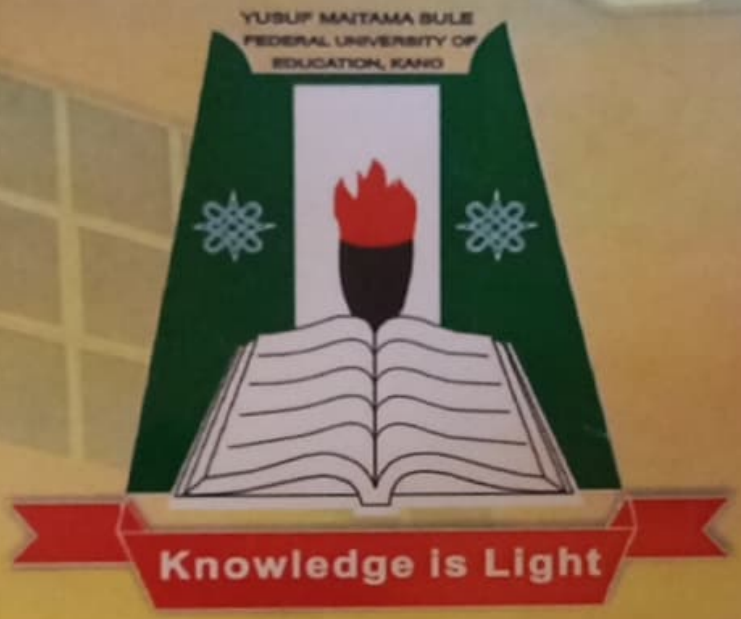
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# An Assessment of Strategies and Challenges of Digital Media in Enhancing Teacher-Student Communication in Some Selected Schools in Anambra State

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***Abstract***
*The focus of this study is on the assessment of strategies and challenges of digital media in enhancing teacher-student communication in some selected schools in Anambra state. The research adopts the cross-sectional survey design as its methodology. Three objectives guided the study and three research questions were raised accordingly. A sample of 150 respondents (consisting of 130 students and 20 teachers) was selected from six different secondary schools in Anambra state. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire administered to the respondents. The instrument was tagged Digital media and teacher-student communication questionnaire (DMTSCQ) and was designed by the researchers and validated by three lecturers from the Odimegwu Ojukwu University Anambra state. The Cronbach-Alpha reliability index of the DMTSCQ is 0.83 indicative of high reliability. Data obtained were analysed based on percentage. Results revealed that the current state of teacher-student communication in schools in Anambra state is inadequate. It was also found that digital media positively impacts teacher-student communication through immediate feedback, collaboration and knowledge sharing opportunities. Challenges to effective digital media incorporation in teacher-student communication include poor digital competence, inadequate infrastructure among others. The study recommends among other things that there is need to provide training and support for teachers and students in digital media and to incorporate multimedia resources into pedagogy in the various schools.*

**Keywords:** communication, digital competence, digital media, enhancement and multimedia resource

## Introduction

Effective teacher-student communication is fundamental to creating a positive educational environment. It fosters an atmosphere of trust and respect, which is essential for student engagement and motivation. When teachers communicate clearly and openly, students feel valued and understand the lesson better, which encourage them to participate actively in their learning processes. This engagement not only enhances academic performance but also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Moreover, effective communication allows teachers to provide timely feedback, helping students to understand their progress and areas for improvement, thereby contributing to their overall development and self-efficacy (Chen & Xiao, 2023).

However, lack of effective communication can lead to significant dangers in educational setting. Poor communication may result in misunderstandings between teachers and students, creating an environment of confusion and frustration. Students who feel isolated or unsupported due to inadequate communication are more likely to disengage from their studies, which can lead to declining academic performance and increased anxiety (Zhao, 2023). Furthermore, the absence of open dialogue can exacerbate feelings of alienation among students, particularly those who may already be struggling with personal or academic challenges. This lack of connection not only affects individual students but can also undermine the overall classroom culture, leading to a less collaborative and supportive learning environment (Biu, 2023).

In response to these challenges, various measures have been implemented to improve teacher-student communication. Traditional approaches such as scheduled office hours, parent-teacher conferences, and face-to-face meetings have been widely used. While these methods aim to facilitate communication, they often fall short of expectation due to their limited accessibility and inflexibility and as such have failed to address the challenge succinctly. Many students find it difficult to attend meetings during specific hours due to their personal commitments or extracurricular activities, resulting in missed opportunities for meaningful interaction (Zhao, 2023). Additionally, face-to-face interactions can be intimidating for some students, particularly those who may lack confidence or feel anxious about speaking up. These challenges highlight the need for alternative solutions that can better meet the demands of modern education and one of such alternative is digital media.

Digital media refers to various platform that can be used to create , store and distribute contents. It offers a promising avenue for enhancing teacher-student communication and includes platforms such as messaging apps, web sites, social media, streaming services, video conferencing tools, and educational websites (Rautela, 2022). Educators can facilitate continuous interaction and provide immediate feedback in a more accessible and flexible manner using these platforms. For example, messaging apps enable teachers to communicate with students in real-time, answering questions and providing support outside of regular class hours. This immediacy helps

to bridge the gap between students and teachers, allowing for ongoing dialogue that can enhance understanding and collaboration (Bui, 2023).

Moreover, digital media creates a more comfortable environment for students to express themselves. Students who may hesitate to speak up in a traditional classroom setting might feel more empowered to share their thoughts and questions through digital platforms. This can lead to increased participation and a greater sense of belonging within the educational community. In addition, the integration of digital media into educational practices supports diverse learning styles and needs, making education more inclusive. For instance, visual learners may benefit from video tutorials, while auditory learners can engage with podcasts or online discussions, catering to a broader range of preferences (Li, 2023). This is the reason why the present study is needful.

**Statement of the Problem**

As educators increasingly recognize the importance of digital media in enhancing communication, it is essential to explore best practices for its integration into teaching and learning. Research indicates that effective use of digital tools can lead to improved student outcomes, increased motivation, and enhanced self-efficacy (Li, 2023). However, these outcomes are yet to be confirmed in Anambra state as the current state of teacher-student communications and students' academic achievements in most schools are not encouraging nor adequate; hence creating a gap in literature that underscores the present study. It is against the background that the study is designed to assess strategies and challenges of digital media in enhancing teacher-student communication in some selected schools in Anambra state.

**Objectives of the Study**

The study is designed to:

1. Assess the impact of digital media on teacher-student communication in school
2. Identify effective strategies for using digital media to enhance teacher-student communications in schools.
3. Analyse the challenges of implementing digital media in enhancing teacher-students communication in schools in Anambra state.

**Research Questions**

The study provided answers to the following research questions.

1. How do digital media enhance teacher-student communication in schools
2. What effective strategies could be adopted in using digital media to enhance teacher-student communications in schools?
3. What factors pose as challenges to effective implementation of digital media in enhancing teacher-student communication in schools:

**Literature Review**

**Concept, Significance and Current State of Teacher-Student Communication**

Teacher-student communication in education refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and feedback between educators and their students. This communication goes beyond merely

delivering content; it encompasses interactions that foster understanding, engagement, and a supportive learning environment. Effective communication is essential for building relationships, as it helps establish trust and rapport, which are critical for student motivation and participation in the learning process (Rautela, 2022). In the context of Nigerian schools, the importance of teacher-student communication cannot be overstated, as it plays a vital role in enhancing educational outcomes and promoting a positive classroom atmosphere. According to Hattie and Timperley (2017), effective feedback is a fundamental component of teacher-student communication as it helps students understand what they are doing well and where they may need improvement, ultimately enhancing their learning outcomes.

The significance of effective communication in education is multifaceted. First, it facilitates the clarification of concepts and expectations, allowing students to grasp complex ideas more easily. When teachers communicate effectively, they can provide timely feedback, which is crucial for student development and academic success. Furthermore, strong communication skills enable teachers to identify and address the individual needs of their students, thereby fostering an inclusive learning environment that accommodates diverse learning styles and backgrounds (Ogunyemi, 2020). Additionally, effective communication encourages student engagement, as students who feel heard and understood are more likely to participate actively in discussions and collaborative activities. According to Del Arco (2021) student-teacher communication helps in clarifying learning objectives, enables students recognize their strengths and weaknesses which helps to improve student learning outcomes. In the same vein, it facilitates open communication which encourages student engagement and participation in the classroom. Positive teacher-student interactions significantly boost student motivation and involvement, fostering a dynamic environment conducive to active learning.

Positive communication fosters trust and respect between teachers and students, creating a supportive learning environment. A research by Frisby (2019) indicates that strong teacher-student relationships are linked to increased motivation and academic success, as connected students are more likely to seek help and engage in their studies. Regular communication allows for timely feedback, creating an essential feedback loop for student growth. Effective feedback is a powerful influence on student achievement, helping students identify areas for improvement and take actionable steps toward their academic goals.

Despite its importance, the current state of teacher-student communication in many Nigerian schools faces significant challenges. Research indicates that traditional methods of communication, such as lectures and one-way information dissemination, dominate the educational landscape, limiting opportunities for interactive dialogue (Ogunyemi, 2020). Many teachers struggle to engage students effectively, often due to large class sizes and inadequate training in communication strategies. Moreover, the lack of resources and infrastructure, such as access to technology and teaching materials, further exacerbates these challenges. As a result,

students may feel disconnected from their teachers, leading to decreased motivation and academic performance.

In recent years, there have been efforts to improve communication practices in Nigerian schools, particularly through the integration of digital media. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been mixed, with many educators facing barriers such as limited digital literacy and resistance to change (Aremu, 2021). Consequently, while some progress has been made, the overall state of teacher-student communication in Nigerian schools remains a critical area for further development. Addressing these challenges is essential for enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

**Meaning, Types and Importance of Digital Media in Education**

Digital media encompasses a broad range of content that is created, stored, and distributed in digital formats, including text, audio, video, animations, and interactive elements. This diverse array of media can be accessed through various devices such as computers, tablets, and smart phones. The integration of digital media into education has transformed traditional teaching methods, offering new opportunities for engagement and learning. As education increasingly embraces technology, understanding the various types of digital media and their applications becomes essential for educators and students alike.

Digital media can be categorized into several types, each serving distinct educational purposes.
i). **Text-based media-** includes e-books, online articles, and academic journals, which are fundamental resources for research and reading comprehension.
ii). **Audio media-,** such as podcasts and audio-books, cater to auditory learners, providing supplementary material that can enhance understanding of complex topics (Duan 2020).
iii). **Video media-** encompasses educational videos, documentaries, and recorded lectures, which serve as powerful tools for visual learning. Platforms like YouTube and dedicated educational websites offer a wealth of video content that can simplify intricate subjects (Higgins., 2021).
iv). **Interactive media-** including simulations, educational games, and quizzes, actively engage students, allowing them to explore concepts in a hands-on manner.
v). **Social media-** Platforms such as Twitter, Face book, and educational forums foster communication and collaboration among students and teachers, creating a vibrant community of learners.

The significance of digital media in education is profound and multifaceted. Digital media enhances learning by making content more accessible and engaging. Research shows that multimedia resources can improve comprehension and retention of information, as they cater for various learning styles (Guan , 2018). Furthermore, digital media enables personalized learning experiences, allowing students to progress at their own pace and according to their individual needs (Eady & Lockyer, 2013). This adaptability is particularly crucial in diverse classrooms where students come from various educational backgrounds and possess different learning preferences.

Additionally, the use of digital tools can stimulate student interest and motivation, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2019).

To maximize the benefits of digital media in educational settings, several strategies can be employed. First, educators should integrate multimedia resources into their teaching to cater for different learning preferences. For instance, combining videos with text and interactive elements can create a richer learning experience (Higgins,2021). Also, encouraging collaboration through social media and collaborative platforms can enhance communication among students and between students and teachers, fostering a sense of community and promoting peer learning (Duan., 2020). Furthermore, providing training for teachers on how to effectively use digital media tools is essential. Educators need to understand how to select appropriate resources and integrate them into their lesson plans. Regular assessment of the effectiveness of digital media in achieving learning outcomes is also crucial. Educators should be willing to adapt their strategies based on feedback and observed student engagement. Lastly, promoting digital literacy is critical; as it enables teaching students how to critically evaluate digital content and use digital tools responsibly which further enhances their learning experience and prepares them for a digital world (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2019).

**Impact of Digital Media in Enhancing Teacher-Student Communication**

Incorporating digital media into education has become increasingly vital in enhancing communication between teachers and students. This integration offers numerous advantages that significantly improve the educational experience. Digital media tools, such as interactive platforms and multimedia resources, foster greater engagement among students. By utilizing videos, podcasts, and interactive simulations, teachers can capture students' attention more effectively than the traditional methods. Research shows that multimedia resources enhance understanding and retention, catering to diverse learning styles (Baker & Cernaian, 2020). This increased engagement not only motivates students but also encourages active participation in the learning process. Digital media provides students with the flexibility to access educational materials anytime and anywhere, which is particularly beneficial for those with scheduling conflicts or those who need extra time to grasp complex concepts. Online platforms enable asynchronous communication, allowing students to engage with course content and their peers at their convenience (Adebayo & Ojo, 2021). This flexibility supports diverse learning needs and promotes a more inclusive educational environment.

Similarly, digital media enhances collaboration between teachers and students through various online tools and platforms. Social media, discussion forums, and collaborative software enable students to work together on projects and share resources effectively outside the classroom. This collaborative approach strengthens relationships and fosters a sense of community among learners (Ige & Ogunyemi, 2021). It also allows teachers to monitor group dynamics and provide timely feedback, enhancing the overall learning experience.

Incorporating digital media into education allows for real-time feedback, which is crucial for student development. Teachers can use online quizzes, polls, and interactive assignments to assess students understanding immediately. This instant feedback mechanism helps identify areas where students may struggle, allowing educators to adjust their teaching strategies accordingly (Khan, 2022). Additionally, students benefit from receiving prompt responses to their inquiries, which can enhance their learning and motivation.

As digital media becomes more integrated into educational practices, students develop essential digital literacy skills that are crucial for success in the modern world. By engaging with various digital tools and platforms, students learn how to navigate information, evaluate sources, and communicate effectively in a digital environment (Okwudishu & Chigbu, 2021). These skills are beneficial for academic success and prepare students for future careers in an increasingly digital workforce.

**Challenges of Incorporating Digital Media in Education**

a). **Lack of Digital Competence:** One of the primary challenges is the lack of digital competence among both teachers and students. Many educators may not possess the necessary skills to effectively use digital tools and platforms, which can lead to ineffective teaching practices and hinder student engagement. Research indicates that insufficient training and support for teachers in using technology can create barriers to successful implementation (Hwang & Chang, 2019). Similarly, students may struggle with digital tools if they lack prior exposure or training, leading to frustration and disengagement (Alharbi & Alshammari, 2020).

b). **Inadequate Infrastructure-** The availability of adequate infrastructure is crucial for the successful integration of digital media in education. Many schools, particularly in developing regions, face challenges such as limited access to reliable internet and insufficient technological resources (Mokhtar et al., 2021). This lack of infrastructure can prevent both teachers and students from fully utilizing digital media, resulting in disparity in learning opportunities and outcomes.

**c). Resistance to Change-** Resistance to change among educators and institutions can also pose a significant challenge. Some teachers may be hesitant to adopt new technologies due to a preference for traditional teaching methods or fear of the unknown (Bennett & Maton, 2020). This resistance can stem from a lack of confidence in their ability to integrate digital media effectively or concerns about the potential impact on their teaching style and classroom management.

**d) Digital Divide-** The digital divide remains a critical issue in education, where disparities in access to technology can exacerbate existing inequalities among students. Students from low-income families may not have access to the necessary devices or reliable internet connections, which can hinder their ability to participate in digital learning environments (Wong et al., 2020). This divide can lead to unequal learning experiences and outcomes, further widening the gap between different socioeconomic groups.

**e). Overreliance on Technology-** There is a risk of over-reliance on technology, which can detract students from the fundamental aspects of teaching and learning. While digital media can enhance

communication and engagement, excessive dependence on technology may lead to a lack of critical thinking and interpersonal skills among students (Hollandsworth , 2017). Educators must strike a balance between utilizing digital tools and fostering traditional learning methods to ensure a well-rounded educational experience.

**Empirical Studies**

Adeyemi (2023) studies the impact of digital media on teacher-student communication in Nigerian secondary schools: A case study of Lagos state. The study was designed to evaluate how digital media tools affect communication between teachers and students and to assess the impact of these tools on student engagement and academic performance. Secondary school students and teachers in urban schools in Lagos made up the population while a sample of 250 students and 25 teachers from six different secondary schools was drawn using the stratified random sampling technique. The study adopts the cross-sectional survey design. Data collection was via a survey questionnaire and focus group interviews while statistical analysis was done by using SPSS for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Findings of the study reveals that the use of digital media tools significantly improved communication frequency between teachers and students, leading to higher engagement levels. Also, students reported a 20% increase in their understanding of course material when digital media was utilized for communication. The authors recommend among other things that schools should provide professional development for teachers on effectively integrating digital media into their communication strategies and further research should explore the long-term effects of digital media on student academic performance across different subjects.

Brown (2024), study was on enhancing teacher-student interaction through digital platforms in primary education in California, USA. The aim was to investigate the effectiveness of digital platforms in facilitating teacher-student interactions and to determine the impact of these platforms on student motivation and learning outcomes. A sample of 180 students and 18 teachers from four primary schools was drawn using the convenience method. Mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted for the study. Online questionnaires and classroom observation checklists were the principal means used for data collection. While descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data and content analysis for qualitative data collected. Results show that teachers reported a 35% increase in students participation during lessons when using digital platforms for communication. In the same vein, students expressed higher motivation levels, with 75% indicating that digital communication made learning more enjoyable. Among the recommendations are, that schools should invest in reliable digital platforms that support interactive communication between teachers and students; again, future studies should examine the role of parental involvement in enhancing the effectiveness of digital communication tools in education.

**Methodology**

The study adopts the cross-sectional survey design. The target population for this study consists of secondary school students and their teachers in urban schools in Anambra state, Nigeria.

A sample of 150 respondents (consisting of 130 students and 20 teachers) was selected from six different secondary schools in Anambra state. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire administered to both students and teachers. The instrument was tagged Digital media and teacher-students communication questionnaire (DMTSCQ) that was designed by the researchers and was validated by three lecturers from the Odimegwu Ojukwu University Anambra state. The Cronbach-Alpha reliability index of the DMTSCQ was found to be 0.83 indicative of high reliability. Data obtained were analysed using the percentage.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** How do digital media enhance teacher-student communication in schools?

**Table 1: How Digital Media Enhances Teacher-Students Communication in School**

| S/NO | Statement | Agreed | | Agreed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. | Digital media foster greater engagement of students | 105 | 70.0 | 45 | 30.0 |
| 2. | It provides flexibility to access materials | 125 | 83.3 | 25 | 16.7 |
| 3. | It enhances collaboration | 130 | 86.7 | 20 | 13.3 |
| 4. | It allows for real-time feedback | 140 | 93.3 | 10 | 6.7 |
| 5. | It promotes digital skill acquisition | 138 | 92.0 | 12 | 8.0 |
| 6. | It improves educational experiences | 120 | 80.0 | 30 | 20.0 |

Data in Table 1 show that digital media positively impacts teacher-students communication as 93.3% opined that digital media allows for real time feedback, while 92% agreed that it promotes digital skills acquisition among others,

**Research Question 2:** What effective strategies could be adopted in using digital media to enhance teacher-student communications in schools?

**Table 2: Strategies for Enhancing Teacher-Student Communication Using Digital Media**

| S/NO | Statement | Agreed | | Disagreed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. | Integrate multimedia resources | 145 | 92.7 | 05 | 3.3 |
| 2. | Encourage collaboration | 130 | 86.7 | 20 | 13.3 |
| 3. | Provide digital training for teachers | 120 | 80.0 | 30 | 20.0 |
| 4. | Conduct regular assessment | 142 | 94.7 | 08 | 5.4 |
| 5. | Promote digital literacy | 110 | 73.3 | 40 | 26.7 |

Data in Table 3 show the strategies to enhance the incorporation of digital media to enhance teacher-student communication. Strategies such as integration of multimedia (92.7%), conduct regular assessment (94.7%) and encouragement of collaboration (86.7%) rated highest among others.

**Research Question 3:** What factors pose as challenges to effective implementation of digital media in enhancing teacher-student communication in schools?

**Table 3: Challenges to Effective Implementation of Digital Media in Schools**

| S/NO | Statement | Agreed | | Disagreed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. | Poor digital competence | 146 | 97.3 | 04 | 2.7 |
| 2. | Inadequate infrastructure | 138 | 92.0 | 12 | 8.0 |
| 3. | Resistance to change | 130 | 86.7 | 20 | 13.3 |
| 4. | Digital divide | 128 | 85.3 | 22 | 14.7 |
| 5. | Over-reliance on technology | 124 | 82.7 | 26 | 17.3 |

Evidences in Table 3 reveal that poor digital competence (97.3%), inadequate infrastructure (92.0%) and resistance to change (86.7%) are the led challenges to effective incorporation of digital media to enhance teacher student communication in schools.

**Discussion**

The study is on the strategies and challenges of digital media in enhancing teacher-student communication in some selected schools in Anambra state. Three objectives guided the study. It was also found that digital media can positively impact on teacher-student communication in schools. This is because of the fact that digital media enhances student engagement, collaboration and knowledge sharing and feedback. These advantages noted Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2019) are very helpful particularly in diverse classrooms where students come from various educational backgrounds and possess different learning preferences. In the same vein, some strategies to enhance digital media incorporation for better teacher student communication were found to include use of multimedia and encouraging collaboration. These findings align with the opinion of Duan (2020) who averred that encouraging collaboration through social media and collaborative platforms can enhance communication among students and between students and teachers, fostering a sense of community and promoting peer learning.

On the challenges to effective digital media incorporation to enhance teacher-student communication, inadequate resources and poor digital competence were paramount. These findings are in tandem with the submission of Alharbi and Alshammari, (2020) who stated that students and teachers may struggle with digital tools if they lack prior exposure or training, leading to frustration and disengagement which might frustrate the efforts to ensure communication. In the same vein, Mokhtar (2021) argued that lack of infrastructure can prevent both teachers and

students from fully utilizing digital media, resulting in a disparity in learning opportunities and outcomes.

**Conclusion**

The study has examined the role of digital media in enhancing teacher student communication. From the results it was gathered that the current state of teacher-student communication in most schools are inadequate as lecture and traditional mode of instruction are prevalent. In the same vein, it was found that incorporation of digital media can positively enhance teacher students' communication through effective collaboration, feedback and knowledge sharing. The study equally found that to maximize the digital media strategies such as use of multimedia resource, regular assessment and collaboration are needful. Some challenges to digital media use include poor digital competence and inadequate infrastructure among others.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Digital media was found to positively impact on teacher-students communication, therefore it is advised that multimedia resources be incorporated in pedagogy in the various schools.
2. There is need to establish clear communication guidelines to enhance the effectiveness of the strategies.
3. Poor digital competence was found as one of the leading challenges, hence it is imperative to provide training and support on digital media to both students and teachers for effective digital media incorporation.

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