UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.21 (1);
January-June, 2026 https://unijerps.org
2023 Impact Factor: **6.834;** 2022 ***Impact Factor***: 5.156; ***2021 Impact Factor: 5.641;***
2020 Impact Factor: 5.355. *Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363*

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION STYLES ON ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONITSHA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the Influence of Principals' Communication Styles on Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State. Four (4) research questions were answered and two (2) null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised all the 832 secondary school teachers in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State. The sample for the study was 90 teachers selected from eighteen (18) secondary schools through randomly and proportionate random sampling. A structured instrument of twenty (20) items titled "Principals' Communication Styles and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (PCSAEQ) was used to collect data for the study. Both face and content validity were established by experts in the Departments of Educational Management and Policy and Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest method. The two sets of responses were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and a reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained; which ascertain the inter-item consistency. Mean scores and percentages were used to answer research questions; while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results revealed that there is no significant difference in the communication styles of principals and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in the area; however, the communication styles of principals are good enough to facilitate effective administration in the schools. The findings revealed also, that there is no significant difference on the nature of communication adopted by principals in the schools; which implies that the nature of communication adopted by principals is good and has positive effect on administrative effectiveness of the schools. The study recommended among others, that principals in public secondary schools must be sensitized on appropriate communication styles that are supportive to administrative effectiveness. In addition, different training programmes on communication must be organized for secondary school principals and teachers to keep them informed on modern communication methods suitable for administrators, for effective administration of schools.

Keywords: Principal, Communication, Communication Style, Administration, Effectiveness.

Introduction

Education has been universally acknowledged as a potent and dynamic instrument for national development and social transformation. It is an important instrument for the development of the individual and the society as it is a weapon against poverty, illiteracy, and disease. In Nigeria, the importance of education in the development of the individual and the nation is highly recognized by the Federal government. Education according to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2011) is a fundamental human right and the key factor to promoting sustainable development. Education as seen by Erese (1983) is "a birth right and not a privilege of every citizen of any government". The Nigerian National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) defines education as the process that helps to develop the whole being, physically, mentally, morally, politically, socially and technologically to enable individuals function in any environment in which they may find themselves. As a process, education involves the development of the individual at the various levels of educational institution. The policy added that access to education and training is not only a basic human right but also a key factor for social progress and for reducing the gap between socio-economic groups and sexes. The policy also made provision for equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens at the different structure of education in the country– primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The essence of secondary education especially in a fast-changing society such as Nigeria in general and Anambra State in particular cannot be over emphasized. Secondary education is very essential, for effective and meaningful development of any society. Njoku (2006) maintained that secondary education consolidates and gives meaning to what the child learns at the primary school level which prepares him for further adventure into the realms of knowledge. Besides, it provides the deciding factor, and acts as a clearing house to other educational institution. Fundamentally, Asiegbu (2001) stated that as secondary education has the responsibility of teaching the values, norms and other positive virtues both by direct instruction in the classroom and by guidance of students in the practice of citizenship in daily and community living, this brings into focus the responsibilities of the secondary school principal. Thus, the influence of principals' communication styles on administrative effectiveness is crucial and exerts some pressing and heavy demands on them.

The importance of the teachers and teacher education has been clearly stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2004) when the Federal Government of Nigeria stated that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. Also, on the important of teachers, Maduewesi (2005) stated that teachers are largely responsible for the translation and implementation of education policies, curriculum or course offering, instruction materials packages and assessment of learning outcomes at all level of learning. Afe (2003) asserted that the focus of any educational programme or measure should be on the teacher who is crucial in translating policy into practice. Secondary school education like any other level of the education system requires adequate and appropriate resources to function effectively. These resources include financial, time, human and physical resources. The administrator of any institution has the responsibility for bringing together its various resources and allocating them effectively to accomplish goals. At the secondary level, the principal is an educational leader that harnesses all these resources for the realization of educational objectives (Nwankwo, 2012). This is buttressed by Tahir

and Obasi (2012) who observed that central task of any principal is the arrangement of all available human and material resources and programmes available for education and carefully using them systematically for the achievement of educational objectives. Thus, the secondary school administrator is concerned with policy making, organizing and implementation of school programmes. In addition, the central role of the principal in a typically organized secondary school include the following: setting objectives; formulating plans; identifying activities to be performed; organizing the activities into departments; defining task to be executed and give targets; assigning staff different functions; providing incentives; supervising; retrieving; and institutionalizing. However, since the functions of school administrator is that of implementing curriculum and extra-curricular activities and school-community relations, all those involved in the management of secondary school perform the above functions. Principal's functions cannot be effectively implemented without effective communication styles. Communication is intended for converging information, instruction, advice, feelings, opinions, and facts correctly and accurately from one person to another person or group of people. Good communication helps to stimulate enthusiasm and raise the interest and motivation of those to whom they are directed such as staff, students, parents, stakeholders and so on.

In any organization, formal or informal, effective communication leads to effective management which aids achievement of organizational goals. Effective personnel management is a function of effective communication; as management involves working with and through others to achieve corporate goals. The realization of the goals of a secondary school as an educational organization hinges on effective communication among the various operating personnel. The basic function of education itself relies almost entirely on communication. A school manager cannot organize his staff, coordinate and control their activities as well as delegate responsibilities without effective communication (Ijaiya, 2000). Communication helps to build relationships and facilitates achievement of goals.

An effective administrator/principal needs excellent coordination strategy when working with colleagues. He needs to be able to communicate well, which will make his directives clear and morale high and be organized so that he can coordinate efforts smoothly. These skills are also important in addressing problems that may arise in order to ensure that necessary tasks are completed in an efficient manner. A key element of an effective school is an effective principal. Although school success is influenced by many people, but school principal remains one of the most important factor in the success. School restructuring and instructional leadership point to good communication style adopted by the principals.

Leadership function of a principal includes his ability to carry along his subordinate through effective communication. The extent to which principal is able to do this, determines the climate in the school. However, principals serve as liaisons between their schools and school districts, families and community members. Because of this, effective communication styles are imperative in order to accurately convey information, correctly understand responses and move forward with school goals and learning targets. The school administrator interacts with different people during the day, including other administrators, teachers, parents, and students etc. The ability of an administrator to contribute

to the improvement of the school system depends on his communication skills. For example, communication is essential for: understanding roles and assignments; planning and carrying out learning activities; coordinating approaches with students; providing information to teachers and other staff; and promoting awareness of others' interest and needs. Being aware of the necessary skills that will encourage open communication is important when working with others. Consequently, issues such as communication with staff, parents and community members and using acceptable language and listening strategies which will relay information that lead towards more positive interaction with others will be examined. Principal should openly communicate with staff; encouraging them to try to achieve the goals set by the school. According to the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA, 2014), the staff is the most effective representatives of the community. It is clear they have clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is also important that staff are the first to be aware of any breaking news. As a supervisor in a work setting, the principal must be able to communicate with staff about workplace concerns. Principals communicate with staff through email, staff meetings, memo, impromptu meetings in the hall or teachers' lounge and so on.

Principals play a central role in school communication and it directly influences school administration, which affects the communication process (Marks and Printy, 2003). One-way principals affect school administration is through their communication with their subordinates. This communication can be both formal and informal (Norris, 2004). Communicating with subordinates gives the staff the knowledge necessary to become aware of and committed to their job, (Brown, 2003). Effective communication allows the principals to build a sense of teamwork so that administration of the school can be successful (Nitechell and Tucker, 1992). Once there is no communication from principal to his subordinate, there will be no team spirit and this may lead to lack of job satisfaction which may result to poor performance from the staff, then will also affect the performances of students in learning process which will have negative effect in students' examination. It has been observed that as important as communication is in school administration, it appears to be defective in most public schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State; in such a way that poor performance of students in examinations could be traced to strained relationship between the principals and teachers in the schools. Where communication gap between the principals and the teachers is too wide that: information are not really communicated to teachers in due time, there is favouritism in the side of the principals in whom to communicate with or not, tribalism in communication within the school between the principal and his subordinate, all these will create a lot of lapses in the administration work as it will affect the performance of students in examinations. Also, poor communication style may not engender anticipatory spirit of leaders. Ideally, a principal should be able to create consensus among staff on rules and their enforcement. The principal must have knowledge and understanding of effective communication style. Creating a collaborative environment and open communication is a single most important factor in school administration. Experience has revealed that this scenario appears to be lacking in some schools where principals appear to have favourites that they share information with, to the negligence of their perceived enemies. It is

observed that principal who does not organize and use his staff will truly be lonely and unsuccessful. These staff have knowledge in specific areas that must be tapped and harmonized through effective communication. However, existence of factions or different camps prevalent in some secondary school tends to pollute the school climate and disrupt effective communication.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is the perceived defective communication style among secondary school principals in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. This has implication on the school climate with its attendant implication on the administrative effectiveness of the school. Where communication is effective, the principal carries his teachers along and they all work together towards the realization of the goals and objectives of education. Where communication is defective, it gives room for rumour mongering with serious implication on school administration. Since communication to a large extent osculates the school climate, the ability of principal to succeed depends largely on his mode of communication. Where communication leads to active participation of staff, the school climate is said to be open. This is because there is collaborative effort. It is in the light of the forgoing that this study was conducted.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out whether there is any relationship between principal communication styles and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State. In specific term, this study will achieve the following objectives:

1. Ascertain the nature of communication in secondary schools.
2. Verify if there are differences in communication style based on school location.
3. Find out the influence of principals 'communication styles and administrative effectiveness in secondary schools
4. Determine the constraints facing effective communication in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. Is there any difference in method of communication among the principals in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?
2. What is the nature of communication adopted by principals in public secondary school in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?
3. What is the influence of principals' communication styles on administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?
4. What are the constraints to effective communication in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the nature of communication among principals in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

2. There is no significant difference between principals' communication styles and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 832 secondary school teachers in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State. The sample for the study was 90 teachers selected from eighteen (18) secondary schools. The sample was drawn through randomly and proportionate random sampling techniques. In doing this, 3 communities were randomly selected from the 6 communicates in the Local Government. This was followed by proportionate selection of two secondary schools per community, making six (6) secondary schools; 90 teachers were thereafter selected using simple sampling technique at the rate of 15 teachers per school. A self-designed instrument of 20 items titled "Principals' Communication Styles and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (PCSAEQ) was used to collect data for the study. Both face and content validity were established by experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. A four-point adopted scale measurement was used thus: strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest method. This was done by administering the instrument twice with an interval of two weeks to 15 teachers in two schools which were not part of the sample used for the study. The two sets of responses were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and a reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained, which ascertain the inter-item consistency. Finally, the instrument was administered through the help of two trained research assistants, while the researchers coordinated the administration and collation of completed questionnaires. Data was analyzed using mean score and simple percentage for answering the four research questions; while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at $P<0.05$ level of significance.

Results

The results of data analysis were presented in order of research questions and hypotheses while discussions of findings were carried out to examine Principals' Communication Styles on Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Research Question 1: Is there any difference in communication styles among principals in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?

Table 1: Responses on communication styles of principals across secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State

Items	Names of Schools					
	Government Technical College	**Onitsha High School**	**Dennis Memorial Grammar School**	**St. Charles Secondary School**	**Ado Girls' Secondary School**	**Queen of Rosary College**
Proper channel of communication	11	12	13	11	10	12

Use of official memo	12	13	12	11	13	11
Vital information through newsletter	10	9	10	11	10	9
Regular staff meeting	6	5	4	6	5	4
Vital information through morning assembly	10	11	10	12	11	10
Mean (%)	**9.8(65.3)**	**10.0(66.7)**	**9.8(65.3)**	**10.2(68.0)**	**9.8(65.3)**	**9.2(61.3)**

Source: Field Work (2020)

Table 1 above shows the mean (average) and percentage of responses is in favour of research question above. Government Technical College, Dennis Memorial Grammar School and Ado Girls' Secondary School with an average of 9.8 ie 65.3% favoured that the communication styles of principals are good enough to facilitate effective administration. Also, Onitsha High School, St. Charles Secondary School and Queen of Rosary College have average of 10.0, 10.2 and 9.2 respectively; which as well favoured the research question 1 above. From the table, we can conclude that there is little or no difference in communication styles across the six secondary schools because there is little or no variation in the averages (means) and percentages in table 1 above.

Research Question 2: What is the nature of communication adopted by principals in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?

Table 2: Responses on the nature of communication adopted by principals in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State

Items	**Names of Schools**					
	Government Technical College	**Onitsha High School**	**Dennis Memorial Grammar School**	**St. Charles Secondary School**	**Ado Girls' Secondary School**	**Queen of Rosary College**
Teachers communicate freely with principal	11	13	12	11	13	12
Principal welcome constructive criticisms	8	9	8	7	9	7
Principal listens to issues about staff	8	8	9	10	8	7
Principal makes consultations before making decision	9	10	9	8	8	7
Principal shares information freely	7	6	7	8	6	7
Mean (%)	**8.6(57.3)**	**9.2(61.3)**	**9.0(60.0)**	**8.8(58.7)**	**8.8(58.7)**	**8.0(53.3)**

Source: Field Work (2020)

Table 2, shows the responses of teachers across the six secondary schools on the nature of communication among their principal. In St. Charles Secondary School and Ado Girls' Secondary School, 58.7% of teachers responded that the nature of communication is good while 57.3%, 61.3%, 60.0% and 53.3% of teachers from Government Technical College, Onitsha High School, Dennis Memorial Grammar School and Queen of Rosary College respectively also responded that the nature of communication adopted by their principal is

good. Thus, we can conclude that since the percentages are above 50%, then the nature of communication adopted by principals in these schools is good.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of principals' communication styles on administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?

Table 3: Responses on the influence of principals' communication styles and administrative effectiveness across secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State

Items	**Names of Schools**					
	Government Technical College	**Onitsha High School**	**Dennis Memorial Grammar School**	**St. Charles Secondary School**	**Ado Girls' Secondary School**	**Queen of Rosary College**
Principal communicates to teachers on acceptable teaching method	13	12	11	14	13	12
Goals and objectives of the school are communicated to teachers	12	13	11	12	13	14
Information on areas of improvement are available to teachers	8	9	5	9	6	9
Vital information are communicated to teachers	6	5	4	6	5	4
	14	13	12	14	14	13
Mean (%)	**10.6(70.7)**	**10.0(66.7)**	**9.2(61.7)**	**10.4(69.3)**	**10.2(68.0)**	**10.8(72.0)**

Source: Field Work (2020)

From the table 3 above, 70.7%, 66.7%, 61.3%, 69.3%, 68.0% and 72.0% of teachers in Government Technical College, Onitsha High School, Dennis Memorial Grammar School, St. Charles Secondary School and Ado Girls' Secondary School and Queen of Rosary College respectively responded that their principals' communication styles have a positive influence on effective administration. These percentages are above 50%; which implies that principals' communication styles bring effective administration in secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Research Question 4: Are there constraints to communication in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State?

Table 4: Responses on constraints to communication in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State

Items	Names of Schools					
	Government Technical College	**Onitsha High School**	**Dennis Memorial Grammar School**	**St. Charles Secondary School**	**Ado Girls' Secondary School**	**Queen of Rosary College**
Lengthy line of communication	7	5	6	7	8	5
Lack of communication skills	6	4	7	8	3	5
Methods of communication hinder feedback	8	7	4	5	4	6
Difficulty of principals' instructions	6	8	7	6	5	7
Oral communication methods used by principals brings about forgetfulness	3	4	5	4	3	5
Mean (%)	**6.0(40.0)**	**5.6(37.3)**	**5.8(35.7)**	**6.0(40.0)**	**4.6(30.7)**	**5.6(37.8)**

Source: Field Work (2020)

From the table 4 above, percentages are below 50% which implies that only few teachers supported the fact that there are constraints to communication in their schools. Therefore, we can conclude that there are little or no constraints to communication in these schools.

Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between principals' communication styles and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Table 5: Difference between principals' communication styles and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State

	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean of Square**	**F**
Between Group	0.827	2	0.827	4.278
Within Group	0.773	3	0.193	
Total	**1.600**	**5**		

***Significance P < 0.05**

The result of ANOVA in table 5 above, F cal = 4.278 and F 2, 3 = 9.55 at 5% level of significance. However, H_0 is accepted because F 2, 3 = 9.55 at x = 0.05 from the F –distribution table is greater than F cal = 4.278. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between principals' communication styles and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the nature of communication among principals in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Table 6: Difference in the nature of communication among principals in secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Square	F
Between Group	1.500	2	0.750	0.563
Within Group	4.000	3	1.333	
Total	**5.500**	**5**		

***Significance P < 0.05**

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) carried out in table 6 above shows that F cal = 0.563 and F 2, 3 = 9.55 at x = 0.05. Then, H_0 is accepted because F 2, 3 = 9.55 is greater than F cal = 0.563 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the nature of communication among principals in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

On the research hypothesis one, the result revealed that there is no significant difference in the communication styles of principals and administrative effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State. This means that the communication styles of principals are good enough to facilitate effective administration in the schools. This implies that for effectiveness of any organization, school inclusive, communication is very important. A good principal must ensure free flow of information among the personnel in the school (teachers, non-teaching staff and students). Communication remains the life blood of a school. Information needs to be flowing from the school principals to staff and students; heads of departments must be briefed before disseminating the information to other members of staff and students. Principals should therefore make judicious use of good communication styles to encourage good communication between the school and the community housing the school; establish close relationship between parents by holding Parent-Teachers Association Meetings. In this view, Morgan (2000), stated that possibly the most vital and fundamental element in the management process is based on working with people; which is done through some form of communication. He further stressed that the success of principal on managerial task depends to a large extent on the effective use of communication styles.

On the nature of communication adopted by principals in the schools, the result shows that there is no significant difference on the nature of communication adopted by principals in these schools; that is to say that the nature of communication adopted by principals in these schools is good and have positive effect on administrative effectiveness of the schools. This shows that the nature of communication adopted by principals of schools in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State play important role in effective administration of schools in the areas. Effective and good communication is required by the principals, perhaps as a result of the fact that human beings need to be communicated properly. This finding is in agreement with the views of Ogunsaju and Ajulabi (2001), who opined that communication brings about excellence and quality and it helps to provide concrete and constructive advice and encourage teachers in order to improve teaching and learning. It could be deduced that principals adopt good communication styles in various public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State; which enhance administrative effectiveness in the school.

Finally, the findings also revealed that there was little or no constraints to communication observed in the secondary schools studied. That is to say those constraints do not in a large extent hinder communication and administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State.

Conclusion

Our study examined the influence of principals' communication styles on administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Onitsha North Local Government Area in Anambra State. The study noted that there was no significant difference between principals' communication styles and administrative effectiveness in the schools. This implies that effective method of communication adopted by principals will enhance and promote effectiveness in their administration. This study also established that there was no significant difference in the nature of communication among principals in the schools. This also implies that the nature of communication adopted by the principals of these schools is good and adequate.

Moreover, good communication will improve the administrative effectiveness of principals and when principals maintain cordial communication with the teachers and the students, it will enhance their administrative effectiveness in schools. On another hand, the study revealed also, that there are little or no constraints to effective communication in these schools. This is to say that the principals are not hindered by any major challenge(s) for free flow of information in the schools. It is therefore our conclusion that the principals and Anambra State Government should adopt the study recommendations to enhance the principals' communication styles for administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in the area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secondary School principals should be familiar with different communication styles in order to enhance administrative effectiveness in their schools.
2. The Ministry of Education should organize workshops and seminars at intervals for principals and teachers in secondary schools to keep them abreast with different communication style and the relevance of communication for administrative effectiveness in the schools.
3. The principals must endeavour to keep a high level of professional spirit and good moral standard of the schools. Principal of secondary schools should learn how to adapt their communication style to situations prevalent in the school to sustain good working environment for teachers and students in order to achieve the school objectives.
4. Principals should create good communication channel in their schools as well as allowing teachers to be involved in decision making in the schools.
5. Principals should always give listening ears to teachers especially in matters concerning their welfare because they are components of motivational measure in schools.

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