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PRINCIPALS' OPEN COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES AS CORRELATES OF SCHOOL CLIMATE IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT
This study examined Principals' communication Techniques as correlates of School climate in secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The correlational research design was adopted. The population consisted of all the 261 principals and 5,280 teachers of public secondary schools with a total sample of 1,317 (261 principals and 1056 teachers) of public secondary schools, from the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample was drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. A 22 item researcher developed instrument was used for data collection which was validated by three experts. The research questions were analyzed using Pearson's product moment co-efficient while linear regression was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that principals' inclusive communication technique to high extent correlate with school climate in public secondary schools in Anambra State with a significant correlation. It recommended that principals of secondary school need addition training in effective communication in order to be equipped with specialized communication techniques for better school administration among others. Suggestions for further studies were also proffered.

Keywords: Principals; Communication Techniques; Correlation; School Climate.

Introduction

The administration of secondary schools is becoming more and more difficult. This is as a result of both population explosion resulting from the introduction of Universal Basic Education that has provided access to secondary education. Given the increased number of students in the school, it has become increasing difficult for principals to ensure effective administration. In a situation of this nature, principals need better communication skills that will provide enabling school climate that will enhance teaching and learning in secondary schools.

Communication is essential for the exchange of information among people. The word communication has been derived from the Latin word "Communis" meaning to share. Okorji (2016) defined communication as a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another. It involves a sender transmitting an idea, information, or feeling to a receiver.

Communication is the chief means by which human beings engage in social interaction with one another. It is said to be effective when the information is correctly and completely transferred between the sender and the receiver. Effective communication occurs only if the receivers understand the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit (Obi, Canary, in Okoye (2016). The communication process is effective once the receiver has understood the message from the sender.

To say that communication is needed virtually in every aspect of human endeavour is to state the obvious. In the school system, the act of directing staff and students towards accomplishing stated goals is dependent on the techniques of communication adopted by both the principal and the teachers. The word technique is interchangeably used in this study as method, approach, procedure, process, skills, in communication. Karl (2018) defined technique as a way, method, skill ability of doing something or carrying out a particular task.

In communication process, the word technique is commonly used to describe communication and the many ways it could be delivered, otherwise known as communication techniques. Richard (2017) defined communication technique as the ability to convey information to one another effectively and efficiently. These include verbal communication which is most frequently used to get a message across in a school environment. This includes meeting, presentations, workshop, telephone, video conferencing. Non-verbal communication includes; facial expression, body language and writing.

There are many techniques which communication can be carried out. Ligh in Ezenwekwe (2013) categorized communication techniques in an organization into five. They are open communication, inclusive communication, two-way communication, result driven communication and multichannel communication techniques. However, this paper focuses on inclusive and two-way communication techniques. According to the scholar, inclusive communication technique is one of the techniques used in communication. It is one in which explicit steps are taken to ensure that all employees feel that they are involved in the decisions that affect their day to day activities (Bamlund, 2013). This entails that organization with inclusive communication technique is open to people and allow contribution from within and outside the

organization. In this era of globalization and internet services, school principals tap information locally, nationally and globally to improve on their administration. All staff and students have confidence in themselves and improve on their professional performances as they are seen as part of the school climate. This is likely to ensure two-way communication mechanism.

In two-way communication technique, communication is between members of the organization (Bahuska, MarlasaVolkman in Ezenwekwe (2013). In secondary school, when the principal makes use of two ways communication technique, there is every tendency to have a peaceful interpersonal relationship between the principal and the teachers. This type of communication technique is also used to bridge every communication gap between the principal and the teachers in school environment (Karin, 2017).

With particular reference to Nigeria secondary schools, principals ought to employ this pattern to strategically plan for achievement such as a secured learning environments for the strategic plan for achievement of their targeted goals. Teachers and principal through these communication techniques will harmoniously work together to achieve the aims and objectives of the school and improve school climate.

This study, therefore, explored the extent to which principals make best use of the different communication techniques above to achieve positive school climate. Principals communicate with teachers, parents, and teachers communicate with students, students communicate with each other and their parents. They interact and relate with one another in a way that will ensure the successful realization of goals of secondary education. Principals do this using various communication techniques. Principals' interactions and attitudes are part of the school climate.

School climate where the principals perform their duties determine success or failure of the school in terms of educational goals' attainment. School climate represents all the constituent aspects of the school: the physical, social, academic and affective aspects of the school. It is the set of dimensional characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influence the behaviours of each members of the school community (Okorji, Igbokwe & Ezeugbor, 2016).

School climate reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the precondition necessary for teaching and learning to take place. Adejumobi and Ojikutu (2013) viewed school climate as the perception of the situation in which school personnel carry out their day to day activities. Studies have shown that two characteristics are important in School climate. These are School characteristics and School processes. School characteristics entails features of available facilities, school size, policies of the school, value system, norms, integrity and recognition while school processes involve social organization of a school which include

the principal leadership style, communication pattern, motivation, teachers' morale and teachers' participation in decision making.

The climate of a school is said to affect efforts geared towards the goal attainment of a school negatively or positively. The climate of a school is said to be open or closed. Open school climate reflects a school climate where the key players in a school – the principal and teachers co-operate and support one another. The principal is more supportive and less directive, while the teachers are more engaged, tolerant, helpful, respectful, caring, committed and less frustrated (Collard, in Okorji 2016). Closed school climate, on the other hand is where the principal is rigid, inconsiderate, unsupportive, uncommitted and controlling, while the teachers are intolerant, disrespectful, frustrated, divided and inefficient (Collard, in Okorji et al 2016). Adeogun and Olisaemeka (2013) classified school climate in two forms, namely positive and negative. A positive school climate is seen as accessible, co-operative, respectful, pleasant, approachable, supportive and highly motivational among principal, teachers and students.

A positive school climate improves student's motivation and achievement. It has a positive impact on the mental and behavioural health of students including contributing to a decrease in risky behaviour and depressive symptoms and an increase in feeling of belonging.

A negative school climate on the other hand is tied to multiple negative outcomes for students and has been shown to manifest harmful behaviour and diminishes achievement. In a school where the head is domineering, authoritative and totally in charge of all activities in the school, such situation is usually characterized by no cordial interaction between the participants of the school such as teachers, students, non-teaching staff including the principal. Open and closed climate are the most prominent types of school climate.

Closed climate is said to be sick and socially tense. The open climate is healthy while closed climate is unhealthy. A healthy (positive) school climate consists of combined interaction between members of the school community unlike the closed climate. The open climate is both friendly and favorable.

One major dimension of school climate that might relate to principals' communication techniques is leadership. Some principals employ different leadership styles in various schools such as autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire. Some of these styles are more rigid than others, some are more open, some are more participatory and others are not. Each leadership style creates its own climate that appears to relate to school effectiveness. Barker and Williams in Okorji, Igbokwe and Ezeugbo (2016) argued that the style of leadership does dictate the type of climate prevalent in the school system where principals and teachers perform their daily functions.

The teacher's role in teaching and learning is very indispensable. Their qualities bring about quality teaching and learning.

Interaction with some teachers in Anambra state revealed that teachers are not trusted by their principals in some schools and are sometimes not involved in decisions concerning them. The fact is that when teachers are not carried along in decision making due to lack of trust, the implementation of such decision becomes difficult since the teachers are the primary enforcement agents of most decisions in the school. Tshannen-Moran and Hoy in Orkorji et al (2016) agreed that school climate can be one that cultivates trust or makes trust difficult. Trust is necessary for openness and for positive school climate; it seems that trusted teachers impact more on students and are more disposed to achieve educational objectives.

It has been argued that principals are incapable of creating conducive school climate that enhances teaching and learning. The protagonists of this argument believe that teachers cannot put in their best unless the school climate is conducive. This group has argued that the existence of poor school climate is as a result of principals' poor communication techniques. Principals' communication technique is said to be the life- wire of good school climate. The nature of school climate can make or mar the success of students since favourable school climate enhances teachers' productivity which in turn enhances students' performance. This is part of the motivation of the researcher to find out the extent to which principals' communication techniques correlate with the school climate in secondary school in Anambra state.

Statement of the Problem

School administration is becoming more and more complex. This complexity in school administration is orchestrated by population explosion in student's enrollment, laxity on the part of teachers, preponderance of inexperienced teachers, cultism, inadequate teaching and learning facilities and poor funding due to dwindling economy to mention but a few. This situation has constituted a veritable threat to principals of secondary schools in Anambra state. The efforts of school principals in grappling with these problems have not yielded the desired results as teachers' absenteeism, indiscipline among students, poor external examination results, low productivity among teachers and poor teaching and learning environment persist. Consequently, principals have come under severe criticisms. Some education stakeholders have argued that principals have failed to create conducive school climate that will enhance teachers' productivity which will enhance students' academic performance, motivate teachers and instill discipline in students. They have argued that principals lack the necessary communication techniques that provide enabling school climate favourable for teaching and learning. According to this group, communication techniques such as open, inclusive, two-way, multichannel and result- driven communication techniques that create conducive school climate for teaching and learning are not applied by secondary school principals in Anambra state. This has, therefore, affected their efficiency and effectiveness in school administration. This researcher is, therefore, worried over this situation especially on how principals'

communication techniques can enhance school climate. The problem of this study is, therefore, put in a question form "what is the extent of correlation of principals' communication techniques with school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state?"

Research questions

1. Does principal's inclusive communication technique correlate with the school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state?
2. Does principals' two-way communication technique correlate with the school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the response of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals' inclusive communication technique correlates with the school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state.

2. There is no significant difference between the response of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals' two-ways communication technique correlate with school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Research Method

This study adopted a correlational research design and was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria. Anambra State is one of the commercial states in Nigeria with 21 Local Government Areas. The population of the study comprised 5,541 (with 261 principals and 5,280 teachers) in 261 public secondary schools in the six Education Zones in Anambra State (Statistical units of Post Primary School Service Commission, Awka, 2019). The choice of principals and teachers as respondents was because principals are the heads of secondary schools and they use communication techniques in the day-to-day running of schools, and teachers are generally their recipients of information.

The population for principals (261) was not sampled because it was manageable, while that of the teachers was 1,056 which represented 20% of teachers' population totaling 1,317 respondents. The use of this percentage was informed by Nworgu (2015), that 10% - 80% of a given population is adequate for research work. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was done according to zones to draw 20% of the total number of teachers in each zone

Data was collected using a 22-item researcher developed questionnaire titled 'Principals' Communication Techniques and School Climate Questionnaire (PCTSCQ).The questionnaire was a rating scale with two parts. Part I consisted of the introductory section and the background information of the respondents. Part II consisted of 21 items built in two clusters. Cluster A examined the extent to which principals' inclusive communication technique correlates with the school climate in secondary school, while cluster B examined the extent to which principals' two-way communication techniques correlate with the school climate in secondary with a four response options which

included: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). To those options, numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned respectively for positive items while it was reversed for negative items.

The instrument was validated by three experts and Cronbach Alpha reliability formula was used to establish the reliability indices of the clusters of the instrument. It yielded 0.79 and 0.81 respectively, while the overall reliability index was 0.80.Direct delivery and retrieval method was used for data collection. Out of the 1,317 copies of the questionnaire administered 1,195 copies (252 from the principals and 943 from the teachers) were retrieved (90.74% retrieval rate). Pearson's Product Moment Co-efficient was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant using linear regression. In answering the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship were interpreted using High Extent (HE) for positive correlation statements and Low Extent (LE) for negative correlation statements respectively.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent does principals' inclusive communication technique correlate with the school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between Principals' Inclusive Communication Technique and School Climate in Secondary Schools

			Inclusive Communication	School Climate	Dec.
Inclusive Communication	Correlation Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1195	1.00	.816	High Extent
	N				
	Correlation Coefficient		.816	1.00	
School Climate	Sig. (2-tailed)	1195			
	N				

In Table 1, showed the Coefficient value of r. (1195) = .816. This implied that the extent of the correlation between principals' inclusive communication technique and school climate in secondary schools in Anambra State was high.

Research Question 2: To what extent does principals' two-way communication techniques correlate with the school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between Principals' Two-way Communication Technique and School Climate in Secondary Schools

			Two-way Communication	School Climate	Dec.
Two-way Communication	Correlation Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1195	1.00	.817	High Extent
	N				
School Climate	Correlation Coefficient		.817	1.00	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1195			
	N				

In Table 3 above, the coefficient, value of r. was .817. it signified that the extent of correlation between principals' two-way communication technique and school climate in secondary schools in Anambra State was high.

Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between the opinions of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals' inclusive communication technique correlates with the school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the Correlate between Principals' Inclusive communication and School Climate

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	256.47	1	256.47	9.31	0.00	S
Residual	6729.09	1195	11.92			
Total	6985.56	1195				

$R^2 = 0.05$

From Table 7 above, a significant regression equation was found F (1, 1195) = 9.31, p <0.05), with an R^2 of 0.05. As shown in Table 7, the calculated F value (9.31) was higher than the significant value (.000). The null hypothesis was not accepted. It concluded

that the relationship between principals' inclusive communication technique and school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state was statistically significant.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between the opinions of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals' two-way communication technique correlates with the school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of the Correlate between Principals' Two-way Communication and School Climate.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	278.66	1	278.66	10.08	0.00	S
Residual	6819.39	1195	12.57			
Total	7098.05	1195				

$R^2 = 0.05$

From Table 4 above, a significant regression equation was found F (1, 1195) = 10.08, p <0.05), with an R^2 of 0.05. As shown in Table 4, the calculated F value (10.08) was higher than the significant value (.000). The null hypothesis was not accepted. It concluded that the relationship between principals' two-way communication technique and school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state was statistically significant**.**

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that there was a high and positive correlation between principals' inclusive communication technique and school climate in secondary schools in Anambra State with a significant correlation. The respondents stated that principals' inclusive communication technique correlated with school climate in terms of helping the principals to make information accessible to teachers, making teachers to focus on improvement of instructional strategies among others. This is in agreement with Guthridge (2018) who stated that principals need to use inclusive communication technique to balance teachers' sense of belonging and their diversity without threatening them. In addition, Ashley (2019) observed that the awareness in inclusive communication helps the principal to understand the diversity in the fullest sense, including not only race and ethnicity, but also gender, sexual orientation, age, lifestyle and abilities are explored and valued.

Further, the findings of the study revealed that there was a high and positive correlation between principals' two-way communication

technique and school climate in secondary schools in Anambra State with significant correlation. This is in tantrum with Kareen (2017), who observed that in secondary schools, when the principal makes use of two-way communication technique, there is every tendency to have a peaceful interpersonal relationship between the principals and the teachers. Two-way communication technique has to be maintained by the principals in secondary schools for a better school climate.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the existence of significant relationship between principals' inclusive communication and two-way communication with school climate is an indication that effective communication techniques are important ingredients in the administration of secondary schools in Anambra State. Effective communication techniques enhance good administration which by extension enhances teachers' productivity. Teachers' productivity, in the same vein, enhances positive education delivery which also enhances positive academic outcomes in both internal and external examinations. Therefore, effective communication techniques of the principals enhance school climate in secondary school in Anambra state.

Educational Implications

The implications of the study focused on the consequences of the findings of this research study as it relates to principals' communication techniques as correlates of school climate in secondary schools in Anambra state.

1. The communication techniques used by principals to communicate in schools enhance teachers' productivity since teachers are always abreast of what they are expected to do, what to do and how to do it. As a result, conducive school climate is enhanced in the secondary school system.
2. The absence of these variables in the schools result to closed school climate which keeps the teachers in the dark, and leads to autocratic administration, frustration on the part of teachers and low teachers' productivity. All these lead to poor quality education delivery and poor students' learning outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the various implications which have been highlighted, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals of secondary schools need additional training in effective communication. This will make them to be abreast with current developments in the field of education especially in the face of changing technology-driven society where educational concepts and principles are always changing. It will also equip them with specialized communication techniques for a better school administration.
2. All secondary school principals in Anambra State should be encouraged to use a wide range of media of communication in secondary schools

to reach both the teachers, stakeholders, community and students.

3. The secondary school principals should delegate functions to vice principals and teachers to maintain effective inclusive communication technique.

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