

Article

The influence of communication on administration of secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria

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This study investigated the extent to which communication affects administration of secondary schools in Delta State. It is a survey study based on ex-post facto design. The researcher raised some questions and formulated three hypotheses were tested using z-test to guide the study. The target of the population of the study was 320 public secondary school principals and 9608 teachers in the state. The researcher sampled 30 (9%) principals and 650 teachers (3%) through simple random sampling technique. The instrument was validated in its face and content values. The researcher made some findings that there is a significant difference in the influence of communication on the administration of secondary schools, using school location, sex and experience as the independent variables. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the findings that in communication process principals should know that communication can never be over-emphasized in the daily running of the schools; as a result, principals should ensure that communication is effectively carried out to enhance discipline and to maintain law and order.

Key words: Communication, administration, secondary schools, Delta State, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Communication system in any organisation like the school is very vital to the survival and smooth running of the organisation. Through the use of language, mankind has been able to record past history and to transmit its culture from one generation to the other. This transmission exercise lies on communication process without which managerial, administrative and academic functions will not be possible in the school. In fact without effective communications, organisations will not be what it is, and functions will not be carried effectively towards goal achievement, with the use of communication, man has helped himself or herself to build societies and other social groupings, which contribute to his survival and to more enjoyable patterns of living. In all organisations, the transfer of information from one individual to another is absolutely necessary (Onyeiwu, 1984). It is a universal activity in one form or another between people at all times in their lives with the exception of a few religious orders. Within an organisation it is formalised as social interaction and is measured by its total amount, its frequency, which initiates it, the degree of reciprocity and its directions, upwards, downwards or sideways, among the members.

In all organizations, the transfer of information from one individual to another is absolutely necessary. It is the means by which behavior is modified, change is

effected, information is made productive and goals are achieved. It could be seen that without communication, the organisation cannot exist, for there is no possibility of others. Communication from the viewpoint of Koontz et al (1984) "is to effect a change, to influence action towards the welfare of the enterprise; and as such the need for an effective channel of communication becomes imperative for the attainment of the organisational goals. To them, communication is the means by which people are linked together in an organisation. The standpoint of Lesikar (1974: 4) on communication is that...

It is the ingredient, which makes organisation possible. It is the vehicle through which" the basic management and administrative functions are carried out. Managers and administrators direct through communication; they co-ordinate through communication; and they staff, plan and control through communication. Had an action without communication leading to it.

The communication process follows a systematic procedure. It is a give and take method involving the sender and the receiver (Nakpodia, 2006). Usually, the sender must have an idea to put across which makes it a 3-way grid – the sender, message and the receiver. For better

communication in school, the principal must first and foremost conceive an idea and relate such idea to his staff and expect response.

In the school system, the principal is not working alone. He has to share information, transfer ideas and feelings through communication to enhance the collective co-operation of others within the school. The school principal must not only communicate downward management in thoughts and in decisions but also upward reactions and development in the ranks. In fact, in order to persuade, instruct, direct, request, inform, stimulate, the principal must engage in upward and downward communication.

Hence, the importance of upward flow of communication in an educational organisation cannot be under estimated. It helps education administrators to get a feedback from the people that might be affected. These people represent an important source of ideas for improvement (Merihue, 1990).

The communication network therefore, is seen as being very significant to the life of the school. This is because it is a Major Avenue through which the school personnel gets an opportunity to identify and appreciate what the school is doing, the atmosphere in which it operates, what is expected from the school and the public. On the bases of these, principals design programme that could make or mar the school system. Communication is thus important in an organization including the schools because it constitutes one of the chief means through which organizational members work together, and also helps to hold the organization together by making it possible for members to influence one another and to react to one another (St. John, 1994).

Statement of problem

Communication is very important in every organization such as the school. It has been a great concern to school administrators, because a break in communication brings about a great havoc in the school system by way of administration.

Most times messages are not decoded properly such that the intended meaning is not interpreted correctly. Teachers do not put in their best into effective teaching as a result of lack of satisfaction emanating from communication gap between them and the principals in the schools. As a result, the statement of problem put in question form therefore, is to what extent does communication influence the administration of secondary schools in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the Influence of communication on the administration of secondary schools in terms of school location.

2. There is no significant difference in the extent to which communication influences the administration of secondary schools in terms of sex.

There is no significant influence in the extent to which communication influences the administration of secondary schools in terms of experience.

METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature based on ex-post facto design. This design is to specify 'who' and 'what' are to be measured. In this design, data are usually collected through questionnaire forms, interviews or direct observations (White and Marsh, 2006).

Population

The population includes 320 principals and 9,608 teachers of public secondary schools in Delta State. The secondary schools are from the 25 local government areas of the state.

Sample

From the existing 320 schools, the researcher sampled 30 school principals which represent 9.0% of the target population and 650 teachers which represent 3%. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the principals and teachers. To ensure that the sample, to a high degree, represent the population, the balloting technique was used to obtain the sample.

Instrumentation

The researcher constructed an instrument for the study titled "Communication Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire" and designated as "CSSQ". The instrument consists of two sessions, sessions A and B. The section A focuses on the demographic variables such as: status, sex, location of school, experience and qualification of respondents. The section B consist of a list of 30 items on the extent to which communication affects the administration of secondary schools in Delta State using the following variables such as school location, sex and experience as assessed by principals and teachers. The items in the instrument were constructed on a Likert 5 point rating scale, which contains a set of items, which are appropriately equal in the value loading. The respondents were asked to react to the statements with varying degree of intensity on the alternatives which range from excellent to unsatisfactory, ranging from excellent (5 points), good (4 points), satisfactory (3 points), fair (2 points) and unsatisfactory (1 point).

The scores for each of the scales were summed up and the mean including standard deviation calculated are to determine a valued analysis.

In order to determine whether the instrument actually measures what it intends to measure, the researcher sought the assistance of some lecturers in the areas of Educational Administration, Delta State University Abraka. Their suggestions and advice assisted the researcher in modifying the items in the instrument. These experts were used to ascertain whether the items in the instrument were relevant and clear. The validity was reviewed in its face and content values. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using 20 respondents not included in the sample with a split half reliability method using the odd items for one and the even numbered items for the other (Kokach, 2006). The test was scored separately and

Table 1. Z-test in the extent to which communication affects the administration of secondary schools in terms of School Location.

Respondents	N	ΣX	SD	Calculated Z-value	Critical z-value	Remark
Teachers	650	9.29	2.31	10.7	1.96	Rejected
Principals	30	8.6	2.47			

0.05 level of significance.

Table 2. Z-test in the extent to which communication affects the administration of secondary schools in terms of Sex.

Respondents	N	ΣX	SD	Calculated Z-value	Critical z-value	Remark
Teachers	650	14.86	4.61	2.13	1.96	Rejected
Principals	30	14.16	4.27			

0.05 level of significance.

Table 3. Z-test in the extent to which communication affects the administration of secondary schools in terms of experience.

Respondents	N	ΣX	SD	Calculated Z-value	Critical z-value	Remark
Teachers	650	13.88	5.03	8.61	1.96	Rejected
Principals	30	10.26	5.87			

0.05 level of significance.

then correlated. The Spearman Brown Prophecy Formular was then used to calculate the reliability coefficient which was established at 0.81.

The instrument was administered in person to the subjects and the completed forms were collected at a later date agreed upon by the respondents and the researcher. In all, a period of three weeks was spent in gathering the data which were analysed in the study. Responses from respondents were scored and grouped according to sex of respondents. Total and mean responses were computed, as well as standard deviations, and the z-test was thereafter applied to test each of the null-hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance and the critical value of 1.96.

Presentation and analysis of data

Responses from the teachers and principals from the sampled public secondary school in Delta State, Nigeria, were used and the data gathered were analyzed, using the z-statistic to test the three hypotheses in the study.

Hypothesis 1

States that there is no significant difference in the influence of communication on the administration of secondary schools in terms of school location.

The calculated z-value of 10.7 is greater than table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance as shown in Table 1, led to the rejection of hypothesis 1. Therefore, there is significant difference in the extent to which communication influences the administration of secondary schools in Delta State in terms of school location as

assessed by principals and teachers.

Hypothesis 2

States that there is no significant difference in the extent to which communication influences the administration of secondary schools in terms of sex.

Z-test was used in analysing these data obtained. The result obtained from the analysis as shown in Table 2 indicated that a calculated z-value of 2.13 is greater than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between principals and teachers in their assessment of the influence to which communication influences the administration of secondary schools in Delta State in terms of sex was rejected.

Hypothesis 3

States that there is no significant influence in the extent to which communication influences the administration of secondary schools in terms of experience.

Z-test was used in analysing these data obtained. The results obtained from the analysis are as shown in Table 3. The result showed that the calculated z-value of 8.61 is greater than the table value of 1.96. at level of significance. The null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference between the influence to which communication influences the administration of secondary schools in Delta State in terms of experience, was rejected. The mean scores of both experienced and less experienced respondents fall above the midpoint of 10, thus confirming a high

assessment of the extent to which communication influences secondary schools administration. In terms of experience.

DISCUSSION

The paper has employed a number of factors that influence communication on the administration of public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Table 1 showed that the hypothesis on school location was significant as assessed by principals and teachers. This is in line with Jike's (1997) criticism of large schools emanated from the fear of communication difficulties, which usually resulted in teachers developing feeling of isolation, as individuals or in small groups with common purpose or interest. Avert such a situation, a carefully planned and efficient system of communication must be established.

Table 2 showed that the hypothesis on sex was significant, thereby rejecting the hypothesis. This is in line with Ekpeyong (1998) which state that females tend to have lower qualification, shorter experience, less seniority and do not communicate well and adjudged the less efficient than their male counterpart in management positions. The latter however pointed out that the imbalance in leadership ranks between the males and the females was due to the fact that men have access to more socio-political and economics powers than the women. It is this power and influence that paved the way for rapid promotion of men over women in much organisational set up.

Table 3 also showed that the hypothesis on experience as the independent variable was significant. This is in line with Akomah (1994) who states that experience in communication is a factor for effective performance as an administrator. This finding reinforces the vision of the Educational Administrator as an effective communicator, and as acknowledgement that information flow is both smooth and clear. This study cannot but reiterates that this finding augurs well for the administration of secondary schools in Delta State since it suggests a low propensity for communication and a high probability of goal achievements.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. That the principals and teachers differ significantly on the influence to which communication influences administration of secondary schools in terms of school location. This implies that the location of a school determines how communication influences the administration of secondary schools.
2. That the principals and teachers differ significantly on the influence to which communication influences administration of secondary schools in terms of sex. This

implies that the sex of principals determine the influence of communication on the administration of secondary schools. Therefore sex of a principal makes him or her to communicate effectively with teachers and students to achieve the goals of education. 3. That the principals and teachers differ significantly on the influence of communication on administration of secondary schools in terms of experience. Experience is the best teacher they say, and an experienced principal can effectively communicate fluently with his staff and students to ensure effective teaching and learning process. Therefore any principal without experience can not perform his or her functions well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, the following recommendations were made, that principals should ensure that communication is effectively carried out to enhance discipline, maintain law and order. To achieve these, both principals and staff should have experience irrespective of gender in terms of communication in administering the school. Also, principals should communicate with their teachers irrespective of their sex so that the goal of education can be achieved. Experienced principals should be appointed to head secondary schools to facilitate effective communication in the school system as regard teaching and learning.

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