

INDICATORS OF OPPRESSIVE INSTRUCTION: VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL SIGNALS USED BY EDUCATORS

CLAUDETTE A. BALURAN*

MA. ELOISA L. YAP*

Abstract

This study examined the use of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals by tertiary educators and the significance of gender, length of experience, educational degree, and academic rank to their perceived use of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals. Likewise, students' perception of tertiary educators' use of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals and the significance of sex are reported. Anonymous questionnaires reflecting characteristic indicators of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals were completed by both tertiary educators and students. Results reveal that number of years in service and academic rank had significant relationships with oppressive non-verbal signals used by tertiary educators while students' sex had significant differences in their perception of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals used by tertiary educators. Implications for possible effects on students and effective teaching are presented.

Keywords and phrases: Oppression, Verbal, Non-Verbal, Bullying, Tertiary Teachers

* Associate Professor of English, West Visayas State University

INTRODUCTION

Teachers affect eternity. Their influence extends beyond the classroom. And in the words of Harris and Rosenthal (2005), this influence can be positive or, regrettably, negative. Common lore and our own memories according to them, tell us that our images of good and bad teachers are heavily influenced by their nonverbal behaviors. They have reviewed available empirical literature on the relations between teacher nonverbal behavior and student outcomes to clear the issue of the impact of teachers' nonverbal behavior on student outcomes which they argue is ultimately an empirical one, and thus explore actual *empirical* evidence regarding the effects of teacher nonverbal communication.

When looking into nonverbal communication, the verbal aspect should likewise be considered. Pease (1988) articulated that most researchers generally agree that the verbal channel is used primarily for conveying information, while the non-verbal channel is used for negotiating interpersonal attitudes, and in some cases is used as a substitute for verbal messages.

Research on verbal and non-verbal communication in the academe has been considered imperative with the rise of bullying and incivility in classrooms. Harris and Rosenthal (2005) argue that there are indeed several aspects of the classroom context that render it a unique setting where the traditional rules governing communication, both verbal and nonverbal, do not always apply and thus demands special research scrutiny.

As Susan Fiske (1993 in Harris and Rosenthal, 2005) has documented, people in positions of lower power are especially attentive to the behavior of high-power individuals. Thus, because the teacher tends to do the greater share of the talking, and because students will be especially motivated to attend to the teacher, it is likely that students will notice their teacher's nonverbal behavior to a greater extent and such behavior may be more influential than in ordinary conversation.

Teachers are critical in determining the school climate. Thus their attitudes to power dynamics are extremely relevant" (Twemlow et al., 2006). Even when teachers are not intentionally controlling their nonverbal behavior to convey a given message, the situational demands of the classroom create hypersensitivity among students to all behaviors, verbal and nonverbal, given off by teachers. To the student, a teacher's smile in response to a suggested answer could be a validation of his or her sense of intellectual achievement and thus affect the student's self-esteem much more strongly than perhaps the teacher could ever suspect. Regrettably,

the converse is also true, and a cold or hostile glance (whether intended or not, or even caused by any action of the student or not) can evoke in the student a sense of shame or despair (Harris and Rosenthal, 2005).

Given the great prominence that teachers' nonverbal behavior can have in an academic context, and given the unique features of the classroom that make it difficult to apply directly traditional theories of nonverbal communication (Doyle, 1977 in Harris and Rosenthal, 2005), the need for nonverbal research that takes place in the classroom is great (Harris and Rosenthal, 2005).

Oppression is defined in dictionaries as an unjust, harsh, or cruel exercise of power over another or others. From a psychosocial perspective, the term can be viewed more specifically in the context of abuse or similar mistreatment that leads to psychological distress or emotional pain and suffering. Oppression can be manifested in different ways. It can be overt or obvious, or it can be conducted secretly without the oppressed persons knowing that oppression is being perpetrated. It does not have to be vicious (Hanna, F.; Talley, W.; & Guindon, M., 2000).

Although bullying is a regular recurrent action, even intermittent, oppressive acts have close association with bullying. Twemlow and Fonagy (2006) defined a bullying teacher as "one who uses his or her power to punish, manipulate, or disparage a student beyond what would be a reasonable disciplinary procedure". Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, and Brethour (2005) found in a survey of 116 elementary school teachers that 45% admitted to having bullied a student. In a qualitative study using discourse and conversational analyses where teachers were asked about teacher bullying of students (Hepburn in Allen, 20010), at least one teacher openly admitted to having bullied students.

Bullying by teachers shares some similarities to peer-on-peer bullying. Like peer-on-peer bullying, it is an abuse of power that tends to be chronic and often is expressed in a public manner. It is a form of humiliation that generates attention while it degrades a student in front of others. In effect, the bullying can be a public degradation ceremony in which the victim's capabilities are debased and his or her identity is ridiculed. Similarly, it is deliberate, it is likely to distress the target, and it tends to be repeated. Equally significant, the teacher who bullies usually receives no retribution or other negative consequences. This too parallels peer-on-peer bullying. The classroom is the most common place for such bullying to occur, although it may occur in any setting where students are under adult supervision (Alan McEvoy, 2005).

Drawing on Hyme's (1972) theory on verbal communicative competence which he defined as the competence of language use appropriate to other participants of the communicative interaction, and appropriate to the given social context and situation (in Kurcz, 2004), this study aimed to provide data on oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals used by tertiary educators in a university in Iloilo City, Philippines as perceived by tertiary educators and students. It sheds light on (1) the use of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals by tertiary educators and the significance of gender, length of experience, educational degree, and academic rank to their perceived use of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals and (2) students' perception of tertiary educators' use of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals, and the significance of sex to their perception.

Some experts consider the term verbal and nonverbal obsolete; however, for the purpose of making the research accessible to those who are not familiar with specialized linguistic terms, these terms were adopted. For the purpose of this study, oppressive verbal signals involve linguistic strategies that embarrass, shame, humiliate, demean the character of a person, or generate fear while non-verbal signals are facial expressions or body movements which include kinesics, proxemics, oculosics, and haptics, that serve as instruments to induce the negative feelings of oppression.

METHOD

Prior to the construction of the questionnaire, an informal survey among students were done to pre-determine oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals they have observed among educators. These observations were prepared and used as basis for the final draft of the questionnaire. Data were collected through the final questionnaire which was filled in anonymously by fifty-five (55) tertiary educators and two hundred fifty (250) students who comprised the representative sample in the selected university. The first part of the questionnaire for the faculty contained information on sex, length of service, degree, and academic rank while the second part contained sixteen (16) indicators for oppressive verbal signals and fourteen (14) indicators for oppressive non-verbal signals. Questionnaires for the students required information on sex and a similar set of indicators. The respondents were requested to tick the observed frequency of each indicator. The responses were tallied and subjected to appropriate statistical tools.

RESULTS

Of the indicators for oppressive verbal signals, “talking to a colleague about a misbehaving student and naming the student” (M=.92) was identified as the top oppressive verbal signal that tertiary educators acknowledge to have used. The remaining indicators are ranked according to the frequency with which they occur: “telling the students to leave the room if they dislike the teacher’s manner of discipline” (M=.64), “interrupting or telling a student to stop during recitation” (M=0.58), “scolding students in the presence of other teachers in the faculty room”(M=0.40), “sarcastically calling students endearments that sound condescending”(M=0.38), “criticizing students in front of the class (M=0.35)”, shouting at students when angry and frustrated”(M=0.33), “sending students out of the class when they misbehave” (M=0.32), “figuratively telling the class my pen will level with them when the class is too much to handle”(M=0.30), “Criticizing students’ work in front of other teachers in the faculty room” (M=0.26),“Criticizing a student/s in front of other students and/or teachers” (M=0.25),“berating students even when there are people around”(M=0.23),“calling students “whiners” to their face when they complain” (M=0.21), “putting students in place when they get an award outside of class telling them that the award is nothing” (M=0.13), “telling students I have earned a degree related to the subject matter so they cannot question my knowledge”(M=0.11), and “call my students names” (M=0.04).Table 1 shows the data.

Table 1. Oppressive Verbal Signals Use as Perceived by Tertiary Educators

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Rank |
|---|------|-------|------|
| Talking to my colleagues about a misbehaving student whose name I would mention so they would be familiar with the student. | 0.92 | 0.646 | 1 |
| Telling students to leave the room if they dislike my manner of discipline. | 0.64 | 0.682 | 2 |
| Tendency to interrupt or tell a student to stop during recitation when his/her answer is not what I expect. | 0.58 | 0.658 | 3 |

| | | | |
|--|------|-------|----|
| Tendency to scold students in the presence of other teachers when we are in the faculty room | 0.40 | 0.569 | 4 |
| Sarcastically calling a student terms of endearment that are mean to sound condescending if he/she seems arrogant, keeps on asking questions, or makes side comments | 0.38 | 0.623 | 5 |
| Criticizing students' work/output/paper in front of the class so others can learn from his/her mistakes | 0.35 | 0.584 | 6 |
| Tendency to shout at students when I get angry or frustrated with the class or their performance | 0.33 | 0.511 | 7 |
| Sending students out of the class when they misbehave | 0.32 | 0.547 | 8 |
| Telling the class my pen will level with them when the class is too much to handle (to mean I can influence their grades) | 0.30 | 0.540 | 9 |
| Tendency to criticize students' work in front of other teachers when students would consult me in the faculty room | 0.26 | 0.445 | 10 |
| Tendency to criticize a student/s in front of other students and/or teachers especially if they make mistakes | 0.25 | 0.434 | 11 |
| Berating students even when there are people around so they would learn from their mistakes and refrain from doing them in the future. | 0.23 | 0.423 | 12 |
| Calling students "whiners" to their face when they complain, especially the "know-it-all" types | 0.21 | 0.409 | 13 |
| Putting students in place when they get an award outside of class telling them that the award is nothing or not really important based on my standards | 0.13 | 0.511 | 14 |

Tendency to tell students I have earned a degree related to the subject matter so they cannot question my knowledge on the subject when students question my knowledge on the subject matter 0.11 0.375 15

Tendency to call my students names when I get frustrated with their attitude toward my subject, scores or my teaching style. 0.04 0.189 16

Non-verbal signals that educators admit to have used the most is “standing close to a student to make him/her behave” (M=1.27). The remaining indicators are listed according to the frequency of occurrence: “staring students down when they seem to question my authority” (M=0.98), “raising an eyebrow when I don’t like a student’s answer or when I feel he/she is being arrogant” (M=0.60), “not paying attention to students who ask questions for varied reasons” (M=0.56), “smirking or pursing my lips when I do not like or do not agree with a student’s answer to my questions during class discussions” (M=0.45), “ignoring students’ complaints and dismiss them as trivial matters since students are just looking for attention” (M=0.37), “pointing my finger to erring or rowdy students to show them my authority” (M=0.30), “purposely ignoring students I dislike when they raise their hands during recitation” (M=0.30), “rolling my eyes when a student’s answer to my question is not right or when they sound arrogant” (M=0.29), “crumpling students’ paper when I catch them cheating” (M=0.22), “putting my hands on my hips and raise my head higher in front of the class to show my authority” (M=0.21), “walking out of class without warning, not even telling the class reasons for my anger or when I meet resistance or misbehavior in class” (M=0.20), “hitting the board/table to prompt them to think when students can’t provide the answer to the questions I pose” (M=0.15), and “throwing a piece of chalk, eraser, or any object at students when they are not paying attention (sleeping, talking, etc.)” (M=0.05). Table 2 presents the data.

Table 2. Oppressive Non-Verbal Signals Use as Perceived by Tertiary Educators

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Rank |
|--|------|-------|------|
| Standing close to a student to make him/her behave | 1.27 | 0.849 | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------|----|
| Staring students down when they seem to question my authority | 0.98 | 0.782 | 2 |
| Raising an eyebrow when I don't like a student's answer or when I feel he/she is being arrogant | 0.60 | 0.655 | 3 |
| Not paying attention to students who ask questions for varied reasons | 0.56 | 0.839 | 4 |
| Smirking or pursing my lips when I do not like or do not agree with a student's answer to my questions during class discussions | 0.45 | 0.503 | 5 |
| Ignoring students' complaints and dismiss them as trivial matters since students are just looking for attention | 0.37 | 0.487 | 6 |
| Pointing my finger to erring or rowdy students to show them my authority | 0.30 | 0.575 | 7 |
| Purposely ignoring students I dislike when they raise their hands during recitation | 0.30 | 0.503 | 8 |
| Rolling my eyes when a student's answer to my question is not right or when they sound arrogant | 0.29 | 0.497 | 9 |
| Crumpling students' paper when I catch them cheating | 0.22 | 0.567 | 10 |
| Putting my hands on my hips and raise my head higher in front of the class to show my authority | 0.21 | 0.409 | 11 |
| Walking out of class without warning, not even telling the class reasons for my anger or when I meet resistance or misbehavior in class | 0.20 | 0.404 | 12 |
| Hitting the board/table to prompt them to think when students can't provide the answer to the questions I pose | 0.15 | 0.488 | 13 |

Throwing a piece of chalk, eraser, or any object at students when they are not paying attention (sleeping, talking, etc.) 0.05 0.229 14

Table 3 reveals that when categorized by sex, length of service, degree, and academic rank, there were no significant differences in the oppressive verbal signals of educators.

Table 3. Oppressive Verbal Signals Perceived by Tertiary Educators Categorized by Sex, Length of Service, Degree, and Academic Rank

| <i>Components</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>p-value*</i> |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 0.42 | 0.355 | 0.131 |
| Female | 0.31 | 0.188 | |
| Length of Teaching | | | |
| 5 years and less | 0.52 | 0.240 | 0.141 |
| 6-10 years | 0.37 | 0.151 | |
| 11-15 years | 0.27 | 0.221 | |
| 16-20 years | 0.40 | 0.173 | |
| More than 20 years | 0.29 | 0.258 | |
| Degree | | | |
| Bachelor's | 0.44 | 0.224 | 0.355 |
| Master's | 0.31 | 0.200 | |
| Doctoral | 0.35 | 0.331 | |
| Academic Rank | | | |
| Instructor | 0.44 | 0.215 | 0.121 |
| Assistant Professor | 0.32 | 0.218 | |
| Associate Professor | 0.23 | 0.125 | |
| Full Professor | 0.39 | 0.385 | |

**t-test and One-Way ANOVA*

In the same manner, when respondents were grouped as to sex and degree, there were no significant differences found. However, when the educators were grouped as to length of

teaching experience ($p = 0.003$) and academic rank ($p = 0.019$), significant differences were found.

Furthermore, post-hoc analysis (multiple comparisons) revealed that educators with 16-20 years teaching experience had significantly higher oppressive non-verbal signal activities than those teachers with more than 20 years of experience.

On the other hand, instructors' non-verbal oppressive signals were significantly higher than that of associate professors'.

Table 4. Oppressive Non-Verbal Signals Use as Perceived by Tertiary Educators Categorized by Sex, Length of Service, Degree and Academic Rank

| <i>Components</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>p-value*</i> |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 0.49 | 0.279 | 0.238 |
| Female | 0.40 | 0.232 | |
| Length of Teaching | | | |
| 5 years and less | 0.65 | 0.259 | 0.003 |
| 6-10 years | 0.41 | 0.225 | |
| 11-15 years | 0.42 | 0.226 | |
| 16-20 years | 0.69 | 0.218 | |
| More than 20 years | 0.32 | 0.195 | |
| Degree | | | |
| Bachelor's | 0.54 | 0.280 | 0.284 |
| Master's | 0.39 | 0.237 | |
| Doctoral | 0.45 | 0.236 | |
| Academic Rank | | | |
| Instructor | 0.57 | 0.228 | 0.019 |
| Assistant Professor | 0.39 | 0.241 | |
| Associate Professor | 0.30 | 0.197 | |
| Full Professor | 0.49 | 0.251 | |

**t-test and One-Way ANOVA*

Meanwhile, students perceived “sarcastically calling a student terms of endearment used in a condescending manner” (M=0.94) as the oppressive verbal signal with the highest frequency. This is followed by the following based on perceived frequency: “criticizing the work of a student/s in front of the class”(M=0.79), “telling the class she knows better than they do when it comes to a subject matterso they are not in the position to question his/her knowledge on the subject”(M=0.75), “telling students to leave the room if they dislike her manner of discipline”(M=0.74), ”criticizing a student/s in front of others (students, teachers, etc.)”(M=0.71), “interrupting or telling a student to stop during recitation when the answer given is not what the teacher expects”(M=0.69), “shouting at students when he/she is frustrated with a class performance”(M=0.61), “sending a student out of the class formisbehaving”(M=0.59), “telling students they are whiners whenthey keep on complaining and showing “attitude”(M=0.57), “criticizing a student and his/her work in frontof other teachers”(M=0.55), “threatening a student/class that his/her pen will level with them”(M=0.55), “scolding a student in the presence of other teachers in the faculty room”(M=0.54), “berating students even when there are other persons around”(M=0.51), “badmouthing a student to the class”(M=0.38), “calling students names”(M=0.29), “devaluing a student who has won an award/recognition”(M=0.21).

Table 5. Oppressive Verbal Signals Use of by Tertiary Educators as Perceived by Students

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Rank |
|---|------|-------|------|
| sarcastically calling a student terms of endearment used in a condescending manner | 0.94 | 0.774 | 1 |
| criticizing the work of a student/s in front of the class | 0.79 | 0.706 | 2 |
| telling the class she knows better than they do when it comes to a subject matterso they are not in the position to question his/her knowledge on the subject | 0.75 | 0.765 | 3 |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------|----|
| telling students to leave the room if they dislike her manner of discipline. | 0.74 | 0.746 | 4 |
| criticizing a student/s in front of others (students, teachers, etc.) | 0.71 | 0.733 | 5 |
| interrupting or telling a student to stop during recitation when the answer given is not what the teacher expects | 0.69 | 0.693 | 6 |
| shouting at students when he/she is frustrated with a class performance | 0.61 | 0.693 | 7 |
| sending a student out of the class for misbehaving | 0.59 | 0.713 | 8 |
| telling students they are whiners when they keep on complaining and showing "attitude" | 0.57 | 0.650 | 9 |
| criticizing a student and his/her work in front of other teachers | 0.55 | 0.712 | 10 |
| threatening a student/class that his/her pen will level with them | 0.55 | 0.683 | 11 |
| scolding a student in the presence of other teachers in the faculty room | 0.54 | 0.677 | 12 |
| berating students even when there are other persons around | 0.51 | 0.666 | 13 |
| badmouthing a student to the class | 0.38 | 0.541 | 14 |
| calling students names | 0.29 | 0.613 | 15 |
| devaluing a student who has won an award/recognition | 0.21 | 0.453 | 16 |

The indicator with the highest frequency of oppressive non-verbal signal used by educators as perceived by students was “staring down at a student who asks/clarifies about a confusing topic” (M=1.24). This is followed by the following based on perceived frequency: “raising his/her eyebrows when he/she does not agree with students’ answer or when he/she meets resistance from students”(M=0.83), “walking out of the class without warning or not telling students about the problem leaving the students hanging”(M=0.74), “ignoring students’ complaints dismissing them as trivial matters” (M=0.71), “putting his/her hands on his/her hips and raises his/her head higher to show he/she is the authority”(M=0.68), “smirking or pursing lips when he/she does not agree with students’ answer or when he/she meets resistance from students”(M=0.65), “pointing his/her finger on an erring student or when a student is too rowdy or undisciplined”(M=0.60), “obviously ignoring during recitation a student he/she dislikes even though the student keeps on raising his/her hand to answer a question”(M=0.56), “rolling his/her eyes when he/she does not favor students’ answer or when he/she meets resistance from students”(M=0.53), “ignoring a student who keeps on asking questions, standing too close to a student to intimidate him/her” (M=0.51), “standing too close to a student to intimidate him/her” (M=0.49), “crumpling the paper of a student caught cheating in class” (M=0.35), “hitting the board/table when a student can’t provide the correct answer to a question posed” (M=0.19), “throwing an object at students who do not pay attention to the lecture/discussion particularly when they talk or sleep in class” (M=0.12).

Table 6. Oppressive Non-Verbal Signals Use by Educators as Perceived by Students

| Indicators | Mean | SD | Rank |
|---|------|-------|------|
| staring down at a student who asks/clarifies about a confusing topic | 1.24 | 0.778 | 1 |
| raising his/her eyebrows when he/she does not agree with students’ answer or when he/she meets resistance from students | 0.83 | 0.645 | 2 |
| walking out of the class without warning or not telling students about the problem, leaving the students hanging | 0.74 | 0.706 | 3 |

| | | | |
|--|------|-------|----|
| ignoring students' complaints dismissing them as trivial matters | 0.71 | 0.687 | 4 |
| putting his/her hands on his/her hips and raises his/her head higher to show he/she is the authority | 0.68 | 0.673 | 5 |
| smirking or pursing lips when he/she does not agree with students' answer or when he/she meets resistance from students | 0.65 | 0.643 | 6 |
| pointing his/her finger on an erring student or when a student is too rowdy or undisciplined | 0.60 | 0.688 | 7 |
| obviously ignoring during recitation a student he/she dislikes even though the student keeps on raising his/her hand to answer a question or participate in the discussion | 0.56 | 0.676 | 8 |
| rolling his/her eyes, when he/she does not favor students' answer or when he/she meets resistance from students | 0.53 | 0.629 | 9 |
| ignoring a student who keeps on asking questions | 0.51 | 0.603 | 10 |
| standing too close to a student to intimidate him/her | 0.49 | 0.622 | 11 |
| crumpling the paper of a student caught cheating in class | 0.35 | 0.591 | 12 |
| hitting the board/table when a student can't provide the correct answer to a question posed | 0.19 | 0.443 | 13 |
| throwing an object at students who do not pay attention to the lecture/discussion, particularly if they talk or sleep in class | 0.12 | 0.354 | 14 |

As shown by Table 7, compared to female students, male students perceived their teachers to be verbally oppressive ($p = 0.004$).

**Table 7. Oppressive Verbal Signals Use by Educators as Perceived by Students
Categorized by Sex and College Where They Belong**

| <i>Components</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>p-value*</i> |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 0.73 | 0.456 | 0.004 |
| Female | 0.56 | 0.334 | |

**t-test and One-Way ANOVA*

Similarly, male student respondents had a significantly higher perception of teachers' oppressive non-verbal signals than that of female students ($p = 0.004$). Table 8 shows the data.

**Table 8. Oppressive Non-Verbal Signals Use by Educators as Perceived by Students
Categorized by Sex and College Where They Belong**

| <i>Components</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>p-value*</i> |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 0.71 | 0.388 | 0.002 |
| Female | 0.55 | 0.310 | |

**t-test and One-Way ANOVA*

When the teachers' and students' responses were paired, students' and teachers' perception on verbal oppressive signals differed, that is students' perception was higher than that of the teachers ($p = 0.002$) while their perception on non-verbal oppressive signals did not differ as their responses agreed ($p = 0.077$).

On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between students' and teachers' perception for oppressive verbal ($r = 0.160$, $p = 0.555$) and oppressive non-verbal ($r = 0.492$, $p = 0.074$) signals.

Table 9. Paired difference and relationship between students' and teachers' perception on non-verbal and verbal oppressive signals

| <i>Components</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Paired Difference p-value</i> | <i>Paired r coefficient</i> | <i>Paired Relationship p-value</i> |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Non-Verbal | | | | | |
| Students | 0.59 | 0.276 | 0.077 | 0.492 | 0.074 |
| Teachers | 0.43 | 0.337 | | | |
| Verbal | | | | | |
| Students | 0.58 | 0.187 | 0.002 | 0.160 | 0.555 |
| Teachers | 0.34 | 0.219 | | | |

DISCUSSION

The data provided by this investigation reinforce studies (Cooper, et al., 2011; Allen, 2010; and Twemlow&Fonagy, 2005) that oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals closely tied to bullying in the academe are on the rise. Sadly, authority figures like teachers and professors are engaged in this act. Furthermore, studies (Johnson, 2007; Osif, 2010; and Twemlow&Fonagy, 2006) claim that oppressive practices of authority figures have profound effects on the powerless in the workplace particularly in academic settings.

As seen in the results, educators admitted to have used oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals with their students but students had a stronger observation of these phenomena perhaps because teachers' actions, being central to students' academic experience, may be magnified. Interestingly, although many literature claim females to be more perceptive and intuitive compared to males, the data suggest that male students were more perceptive of oppressive non-verbal signals. This could perhaps be attributed to common observation that male seem more aggressive and boisterous compared to females and thus incur more negative attention from teachers who wish to impose strict classroom management styles. Length of teaching experience and academic rank seem to affect how teachers deal with students for unknown reasons. Educators who belong to the lowest strata of academic ranks like instructors are usually young

and are perhaps inexperienced in classroom management, resulting to conflicts and the need to control using oppressive non-verbal signals. This result warrants deeper investigation.

The educators responded with some items that would point to students who may have likewise bullied these teachers, prompting what could possibly be temporary indiscretion on the part of the educators—some may have been isolated cases; however, given the amount of tolerance expected from educators, these are insufficient and weak reasons to cover for oppressive practices to begin with. As Allen (2010) observes, the frightening aspect of this [teacher and student bullying each other] is that students and teachers may get caught up in a reciprocal exchange that destroys the professionalism of the relationship and encourages mutual aggression.

A classroom environment founded on respect and understanding has been shown to create positive results. The results of the meta-analysis conducted by Harris and Rosenthal (2005) reveal that teacher nonverbal immediacy is strongly related to many positive student outcomes: liking for the course and teacher, willingness to take more classes with the teacher, and students' perceptions that they have learned a lot in the class.

Since data were taken in a university context, they do provided information indicative of extreme or high rate offenders. A separate study on this matter is strongly recommended since there are limited literatures in this area deemed by some researchers as a difficult terrain to navigate. Research results on this aspect may add to the pool of studies to help reduce the incidence of, if not stop oppression in academia.

The study does not intend to put teachers in a bad light, undercompensated as they are; however, rising oppression in the academe merits valid concern. The tentative conclusion of the study may be used as a reflection for possible implications to institutional policies that may help solve the problem of oppressive practices of educators. Aforementioned effects of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals that educators use result to vulnerable learners detrimental to a supportive educational climate. The study underscores the need for critical interventions to put an end to the use of oppressive verbal and non-verbal signals by educators. Trainings on communication strategies and pedagogical skills are recommended to scaffold teachers' ability to proactively establish an atmosphere where oppression and bullying are prevented. Holley (2012) asserts that individual-level interventions are necessary, but must be combined with strategies that aim to change oppressive institutions and cultural practices.

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