



The Relationship of Expert Teacher–Learner Rapport and Learner Autonomy in the CVIF-Dynamic Learning Program

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Abstract This study focused on the relationship of rapport between teachers and learners in the context of the Central Visayan Institute Foundation-Dynamic Learning Program (CVIF-DLP) and learner autonomy. The concept of rapport and learner autonomy in the field of education is often untouched in varied contexts, including the CVIF-DLP which shows a systems approach to process-induced learning, specifically designed to train learners to learn autonomously or independently. In this approach, learners are only provided intervention whenever the need arises, allowing them to learn with little to no assistance of the teacher; thus, the development of rapport between teachers and learners might diminish, compared to a conventional teaching approach that is teacher-centered, where more rapport may be provided due to more interaction between teacher and learner. A correlational study was conducted among 174 learners by answering scales intended to measure rapport with their teacher and autonomous learning. The results revealed an overall moderate, positive, and very significant correlation across all groups. Therefore, rejecting the generalization of most learners in their adolescence has lower rapport with their teachers as they mature; moreover, autonomy-supportive attitudes might have been a foundation instilled among learners by their teachers in the approach. The conclusion led to mediating factors such as the teaching approach itself and a strong guidance program. This study recommends more studies on the CVIF-DLP teaching approach, its effect on learner autonomy, and

a detailed description of the rapport among specific subject teachers for further in-depth understanding.

Keywords Rapport · Learner autonomy · Teacher and student relationship · Dynamic learning · Education

Introduction

Successful learning is a goal derived from many contributing factors. Factors such as socioeconomic backgrounds, gender, entry qualification, teacher quality, learning environment, motivation, learning styles, stress and anxiety, personality, class size, and satisfaction have been assessed and evaluated throughout the years by many experts in the academe (Mohamed et al. 2018). Aside from these factors, there also lies the reality of how learners keep track of their learning. In fact, there are even digital learning materials that are readily accessible for learners and teachers as well in remodeling and updating their teaching approaches. Furthermore, success in learning is not only attributed to learning strategies, but also in developing positive relationships with others, these include fellow learners and teachers. According to Hamre and Pianta, developing a positive relationship is a key in developing rapport, which is a basic characteristic of attaining holistic development (Hussain et al. 2013). In addition, Coupland reasoned that developed rapport reduces the risk of anxiety levels among learners (Frisby and Martin 2010). Aside from rapport as a means of aiming towards holistic development, learner autonomy plays a vital role in the attempt to acquire full development. In this age, access to reliable information allows learners to become more independent in their approach towards

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learning. The innovation of other approaches and strategies to fulfill learner autonomy have emerged for learning to become more enjoyable and more creative; further, the role of the teacher transitions now from becoming an all-knowing information feeder to a facilitator.

In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, both rapport and learner autonomy are considered significant factors in the holistic education of basic and higher education learners. In a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2015), autonomy is given significant focus. Countries like the Republic of Korea and Vietnam have even included autonomy in their school curriculum. Some studies cite the crucial role that teachers' rapport with students has in their progress in the educational ladder (Viernes and de Guzman 2005; Huan et al. 2012; Nova 2017).

The concept of rapport is often understudied. Such studies related to rapport are often linked to its relationship with academic achievement, although many consider rapport to be a major variable considered in pursuing holistic development (Buskist and Saville 2001). Generally, rapport develops a harmonious classroom environment, producing conducive classrooms, better academic performance, and positive attitudes towards 'learning how-to-learn.' On the other hand, since the expansion of learner autonomy in the 1980's, more opportunities have been provided for egalitarian and independent learning processes (Frisby and Martin 2010). For instance, the innovation of novel approaches (e.g., CVIF-DLP) in teaching and learning further trains each learner to abandon reliance on teachers and promotes independent learning (Carpio-Bernido et al. 2014).

Given the importance of rapport in the classroom, little knowledge is known between rapport and other variables related to education, and those that describe the relationship of rapport and learner autonomy in classrooms, both in orthodox and alternate approaches. Likewise, few studies circle on the CVIF-DLP as a teaching approach, yet little to no studies are available testing two to more variables using this approach as a mediating variable—frequently, enthusiasts of the approach use it as an independent variable to test its legitimacy. This study intended to determine the level of teacher–learner rapport and its relationship with the level of autonomy of learners in the CVIF-DLP approach, with the consideration of the grade level of learners and the locale's programs as mediators.

Research Questions

The following questions were aimed by the researcher at the end of the study:

1. Is there a significant difference between rapport and learner autonomy across grade levels?
2. Is there a significant relationship between rapport and learner autonomy across grade levels?
3. Does the CVIF-Dynamic Learning Program assist in developing the rapport and autonomy of learners?

Rapport

Rapport is the development of a harmonious relationship between the teacher and learner. It is characterized by the presence of friendship, mutual understanding, respect, and other binding and coexisting traits. It is a bond that enables two individuals in the learning arena or any professional setting. Further, Catt, Miller, and Schallenkamp identify rapport as two or more individuals covered with a mutual and trusting bond (Faranda and Clarke 2004; Frisby and Martin 2010; Gremler and Gwinner 2000). Moreover, Dobransky and Frymier; Frymier and Houser; Nussbaum and Scott; and Jorgenson elaborate that it is an interpersonal bond during instruction and truly relationship-centered (Frisby and Martin 2010). From these definitions, the teacher gains a leverage over learners by claiming their attention and for their professional development, while the learner gains confidence in class, course, and the teacher opens opportunities for full achievement in the best possible way; therefore, making rapport as both teacher and learner-centered.

Rapport is one of those variables attached to the overarching goal of learner achievement. Like other factors, it is essential, yet one of the most critical. Studies declare the relationship between teacher and learner as the very important aspect of classroom climate. Also, establishing positive rapport among learners is a good indicator of an effective teacher (Falsario et al. 2014; Faranda and Clarke 2004; Frisby and Martin 2010). Nguyen (2007) reasoned that once rapport is established, learners are provided new learning spaces that can cater to their needs of full holistic achievement. Further arguments that learning starts from rapport, and that rapport is an irrevocable part of education and in terms of motivation, developing personal relationships with learners can spark interest in the subject and further produce a boost in motivation (Bouras and Keskes 2014; Nguyen 2007; Wang 2013).

Rapport is an important tool in improving learning, although its subfactors of which leads directly to rapport building is yet to be known (Frisby and Martin 2010; Webb and Barrett 2014). Nevertheless, the study regarding rapport-building behaviors between retail employees and customers in four groups were classified, namely: attentive behavior, imitative behavior, courteous behavior, and common grounding behavior. Although the study was

conducted under retail and marketing fields, the behaviors revealed a share of similar characteristics on how rapport is built between the teacher and learner (Gremler and Gwinner 2000). Similarly, those who manifest immediacy behaviors such as calling learners' first names or nicknames, maintaining eye contact, providing affirmations, moving around the classroom, and applying appropriate gestures during lecture would promote interest in learning and a sense of trust towards teachers (Wilson and Ryan 2012). A set of guidelines on how teachers would create a good sense of rapport in the classroom, according to Brown, like showing interest in the individuality of learners, providing appropriate feedback, encouraging free expression, respecting learners' thoughts and ideas, applying humor, becoming teammates in learning, and providing appropriate statements to learners; likewise, respect, approachability, openness, gentleness, and optimism (Weimer 2010). Differently, other examples of immediacy attributes are delivered through movements, vocal variety, humor, and personal anecdotes. Teacher immediacy is one of the most essential keys in the process of developing rapport. It serves as a crucial area that both the teacher and learner must undergo in order to diminish the gap between them, reduce intimidation, and signify approachability. Perhaps, the presence of immediacy behaviors allows positive learning and developing positive relationships to be possible, wherein both contribute to advance the learners' fullest potential (LeFebvre and Allen 2014; Nguyen 2007).

A routine of teachers engaged among learners in the elementary levels were presented by Buskist and Saville (2001) where teachers at first extend warmth and friendly invitation to the learners to the classroom as an extension of their home where they can be a part of a community of learners; then, the routine is continued for the succeeding days. In this way, it decreases anxiety levels and aggressive behaviors of learners. Moreover, those institutions that implement strong guidance programs intended to enhance feelings, creating a sense of attachment among fellow learners and their teachers tend to reduce dropout rates (Frisby and Martin 2010, as cited in Coupland, Bean and Eaton; Meehan, Hughes, and Cavell, as cited in Hussein et al. 2013).

Contrarily, a study was conducted on the relationship of classroom climate with academic achievement among senior tertiary-level education learners in the Philippines; the study revealed a low-to-moderate positive correlation between two variables. A possible reason for its low-to-moderate positive correlation was the learners' maturity or age (Falsario et al. 2014). Moreover, a similar study from a Malaysian polytechnic between tertiary business learners and their academic achievement was conducted and revealed a low negative relationship between rapport and

their academic achievement (Mohamed et al. 2018). These results are relative to Freeman et al. (2007) who described the teacher and learner rapport to decline as learners continue to progress each time they gain maturity. This theory is best explained by the maturity process that an individual undergoes over time. Aging learners are most likely to become more individualized learners, thus compromising the relationship that should be developed by both teacher and learner. Likewise, Ang hypothetically explains that the concept of dependency is only appreciated by younger learners or those in the kindergarten to third grade levels (Mohamed et al. 2018). Similarly, Pianta mentioned that the relationship between the teacher and learner shows threats in decline as the learner grows older (Davis 2003; Modlin 2008).

Ultimately, rapport is a vital component that strongly contributes to the entire learning process. It is essential for teachers and learners in possessing good rapport, because it might result in good academic results. This concept is a good foundation in developing positive relationships among learners that may help in the process of learning, especially for those who might have difficulties and varied challenges.

Learner Autonomy

The concept began in the 1980s as an approach from the *Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues* (CRAPEL), founded by Yves Chalon and was succeeded by Henry Holec, at the University of Nancy in France which focused on lifelong education for adults (Little 2007).

Holec defines learner autonomy as the ability of an individual to take responsibility over his own learning. Further, one who takes self-regulation in learning, provides other resources in the aid of attaining their learning goals; being able to do tasks on their own—a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action (Iñigo 2018; Little 2007; Myartawan et al. 2013). In order to achieve this, the learner should be involved in the complete teaching–learning process (i.e., planning, realization, and evaluation). Thus, it refers to the control of the learners in learning (Benson 2013; Tholin n.d.). It is critical to understand the difference between autonomy and independence in the context of learner autonomy, as both are synonymous, in order to avoid misconception. Benson and Voller discuss 'independence' as being free from reliance of any intervention provider, while 'autonomy' is also defined freedom, but in the sense of decision making without external influence (Chiu 2012). Simply, learner autonomy is the concept of allowing learners to establish their own goals, design their own learning processes, and become resourceful.

Learner autonomy is essential in 21st century learning. It is one of the keys to successfully establish a learner-centered classroom. Habit forming is a vital subcomponent of implying autonomy. For instance, Carpio-Bernido et al. (2014) emphasized the use of the learner activity sheets in an approach signifying ‘learning time’ and immediately redirects their attention from whatever they are doing to being focused to the ideas to be learned. In the theory of self-determination, those learners who have fostered learner autonomy are more likely to be more motivated especially if they are supported by their teachers and parents. A study investigated parents’ control and autonomy support on low and high achieving children revealed a decrease in performance with parent-controlling responses, while those who are supported with autonomy increased in performance for half a year (Ng et al. 2004). Additionally, the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIRe) allows access to further information on the learning concepts aside from what they are presented with in the classroom; therefore, the learning area is no longer limited to the classroom, but now within their reach.

Although learner autonomy is very extensive, it may not be considered as a full or absolute concept. Iñigo (2018) labels learner autonomy as multi-faceted. Likewise, terms such as ‘self-instruction,’ ‘out-of-class-learning,’ and ‘distance learning’ are often associated with the broad concept (Dafei 2007; Ivanovska 2015). Therefore, diversity may be considered as a mediator since there are learners who hail from varied cultures, learning styles, and personalities. A study was conducted focusing on the learning strategies foreign learners apply in coping with their language anxiety (Lucas et al. 2011). Deci also elaborates that those learners who have higher motivation would most likely elicit autonomy support from their teachers (Egel 2009).

Myartawan et al. (2013) studied the relationship of autonomy in the language learning proficiency among Indonesian EFL college learners where a strong, positive, significant relationship was revealed between variables, similarly, a positive, significant correlation between autonomy and grade point average (Lowe 2009). Further, Tholin (n.d.) explains that a teacher who initiates autonomy support to learners who are inattentive, would most likely develop intrinsic motivation.

Learner autonomy is well known; however, it is not given too much attention in the Philippine context. Ironic as it may sound, but when the Department of Education (DepEd) formulated its curriculum, they made it learner-centered (Madrunio et al. 2016), where teachers have academic freedom, learners capable of their own learning; although knowledge about the concept is obvious, the top-down approach of delivering policies and programs hinders them to. They also found in their study of language

teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding learner autonomy that some remain unfamiliar with the concept’s term during their undergraduate/graduate studies and during their practice. The education system in the Philippines is unaware of not catering to the needs of learners (i.e., taking responsibility in own learning). Even with few improvements like a sense of encouragement in constructing their own knowledge, there are still less studies regarding learner autonomy in the Philippines, with only specifically mentioning such terms incidentally.

Fostering learner autonomy in learners would ease the responsibilities of the teachers; diverting from the old teacher-centered to learner-centered approach. Its integration into learning would mostly benefit all stakeholders, especially in this age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIRe). Learners have different learning preferences and teachers should take notice, so they may be allowed to learn at their own pace without anyone getting left behind. Learners, on the other hand, should take responsibility for their learning at an early age and should be consistent as they mature. Likewise, learner autonomy should be considered in the Philippine educational context for further studies to improve the implementation of the ‘learner-centered’ curriculum.

ASEAN Integration of Learner Autonomy and Rapport in the Curriculum

In the ASEAN region, the concepts of learner autonomy and rapport have been well-integrated. The integration of both concepts is in recognition of the significant contributions that can be brought about by the said factors in advancing quality education. The Republic of Korea, in their 2009 curriculum reform, included autonomy as one of the four creative hands-on activities. Autonomy is also considered as part of the ‘character education’ in the said curriculum reform. In Vietnam, learner autonomy in the learning process is also promoted. This is highlighted in one of the presented pedagogies in a UNESCO document. Further, Rungwaraphong (2012) explored how learner autonomy is promoted in Thai tertiary education. It was mentioned there was no mandate on learner autonomy across levels of education. The study was able to contribute to the body of learner autonomy studies which showcased how it can be explored further. There were also recommendations in addressing learners’ autonomy.

There is a strong evidence in the literature as well that rapport is given significance in the ASEAN context. In the study of Viernes and de Guzman (2005) exploring Filipino teachers’ experiences of supportive relationships with colleagues, themes describe Filipino teachers as ‘relational people’ in terms of interpreting a supportive nature in school. They have affirmed that Filipinos are warm and

active in seeking harmony, unison, rapport, and affinity with people.

In the study by Huan et al. (2012), they explored how teacher–learner relationship influenced learner attitude towards teachers and school. The study involved 1266 students from middle schools in Singapore; finding the following: student perceptions were predictive of their attitude towards teachers, student perceptions were predictive of their attitude towards school, teacher perception is predictive of student attitude towards teachers, and teacher perception is predictive of student attitude towards school.

In Indonesia, rapport is crucial in education. Nova (2017) developed an instrument on teacher’s self-assessment of rapport building in the EFL classroom in recognition of the significance of building positive social interaction in the classroom. The study was able to produce a teacher’s self-assessment of rapport-building instruments. The instrument is composed of 11 sections representing the 11 principles identified in the study with a total of 35 statements.

Both learners’ autonomy and teachers’ rapport are crucial and significant factors relevant to advancing the quality of interaction and education in general, by students in the education ladder from basic to higher education.

Theoretical Framework

Freeman et al. (2007) explained that the rapport of learners and teachers is possible to decline as learners slowly reach a level higher. Supported by Ang in Mohamed et al. (2018), Pianta in Davis (2003), Modlin (2008), and Falsario et al. (2014), these studies cited the independence of a learner become apparent as they grow, assuming learners have established a sense of autonomy or independence, thus, resulting in needing less to no teacher interaction. Moreover, the greater bulk of the framework of this study is anchored on the approach posited by physicists, Dr. Christopher Bernido and Dr. Maria Victoria Carpio-Bernido. The details are further discussed in the following section.

Central Visayan Institute Foundation-Dynamic Learning Program (CVIF-DLP)

The Central Visayan Institute Foundation-Dynamic Learning Program (CVIF-DLP) is a systems approach to process-induced learning. First introduced in 2002 in the fourth-class town of Jagna in the island province of Bohol in the Philippines by Ramon Magsaysay awardees, physicists Dr. Christopher Bernido and Dr. Maria Victoria Carpio-Bernido as a synthesis of classical and modern pedagogical theories intended to address the decline of

their learners’ performance in national standardized tests and entrance examinations in major colleges/universities, increasing dropout rates, and few qualified Physics teachers. This adopts a learner-centered approach where more time is allotted to learners doing tasks on their own than in the traditional teacher-centered as seen on Fig. 1, resulting to independently abled learners. By implementation, competencies in the curriculum can be unpacked from simplest to most complex. (Carpio-Bernido et al. 2014; Carpio-Bernido and Bernido n.d.).

There are four non-negotiable components that contribute to its success:

Parallel Classes Scheme

The parallel classes scheme is designed to control teacher intervention in providing learners more time to work on their tasks (Carpio-Bernido and Bernido n.d.). Two to three classes are held simultaneously where teachers go from one classroom to another within allotted time.

The teachers’ roles are classified into two: expert teacher and facilitator. The first is the subject teacher responsible for the development of materials, instruction, assessment, evaluation, intervention, and addressing questions from learners; the latter assists the expert teacher in classroom management, executing tasks, and ensuring learners are at-task; however, answering questions related to the task or lesson is forbidden; thus, it would force learners to find solutions to challenges independently.

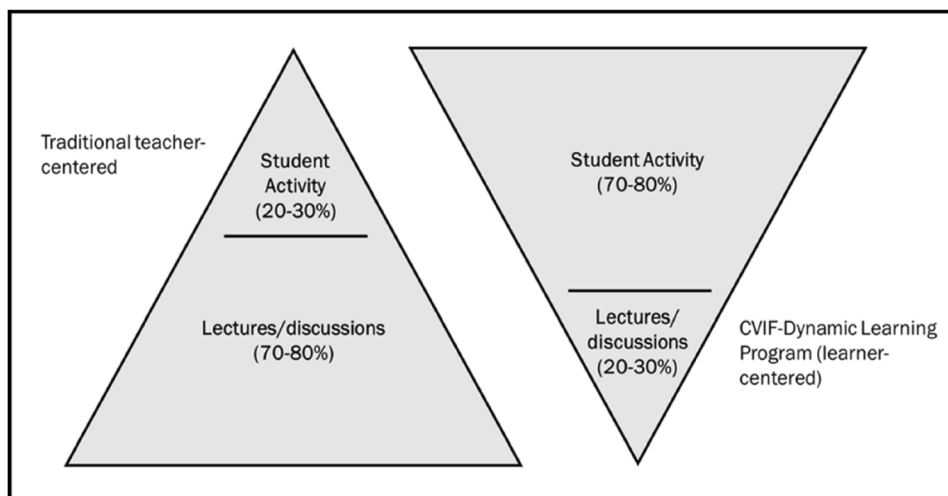
Prior to the beginning of the class, the expert teacher assigns facilitators a class where they are tasked to execute tasks provided for learners. Figure 2 shows the expert teacher entered in Sect. 1, while the facilitators are in Sects. 2 and 3. After 20 min, Fig. 3 shows the switch between Facilitator 1 and the expert teacher.

Another switch will occur within the last 20 min between Facilitator 2 and expert teacher, as shown on Fig. 4. By the end of the class, the expert teacher has already addressed possible concerns of all sections, if there are any; facilitators also report progress, learners’ behavior, and concerns from the last class they attended.

Figures 5 and 6 show the same process, only that the switch happens after 30 min.

The expert teacher should carefully prepare for the implementation of the parallel classes (i.e., facilitators’ instructions, learner tasks). Learners need not to wait for any teacher intervention as they are provided with a task to maximize time; this also forms the habit of learning on their own.

Fig. 1 Traditional teacher-centered approach vs. CVIF-DLP teaching approach (Carpio-Bernido et al. 2014; Carpio-Bernido and Bernido n.d.)



TIME	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
7:45-8:45 AM	Expert Teacher	Facilitator 1	Facilitator 2

Fig. 2 Parallel classes scheme in three sections during the first 20 min

TIME	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
7:45-8:45 AM	Facilitator 1	Expert Teacher	Facilitator 2

Fig. 3 Parallel classes scheme in three sections during the next 20 min

TIME	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
7:45-8:45 AM	Facilitator 1	Facilitator 2	Expert Teacher

Fig. 4 Parallel classes scheme in three sections during the last 20 min

TIME	Section 1	Section 2
7:45-8:45 AM	Expert Teacher	Facilitator

Fig. 5 Parallel classes scheme in two sections during the first 30 min

TIME	Section 1	Section 2
7:45-8:45 AM	Facilitator	Expert Teacher

Fig. 6 Parallel classes scheme in two sections during the last 30 min

Activity-Based Multi-Domain Learning

Activities in the CVIF-DLP are designed for all types of learners. Multi-domain learning pertains to the writing activities done by learners; since writing, usually in cursive, stimulates information retention, also referred to as the ‘dynamism’ in the brain, for which the name of the approach was derived from.

The learners are provided individual learning activity sheets (LAS). Each LAS is equivalent to one activity, whatever the type of activity may be (i.e., notes, seatwork, quiz). Each activity has its own small learning targets later directed into a more advanced competency. With the use of the LAS, the learner possesses the ability to focus on the smaller bits of knowledge he or she must be able to possess before proceeding to a more complex learning goal.

In-School Comprehensive Portfolio

The in-school comprehensive portfolio is the primary storage of the activities done by the learner from beginning to end. These are color-coded according to learning area (e.g., white for Mathematics, blue for English). It serves to instill good organization habits and monitor their own progress. Some practices in CVIF-DLP implementing schools require learners to have a monitoring sheet/chart or any equivalent to let them see their scores and remarks from teachers, and these would later be sent to parents to keep track of their academic performance. The expert teachers reserve the right to recheck the learners’ portfolios individually to decide whether they are on the right track or that they need intervention and/or remediation.

Teachers also possess a portfolio that documents all activities given to learners from beginning to end. Likewise, these are also color-coded and serve as their

organized documentation of all activities and allows teachers to monitor their own efficiency.

Strategic Rest and Study Periods

Learners who are in their early to mid-adolescent years are expected to get rest at home for eight to 11 h (National Sleep Foundation 2015) in order to get energized for the next school day. Additionally, implementing schools are allotted with one non-academic day featuring activities in learning areas of music, arts, and athletics.

Success indicators prove the effectiveness of the approach. Government-administered standardized tests and leading college/university entrance tests show higher rates and passers explain its effectiveness. A study of an implementing school in southeastern Mindanao, Philippines revealed a significance of the post-test scores of those exposed in the approach in its first year of implementation (Basilio 2009; Carpio-Bernido and Bernido n.d.).

Methods

This study took a correlational design; defined as a statistical test determining the pattern of two or more variables consistently varying. One of its purposes is to allow researchers to predict scores and explain relationships across variables (Creswell 2012).

Prior to the collection of pertinent data, instruments to be modified and used were given permission by authors through direct contact. Two Likert scale instruments were used to determine rapport and autonomy levels: Professor–Student Rapport Scale (PSRS) (Wilson and Ryan 2013) and the Learner Autonomy Scale (LAS) (Macaskill and Taylor 2009), both were modified to suit the situation of the locale and comprehension or understanding of learner-respondents; for instance the term ‘Professor’ in the PSRS was changed to ‘Expert Teacher’ since teachers in their locale are not referred as a ‘Professor.’ Both instruments were validated by experts in education using a validation instrument; one possessed a doctorate degree in a higher education institution, two earned credits in their respective doctorate programs, and one earned credits in a graduate program.

Stratified sampling was used among respondents coming from a private, secondary, Catholic school in Quezon City, Philippines implementing the CVIF-DLP for 9 years. Qualified respondents for this study had to be a student of the implementing school for at least 1 year to ensure all respondents have had an experience in the CVIF-DLP approach. Sampling was done in two phases: first, 120 respondents had to be selected for reliability testing of the instruments; second, a new set of 200 respondents had to be

selected for actual data collection. A new set was selected in the second phase to ensure that no respondent would be answering the same scales twice.

Based on the reliability test, the ELRS was considered ready for use with 34 items, citing no revisions; however, the 11-item LAS was later reduced to 10 items after showing better reliability by omitting one of the questions. Therefore, measures for the ELRS using Cronbach’s alpha revealed a 0.91 reliability, while 0.78 for the LAS, both excellent and acceptable, respectively, defined as excellent and acceptable, respectively (George and Mallery in Gliem and Gliem 2003).

After the reliability test, 200 learner-respondents were selected in each grade level, ranging from Grade 7 to 10, with 50 learners per grade level. Out of 200 respondents, only 174 responses were tabulated and analyzed due to some of them being absent on the day of the data collection, and others were not able to provide honest answers in their respective scales as observed by one of the facilitators of the data collection.

The data were encoded using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 25.0 (SPSS 25.0) and was analyzed using Analysis on Variance (ANOVA) to compare mean scores of the two instruments across four groups and the Pearson’s *r* correlation to determine the relationship of rapport and learner autonomy.

Results

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, the ranges of mean scores were determined through the difference of the lowest and highest possible scores of both questionnaires, then divided among the 5-point Likert scales.

In Table 3, the mean in both variables can easily be identified as increasing as the grade level increases. Among groups in the context of rapport, the Grade 7 learners were able to develop ‘high rapport’ with their teacher, while the other three groups developed ‘very high rapport’; while learner autonomy in all groups are labeled as ‘high autonomy.’ Analyzing the standard deviation of all the means under both variables, it is noticeable that there are

Table 1 Rapport Mean Score Descriptions

Score range	Verbal interpretation
34.00–61.20	Very low rapport
61.21–88.40	Low rapport
88.41–115.60	Moderate rapport
115.61–142.80	High rapport
142.81–170.00	Very high rapport

Table 2 Learner Autonomy Mean Score Descriptions

Score range	Verbal interpretation
11.00–19.80	Very low autonomy
19.81–28.60	Low autonomy
28.61–37.40	Moderate autonomy
37.41–46.20	High autonomy
46.21–55.00	Very high autonomy

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis on Variance (ANOVA)

Group	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error
Rapport				
Grade 7	48	135.77	17.42	2.51
Grade 8	47	146.64	9.97	1.54
Grade 9	38	149.61	12.13	1.97
Grade 10	41	153.56	9.92	1.55
Total	174	145.92	14.45	1.10
Learner Autonomy				
Grade 7	48	40.96	6.34	0.92
Grade 8	47	43.13	5.95	0.87
Grade 9	38	44.24	4.72	0.77
Grade 10	41	46.12	6.18	0.97
Total	174	43.48	6.12	0.46

Table 4 Overall Mean Scores

	N	Mean	SD	Verbal interpretation
Rapport	174	145.92	14.45	Very high rapport
Learner Autonomy	174	43.48	6.12	High autonomy

low standard deviations. Relying on this basis, most of the responses of the participants in their respective levels are more likely to have fallen under the verbal interpretation of the mean of their group or grade level.

According to Table 4, rapport of learners is interpreted as 'very high,' while learner autonomy likewise is interpreted as 'high.' The responses of 174 learners, based on the standard deviation of the mean scores, are most likely to fall under the same verbal interpretations mentioned prior.

The development of rapport through various immediacy actions like autonomy-supportive behaviors of teachers imposed on learners allows learners to develop intrinsic motivation, to become involved in the learning process, and to foster autonomy themselves (Benson 2013; Deci in Egel 2009; LeFebvre and Allen 2014; Ng et al. 2004; Nguyen 2007; Tholin n.d.; Wilson and Ryan 2012). Seeing

Table 5 One-way ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rapport					
<i>Between Groups</i>	7878.367	3	2626.122	15.820	0.000**
<i>Within Groups</i>	28,220.507	170	166.003		
Total	36,098.874	173			
Learner Autonomy					
<i>Between Groups</i>	618.999	3	206.333	5.975	0.001
<i>Within Groups</i>	5870.409	170	34.532		
Total	6489.408	173			

that rapport and autonomy are apparently beyond satisfactory levels, respectively, learners may be attributed to autonomy-supportive strategies of teachers and their beliefs towards learner autonomy or to the concepts that can be cited as related to it. As teachers, exhibiting autonomy-supportive behaviors lead to the learners feeling comfort and trust towards their teacher and the confidence and motivation to pursue learning under their management does not jeopardize the development of rapport; instead, the developed rapport is used as a foundation to build learner autonomy.

The mean scores of both rapport and learner autonomy shown in Table 5, as compared in the one-way ANOVA show that rapport has a statistically very significant difference between groups, while learner autonomy shows no significant difference in mean scores. The significance value of learner autonomy between groups suggests there might be other factors responsible for promoting the concept to the participants in each group aside from the rapport they develop with their expert teachers.

Referring to the values of Ratner (2009) in Tables 6 and 7 presents a moderate, positive, and very significant correlation between rapport and learner autonomy. There is a parallel direction between variables under the CVIF-DLP, that is when the level of rapport with teachers rise, so as the

Table 6 Correlation coefficient interpretation (Ratner 2009)

Value	Interpretation
0	No linear relationship
+1 (−1)	Perfect positive (negative) linear relationship
0.0–0.3 (0.0 to − 0.3)	Weak positive (negative) linear relationship
0.3–0.7 (− 0.3 to − 0.7)	Moderate positive (negative) linear relationship
0.7–1.0 (− 0.7 to − 1.0)	Strong positive (negative) linear relationship

Table 7 Rapport and Learner Autonomy Correlation

	Rapport	Learner Autonomy
Rapport		
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	1	0.408**
<i>N</i>	174	174
Learner Autonomy		
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	0.408**	1
<i>N</i>	174	174

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$

understanding, appreciation, maturity, and autonomy. Moreover, the value presented at moderate level is good enough since we still expect learners to develop and/or increase their rapport with teachers and autonomy as they mature. The result is contrary to the conclusions in the studies of Freeman et al. (2007), Ang in Mohamed et al. (2018), Pianta in Davis (2003), Modlin (2008), and Falsario et al. (2014) which indicate an inverse relationship between rapport and learner autonomy as learners mature.

Discussion

Prior studies claim an inverse relationship between rapport and learner autonomy as learners mature. In this study, it is evident that the relationship between variables follows a parallel direction. This means that the rapport does not fade as the learners grow older under the implementation of the CVIF-DLP in the locale; instead, the relationship continues to bloom.

Evidently, there is rapport among expert teachers and learners even with less interaction time during the learning process, as its significance value suggests; thus, the developed rapport between expert teacher and learner does not diminish. However, the significance value of learner autonomy indicates that there may be other mediating variables responsible for the learners' autonomy aside from the autonomy-supportive behaviors present among teachers like teacher immediacy and rapport. These mediating factors may be present at home from their parents and relatives, at school through their encounters with their teachers and classmates, within their circle of friends, within themselves, etc. For instance, the research locale implements a strong guidance program that allows any member of the community to develop a harmonious relationship among each other. This phenomenon is similar in Buskist and Saville (2001) where teachers extend warm and friendly attitudes to learners, therefore, reducing the gap between them.

Bouras and Keskes (2014), Nguyen (2007), and Wang (2013) argued that rapport is an irrevocable part of education. The case of the CVIF-DLP towards rapport is a unique one. We can easily conclude that due to the lesser times that the teachers and learners would interact during instruction, the rapport would most likely lessen; moreover, it can also be raised whether rapport is still alive or dead in this approach; however, the ways how teachers and learners develop their rapport in traditional settings is not different with the way how rapport is built in the CVIF-DLP. Numbers from the correlation value tell us that rapport is present considering the approach, even if there is only limited interaction between teachers and learners. This can be attributed to teacher immediacy factors that expert teachers themselves exhibit during their time with the learners. Another possible attribution to this is the locale's influence towards the teachers and learners. It is recommended that these contributors be maintained to spark motivation and interest among learners and reduce the gap between teachers and learners (LeFebvre and Allen 2014; Nguyen 2007). Maintaining these would likely entice learners to become autonomous.

The CVIF-DLP, as an effective pedagogical approach in establishing learner-centeredness, does not only instill the development of learner autonomy, but also allow the continuous increase of rapport between teachers and learners which is a vital component of a conducive classroom suitable for learning; however, for both variables to function in parallel movement, a strong guidance intervention program or the development of a harmonious, supportive, and positive environment for all members of a learning community is recommended to be present in an institution who wishes to seek the same or better results. Analyzing the rapport between expert teachers and learners in other subject areas may also be studied, as well as expert teachers' perceptions in using the approach as a tool in promoting learner autonomy and/or rapport, since there might be other mediating factors present in varied subject areas. Likewise, the addition of qualitative data to test the legitimacy of the study may be done in future studies, since there is a lack of existing studies regarding the variables used in this study.

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