the majority of respondents attributed importance to communication skills. In total, 300 students took part in this assessment, and the data indicates a strong consensus regarding the importance of communication skills. This high level of agreement emphasizes the recognition of effective communication as a crucial and valuable attribute in various aspects of their lives, including academics, personal relationships, and future careers. The relatively low percentages in the "Neutral", "Less important" and "Not important" categories suggest that these perspectives were held by a small minority. This insight is essential for educational institutions and curricula, as it underscores the emphasis placed on communication skills by students.

Table 4 provides insight into the perceptions of teachers regarding the definition of experiential activities. The table presents three distinct definitions of experiential activities, and the responses are summarized in terms of the number and the percentage of teachers who supported each definition.

Table 4. Teachers' perceptions of the definition of experiential activities.

No.	Definition of experiential activity	N	%
1	Experiential activities are practical, educational activities conducted in parallel with teaching activities in school. Creative experiential activities are a part of the educational process organized outside of cultural subjects in class and have a complementary relationship with and support for teaching activities.	22	14.7
2	Experiential activities are educational activities in which each individual student has direct practical experience in the school environment as well as the family and social environments under the guidance and organization of educators through which emotions, ethics, personality qualities, and abilities are developed.	24	16.0
3	Experiential activities are educational activities in which the content and organization create conditions for each student to directly participate and be the subject of the activity and to plan and proactively build strategies for themselves and their group to form and develop the qualities, ideas, intentions, emotions, values, life skills and capabilities needed of citizens in modern society. Students develop their creativity to adapt and create new and valuable contributions for individuals and the community.	104	69.3
Total		150	100.0

The first definition characterizes experiential activities as practical educational activities conducted in parallel with teaching activities in school. It highlights creative experiential activities as a complementary and supportive component of the educational process organized outside of traditional classroom subjects. This definition was supported by 22 teachers, representing 14.7%. The second definition describes experiential activities as educational activities in which each individual student engages in direct practical activities within school, family, and social environments. These activities are guided and organized by educators to foster the development of emotions, ethics, personality qualities, and abilities. This definition was supported by 24 teachers, accounting for 16.0%. The third definition places a strong emphasis on students' direct participation, autonomy, and creativity. It highlights that students are not only the subjects of these activities but are also involved in planning and building strategies for themselves and their groups. The primary goal of these activities is to develop qualities, ideas, emotions, values, life skills, and capabilities that are essential for modern citizenship. This definition resonated with the majority of teachers (104, 69.3%). In total, 150 teachers participated in this survey, and the data underscores a clear preference for the third definition, which emphasizes student participation, creativity, and the development of a wide range of skills and attributes necessary for modern society. While the first and second definitions received support from a portion of the teachers, the third definition was the most widely accepted, emphasizing the importance of student involvement and empowerment in experiential activities. These findings provide valuable insights into how teachers conceptualize and prioritize experiential activities in the educational context. Table 5 presents the results of the students' evaluations regarding the role of experiential activities in developing communication skills, as reported by Tay and Nung secondary school students. The table categorizes the levels of evaluation, and the responses are summarized in terms of the number and percentage of students who provided each evaluation.

Table 5. Students' evaluation on the role of experiential activities in developing communication skills for Tay and Nung secondary school students.

No.	Level of evaluation	No. of students	%
1	Very good	189	64.9
2	Good	73	25.1
3	Normal	24	8.2
4	Little effect	1	0.3
5	No effect	4	1.4
Total		291	100.0

The highest level of evaluation ("Very good") was chosen by a substantial majority of the student respondents. A total of 189 (64.9%) of the surveyed students considered experiential activities to have a very positive impact on the development of communication skills. This strong endorsement underscores the students' belief in the effectiveness of these activities in enhancing their communication abilities. The second level of evaluation, "Good," was selected by 73 students, representing 25.1% of the participants. This group also recognized the positive impact of experiential activities on communication skills, albeit to a slightly lesser extent. A smaller number of students (24, 8.2%) marked their evaluation as "Normal". This suggests that some students perceived experiential activities as having an average or neutral effect on their communication skills development. Only one student (0.3%), reported "Little effect" in terms of experiential activities on their communication skills, and "No effect" was selected by four students (1.4%). This response indicates that experiential activities had no discernible impact on communication skills and was the least favored among the students. The majority (64.9%) rated the effect as "Very good," which signifies a strong belief in the effectiveness of these activities in improving their communication abilities. The relatively lower percentages in the "Normal," "Little effect," and "No effect" categories suggest that these perspectives were held by a small minority of students.

Table 6 provides an in-depth view of the students' self-assessment of their communication skills across a range of dimensions. The self-assessment scores (Armstrong & Ferguson, 2010) reflect how students perceive their own proficiency in each of these skills.

Table 6. Students' communication skills through student self-assessment.

No.	Communication skill	Students Armstrong and Ferguson (2010)
1	Greeting	4.08
2	Emotional and behavioral self-control	3.71
3	Approaching communication objects	3.48
4	Making requests and suggestions	3.75
5	Refusing other people's requests and suggestions	3.73
6	Feedback	3.60
7	Sharing	3.76
8	Problem solving	3.67
9	Public speaking	3.24
10	Teamwork	3.78
11	Persuading	3.64
12	Listening	4.00
13	Expression	3.61
14	Negotiation	3.56
15	Communication through eyes and gestures	3.50

Greeting skills, with an average score of 4.08, received one of the highest ratings, suggesting that students believe that they excel in initiating conversations and setting a positive tone and indicates a strong level of self-confidence in their greeting abilities. Emotional and behavioral self-control skills, with an average score of 3.71, indicate that students perceive themselves as having reasonable control over their emotions and behaviors during communication. This ability is essential for effective communication, and the students seem to recognize its importance. Approaching communication objects, with an average score of 3.48, suggests that students feel moderately confident in initiating interactions with objects or topics in a communication context. Making requests and suggestions skills, with an average score of 3.75, reflects a perceived proficiency in communicating needs and ideas. This suggests that students are comfortable expressing their requests and suggestions. Refusing other people's requests and suggestions, with an average score of 3.73, implies that students believe that they are reasonably capable of politely declining requests or suggestions, which is a crucial aspect of assertive communication. Feedback skills, with an average score of 3.60, indicates that students feel moderately skilled in

providing feedback during communication, a key component of constructive interaction. Sharing, with an average score of 3.76, signifies that students perceive themselves as being proficient in sharing information and ideas, emphasizing their commitment to effective communication through the exchange of thoughts. Problem solving, with an average score of 3.67, highlights the students' self-assessed ability to address and resolve issues that may arise during communication, underlining their confidence in solving problems. Public speaking, with an average score of 3.24, received a comparatively lower rating, suggesting that students feel less self-assured in the area of public speaking. This is an area where they may see room for improvement. Teamwork, with an average score of 3.78, implies that students excel in collaborative efforts, demonstrating their commitment to working effectively in group settings. Persuasion, with an average score of 3.64, signifies that students believe that they possess reasonable capabilities in convincing and persuading others during communication. Listening, with an exceptionally average score of 4.00, is indicative of the students' high regard for their ability to listen to others actively and attentively, an essential skill in effective communication. Expression, with an average score of 3.61, indicates a moderate level of confidence in their capacity to convey their thoughts and ideas effectively to others. Negotiation, with an average score of 3.56, reflects students' self-assessed ability to engage in effective negotiation and conflict resolution during communication. Communication through eyes and gestures, with an average score of 3.50, suggests that students feel reasonably competent in using non-verbal cues to enhance their communication. The self-assessment scores offer a comprehensive picture of students' perceptions of their communication skills. While some skills received high ratings, indicating strong self-confidence, others showed room for improvement. These insights into students' self-evaluations are invaluable for educators and curriculum planners, as they can guide the design of communication skills development programs tailored to address specific areas of strength and areas that require further enhancement.

Table 7 presents an insightful perspective on how teachers assess the communication skills of their students across different dimensions. These assessments, indicated by self-assessment scores (Armstrong & Ferguson) for each skill, offer valuable insights into how educators view the competence of their students in these specific areas of communication.

Table 7. Students' communication skills through teacher assessment.

No.	Communication skill	Teachers Armstrong and Ferguson (2010)
1	Greeting	3.71
2	Emotional and behavioral self-control	3.35
3	Approaching communication objects	2.97
4	Making requests and suggestions	3.29
5	Refusing other people's requests and suggestions	3.23
6	Feedback	3.27
7	Sharing	3.29
8	Problem solving	3.27
9	Public speaking	3.09
10	Teamwork	3.28
11	Persuading	3.19
12	Listening	3.33
13	Expression	3.23
14	Negotiation	3.20
15	Communication through eyes and gestures	3.22

The teachers perceived students as proficient in greeting skills, with an average score of 3.71. This suggests that they believe that students excel in initiating conversations and setting a positive tone during interactions. The teachers assessed the students as having reasonable control over their emotions and behaviors during communication, with an average score of 3.35. This is a vital attribute in effective communication, and the

assessment underscores its importance. Students have room for improvement in approaching communication objects, as suggested by the average score of 2.97. This implies that teachers see opportunities for students to enhance their ability to initiate interactions with objects or topics in a communication context. Students were viewed as proficient in making requests and suggestions, with an average score of 3.29. This suggests that teachers believe that students are effective in expressing their needs and ideas during communication. The students were perceived by teachers as having the capability to politely decline requests or suggestions, with an average score of 3.23. This emphasizes the importance of assertive communication skills. The teachers assessed students as proficient in providing feedback, with an average score of 3.27. Effective feedback is a critical component of constructive interaction. They viewed students as skilled in sharing information and ideas, with an average score of 3.29. This highlights the students' ability to actively contribute to communication through the exchange of thoughts. The students were perceived as having good problem-solving skills during communication, as indicated by an average score of 3.27. This reflects the students' aptitude for addressing and resolving issues that may arise during interactions. The teachers' assessment of public speaking skills, with an average score of 3.09, suggests that there may be areas for improvement in this aspect of communication and students may benefit from further developing their confidence and proficiency in public speaking. The teachers assessed students as proficient in teamwork skills, with an average score of 3.28, indicating that they excel in collaborative efforts and work effectively in group settings. They perceive students as reasonably skilled in persuading others, as indicated by an average score of 3.19. This suggests that students are capable of convincing and influencing others during communication. According to the teachers, students have good listening skills, with an average score of 3.33, emphasizing their attentiveness and active listening during interactions. The students were assessed as being competent in expressing themselves clearly, with an average score of 3.23, indicating that they are effective communicators. Teachers view students as having reasonable negotiation skills, with an average score of 3.20, suggesting that students can engage in effective negotiation and conflict resolution during communication. According to the teachers, their students possess good non-verbal communication skills, with an average score of 3.22, indicating their competence in using non-verbal cues to enhance their communication. The teachers' assessments of students' communication skills offer a comprehensive perspective on how educators perceive the competence of their students in various dimensions. While some skills received positive evaluations, others were seen as areas for development. These teacher assessments can serve as valuable guidance for educators and curriculum planners in tailoring communication skills development programs to address specific strengths and areas of improvement among students.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings offer a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and significance of communication skills in an educational context. Both teachers and students share a common understanding of communication skills as multifaceted abilities that require the harmonious coordination of various elements in communication to achieve specific goals. This alignment underscores the holistic nature of effective communication. The overwhelmingly high importance attributed to communication skills by students emphasizes their recognition of these skills as vital for personal, academic, and professional success. The preference for student-centered experiential activities by teachers highlights the evolving pedagogical paradigm that empowers students to take ownership of their learning. Furthermore, students' positive evaluations of the impact of experiential activities on communication skills underscore the potential of active, context-based learning approaches. Student self-assessments provide valuable insights into their self-perceived strengths and areas for improvement, empowering educators to tailor communication skills development programs. Finally, teacher assessments guide the shaping of teaching strategies to align with specific strengths and areas for growth identified by both teachers and students. These findings collectively underscore the significance of effective communication skills, the value of experiential learning, and the

importance of considering the unique perspectives of both educators and students in communication skills education.

Table 2 indicates a strong consensus between teachers and students regarding the definition of communication skills. Both groups predominantly view communication skills as the ability to harmoniously coordinate various elements in communication to achieve specific goals. This aligned perception underscores the multidimensional nature of effective communication. In an educational context, this alignment is crucial as it provides a shared foundation for communication skills development. It suggests that educators and students are on the same page when it comes to the fundamental understanding of communication skills and the importance of considering multiple facets for effective communication (Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006). This shared understanding can facilitate more effective communication skills instruction (Stein et al., 2007).

Table 3 demonstrates that students overwhelmingly recognize the immense importance of communication skills. A significant majority of the students rated these skills as "very important." This finding aligns with existing research emphasizing the central role of communication skills in personal, academic, and professional success. Effective communication is not only a key academic skill but also a critical life skill that impacts relationships, teamwork, and future career prospects (Duncan, Birdsong, Fuhrman, & Borron, 2017). The high value attributed to communication skills by students suggests that they are aware of the broad-reaching impact these skills can have on their lives (Cupach & Spitzberg, 1983; Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015).

Table 4 reveals that teachers favored the definition of experiential activities that places students at the core of the learning process. This definition highlights students' direct participation, autonomy, and creativity in the learning experience. This preference underscores the pedagogical shift toward active and student-centered learning. Educators recognize that experiential activities can empower students to take ownership of their learning and develop a deeper understanding of concepts (Estes, 2004; Franklin & Harrington, 2019). By valuing experiential activities that encourage student participation and creativity, educators acknowledge the importance of active engagement in the educational process. This aligns with the contemporary educational paradigm that emphasizes learner-centered approaches (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Wright, 2011).

Table 5 provides insights into students' evaluations of the impact of experiential activities on their communication skills. The majority of students rate this impact as "very good." This strong endorsement signifies that students perceive experiential activities as highly effective tools for enhancing their communication abilities and underscores the potential of experiential learning in communication skills development. Experiential activities, such as role-playing, group discussions, and real-world problem solving, offer students opportunities to apply and refine their communication skills in authentic contexts (Bhattacharjee & Ghosh, 2013). The students' positive evaluations highlight the importance of incorporating experiential activities into the curriculum as a means to nurture effective communication (Duta, Panisoara, & Panisoara, 2015; Zhu & Shek, 2021).

Table 6 presents the students' self-assessment of their communication skills across various dimensions. Some skills received higher self-assessment scores than others. The variation in these scores offers a detailed view of students' perceptions of their strengths and areas for improvement. For example, students may have high confidence in their greeting and listening skills but recognize a need for development in public speaking (Dansieh, Owusu, & Seidu, 2021; Tran, Lam, Duong, Thi, & Chi, 2021). This self-assessment offers valuable insights into how students view their own communication abilities and are instrumental for personalized and targeted communication skills development. Teachers can use this information to tailor their instruction to address specific areas where students feel they need to improve. By doing so, educators can empower students to take an active role in their own learning and growth (Kanchana, 2019).

Table 7 provides insights into how teachers view the communication skills of their students. The teacher assessments offer a detailed perspective on students' abilities and areas for development. While some skills received positive assessments, others were perceived as areas for potential growth. This detailed teacher assessment is a

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valuable tool for educators in shaping their teaching strategies. For instance, if teachers perceive public speaking as an area for development, they can design targeted lessons and activities to enhance this skill (Kayi, 2006). The teacher assessments also highlight the importance of considering the unique perspectives of educators when planning communication skills development programs. These assessments help educators align their strategies with the specific strengths and areas of improvement identified by both teachers and students (Bearman et al., 2018; Brownell, Jones, Sohn, & Stark, 2020).

The overall findings provide comprehensive insights into the perceptions of communication skills, the importance attributed to these skills by students, the preferences for student-centered experiential learning, and the impact of such activities on communication skills. Additionally, student self-assessments and teacher assessments offer a granular view of strengths and areas for improvement. These insights are instrumental in tailoring communication skills development programs to meet the unique needs and perceptions of both educators and students, thereby fostering more effective communication skills instruction.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Firstly, the data is based on self-reports and assessments, which may introduce a degree of subjectivity. Students' and teachers' perceptions and evaluations of communication skills may be influenced by their individual experiences and expectations, potentially leading to bias in their responses. Additionally, the study focused on a specific geographic region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different cultural and educational contexts. Furthermore, the study did not explore the potential influence of various demographic factors, such as age, gender, or years of teaching experience, on the perception and evaluation of communication skills, which could provide valuable insights into the variations in these perspectives. Lastly, while the study highlights the importance of experiential activities, it does not delve into the specific types of activities or the curriculum content used, which could impact the effectiveness of communication skills development. Future research could address these limitations by employing a more diverse and representative sample, considering demographic factors, and providing a more in-depth examination of the nature of experiential activities in communication skills education.

The implications of the findings from this study are significant for both educational practice and policy. Firstly, the alignment between teachers and students in their perception of communication skills and their recognition of the importance of these skills emphasizes the importance of integrating effective communication skills into the curriculum. Educational institutions can develop and implement comprehensive communication skills programs that cater to the holistic nature of this ability, ensuring that students are well prepared for academic, personal, and professional success. Secondly, the positive evaluations of experiential activities by students and the preference for student-centered experiential learning by teachers highlight the potential of active, context-based learning approaches in communication skills development. Educators can design and implement experiential activities that offer students opportunities to apply and refine their communication skills in authentic scenarios, promoting meaningful learning experiences. Finally, the detailed student self-assessments and the teachers' assessments of communication skills provide valuable data for personalized and targeted communication skills development. Educators can use this information to create tailored instruction plans that address specific areas of improvement while building on existing strengths, thereby fostering more effective communication skills instruction. These implications underscore the importance of recognizing the unique perspectives of both teachers and students and providing a balanced and dynamic approach to communication skills education.

5. CONCLUSION

This study offers a comprehensive exploration of the perceptions, evaluations, and significance of communication skills in an educational context. The alignment between teachers and students in their understanding of communication skills and the shared recognition of their importance underscore the holistic nature of effective communication and provide a solid foundation for communication skills development.

Experiential activities, preferred by teachers and positively evaluated by students, hold the potential to enrich communication skills by offering opportunities for authentic, context-based learning. The detailed self-assessments of the students and the teachers' assessments of communication skills contribute to personalized and targeted communication skills development. This study highlights the value of recognizing the unique perspectives of both educators and students and tailoring communication skills education to address specific areas for improvement while building on existing strengths. The implications of this study extend to curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and policy decisions that can enrich the communication skills of students, thereby enhancing their academic, personal, and professional capabilities.

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