# Psychosocial Effects of Teacher-Students Digital Communication in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

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#### Abstract

The study investigated the psychosocial effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions were answered and three hypotheses tested in the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Population of the study was 129, 133 respondents consisting of 15, 624 teachers and 113, 509 students out of which 789 respondents (390 teachers and 399 students) were sampled using stratified proportionate random sampling technique. Instrument used for data collection was a 15 items questionnaire titled "Psychosocial Effects of Teacher-Students Digital Communication Questionnaire" (PETSDCQ) which was face and content validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt. Reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach alpha statistics at an index of 0.87. Research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. Finding of the study indicated that digital communication between teacher and students in secondary schools in Rivers State had both psychological and social effects. Challenges faced included lack of competence in digital communication as well as the capital intensive nature of engaging in digital communication among other factors. It was recommended that school administrators should establish an official digital communication system between the school and the home for the attainment of the overall educational goals and objectives of the school.

Keywords: Psychosocial, Digital, Communication, Secondary School, Rivers State

## Introduction

Communication plays a vital role in teaching and learning in the school system like every other formal organization. The importance of communication has necessitated the evolution of digital communication tools and medium which have today been a part and parcel of the administration of the school system. Simomson et al. (2019) deduced that clear and efficient information sharing and exchange between people who share common interest is ultimately a result of effective communication and this contributes significantly to goal attainment. Teachers, students, parents and school administrators as well as the government now use available digital communication tools and medium to send and receive information relevant to the interest of members.

Furthermore, Ahmed *et al.*, (2016:183) asserted that "the use of digital communication systems as a medium for numerous other systems and services is possible. Just three prominent examples of these services are digital television, mobile phone service, and internet access". Today, several other digital tools and platforms are now used to communicate and the use of digital communication equipment has become almost a norm even between teachers and students.

Amadi and Paul (2017:1102) stated that "the fact remains that for real learning to take place in the classroom, a positive socioemotional environment must be established" and this may explain why teachers explore all available avenue to keep in touch with their students including the use of digital communication mechanism. However, very little is known about the psychological and social effect of such communication on the students and this is necessary in order to appropriate the benefits of digital communication between the teacher and the students in the right perspective.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Researchers have in recent time began to draw the attention of educational stakeholders to the effects that digital communication has on the overall development of students. More importantly, with the rise in digital communication between teachers and students who explore different communication channels and platforms to send and receive information, very little is known on how this interaction affects the psychological and social life of the learner. Communication affects the overall development of the child affecting their attitude, skill and knowledge and the nature of communication that teachers and students build using digital platform need to be investigated especially in the face of free flow of both verified and unverified information. It is on this note that this study intends to investigate the psychological and social effect of digital communication between the teacher and students in secondary schools in Rivers State in the face of the rising digital platform and communication in the State.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the psychosocial effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the objectives of the study were to:

- 1. identify the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria
- 2. determine the social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria
- 3. ascertain the challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

# **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised in the study:

- 1. What are the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- 2. What are the social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- 3. What are the challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

# Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria
- 2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria
- 3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

# **Literature Review**

# **Digital Communication**

The concept of digital communication can be explained to mean any communication resources that is utilized using digital resources or equipment. Digital communication is a term that relates to the process by which digital technologies are used to transmit information between two or more people. These digital technologies can be in the form o tools, platforms and any resource that is technologically driven and used to share relevant information among people who share similar interest or objectives. Gok (2015:173) stated that "the digital technologies (e.g. mobile phone, tablet, notebook, etc.) and social media (e.g. Facebook, Youtube, Blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) have become increasingly popular in recent years with the most common digital technology being the mobile phone". The use of any of these technologies for sending and receiving information is a part of the digital communication process.

The importance of using digital means and platforms for communication cannot be overemphasized especially in the classroom environment and in the learning process. Pokrovskaia *et al.*, (2021) asserted that learning is a social cognitive process that calls for both coordination of the exchange and assimilation process as well as content on the primary subject of study. The information is presented in verbal, visual, and auditory formats and can be accessed online or as printed books and materials. It reflects a logical mental representation of reality. Digital communication has come to be known as an essential tool for different educational activities including teaching, learning, planning, counselling among several other activities that contributes to the administration of the school system.

## **Effects of Digital Communication**

Scholars in different studies have continued to contribute new knowledge on how advancement in digital technology can help improve the administration of the education sector like other sectors of the national economy and also improve the process of school administration. The benefits derived

and derivable from the deployment of technology has in the school and for various school activities often make it difficult for proper attention to be paid to the effects that may accompany this evolution.

On their part, Kuusimaki *et al.*, (2019) revealed that digital communication does have effects and one of such is that effective digital communication fosters collaboration and contributes to students' best overall development. This means that if digital communication medium if appropriately deployed, they can improve on the development of students and also contribute to the process of collaboration which is part of the learning process in an academic institution. This means that with digital communication medium on ground, it is possible for people across different locations to collaborate in carrying out essential educational activities. This makes it easy for new knowledge to be shared with ease across borders.

Digital communication can also affect the social and psychological disposition and expression of users especially students who are at the formative stage of their development. There is no doubt that while teachers are more knowledgeable and resilient to the use of digital platforms, the students are still new to some of this evolutions and the knowledge and physical divide between the teacher and the students who often communicate on this platform may create differences in their disposition in the use of this platform and this has uncertain effects on the students' overall development.

On their part, Lin *et al.*, (2017) noted that students support the use of digital learning tools to aid in subject learning implying that students consider the use of digital communication platforms more in the context of tools which can be deployed to enhance their learning across different subjects. However, aside developing cognitively, the digital communication between the teachers and the students can also improve the social network of the student as well as improve on the social skills of the student if properly utilized. Teachers are expected to create an environment where students are willing to engage in digital learning in order for them to bravely ask questions during class discussions and increase their online interaction with the teacher (Lin *et al.*, 2017) and this also helps to improve on the confidence and team spirit of the student. Students can also learn to improve in their overall expression and thoughts when the teacher engages them appropriately in the use of digital communication interactions.

The use of digital communication platforms does not come without challenges especially where the communication process is not adequately regulated such as the one between the teachers and the students. It was on this basis that Bosch *et al.*, (2017) noted that some parents even consider digital communication between the teacher and their children as being intrusive as it may expose the child to irrelevant interactions. Similarly, language difference both in the cultural and chronological age difference between the teacher and the student may result in language barrier between the teacher and the student may result in language barrier between the teacher and the students, communication process. Similarly, Yusoff *et al.*, (2022) pointed out that ethics, communication methods, competency in the use of digital tools, organization of digital information, the availability of essential digital tools as well as lack of regulation are some of the challenges that may be experienced in the process of digital communication. It is on this note that the school as well as parents need to harmonize on the conditions that will guide the communication between teachers and students for the development of the learner as well as overall educational goal attainment in the school.

# **Empirical Reviews**

Liu *et al.*, (2019) carried out a meta-analysis on digital communication media use and psychological well-being. The findings revealed that while online gaming was negatively correlated with well-being, phone calls and texting were positively correlated with it. Furthermore, how technology was used had an impact on the relationship between use of digital media and wellbeing. This point was

clarified using a number of meta-analyses of various SNS use scenarios and well-being: interaction, self-presentation, and entertainment on SNSs were all linked to higher well-being, whereas content consumption on SNSs was linked to lower well-being. Umar and Idris (2018) also investigated the influence of social media on psychosocial behaviour and academic performance of secondary school students. The study, which included 306 SSII students chosen at random, found that social media use has a detrimental effect on students' psychosocial behavior and academic performance.

Oldfield (2019) investigated digital communications, social support and psychological well-being in adolescents. The study included 443 young people between the ages of 16 and 24. The study was unable to find evidence to support the existence of negative effects from using these digital communications media. Positive outcomes were found after using text-based digital communications. Limone and Toto (2022) also conducted a study on psychological and emotional effects of digital technology on digitods (14–18 Years) with a systematic review. The study's findings revealed a significant association between excessive use of digital technology and poor psychological and emotional outcomes in youth aged 14 to 18 (p 0.005). In a similar vein, a statistically significant difference between boys and girls was discovered, with girls having more adverse outcomes than boys.

On the other hand, Chukwuere (2021) investigated the impact of social media on students' social interaction. The study's findings enable students to comprehend that while social media platforms encourage social interaction, they also encourage friends to physically distance themselves during gatherings or events. Further study by Makhzoum *et al.*, (2021) also investigated the role of teachers' digital communication skills in the success of the distance learning process in private universities in Lebanon. According to the study's findings, private universities in Lebanon were equipped to manage online instruction during the CoViD-19 pandemic. The respondents expressed confidence that they are equipped with the newly developed digital technologies that are just beginning to emerge and are used for solving crisis. These studies proved that digital communication is receiving attention and has an impact on how various educational stakeholders interact in the school.

# Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive survey design since the study was investigating a phenomenon that was ongoing. The population of the study consisted of 129, 133 respondents consisting of 15, 624 teachers and 113, 509 students across the senior secondary schools in the State out of which 789 respondents (390 teachers and 399 students) were sampled using stratified proportionate random sampling technique. The instrument used for data gathering was a 15 items questionnaire tagged "Psychosocial Effects of Teacher-Students Digital Communication Questionnaire" (PETSDCQ). The questionnaire was responded to on a four point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weighted scores of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The weighted scores were summed up and divided by the four response scales to arrive at 2.50 which was the criterion mean score used for agreeing or disagreeing with each questionnaire item. The questionnaire was validated both in face and content by two experts in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach alpha statistics with an index of 0.87. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher with the aid of four trained Research Assistants and out of the 789 copies of questionnaire administered, 602 copied (214 teachers 388 students) which was a 76.3% retrieval rate. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance.

#### Results

#### **Answer to Research Questions**

**Research Question One:** What are the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

 
 Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Psychological Effects of Teacher-Students' Digital Communication in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/No	Items	Teachers <b>1</b>	n=214	Students n	Students n=388 N			
		Mean $\overline{X}_1$	SD	Mean $\overline{X}_2$	SD	$X \overline{X}$	Rank	Decision
1	The problem of boredom is reduced when digital communication is made possible	2.93	0.90	2.95	0.82	2.94	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
2	Empathy is built when one is able to communicate digitally with others	2.87	0.94	2.70	0.82	2.79	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed
3	Social support is gained from the ability to communicate digitally	2.52	0.99	2.97	0.81	2.75	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
4	Intelligence is expanded from the freedom to communicate digitally	2.90	0.91	2.91	0.85	2.91	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
5	Digital communication makes it difficult to be self-reliant	2.46	1.03	2.41	1.05	2.44	5 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	2.74	0.95	2.79	0.87	2.76		Agreed

Table 1 showed that the teachers responded to items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean scores of 2.93, 2.87, 2.52, 2.90 and 2.46 while the students responded to the same set of items with mean scores of 2.95, 2.70, 2.97, 2.91 and 2.41. In the table, all the items were above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making and as such the items were agreed except for item 5 which the teachers and students responded to with mean values less than the criterion mean score of 2.50 and this implied that the respondents both disagreed that digital communication makes self-reliant difficult. In the ranking, the reduction of the problem of boredom was the greatest social effect of digital communication between the teacher and the students in that order. The grand mean score of 2.74 and 2.79 indicated that the teachers and students both agreed on the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria and this was also supported by the mean set score of 2.76 which showed that the respondents agreed on the items raised.

**Research Question Two:** What are the social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

S/No	Digital Communica	Teachers n		Students n		,	Mean Set			
5/140	Itellis	Mean $\overline{X}_1$	SD	Mean $\overline{X}_2$	SD	$X \overline{X}$	Rank	Decision		
6	Senseoflifesatisfactionisbuiltfromthecommunicationthe	2.96	0.89	2.98	0.80	2.97	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed		
7	process Engaging in such communication promotes a sense of belonging	2.94	0.90	2.99	0.79	2.97	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed		
8	Communicating digitally is a form of intrusion into ones privacy	2.40	1.05	2.85	0.89	2.63	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed		
9	There is a sense of discomfort that is developed when communicating digitally	2.38	1.07	2.44	1.03	2.41	5 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed		
10	Social health problems are experienced from regular digital communication	2.42	1.04	2.47	1.01	2.45	4 <sup>th</sup>	Disagreed		
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	2.62	0.99	2.75	0.90	2.68		Agreed		

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Social Effects of Teacher-Students'
Digital Communication in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 2 indicated that the teacher and students responded to items 6-10 with mean values of 2.96, 2.94, 2.40, 2.38 and 2.42 as well as 2.98, 2.99, 2.85, 2.44 and 2.47 in that order. Items above the criterion mean score of 2.50 were agreed while the other items were disagreed. This implies that the teachers and students both disagreed on items 9 and 10 that digital communication between them created discomfort and mental health problems but they had varying opinion on item 8 but shared similar opinion on items 6 and 7. The table showed that the respondents ranked item 7 as the 1<sup>st</sup> social effect of digital communication which was that digital communication promoted sense of belonging. The grand mean score of 2.62 and 2.75 from the students and teachers as well as the mean set score of 2.68 all showed that the respondents averagely agreed on the items as social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Research Question Three:** What are the challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Communication in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria										
S/No	Items	Teachers n	n=214	Students n		Mean				
		Mean $X_1$	SD	Mean X <sub>2</sub>	SD	ХХ	Rank	Decision		
11	Digital	2.79	0.96	2.84	0.90	2.82	$3^{\rm rd}$	Agreed		
	communication									
	system lacks									
	adequate regulation									
12	Language barrier	2.48	1.02	2.42	1.04	2.45	$5^{\text{th}}$	Disagreed		
	exists in the process							U		
	of using digital									
	communication									
13	The lack of digital	2.91	0.91	2.93	0.84	2.92	$1^{st}$	Agreed		
-	competence can							8		
	hinder effective									
	digital									
	communication									
14	Organizing	2.55	0.98	2.47	1.01	2.51	$4^{\text{th}}$	Agreed		
	information in the							U		
	clearest form is a									
	problem using									
	digital resources									
15	Digital	2.89	0.93	2.87	0.88	2.88	$2^{nd}$	Agreed		
	communication is							e		
	capital intentive									
	Grand Mean and	2.72	0.96	2.71	0.93	2.72		Agreed		
	<b>Standard Deviation</b>							8		

# Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Challenges of Teacher-Students' Digital Communication in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 3 indicated that the teachers responded to items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 with mean values of 2.79, 2.48, 2.91, 2.55 and 2.89 while the students responded to the same set of items with mean values of 2.84, 2.42, 2.93, 2.47 and 2.87. The items above the criterion mean score of 2.50 were agreed while the others were disagreed. Item 13 was ranked first that lack of competence was the greatest challenge faced in digital communication between the teacher and the students while the capital intensive nature of digital communication was the second greatest challenge. The grand mean of 2.72 from the teachers and 2.71 from the students supported the mean set score of 2.72 to indicate that the respondents averagely agreed on the items as challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## **Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

	Students on the Psychological Effects of Teacher-Students' Digital Communication in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria											
Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision				
Teachers	214	2.74	0.95	600	0.64	1.96	0.05	Not Rejected				
Students	388	2.79	0.87					-J				

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference in the Mean Ratings of Teachers and n

Table 4 showed that while the value of t-cal. was 0.64, the value of t-crit. was 1.96 at 600 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the value of t-cal. of 0.64 was less than the value of tcrit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected indicating that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 5: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference in the Mean Ratings of Teachers and
Students on the Social Effects of Teacher-Students' Digital Communication in
Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

	<u> </u>							
Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Teachers	214	2.62	0.99					
				600	1.59	1.96	0.05	Not Rejected
Students	388	2.75	0.90					Rejecteu

Table 5 revealed that while the value of t-cal. was 1.59, the value of t-crit. was 1.96 at 600 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the value of t-cal. of 1.59 was less than the value of t-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected suggesting that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Table 6: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Difference in the Mean Ratings of Teachers and Students on the Challenges of Teacher-Students' Digital Communication in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Teachers	214	2.72	0.96	600	0.12	1.96	0.05	Not
Students	388	2.71	0.93					Rejected

Table 6 indicated that while the value of t-cal. was 0.12, the value of t-crit. was 1.96 at 600 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, since the value of t-cal. of 0.12 was less than the value of t-crit. of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected implying that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The in the responses gathered from the respondents, it was shown that the teachers and students both agreed on the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Similarly, it was shown that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the psychological effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This outcome is at variance with the result of a similar study conducted by Umar and Idris (2018) which found that social media use has a detrimental effect on students' psychosocial behavior and academic performance. However, this study showed that both the teacher and the students both share the same opinion on the psychological effects that arises from the digital communication that exists between them which were mostly positive.

The study showed that the respondents believed that digital communication between them helps to deal with the issue of boredom and also raises the spirit of empathy on the communicators. However, Limone and Toto (2022) indicated a significant association between excessive use of digital technology and poor psychological and emotional outcomes in youth aged 14 to 18 (p 0.005). This means that digital communication between teachers and students who are still adolescence needs to be given proper monitoring and guidance so as to appropriate the benefit of this technology. The respondents also identified that social support system and intelligence are built as a result of the digital communication between the teacher and the students. However, the teachers and students both disagreed that digital communication reduces their chances of self-reliance. The position of both respondents have established the fact that digital communication between the teacher and students have psychological effects and does not in any way affect their self-reliance. Teachers and students are therefore able to improve on their psychological conditions using digital communication platforms but this may only be so when the communication processes and activities are organized in the right context that will be beneficially academically for both parties.

Similarly, the students and teachers agreed on the items as social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria and it was equally shown that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the social effects of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Responses from the teachers and students established that digital communication that takes place between them is able to improve on their life satisfaction and sense of belonging. This result agrees with the outcome of the study by Chukwuere (2021) which showed that social media platforms encourage social interaction but encourage friends to physically distance themselves and this is a challenge that may come with this process thereby making even teachers and students to be physically apart which makes it difficult to get first-hand information on the physical development of both stakeholders. This means that the teacher and students are able to improve on their social satisfaction status when they engage in meaningful digital communication.

However, while the teachers consider that digital communication was not intrusive, the students agreed otherwise. This tend to suggest some form of coercion in the communication process where the dictates of the teachers may override that of the students as it relates to the terms of the communication. Surprisingly, both the teacher and the students pointed out that the communication process does not in any way serve as discomfort to them. This means that the communication between the teacher and students on the available digital platform meets the expectation of both

parties but need to be better regulated in terms of the conditionalities. The teachers and students also disagreed that social health challenges arises from the digital communication processes suggesting that the teacher and students are satisfied with the entire communication activities between the teacher and the students.

Teachers and the students agreed on the items listed as challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study also established that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and students on the challenges of teacher-students' digital communication in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Studies by Oldfield (2019) indicated that they were unable to find evidence to support the existence of negative effects from using these digital communications media and that positive outcomes were found after using text-based digital communications and this calls for the need to deal with any challenge that can limit the attainment of these benefits. The respondents disagreed that they have any form of language barrier between the teachers and the students and this means that there is a free flow of information between the teacher and the students and this is essential for the success of all educational interaction between the teacher and the students.

The result of the study also established that the respondents believed that there was lack of competence in the use of digital communication platforms, there were no adequate regulations on digital communication, digital communication was capital intensive and organizing digital information using digital communication channels was also a challenge. Study by Makhzoum *et al.*, (2021) established that institutions do better when they provide the needed skills and facilities to support the digital communication process of their personnel. All of these points to the fact that there is need for further interventions if the digital communication of the social and psychological effects as well as the attainment of broader educational goals and objectives in the school. However, Liu *et al.*, (2019) pointed out in their study that what digital communication tools and platforms are used for determine the possible effects that will be derived and this calls for the need for more caution and control in the use of digital communication platforms between teachers and students in these schools.

# Conclusion

Conclusively, it was revealed from the findings of the study that digital communication between teacher and students in secondary schools in Rivers State had both psychological and social effects and the inability to enhance such communication was as a result of lack of competence in digital communication as well as the capital intensive nature of engaging in digital communication among others. The teachers and students did not differ in their opinion about the psychological and social effects of digital communication among them.

# Recommendations

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

- 1. It is important for school administrators to establish official communication channels between teachers and students such that this platform follows the goals and objectives of the school and communication on these platforms should be properly monitored to ensure that the purpose of its establishment is not eroded.
- 2. The choice of digital tools and platforms adopted by schools should be both environmentally and financially friendly for both the teachers and students who also need to be adequately trained on how to optimize these platforms for the benefit of all school stakeholders.
- 3. School administrators should regularly engage parents of the children in their school to get regular feedback of the various interactions between the school and its stakeholders as well as children at home as this will help ensure quality control in the relationship and interaction between the school and the home front.

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