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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON TEACHER PRODUCTIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the impact of principals' communication skills on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised 8463 teachers from all the 297 secondary schools in Enugu State. The researcher used a sample size of 512 respondents, including 173 Male and 339 female teachers obtained using disproportionate stratified sampling technique. Two research questions were raised and answered in line with the two specific purposes that guided the study, using mean statistics and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance and appropriate degree of freedom using t-test. The instrument used for data collection was a structured 24-items questionnaire developed by the researcher after an extensive literature review titled "Principals' Communication Skills on Teachers Productivity Questionnaire (PCSTJPQ)". The instrument was validated by three research experts; two of the experts were from the Department of Educational Management while one was from the Measurement and Evaluation Unit of Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The overall reliability index of 0.72 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The result of the analysis showed among others that principal's oral communication skill can enhance teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State with Mean (x): 2.74 and standard deviation (SD): 1.02. The study recommended thereafter that oral communication skills should be considered a necessity for principals in secondary schools in Enugu State, and written communication skills should constitute a part of principals' entry qualifications, among others.

Keywords: Principals, Communication Skills, Teachers, Productivity.

Introduction

Secondary school in the context of this study refers to a school type established for enrollment of students for continual learning after primary level. Secondary school according to Udoh-Uwah (2015) is the intermediate level of education which is an inevitable bridge between the basic education level and tertiary level. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2013) highlighted the specific objectives of secondary education to include; providing all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education at a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background, offering diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles., providing trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades, developing and promoting Nigerian languages, arts and culture in the context of

world's cultural heritage, inspiring students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence, foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity, raising a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens, and providing technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. The afore-listed objectives of secondary schools are implemented through the guidance of the principals.

The principal can be seen as the leader of all secondary school affairs. Principal can be defined in this context as the operational coordinator of all activities owing to the success of secondary school. The school principal oversees to the smooth running of secondary school. *Neil (2015) defined* Principals as essentially, the day-to-day managers of elementary, middle and high schools. The author stressed that the principals lead faculty and staff and oversee daily operations of the schools. Egwu (2016) opined that the principal is a leader who must plan, coordinate and supervise the affairs of the school, so that they run smoothly. The work of principal is highly complex and much important in any education system. Ojobor (2014) added that in order to ensure effective administrative climate in secondary school, the principals as chief executives of their schools need to plan well by applying communicating policies, information and decisions to staff and students. Hence, the need for acquisition of effective communication skills becomes inevitable for the principal to succeed in secondary school administration.

Communication involves passing information from one person to another. Communication simply entails effective transmission of information with clarity on the subject matter. Sushanta (2021) perceived communication as the social action that involves the transfer and exchange of information, opinions, plans and ideas among individuals or groups to motivate action, influence behaviour and entice responses. Joduah (2014) defined communication as that which involves passing a message from a sender on the one hand and receiving on the other hand through a medium. Hence, for effective communication to take place, information need to be passed from the sender (speaker), through a medium and understood optimally at the receiving point. Thus, communication skills when effectively acquired, would play immeasurable role in maintaining peace and love in an environment, especially in establishments where different individuals with different ideas comes together. Hence, the success or failure of any organization including secondary school is highly dependent on several factors including ability to apply communication skills wisely.

Skill is the ability to perform certain functions optimally. Mbah and Umurhurhu (2016) defined skill as the ability to make purposeful movements that are necessary to complete or master a particular task. Communication skills therefore involve the ability to pass substantially relevant information between individuals or groups. Mafana (2018) defined communication skill as the competency to communicate information exactly, clearly and as intended. It is the ability to give and receive information and transfer same ideas and opinions to people around. The author maintained that communication skills entails speaking appropriately to people while maintaining good eye contact, eloquent speech with tailored language, listening effectively, writing clearly with concise language, being confident, friendliness, empathy, use of question, open mindedness and presenting your ideas

appropriately. Anchal and Richa (2015) noted that good communication skills help to develop better understanding and beliefs among people, inspire them to follow the principles and values which their leader wants to inculcate in them. Hybels and Weaver (2015) added that no matter the situation one faces in personal or professional contexts, one will need to communicate effectively and interact with people of diverse cultures, utilizing speaking and listening skills to create and sustain impressions. In communication, series of skills are required.

Some of the communication skills prerequisite for enhancing principals' and teachers' job performance according to Ani (2018) include oral communication, written communication, upward communication and downward communication. In another development, Mohd and Ab (2015) proposed that there are essentially three types of communication, which are interpersonal communication, management communication (communication in a group), and public communication (speech making). Hence, communication skills in the context of this study include oral, written, interpersonal and assertive communication skills.

Oral communication skills involve the ability to use spoken words to express feelings, ideas or thoughts. According to Ani (2018), oral communication skill involves the use of spoken words either in a face-to-face setting or through telephone calls. Johnson (2017) posited that oral communication can enhance learning in any subject area. It can be used to manipulate lesson input or to examine and explore lesson-related ideas. The author noted that oral communication is open-ended so as to provide choice, challenge, and complexity for highly creative or intellectually gifted individuals. These may be a situation where ideas, messages or lessons are written down for reference purpose. Hence, there is need for written communication skills.

Written communication skill concerns itself with the ability to write and present reports in a clear and concise form. Sharma (2016) opined that written communication involve means of sending messages, orders or instructions in writing through letters, circulars, manuals, reports, telegrams, office memos, bulletins, etc. The author maintained that written communication is a formal method of communication and is less flexible. A written document preserved properly becomes a permanent record for future reference. Written communication skills may enhance interpersonal communication skills.

A teacher in this context can be defined as an individual who acquires pedagogical competencies through training for effective impartation of ethical standards into the learners. Teachers are agents of transformation whose solemn responsibilities doesn't end in the classroom but extends to extracurricular activities including sports and others. When the communication is not effective in secondary school, the teachers' productivity could be affected.

Productivity can be defined as the ability of an individual to effectively carry out a function as required. Teachers' productivity however can be seen as capacity of the teacher to deliver a responsibility as required in schools. Productivity and how ease with which they are made are dependent on how secured teachers are about their job considering the place of communication. Thus, principal's ineffective communication can hamper the process, and result in delay in the attainment of general educational goals in a given secondary school. In

absence of effective communication skills, there are bound to be misunderstanding which can in-turn hamper productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Thus, assessing principals' communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State could be gender sensitive.

Gender as in the context of this study can be defined as the social-cultural attribute to differentiate a man from a woman. Gender according to World Health Organization (2018), refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Hence, it is not known the principals' communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State and hence, the concern of this work is, to assess the impacts of principals' communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Communication has been considered as a critical factor in directing and mobilizing the workforce towards the accomplishment of the organizational goals and objectives as no administrative functions can be carried out in an organization including schools without good and effective communication. Hence, in secondary schools, principals plan, organize, control, coordinate and perform other related administrative functions through communication.

However, the reverse has been the case in most secondary schools in Enugu State as it was observed by the researcher and noted in this study, the seeming-ineffective communication skills adopted by most principals in secondary schools in Enugu State appears to have created a gap resulting to misunderstanding, rumour, and counter-rumour, mistrust in schools administrations, lack of unity of purpose and suspicious among staff, which resulted to poor commitment by the staff, lower standard of education, frustration among staff and indiscipline among staff and students. On this background, the problem of the study is presented in a question form, "What is the principals' communication skill for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State"?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to assess principals' communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. examine principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. ascertain principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. What is the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated guided the study:

H0$_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State

H0$_2$: A significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which aimed at assessing the principals' communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. This study was conducted in Enugu State. Enugu State according to *Williams (2008)* is one of the states in the South East geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The population for this study consisted of all teachers in government-owned secondary schools in Enugu State. The population of teachers is 8307 (2059 male and 6248 female teachers). The sample size of the study comprised 512 respondents. This included 173 male and 339 female teachers obtained using disproportionate stratified sampling technique, where 10% of the population of male teachers and 5% of female teachers were drawn. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument titled "Principals' Communication Skills for Enhanced Teachers Productivity Questionnaire" (PCSTJPQ)" was divided into two parts: Part A dealt on personal data of the respondents.

The instrument was face-validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and one expert from the Measurement and Evaluation unit of Department of Mathematics and Computer Education, all in the Faculty of Education, ESUT. The instrument was subjected to test to ascertain its reliability (Internal consistency). In other to achieve this, 30 copies of the instrument were administered to 10 male and 20 female secondary school teachers in Anambra State. The reliability co-efficient results of cluster 1 and 2 were .77 and .71, .69 with the overall reliability index of .72 showing that the instrument was highly reliable for use by the study (Okoye, 2018).

The researcher used direct delivery and retrieval method to administer the 512 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of six research assistants. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. In this case, any item that has a mean score of 2.50 or above was regarded as "Agree", while those with a mean score below 2.50 were regarded as "Disagree". Also, t-test statistics in SPSS was used in testing the null hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance and appropriate degree of freedom. The hypotheses was not rejected when the significant value was more than the level of significance and otherwise not accepted when the significant value was less than the level of significance. Thus, the basis for decision making. Hence, the data analyses were based on 503 copies of the questionnaire collected after completion, out of 512 copies distributed representing 98.24% return rate.

Results

The result of the study is presented below based on the research questions and null hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1

What is the principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1:

Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Principals' Oral Communication Skills for Enhanced Teachers' Productivity in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

S/N	Principals' oral communication skill for enhanced teachers' productivity include;	Male Teachers N = 170		Female Teachers N = 333		Overall N = 503		Remark
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD_1	$\bar{x}_2$	SD_2	$\bar{x}_G$	SD_G	
1	briefing of staff	2.91	1.07	2.69	1.10	2.80	1.09	Agree
2	expression of thoughts	2.74	1.02	2.98	1.09	2.86	1.06	Agree
3	verbal encouragement of staff	3.02	1.02	2.91	1.09	2.97	1.06	Agree
4	appreciation of overall performance verbally	2.53	1.07	2.44	1.07	2.49	1.07	Disagree
5	clarity of information	2.83	1.05	2.95	1.03	2.89	1.04	Agree
6	being empathetic	2.28	1.01	2.26	1.02	2.27	1.02	Disagree
7	expression of patience	3.38	0.97	2.52	0.83	2.95	0.90	Agree
8	expression of open mindedness	2.58	0.85	3.43	0.69	3.01	0.77	Agree
9	expression of ideas for smooth running of school	2.55	0.98	2.76	0.91	2.66	0.95	Agree
10	easy assimilation of information	2.84	1.10	2.67	1.02	2.76	1.06	Agree
11	active listening to staff welfare	2.73	0.97	2.49	1.05	2.61	1.01	Agree
12	expression of feelings	2.53	1.07	2.84	1.07	2.69	1.07	Agree
13	immediate feedback on matter arising	2.79	1.22	2.49	1.13	2.66	1.19	Agree
	Grand Mean/SD	**2.75**	**1.03**	**2.73**	**1.01**	**2.74**	**1.02**	**Agree**

Note: *x = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.*

Source*: Researcher's Field Survey (2025).*

In **Table 1**, the mean ratings obtained for the male teachers on items number 1 to 5 and 7 to 13 ranged from 2.53 to 3.38, indicating that the listed items are principals' oral communication skill for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State while items number 4 and 6 with the mean rating of 2.28 to 2.42 denotes disagree perception by the male teachers. Similarly, the **Table** shows that the mean rating range of 2.52 to 3.43 are obtained for the female teachers on items number 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12, indicating agree perceptions while the mean ratings range of 2.26 to 2.49 obtained for the rest of the items shows disagree perceptions accordingly. Thus, the overall (grand) mean rating of 2.74 shows that the listed are principal' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State while the overall standard deviation score of 1.02 denotes homogeneity in respondents' opinions.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 2:

t-test Statistics on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teachers on the Principals' Oral Communication Skills for Enhanced Teachers' Productivity in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Respondents (Teachers)	**N**	**$\bar{x}$**	**SD**	**t-value**	**Df**	**Sig. (2tailed)**	**Remark**
Male	170	2.75	1.03	0.313	501	0.347	Not
Female	333	2.73	1.01				Significant

Table 2 shows that the t-value of 0.313 is obtained at 0.05 level of significance and 501 degree of freedom with the significant value of 0.347. However, since the significant value is more than the level of significance, the null hypothesis is statistically insignificant and thus, not rejected for these items. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers for the principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Question 2

What is the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 3:

Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Principals' Written Communication Skills for Enhanced Teachers' Productivity in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

S/N	**Principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity include;**	**Male Teachers N = 170**		**Female Teachers N = 333**		**Overall N = 503**		**Remark**
		$\bar{x}_1$	**SD_1**	**$\bar{x}_2$**	**SD_2**	**$\bar{x}_G$**	**SD_G**	
14	creation of records for teachers activities	3.00	0.87	2.69	1.07	2.85	0.97	Agree
15	provision of sufficient time for response to issues	2.40	0.97	2.39	1.03	2.40	1.00	Disagree
16	serves legal guides to activities	3.46	0.91	2.69	1.09	3.08	1.00	Agree
17	documentation for future use	2.40	0.97	2.39	1.03	2.40	1.00	Disagree
18	fixation of responsibility	2.72	1.03	2.70	1.08	2.71	1.05	Agree
19	allocation of work	2.57	1.18	2.49	1.09	2.53	1.16	Agree
20	reduction of ambiguity	2.98	1.01	2.39	0.78	2.69	0.90	Agree
21	clear presentation of diagram	2.53	0.86	2.61	0.91	2.57	0.89	Agree
22	presentation of statistical data	2.93	0.99	2.27	1.10	2.60	1.05	Agree
23	uniformity of work procedure	2.56	1.19	2.49	1.16	2.53	1.18	Agree
24	giving order	2.21	1.00	2.95	0.93	2.58	0.97	Agree
	Grand Mean/SD	**2.71**	**1.00**	**2.55**	**1.02**	**2.63**	**1.02**	**Agree**

As seen In **Table 3**, the mean ratings obtained for the male teachers on items number 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 ranged from 2.53 to 3.46 indicating that the identified items are the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State while items number 15, 17 and 24 with the mean ratings below 2.50 depicts disagree responses by the male teachers. The **Table** also shows that the mean rating

range of 2.61 to 2.95 are obtained for the female teachers on items number 14, 16, 18, 21 and 24, showing agree perceptions while the rest of the items has the mean ratings below 2.50, for disagree perceptions respectively. Hence, the overall (grand) mean rating of 2.63 obtained denotes that the listed items are the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State with the overall standard deviation score of 1.02 indicating that a huge disparity doesn't exist in the opinions of the respondents.

Hypothesis 2

A significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 4:

t-test Statistics on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teachers on the Principals' Written Communication Skills for Enhanced Teachers' Productivity in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Respondents (Teachers)	**N**	**$\bar{x}$**	**SD**	**t-value**	**Df**	**Sig. (2tailed)**	**Remark**
Male	170	2.71	1.00	0.170	501	0.519	Not
Female	333	2.55	1.02				Significant

Table 4 shows that the t-value of 0.170 is obtained at 0.05 level of significance and 501 degree of freedom against a significant value of 0.519. Hence, since the significant value is more than the level of significance, the null hypothesis is not significant and therefore not rejected. By implication, a significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed, the following findings were noted:

1. Principals' oral communication skill can enhance teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' oral communication skills teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' interpersonal communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.
4. Principals' assertive communication skill can enhance teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study, in line with the answered research questions and null hypotheses tested for the study are discussed below:

Principals' Oral Communication Skills for Enhanced Teachers' Productivity in Secondary Schools in Enugu State

In line with the findings of the study regarding principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State, it was found that principals' oral communication skill can enhance teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. In the light of the above, the study itemized expression of patience, verbal encouragement of staff, briefing of staff, clarity of information, easy assimilation of information, expression of thoughts, immediate feedback on matter arising among others as ways through which principals' oral communication skill can enhance teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. However, oral communication herein is seen to be significant in management as it influences productivity emanating from mutual understanding. Hence, oral communication skills should be properly acquired to ensure productivity in a system.

Similarly, the hypothesis test of male and female teachers on principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State yielded a higher significant value against a lower significant level, thereby making the hypothesis statistically insignificant. By implication, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' oral communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

These findings agreed with the findings of Udeze (2015) who stated that the other main advantage of oral communication method is that it helps in conveying the message with the desired pitch and tone that is needed for the message. This also concurs with the findings of Eunson (2015) who stated that during oral communication, one must; (a) Ensure that the words are framed properly and are delivered in the right pitch and tone. (b) Clarity, brevity and precision are mandatory features of an effective oral communication system. (c) It is advisable to avoid complicated sentences and jargons so as to make sure that the message is conveyed across properly. (d) It is important to establish an eye contact and to modulate body language based on the message. For example, a strict order can be conveyed better when communicated with a formal and stern body language as opposed to a casual and friendly one.

Principals' Written Communication Skills for Enhanced Teachers' Productivity in Secondary Schools in Enugu State

With reference to principals' written communication skill for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State, the study revealed among others that the principal through the acquisition of skills in written communication influences teachers' job performance in secondary schools as written communication skills; serves legal guides to activities, creates records for teachers activities, fixes responsibility, reduces ambiguity, eases in the presentation of statistical data. By this note, written communication skill is seen to be a veritable tool that can promote effective communication in an environment, including secondary schools in Enugu State. Hence, there is no significant difference found in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the principals' written communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

The above finding is in harmony with the findings of Holz (2015) who stated that communicating through writing is essential in the modern world and is becoming ever more so as we participate in what is now commonly called the information age. The author

maintained that written communication is the most common form of business communication, which is essential for small business owners and managers to develop effective written communication skills and to encourage the same in all employees. In addition, Reynolds (2017) noted that one advantage to using written forms of communication is that written messages do not have to be delivered on the spur of the moment; instead, they can be edited and revised several times before they are sent so that the content can be shaped to maximum effect. Thus, written communication provides a permanent record of the messages and can be saved for later study.

Conclusion

The study assessed principals' communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. It discussed principals' oral, written, interpersonal and assertive communication skill for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. These findings have provided empirical results justifying the need for acquisition and utilization of effective communication skills by managers including secondary school principals in Enugu State. These findings were also justified by the test of hypotheses which no significant difference was found in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on principals' oral, written, interpersonal and assertive communication skills for enhanced teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. On this note, the study advocates for the acquisition and adoption of the afore-discussed communication skills for all-round productivity of teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Oral communication skills should be considered a necessity for principals in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. Written communication skills should constitute a path of principal entry qualifications.

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