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SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' COMMUNICATION STYLES ON PUPILS' SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL ZONE I OF OWERRI.

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Abstract

This work is titled sociological analysis of teachers' communication styles on pupils' self-esteem and academic achievement in educational zone I of Owerri. Four research questions were posed to guide the study. The designs adopted in this study were survey and correlation. Population of the study was ninety-four thousand, six hundred and eighty-two 94,682 pupils in the basic schools of Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State. The sample size for this study was four hundred and one (401) primary five pupils, representing 0.42% of the population. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. This included the stratified, cluster and random sampling techniques. The researcher used bio-data questionnaire, rating scales and academic achievement proforma as the instruments for collection of data in the study. The bio-data was used to collect personal information of the pupils while rating scales were used to collect information on teachers' communication styles and self-esteem of the pupils. The rating scales were titled: "Teachers Communication Styles Rating Scales" and "Pupils Self-Esteem Rating Scale". Academic achievement proforma on pupils academic results was used to collect information on the academic achievement of pupils. This served as a platform for recording results of pupils in Mathematics. The validity of instruments was confirmed and the reliability ascertained through a pilot study which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.91 and 0.93 respectively. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question one, while Pearson r was used to answer research questions two to four. Findings indicated among others that: there is teacher maximal use of authoritative communication

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style and minimal use of democratic communication style. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which included among others that: head teachers of the basic schools should encourage their teachers to make maximal use of authoritative communication styles in their teaching since it has been proven to yield a very high positive result.

Key Words: Sociological Analysis, Teachers, Teachers' Communication Styles, Pupils' Self-esteem, Pupils' Academic Achievement.

Introduction

Education is an essential aspect of every individual's life as it plays a crucial role in shaping one's personality, skills, knowledge and understanding of the world. For the pupils, education is even more significant as it lays the foundation to their future and prepares them to face the challenges of the modern world. First and foremost, education provides pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in life. Through formal education, pupils learn various subjects such as mathematics, sciences, language history and geography which equips them with the basic knowledge needed to navigate through their academic and professional life. In addition, education helps in developing important skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and team-work, which are essential for success in any field. Education also helps pupils to expand their world-view and understanding of the world around them (Jumbe & Emos, 2024).

Moreover, education is a vital tool and indispensible in the children's life due to the roles that it plays in human development. It is generally important to humans in the society because it provides self-direction, social status, worldly knowledge as well as the ability to explore. Education is essential because it provides one the opportunity to learn in order to excel in the real world. It provides scientific, technological, social and economic advancement. According to New World Encyclopedia (2024) education can be thought of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. It is equally an indispensable tool for human programme and empowerment. Having good education opens opportunities for one's career path which improves his/her earning ability. Everyone has his/her ideas and ways of doing things regardless of how he/she is educated, but at the end, our true intellect lies within the education we had and continue to have throughout our entire life.

Education also provides knowledge on the general well-being of individuals. Education equips individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate through the complexities of modern society. It helps individuals to analyze situations, identify problems and come up with innovative solutions. In the words of Isiguzo (2024), the results emanating from educational improvements are not in doubt. They are evident in the social, economic and technological evolutions taking place today. The level of technological explorations that has engrossed the world today is made possible through educational advancement. Having this in mind, it becomes apparent that education is the highest legacy any nation can bequeath her citizens. However, the instrument used in bequeathing this knowledge on the citizens is no other than the teacher.

A teacher is a guiding light, a mentor, and a source of inspiration for his pupils. He relates directly with the pupils, thereby moulding their feelings and facilitating their academic achievement. This is why the teacher is known as the implementer of the educational

curriculum. The relationship between him and his pupils is a special bond that might have a lasting impact on their academic, emotional and social development. It is through the guidance and support of the teacher that pupils might reach their full potentials and become well rounded individuals. In the views of Abiyeva (2024), one of the most important roles of a teacher is to educate and impart knowledge on their pupils. Teachers have the responsibilities of teaching their pupils the necessary skills and information needed to succeed in their academic pursuits. They create lesson plans, deliver lessons, assign homework, and assess pupils' progress to ensure that their pupils are learning and understanding the lessons. A good teacher is not just a source of information, but also, a facilitator of learning, helping his pupils to think critically, solve problems and develop interest for learning. The teacher's communication style should therefore be of very great importance to the pupils whom he/she teaches. There are various communication styles that the teacher might employ when communicating with his/her pupils. These might include: authoritative communication style, democratic communication style, empathetic style and combined verbal tone style.

The authoritative communication style is a communication style where the teacher communicates in direct and commanding manner. This type of communication might be effective in maintaining discipline and order in the classroom. However, Baran, (2024) maintains that this type of communication style may create a barrier between the teacher and the pupil, making it difficult for the pupil to feel comfortable expressing himself or asking questions. In this style, the teacher equally tries to maintain orderliness in the class and pupils always remain calm whenever the teacher is with them.

On the other hand, the democratic communication style is a teacher's communication style which involves being warm, welcoming, and engaging with pupils. Chiriac, Trebeş, Lopatiuc, and GuTu (2017) is of the view that teachers should use this communication style often to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment, where pupils would feel encouraged and participate as well as share their thoughts and ideas. This style might positively affect learning because it may yield enhanced self-esteem for the pupils', while it might also affect it negatively because some pupils might feel pampered, thereby not taking their lessons as serious as supposed.

Pupils in Nigeria, are generally classified as the children who are enrolled in the primary schools. The pupils at this stage, are still in the formative years of their education and are typically at the beginning of their school experience. Their various teachers need to contribute to their upbringing through their communication style, which might impact on the pupils' self-esteem.

Self-esteem is an essential component of a person's psychological well-being and plays a crucial role in determining individuals' success and happiness in life. In the views of Pankevič and Suchá (2022), self-esteem refers to how individuals feel about themselves and their abilities. It plays a crucial role in shaping pupils' confidence, resilience, and motivation to succeed in school and in life. Bouillet and Miljević-Riđički (2020) are of the opinion that one of the major factors that influence pupils' self-esteem is their interactions with teachers. They maintain that as pupils receive positive reinforcement, encouragement and support from these important people in their lives, they are more likely to develop a positive self-image and belief in their abilities while on the contrary, negative feedback, criticism, and rejection can greatly impact on the pupils' self-esteem and undermine their confidence. In the context of primary school pupils, self-esteem refers to how they perceive and view themselves. The variables used in defining self-esteem could include: feeling of self-worth, outlook on

educational achievements, lack of worry, lack of personal doubt, self-confidence, setting educational goals, etc, especially in subjects such as Mathematics.

Mathematics is a core subject that develops logical reasoning, problem-solving skills, and cognitive discipline. According to Mursalin, Fonna, Muliana, Ali, Setiawan and Amita (2025), it is often perceived as challenging, and pupils' attitudes toward Mathematics are significantly shaped by teachers' instructional delivery and communication style. Supportive and patient communication may therefore reduce anxiety and build pupils' academic self-concept, whereas harsh or overly critical communication may heighten fear and lower self-esteem, ultimately affecting academic achievement. Jancarikova, Jancarik and Havelkova (2022) were of the view that because Mathematics requires clarity of explanation and guided practice, it provides a strong context for examining how teachers' communication approaches influence pupils' academic achievement.

However, using Mathematics as source of academic scores in the study is sociologically appropriate because the subject is compulsory, standardized, and widely recognized as a major indicator of overall academic competence. It cuts across gender, socio-economic background, and school types within Educational Zone I of Owerri, Imo State, thereby providing reliable measures for assessing academic achievement in relation to teachers' communication styles and pupils' self-esteem. Thus, deriving academic scores from Mathematics could enable the study to capture cognitive dimensions of learning while examining the broader social interaction between teachers and pupils in the classroom setting and might generally be suitable for assessing the pupils' academic achievement.

Academic achievement is a crucial aspect of pupils' educational journey, as it serves as a measure of their knowledge and skills in various subjects. Pupils' academic achievement is often used as a benchmark to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the educational system. In the views of Obafemi, Yahaya, Yakubu and Obafemi (2024), there are many factors that might contribute to the pupils' academic achievement. These according to them, may range from individual aptitude and motivation to the quality of teaching and teacher characteristics, including their interactions with their pupils. In any case, it is a reflection of the pupils' capabilities, effort, and dedication towards their studies which might as well, yield to variation in their self-esteem.

Unfortunately, it is currently observed that the pupils' self-esteem varies significantly, with most of them exhibiting low self-esteem. In the same vein, reports such as those of Zhao (2019) have shown that their academic achievement is generally nothing to write home about. These developments have created negative feelings on the educational stakeholders, with many wondering about the source of these anomalies. Some factors have been suggested, but the teachers' communication styles have been resounding as it is speculated to play a crucial role in building the pupils' self-esteem and to have the potential to develop the pupils' academic achievement. As a matter of fact, there is a dearth of empirical evidence on how teachers' communication styles influence the pupils' self-esteem as well as their academic achievement. There is therefore, the need to explore the relationship between the teachers' communication styles and the pupils' self-esteem and academic achievement. The need to ascertain this fact motivated the researcher to embark on this study in order to conduct a sociological analysis of teachers' communication styles on pupils' self-esteem and academic achievement in Owerri Educational Zone of Owerri.

The theoretical framework used in this study was the Symbolic Interactionism Theory. Symbolic Interactionism Theory was principally developed by George Herbert

Mead in the year, 1934. The theory posits that human behavior and social reality are constructed through interaction and the use of symbols, such as language, gestures, and other forms of communication.

The relevance of Symbolic Interactionism Theory to this study is profound. Since the research focuses on teachers' communication styles and their impact on pupils' self-esteem and academic achievement in Mathematics, the theory provides a sociological lens to interpret how classroom interactions shape pupils' identities and learning outcomes.

Empirically, Fauziahnd Irmaynti (2023) reported that teachers who are able to communicate well and adjust the style of communication with students are able to create a fun and productive learning environment. Hanaysha, Shriedeh and In'airat (2023) revealed that teachers who had competence in their face-to-face communication impacted highly on the academic performance of the pupils. Allodi (2024) found that the self-concept of the special pupils was highly influenced by the style of communication adopted by the teachers. Mursalin, Fonna, Muliana, Ali, Setiawan and Amita (2025) reported that teachers who adopted friendly roles in their communication during their teaching of Mathematics impacted more positively on the pupils than those who used other communication roles in their teaching.

Statement of the Problem

Education is inherently a social process in which communication serves as the primary channel through which knowledge, values, and expectations are transmitted. Ideally, teachers are expected to adopt supportive, respectful, and student-centered communication styles that promote positive classroom relationships. From sociological perspectives such as those of Émile Durkheim and Lev Vygotsky, learning occurs through social interaction, and the quality of communication within the classroom significantly shapes pupils' academic and personal development. In this ideal context, effective teacher communication enhances pupils' self-esteem, encourages participation, and ultimately improves academic achievement.

However, in many school settings, teachers' communication styles may reflect authoritarian, critical, or dismissive patterns that might limit pupils' expression and reduce their sense of worth. Such communication might negatively influence pupils' self-esteem and create a classroom climate that hinders academic engagement and achievement. Despite growing concerns about pupils' low academic achievement and fragile self-concept, insufficient attention has been given to examining teachers' communication styles from a sociological standpoint, particularly in terms of how classroom interactions shape pupils' identity and achievement outcomes.

The problem, therefore, lies in the limited sociological understanding of how teachers' communication styles influence pupils' self-esteem and academic achievement. This study seeks to bridge this gap by systematically analyzing teachers' communication patterns and determining their relationship with pupils' self-esteem and academic performance, thereby contributing empirical evidence to improve classroom interaction and educational practice.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to conduct a sociological analysis of teachers' communication styles on pupils' self-esteem and academic achievement in Owerri

Educational Zone of Owerri I of Imo State. Specifically, the study investigated the following:

1. communication styles used by basic school teachers in teaching Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I, Imo State.

2. the relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils academic achievement in Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I, Imo State.

3. the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils academic achievement.

4. the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils self-esteem.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed and answered to guide the study:

1. What communication styles are used by basic school teachers in teaching Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I, Imo State?

2. What is the relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils academic achievement in Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I, Imo State?

3. What is the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils academic achievement?
4. What is the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils self-esteem?

Method

The research designs adopted in this study were survey and correlation research designs. The general population of study used was ninety-four thousand, six hundred and eighty-two 94,682 pupils in the basic schools of Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State (Source: State Universal Basic Education Board, (SUBEB), 2025/2026). The sample size was four hundred and one (401) primary five pupils, representing 0.42% of the population. The multi-sampling technique was adopted in this study. This included the stratified, cluster and random sampling techniques. The stratified sampling technique was used to select the primary five four and three pupils who were higher in class level. The reason for using this technique was due to the fact that these pupils had spent three, four and five years which would enable them to understand the tone and style of their teachers' communication in the class. The cluster sampling technique was used to select the pupils who were in their various classes of the various Local Government Areas, and in the Owerri educational zone I of Imo State. The pupils were randomly selected from their classes. To determine the sample size, the researcher used the suggestions of Nwana (2018) that if the population is a few hundreds, a 40% or more sample will do. It equally maintains that If thousands, 10% will do, if many thousands, 5% or less will do. For the fact that so many thousands were used, much less than 5% was used. The researcher used the bio-data questionnaire, rating scales and academic achievement proforma as the instruments for collection of data in this study. The bio-data was used to collect personal information of the pupils while rating scales was used to collect information on the teachers' communication styles and self-esteem of the pupils. The academic achievement proforma was used to collect information on the academic

achievement of the pupils. This served as a platform used to record the results of the pupils in Mathematics (to be collected from the Head Masters' office). The rating scales for the collection of data on teachers' communication styles and pupils' self-esteem were rated as follows: Strongly Agree (SA, 4 points), Agreed (A, 3 points), Disagreed (D, 2 points) and Strongly Disagreed (SD, 1 point). The pupils were requested to indicate their opinion concerning their teachers' communication styles and their self-concepts, developed as a result of such communication styles. See page 127.

The draft copies of the instrument were given to five specialists, three specialists in the department of Education Foundation and Counseling, and two specialists in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, all of Imo State University. The five specialists scrutinized the instrument in order to ascertain its suitability for the study. Their corrections were effected, which yielded the final copy of the instrument to be used for this study. The reliability of instrument was ascertained through a pilot study. The instrument was presented to 20 other respondents from basic schools outside the sampled area. The schools used were precisely, Town School Ubonukam, Onicha in Ezinihitte Mbaise. The respondents used for the study had the same characteristics with the sampled ones. The Chronbach Alpha was used to analyze their responses. Indices of 0.91 and 0.93 were realized for the two instruments which indicated that the instruments were reliable. In order to analyze the collected data, the mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question one while Pearson r was used to answer research questions two to four.

Results

Research Question One

What communication styles are used by basic school teachers in teaching Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I, Imo State?

Table 1: Summary of Analysis on the communication styles used by basic school teachers in teaching Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I, Imo State, as responded by Primary 5 Pupils

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
	our Mathematics teachers use:							
1.	authoritative communication style because they are usually firm while communicating to us	118	161	81	41	2.89	0.946	Agree
2.	authoritative communication style because they are usually assertive while communicating to us	121	200	40	40	3.00	0.896	Agree
3.	authoritative communication style because they are usually clear while communicating to us	197	83	82	39	3.09	1.039	Agree
4.	democratic communication style because they are usually approachable while communicating to us	62	21	110	208	1.84	1.081	Disagree
5.	democratic communication style because they are usually supportive while communicating to us	49	53	136	163	1.97	1.014	Disagree
6.	democratic communication style because they are usually kind while communicating to us	56	56	131	158	2.02	1.046	Disagree
	OVERALL MEAN					**2.46**		Low Average Mean

Table 1 shows the mean response scores of primary 5 pupils on the communication styles used by their basic school teachers in teaching them Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State. Items 1, 2 and 3 had means above 2.50, all for teachers' use of authoritative communication style. Items 4, 5 and 6 had means below 2.50, all for teacher use of democratic communication style. These indicate that there is teacher maximal use of authoritative communication style and minimal use of democratic communication style.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils academic achievement in Mathematics in Owerri Education Zone I, Imo State?

Table 2: Summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils academic achievement in Mathematics, as responded by primary 5 pupils

V	N	r	$\bar{x}$	r^2	DR	Remarks
Teacher authoritative communication style	401	0.967	32.95	93.51%	positive	Very high positive relationship
Pupils' academic achievement			33,05			

V Variables, N Number of respondents, r Pearson (r), $\bar{x}$ mean, r^2 Proportion of Variance, DR Direction of Relationship and Remarks

Data in Table 2, presents the summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils academic achievement in Mathematics. The analysis reveals a very high positive relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils academic achievement in Mathematics, indicating that as teacher authoritative communication style increases, the likelihood of pupils academic achievement also increases. Specifically pupils' academic achievement in Mathematics can be attributed to teacher authoritative communication style, highlighting the significant impact of teacher authoritative communication style on pupils' academic achievement in Mathematics. Therefore, the answer to the above question reveals a very high and positive relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils' academic achievement in Mathematics.

Research Question Three

What is the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils academic achievement?

Table 3: Summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils academic achievement in Mathematics, as responded by primary 5 pupils

V	N	r	$\bar{x}$	r^2	DR	Remarks
Teacher democratic communication style	401	0.147	29.28	02.16%	positive	Very low positive relationship
Pupils' academic achievement			33.05			

V Variables, N Number of respondents, r Pearson (r), $\bar{x}$ mean, r^2 Proportion of Variance, DR Direction of Relationship and Remarks

Data in Table 3, presents the summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' academic achievement. The analysis reveals a very low positive relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils academic achievement, indicating that as teacher democratic communication style increases, the likelihood of pupils academic achievement also increases, but to a very low extent. Specifically pupils' academic achievement can be attributed to teacher democratic communication style, highlighting the impact of teacher democratic communication style on pupils' academic achievement. Therefore, the answer to the above question reveals a very low and positive relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' academic achievement.

Research Question Four

What is the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils self-esteem?

Table 4: Summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils self-esteem, as responded by primary 5 pupils

V	N	r	$\bar{x}$	r^2	DR	Remarks
Teacher democratic communication style	401	0.109	29.50	01.18%	positive	Very low positive relationship
Pupils'self-esteem			32.27			

V Variables, N Number of respondents, r Pearson (r), $\bar{x}$ mean, r^2 Proportion of Variance, DR Direction of Relationship and Remarks

Data in Table 4, presents the summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' self-esteem. The analysis reveals a very low positive relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils self-esteem, indicating that as teacher democratic communication style increases, the likelihood of pupils self-esteem also increases, but to a very low extent. Specifically pupils' self-esteem can be attributed to teacher democratic communication style, highlighting the impact of teacher democratic communication style on pupils' self-esteem. Therefore, the answer to the above question reveals a very low and positive relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' self-esteem.

Discussion of Findings

Communication styles used by basic teachers in Mathematics

The findings revealed that there is teacher maximal use of authoritative communication style and minimal use of democratic communication style in teaching Mathematics in the Basic Schools. This shows that teachers in the basic schools maximally make use of authoritative communication style more than democratic. Empirically, this finding supports that of Fauziahnd Irmaynti (2023) which reported that teachers who are able to communicate well and adjust the style of communication with students are able to create a fun and productive learning environment. However, based on the findings of this study, it can be taken that basic school teachers mostly adopt the use of authoritative communication style.

Relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils academic achievement

Finding of the study on the relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils' academic achievement revealed that there is a very high and positive significant relationship between teacher authoritative communication style and pupils' academic achievement in Mathematics. This finding shows that Mathematics teachers' use of authoritative communication style very highly enhances the pupils' academic achievement in the basic schools. In order words, this finding indicates that as the teacher use of authoritative communication style improves, the pupils' academic achievement in Mathematics equally improves. Empirically, this finding corroborates that of Hanaysha, Shriedeh and In'airat (2023) which revealed that teachers who had competence in their face to face communication impacted highly on the academic performance of the pupils. In any case, considering the finding of this study, it can be concluded that there is a very high positive significant relationship between basic Mathematics teachers' authoritative communication style and the pupils academic achievement.

Relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils academic achievement

Finding of this study on the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils academic achievement revealed that there is a very low and positive significant relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' academic achievement. This finding has shown that the use of democratic communication style does not highly influence the pupils' academic achievement. This could be for the fact that the democratic communication style which is friendly and which was not mostly used by teachers, did not give room for pupils to be serious in their studies, in order to gain high academic achievement. However, this finding contradicts that of Mursalin, Fonna, Muliana, Ali, Setiawan and Amita (2025) which reported that teachers who adopted friendly roles in their communication during their teaching of Mathematics impacted more positively on the

pupils than those who used other communication roles in their teaching. It could probably be that while adopting the friendly communication roles, the teachers were still persuasive, assertive and firm. In any case, it can be taken based on the finding of this study that there is a very low and positive significant relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' academic achievement.

Relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' self-esteem

Finding of this study on the relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' self-esteem indicated that there is a very low relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' self-esteem. The finding of this study has already proved a dearth or minimal use of democratic communication styles by the basic school teachers in their teaching of Mathematics. This shows that they did not adequately adopt the use of democratic communication style in the teaching of Mathematics. Consequently, this communication style did not have much impact on the pupils' self-esteem. Empirically, this finding corroborates that of Allodi (2024) which reported that the self-concept of the special pupils was highly influenced by the style of communication adopted by the teachers. Based on the finding of this study, it can be concluded that there is a very low and positive significant relationship between teacher democratic communication style and pupils' self-esteem.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. The head teachers of the basic schools should encourage their Mathematics teachers to continue to make maximal use of authoritative communication styles in the teaching of Mathematics.

2. Mathematics teachers in the basic schools should learn to use authoritative communication styles in teaching the subject, in order to promote very high academic achievement for the pupils.

3. Mathematics teachers in the basic schools should avoid the use of democratic communication styles in their teaching of the subject in order not to produce very low academic achievement for the pupils.

4. Mathematics teachers should avoid the use of democratic communication style in their teaching of the subject in order not to enhance very low self-esteem for the pupils.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby concluded that primary school teachers make maximal use of authoritative communication styles and minimal use of democratic communication style in teaching Mathematics in the Basic Schools, authoritative communication style has very high influence on pupils' academic achievement while democratic communication style has very lowly influence on pupils' academic achievement as well as their self-esteem.

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