Review Report

Interpersonal Communication Skills and Proactive Stance to Life's Puzzles among Children: A Review

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Abstract: This research article dealt with interpersonal communication skills among children and proactive stance to life's puzzles. A review of related literature was performed to examine interpersonal communication, interpersonal communication skills, interpersonal communication and a proactive stance in conflict resolution, and the development of communication skills in children in a puzzled world. The study noted that children should be allowed and guided appropriately to express themselves clearly and assertively; parents should follow up on their children regularly and should build on teachers' efforts at home. Parents should also allow teachers to do their job of teaching, counselling, and rewarding positively (praise, commend) or negatively (punish) based on the circumstances; teachers should use a child-centered approach in order to make the class lively, interesting, and engaging for children. In addition, they should show empathy and try to be close to the children as much as possible to curb the actions of the loquacious ones and help the shy or withdrawn children to come out of their shells as they prepare for the task ahead in a challenging but essential milieu as they mature and are integrated into the system. The government should implement better incentives and policies to encourage teachers to contribute to the growth and positive development of the child through remuneration and promotion that are timely and in line with their quota.

Keywords: Children, Interpersonal communication, Parents, Proactive Stance Puzzles, Teachers

1. Introduction

The Latin word for communication is communicare, which means "to share" (Weekley, 1967). (Weekley, 1967). It is a means of transmitting verbal and non-verbal messages or information. It consists of a circular process, including the sender, the receiver, and the communication channel. During the course of communication, obstacles, interference, or distortion may occur, compromising the intended message's clarity. This is contingent upon the cultural context, the medium utilized, the individual's disposition, the tone, and the temporal setting. Genuine communication occurs in all that we do, as every form of communication conveys some sort of meaning, whether expressed deliberately, unintentionally, or implicitly. Hence, it is critical to possess an accurate comprehension of the surroundings in order to decipher the message accurately at any given moment (Adler & Proctor, 2016; Reems, 2023). Death and life are even more dependent on the power of the tongue, and how one employs it determines the outcomes they experience in life. Individuals have the ability to incite or avert wrath with their words. Furthermore, life is a puzzle (i.e., something that is difficult to decipher or comprehend) replete with obstacles, the majority of which stem from misunderstanding. Therefore, effective interpersonal communication is a crucial component in this puzzled world, given that human beings are inherently social and the manner in which they communicate will determine the success or failure of a given relationship. One example is the notion that all men are inherently good until they come into contact with another individual. In this respect, this research article discusses interpersonal communication skills among children and proactive stance to life's puzzles.

2. Problem Statement and Study Scope

A multitude of challenges in life, including those involving parents, siblings, peers, cities, and nations, often stem from interpersonal communication issues that arise due to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of language during the communication process. The process begins immediately after a child is born and persists throughout one's lifetime if not properly managed. Therefore, it is essential to provide children with the knowledge and skills to effectively communicate in order to navigate through life effortlessly and communicate proficiently in this ever-changing and demanding world. This review paper's discussion will revolve around interpersonal communication, interpersonal communication skill; types of interpersonal communication; principles of interpersonal communication; practice of interpersonal communication and its benefits; interpersonal communication and pro-active stance in conflict resolution; and inculcating communication skills in children in a puzzled world. Overall, this paper examines the importance of interpersonal communication skills in children and their proactive approach towards solving life's challenges. This review aims to provide valuable insights to educate various stakeholders, including parents, counsellors, psychologists, teachers, policy makers, and the government, about the significance of imparting positive communication skills to children. These skills are essential for fostering healthy relationships in all aspects of life.

3. Review Questions

    a) What is interpersonal communication?
    b) What is interpersonal communication skill?
    c) What are the types of interpersonal communication?
    d) What are the principles of interpersonal communication?
    e) What is the practice of interpersonal communication and its benefits?

f) What is the relationship between interpersonal communication and pro-active stance in conflict resolution?

g) How can communication skills be inculcated in children in a puzzled world?

4. Materials and Methods

The research adopted a narrative review in which some relevant and related literature were consulted and reviewed in the course of putting this article together based on global permission for researchers ethically. To finalise the manuscript, the paper was subjected to internal and external peer review. Twenty-eight (28) articles were consulted in the course of putting this article together.

5. Results and Discussion
5.1. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication or face-to-face communication is the exchange of information, idea, and feeling verbally or non-verbally between two or group of people. It is universal in nature, done daily in formal or informal way, for example, speaking (words), writing, media (phone calls), facial expression, body language (gesture, posture), and sound. It is one of the most effective forms of communication whereby the feedback is instant. It gives room for persuasion, appeals to the emotion, encourages, motivates, and coordinate the feeling of the receiver. The elements of interpersonal communication are the communicator, the message, interference, feedback, context, and the channel of communications (Adler & Proctor, 2016; Terra, 2023). The complexity of communication makes it a necessity for the acquisition of a good communication skill in this puzzled world. Therefore, the mode of communication matters in order to convey meaning to the hearer or receiver. To this end, communication should be accurate, effective and unambiguous to convey meaning (Terra, 2023).

5.2. Interpersonal Communication Skill

Interpersonal communication is referred to as social skills, life skills or people skills. Children learn it naturally by interacting with others but they still have to be guided. They are required in the course of interaction daily irrespective of one's sex or status. It is key to future triumph and children's success academically, professionally and in every sphere of life's endeavours. It helps children to bond easily and comfortably with the significant others. It is a basic skill needed in the work environment if an individual will succeed in such sector in life. It aids in the acquisition of social skills and emotional regulation which are learned mostly through observation of the behaviour or by direct contact with others (DeVries, 2023). To adapt successfully in this puzzled world, interpersonal communication skills should be developed in children (whether typical or atypical) as early as possible. Therefore, adults, significant others and parents must mindful of their communication and behaviour before children. Examples of interpersonal skills are body language, active listening, positive attitude, negotiation, persuasion and influencing skills, effective communication skills, emotional intelligence, assertiveness, team working skills, responsibility, critical thinking, conflict resolution skills, problem-solving and decision-making skills (PlanetSpark, 2021; Wyeth, 2023).

5.3. Types of Interpersonal Communication

According to Terra (2023), interpersonal communication is made up of verbal and non-verbal communication, listening and written word.

5.3.1. Verbal and non-verbal interpersonal communication

Verbal interpersonal communication entails the way words are used, for example, how one speaks persuasively, the word that one emphasizes, the language one uses in addition to the short phrases and

affirmative sound one expresses. Conversely, non-verbal interpersonal communication includes non-verbal cues like body language, tone of the voice, facial expressions and gestures. These non-verbal cues must be meaningful to the listener in order to be effective in interpersonal communication.

5.3.2. Listening in interpersonal communication

Listening includes special techniques in the form of clarification and reflection. It involves either using the ears to listen in a face-to-face intercommunication or through the internet as the case may be. This is done when the listener focuses their attention on the speaker whereby the speaker is seen as the singular or most important entity in the significant environment.

5.3.3. Written word in interpersonal communication

Written communication skill is valued nowadays especially due to the pandemic. Making one's words understandable in writing is essential to making a meaningful interpersonal communication; for example in the workplace, school, on social media, texting messages on phone. Proper use of punctuation matters, emojis must be selectively used to covey meaning to the receiver, grammar must be adequately constructed, words must be succinctly chosen with clarity and the tone must be acceptable to get the best in writing.

5.4. Principles of Interpersonal Communication

i.   It is unavoidable, complex, irreversible (Eyin ni ohun).
ii.   It is contextual depending on the mood, mindset, culture and maturity or level of comprehension of the receiver or hearer.

5.5. Practice of Interpersonal Communication and its Benefits

5.5.1. General Principles of Interpersonal Communication

i.   It assists one to make friends, create contacts, and maintain relationship.
ii.   It helps in conflict resolution.
iii.   One can anticipate and predict other people's behaviour.
iv.   It equips one for managing work place stress.
v.   One can impart others and gain information from others too.
vi.   One will be able to influence the attitude and behaviour of others.
vii.   To set professional and social boundaries.
viii. It gives one the opportunity to provide and receive emotional support.
ix.   It is an essential soft skill required in most job descriptions.
x.   It contributes to the positive effect of team playing.
xi.   Clarity in the expression of one's intention or thought is gained leading to a more satisfactory personal and professional status later in life.
xii.   The evil of misunderstanding or conflict is conquered through a good interpersonal communication skill (Terra, 2023 in Simplilearn Solution, 2023; SkillsYouNeed 2022).

5.5.2. Interpersonal Communication and Emotional Intelligence

Generally, irrespective of a child's state (whether normal or born with any handicapping condition) apart from developing interpersonal communication skills, children need emotional intelligence that is the ability to understand, use and manage or regulate one's emotion in order to ameliorate stress (emotionally and psychologically), communicate more effectively, empathise with the significant others, overcome any challenge and resolve conflicts amicably where necessary so as to cope with the ever changing world. Hence, with emotional intelligence, a child will know what to say at the right time, empathise with others and when to say nothing at all depending on the situation at hand. Further, the child will learn how to develop social awareness, build positive relationship, and have a positive

self-esteem. Furthermore, through appropriate expression of emotion, relating and sharing with others, children gain insight into their own emotional states and learn how to cope with life generally.

5.5.3. Howard Gardner's Theory on Communication

Howard Gardner propounded the theory of multiple intelligences in 1983. According to Gardner (2011a), there are basically eight types of intelligences are available for the humans to harness based on one's genetic make-up and experiences as the case may be. The author asserted that intelligence is a form of bio-psychological ability to process an information in order to solve problem(s) in a cultural setting or the power to create a product or products that are valuable in any specific culture or setting (Gardner, 2011a). Research showed that before the proposition of Howard Gardner, people believe in only one type of intelligence that is the general intelligence 'g' (Gottfredson, 2004) which is based on cognition ability of an individual only. But Gardner expatiated on this by introducing other kinds of intelligence hidden in man as a creative being. These intelligence were labelled as follows: spatial (picture smart), musical (music smart), naturalist (nature smart), linguistic (word smart), bodily/kinesthetic (body smart), logical/mathematical (number/reasoning smart), interpersonal (people smart) and intra-personal (self-smart). In his proposition, Gardner found that logical/mathematical and linguistic intelligence were the most notable in the school and the society generally. There are other intelligence such as moral, spiritual and existential that Gardner (2011b) exposed to liberate men from the erroneous belief in a singular intelligence which had made many children including adults jealous, evil minded or entirely frustrated in life in the course of thinking that they did not belong, are not appreciated or worst of all are not gifted at all.

5.6. Interpersonal Communication and Pro-Active Stance in Conflict Resolution

Conflict in play and in various activities during the day is normal among young children. Removing the child in the tense environment is not always the best because the child can learn how to negotiate resolution by himself through that situation. This is because success in resolving some form of conflict and argument in the early years will prepare the child on how to resolve issues in times of disagreement later in life whether in the professional or family milieu. All these are better and conveniently learned and mastered in the developmental years as a child than in adulthood when the personality is already formed. It is worthy of note that children's behaviour are the antecedents of classroom interactions which are antisocial behavior, for instance, aggression; pro-social behavior, for example, pattern of cooperative interaction and asocial behaviour. While pro-social behaviour sometimes allows interpersonal cost and most of the time benefit the partners, asocial behaviour usually affects partner's unskillful acts and inability to sustain relationship. Various children behaviour is connected to either of these types of relationship. Children behaviour has positive or negative influence on their relationship with others. Children's dyadic interaction e.g., friendship, teacher-child relationship (Birch & Ladd, 1996) and group-level interaction e.g., peer acceptance (Bukowski & Hoza, 1989). There could be friendship, that is, peer acceptance (whether a child is liked or disliked by members of his classroom) or peer victimization (bullied by aggressive peers) (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). But overall, aggressive behaviour often lead to peer rejection irrespective of the sex and type of aggression (boys-instrumental aggression, girls-relational aggression, confrontive aggression (in both boys and girls) (Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983; Coie, et al. 1991; Crick, 1996; Dodge, 1983; Ladd, Price & Hart, 1988). Moreover, there might be gender differences in how aggression is exhibited (Hymel, Wagner & Butler, 1990). Prosocial behaviour linked to peer-group acceptance (Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983; Dodge, 1983; Ladd, Price & Hart, 1988). For example, highly inquisitive boys with positive comments gain acceptance by his peers and preschoolers that play cooperatively with other class members receive

peer acceptance (Ladd et al., 1988).

Also, research evidence has shown that a child's aggressive behaviour can hinder friendship while relational aggression can cause problematic friendship in both sexes (Crick & Grorpeter, 1995). Passive or non-aggressive children are usually the victims of provocative or aggressive children. Boys who were consistently passive victims became submissive, incompetent in interaction and were progressively withdrawn as time went on (Olweus, 1994; Perry, Kusel & Perry, 1988; Schwartz, Dodge & Coie, 1993). Internal issues, physical weakness and poor social skills predispose a child to peer victimization (Egan & Perry, 1998). Research finding support the notion that children's aggressive and passive behavior as well as a paucity of social skills associate with peer victimization. And victimization is related to school related issues among children. Children's behaviour in the classroom or school setting will go a long way to influence their relationship with peers and the teacher as well. Children with prosocial actions are positively connected to their teachers in terms of relationship. Their antisocial behaviour in kindergarten will affect their closeness with the teacher and will degenerate into teacher-pupil conflict. Disruptive behaviour in a child and problem of anxiety will affect teacher-pupil interaction. In all, the behaviour a child brought to school will have a great impact on the nature and the quality of relationship they later form in the school environment (Ladd, Buhs & Troop, 2002).

5.7. Inculcating Interpersonal Communication Skills in Children in a Puzzled World

Life is a puzzle as mentioned earlier and from the reviewed literature, it was gathered that children unavoidably need interpersonal communication skills to thrive in their day-to-day activities in preparation for the global challenge irrespective of their colour, race or geographical location at any point in time. Inculcating interpersonal skills in children will help them to understand the conceptualization of mental process thereby thinking before speaking and communicating it clearly (PlanetSpark, 2021). According to DeVries, (2023), parents should live by example, teach the child about conversation parts, and patiently explain to the child what is proper and what is not appropriate. PlanetSpark (2021) highlighted some interpersonal communication skills required for ultimate survival in this puzzled world. Parents should set visible and quality example, allow children to express themselves; Let them master beyond the mode of verbal communication; support their interests or hobbies; Teach them to listen to others too; they should be friendly to attract friends get them acquainted with various parts of a conversation (start, mid and end); let them be conversant with what is appropriate to talk about and what they should not talk about; they should mind the tone of their voice while talking and practice active listening; introduce them to communication games; teach them about being assertive without being aggressive; let them practice the act of sharing what they have with others and finally teach them how to observe keenly paying attention to details.

6. Conclusion

As children interact with others on a daily basis, they learn basic interpersonal skills, whether positive or negative. As a result, parents should devote time to their children in order to rid them of negative skills and instill positive skills in them for effective interpersonal communication and proper interaction in life. They should also follow up on their children on a regular basis, building on the efforts of the teachers at home. More specifically, they should allow teachers to do their jobs of teaching, counseling, and rewarding positively or negatively as appropriate. Children should be allowed and guided appropriately in order to express themselves clearly and assertively. Teachers should use a child-centered approach to teach children in order to make the class lively, involving, and appealing. Furthermore, they should show empathy and try to be as close to the children as possible in

order to curb the actions of the loquacious ones and help the shy or withdrawn children come out of their shells in preparation for the task ahead in a challenging but indispensable milieu as they mature and are integrated into the system. The government should put in place better incentives and policies to encourage teachers so that they can contribute their quota immensely to the growth of the system.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationship that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Author contributions

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