
**Administrator's Communication Ability and Effective Management of Public Schools in
Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State**

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ABSTRACT

A school administrator is one who oversees the affairs of the school by directing, managing and executing the plans of education in order to attain the goals and objectives of education. This the administrators can accomplish through effective communication and management ability. The study sought to investigate the extent to which the administrators' communication ability predicts effective management of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. An Expost-Facto research design was used for this study. The research area was Eket Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom State, the population of this study comprised of one thousand one hundred and fifty-two (1152) teachers distributed into 63 public secondary schools in seven local education committees in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the five hundred and seventy-seven (577) teachers. The main instrument used in this study was questionnaire titled "ADMINISTRATORS' COMMUNICATION ABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (ACAQ) and SECONDARY SCHOOL EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (SSEMQ)." The instrument passed through face and content validated by the experts in test and measurement. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument, the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.75 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study was appropriate analyzed using Simple Regression Analysis technique. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study concluded that administrators' communication ability predicts effective decision making and planning of public schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. It was recommended amongst others that secondary school administrators' should make use of participatory decision making style in the school because it will encourage staff to contribute their ideas for the smooth running of the school.

KEY WORDS: Administrator's Communication Ability, Effective Management, Planning, Decision Making, Public Schools

Introduction

Communication is the state of exchanging information between entities. Communication is concerned with the transmission of information, directions, ideas, feelings, attitude and understandings (Uyanga, 2002, Polintan, 2012). There must be the sender of a message (communicator) and the receiver of a message (communicate). It is therefore the means for interacting among the personnel within a school. In the school, an administrator who is an effective leader and problem solver must apply a range of communication strategies every day. Good communication straightens activities, smoothen the work and makes for organizational goal achievement and employee's satisfaction. It is almost impossible to run any social organization successfully without effective communication ability is a very important and effective tool in the smooth running of secondary schools since the school itself is a social agent (Uyanga, 2002). In the secondary schools, the principals are the school administrators. The basic ingredients of good speeches are; simplicity, clarity, directness, forcefulness and pleasantness. In other words, a good speaker should make their speech as natural as possible so as to achieve maximum effect in the audience with minimum number of words. Every form of speaking involves some teaching as the speaker presents the listeners with information, thoughts, reflections, new visions and plans. In speech, the speaker needs the feedback to know whether the listener understand the information or not. Listening ability requires active listening to get "get inside" the speaker's head in order to understand the communication from the speaker's point of view (Habaci, 2013).

Thus, the school administrator is expected to exhibit an effective writing ability as this will enable the receiver to fully understand and send appropriate feedback. Moreover, written communication provides record for every messages sent and can be saved for the later study. Messages may be printed or hand written. These can be transmitted via-emails, web sites, faxes, brochures, advertisements, letters reports or memos. Poor communicators avoid passing down information to their subordinates through writing and do not back up verbal messages with memos. This can be lead to communication breakdown. Written messages should be in reachable handwriting. When secondary school administrators do not make adequate use of their communication abilities, they become poor communicators. Administrators should avoid one sided communication and multi-tasking while listening to people. It has also been observed that great communicators place much emphasis on liosten9ng than writing. Thus, educational administrators should have a good listeni9ng ability because where there is lack good communication ability, problems may arise (Akinnubi and Gbadeyan, 2015).

Statement of the problem

Every school administrator is involved in communication of information among staff and students while managing the school. Managers and administrators direct through communication. They primarily plan, make decisions, supervise, control and discipline the organization through communication. In the secondary school, managers are saddled with the task of equipping students to be good citizens and in preparing them for higher education. These tasks have not been an easy one because administrators need to provide favourable environment for teaching and learning by monitoring the activities within the school. This seems very difficult for them because of limited resources and poor funding. The available resources have to be circulated evenly to our various public schools. The schools have to clearly plan on how to utilize the available resources and communicate the decisions made to all concerned. To what extend does administrators' communication ability predicts effective management of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District? This research seeks to answer the question by studying communication ability

as a predictor of public secondary school management in terms of effective planning, decision making, supervision, control and disciplining of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which the administrators' communication ability predicts effective management of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the objective of this study were to;

1. Determine the extent to which the administrators' communication ability predicts effective planning of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.
2. Determine the extent to which the administrators' communication ability predicts effective decision making of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent does administrators' communication ability predicts effective planning of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent does administrators' communication ability predicts effective decision making of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study.

- Ho1: Administrators' communication ability does not significantly predict effective planning of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom State.
- Ho2: Administrators' communication ability does not significantly predict effective planning of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom State.

Theoretical Framework

Communication Accommodation Theory: Howard Giles (1971)

Communication Accommodation Theory was developed by Howard Giles in the year 1971. It was first known as speech accommodation theory it says that when humans talk to each other, they tend to change the way they talk to match the way the listener talk. Giles (1979) explained that consciously or unconsciously one matches accents, speed, rhythm, vocabulary, stance, gestures to that of the person that is being spoken to. Thus, when people interact they adjust their speech, their vocal pattern and gestures to accommodate others. The theory explained that people accommodate or adjust their communication styles to others consciously or unconsciously. This theory focuses on both the intergroup and interpersonal factors that lead to accommodation as well as the way in which power, macro and micro context concern affect communication. Therefore, the main focus

of communication accommodation theory is: social exchange, similarity and intergroup (Gallois and Giles, 2005).

There are two main accommodation processes: divergence and convergence. Divergence refers to the instances in which individuals accentuate the speech and non-verbal differences between themselves and their interlocutors. It is used to highlight group identity touting the differences of the group they identify with. Convergence refers to the strategies through which individuals adapt to each other's communicative behaviors, in order to reduce social differences. It is used more often by powerless individuals for social approval and focuses on matching the communication style of the person with whom they are speaking to.

The following are the relevance of communication accommodation theory to this study:

1. Adjustment of the school administrators to communicate with various people within and outside the school community. This is done when administrators' make use of the three communication flow; downward, upward and horizontal (or lateral) flow.
2. Exploring various reasons why individuals emphasize or minimize the social differences between themselves and their interlocutors. This is done when staff are given opportunity of expressing their feelings, thus conflicts can be resolved amicably and tension reduced.
3. It focuses both on the intergroup and interpersonal factors that lead to accommodation while communicating. Thus, strategies should be mapped out by the secondary school administrators, for receiving and passing information within and outside the school. This can be done through telephone calls, newsletters and bulletins.

Conceptual Review

The concept of communication ability

The word communication originates from the Latin word "cum" which means "with" and is combined with the word "Unus" which means "one". The combination of these two words result in the word "communio" which is translated as "communion". It is derived from the verb "communicare" which means sharing something with someone (Polintan, 2012). Also, Nwosu (2002) explained that communication is a Latin word "communicum" meaning to make common, to impact, to transmit. It is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages or information through speech; visual, signals, written or behavior. It is also the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures.

Uyanga (2002) is of the opinion that communication itself is the process of conveying messages, information or ideas from one person to another in a manner that both parties understand the message succinctly. Turkmen (2003) explained that the objective in communication is to change something in the person who is being contacted. Therefore, communication should bring about a change to the receiver. Welhrich and Koontz (2004) had it that in communication, the information must be understood by the receiver the way it is by the receiver.

Nwachukwu (2007) observed that effective communication is one that produces the desired effects. Thus, sent messages should have its desired effect on the receiver. Again, communication which is concerned with transmitting and receiving information is seen as the key at all aspects of organizational life, whether by planning, controlling, problem-solving, decision-making, motivating, interviewing and other management activation (Kayode, 2012). Thus, communication

helps to build relationships and facilitates achievement of goals. Therefore, there is great need for effective communication ability among secondary school administrators' in order for secondary schools to have a sound learning environment.

The concept of effective secondary school management

The secondary school education is the education with children that have finished their primary education and need to be prepared for higher studies. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), at the secondary school level, the broad goals of education shall be to prepare the individual for; Useful living within the society; and Higher education.

In the secondary school, the scope of educational management, that is the functions which educational administrators play in order to achieve set objectives in the school system are; personnel management (staff personnel management and management of students), financial and facilities management, curriculum development and programme management and school community relations management. Akinnubi (2010) defined school management as the guidance or direction of people towards organizational goals or objectives. The source further explained that school management can also be seen as supervising, controlling and coordinating school activities to attain optimum results with organizational resources. Also, Uyanga (2002) explained that management in an organization is to direct, activate, control and monitor the functioning of the different organs of the system.

Therefore, for management to be able to monitor the different organs in the school system, communication ability of the administrator should be effective. According to Habaci (2013) communication is directly associated with a management processes. The source further explained that communication takes place almost all the time in this context. Agabin, Habaci (2013) encouraged that school administrators should communicate robustly with staff, as well as members of parent-teacher associations, parents, bus drivers and others. This will in turn help every other organ in the school to function properly. The secondary school itself is a system with various organs. These organs need to be adequately managed so that resources and personnel are properly utilized to accomplish set goals and objectives.

Akinnubi (2010) observed that failure to communicate the school's aims, values and achievements to the staff and students makes the school management a mirage. Thus, secondary school must be properly monitored to ensure quality instruction. Akinnubi (2010) further explained that the channels of communication needs to be modern, effective and as personal as possible, if management of large organizations such as the schools are to maintain close ties with teachers and encourage maximum performance.

Administrators' communication ability and effective planning of secondary schools in Eket.

An effective educational system needs proper planning especially as limited funds must be fairly allocated to various components for development. Pont (2012) explained that planning is the process of thinking about and organizing the activities required to achieve a desired goal. It involves creation and maintenance of a plan. Kayode (2012) observed that planning deals with defining preparation of policies and procedures in advances and that the influence of effective communication in planning process cannot be underrated. Planning is a fundamental property of intelligent behavior. Longe (2003) opined that educational planning involves taking decision for

future actions with the view of achieving pre-determined objectives through optimum use of the scarce resources. Okunamiri (2005) opined that educational planning is a process of preparing a set of decisions about the educational enterprise in such a way that the goals and objectives of educational will be adequately realized in future with the available resources namely: human and material resources.

Also, Koko and Nwiyi (2006) explained that educational planning is that blue-print of actions designed towards the advancement of educational goals in most effective and efficient means. Cooper (2016) opined that effective communication plan is crucial to any organization in which the school are no different. He also explained that with a comprehensive communication plan, the administrator will be able to promote the school to parents and the community. This he can do by connecting with current students; attract the future ones and even successfully engaging staff members. Thus, administrators should have an up-to-date school communication. Given the variety of kinds of information and the modern channels for delivering school info, planning and allocation of resources has become a very important issue in the schools. These plans can be communicated through websites, social media and simple school newsletters (Pont, 2012).

Pont (2012) also observed that communication plan as a living and working document should be updated periodically as change is needed. The source further explained is a basis for monitoring progress, assessing results and developing is a basis for monitoring progress, assessing results and developing new programs, also, strategic planning helps ensure that internal communicational functions, stay relevant and responsive to the needs of the school. **Administrators' communication ability and effective decision making of secondary schools in Eket**

Decision making is one of the administrative task of the secondary school administrators. Uyanga (2002) defined decision-making as the process by which a solution is sought for a problem through the selective elimination of alternative solutions. Decision making involves choosing from other alternatives. It could be rational, deliberate, discretionary and purposive or it could be irrational, obligatory or random. According to Peretomode and Peretomode (2001) decision making is the process of choosing from alternative ways of achieving an objective or providing a solution to problem. Decision-making can be seen as the centre of the process in every administration. Thus, the task of decision making pervades the center managerial fabric quite as much as a doing the task. In school management, the administrators are involved in taking decisions and executing them (Akinnubi and Gbadeyan, 2015).

Decision making is thus regarded as the crux of any organization. All management functions are based on decision making. Decision making provides greater knowledge and information about an issue which one could not have heard. It also reduces communication problems in the school system. Hence, school administrators should create a favorable atmosphere for joint decision making. Akpan (1995) discovered that [participation in organizational decision making could reduce conflict in the organization, thus, students should be co-opted into decision making especially those that affect them. This will stem out students' unrest, staff indiscipline and teachers and students working against school authorities.

Abbot (quoted in Peretomode and Peretomode, 2001) believes that the effectiveness of the school manager can be improved by these decision-making skills; skills in differentiating among types of decisions; skill in determining the amount and type of information needed to reach a decisions; skill in determining the appropriate involvement of other people in reaching a decision, skill

establishing priorities for action, and skill in anticipating both intended and unintended consequences of decision.

Decision making skills call use of or applying the results of analytical and creative skills using both the social and communication skills. Decision making involves a conscious selection of a course of action from among certain well defined set of competing alternatives both the goals of the organization and the assumed best way of achieving them (Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia). Therefore, in an attempt to solve an existing problem, a lot of alternatives come to mind. A choice from among the alternative constitutes decision making. Thus, decision making is the process by which a solution is sought for a problem through the selective elimination of alternative solutions. It is a sequential process that culminates in single series of choice that stimulates or move actions (Bassey, 2011).

Methodology

Research Design

An Expost-Facto research design was used for this study. In this type of design the researcher cannot manipulate the effect on the dependent variable but just obtain the effect already existing in the natural course of events.

Area of the Study

The research area for this study was Eket Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of one thousand one hundred and fifty-two (1152) teachers distributed into 63 public secondary schools in seven local education committees in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the five hundred and seventy-seven (577) teachers derived from 7 Local Education Committees (L.E.Cs) in Eket Senatorial District.

Instrumentation

The main instrument used in this study was questionnaire titled “ADMINISTRATORS’ COMMUNICATION ABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (ACAQ) and SECONDARY SCHOOL EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (SSEMQ).” The questionnaire was made up two sections, (sections A and B). Section A was used to collect information on personal data of the respondents while section B of the questionnaire was made up of two variables such as views administrators’ communication ability predicts effective planning of public secondary schools in Eket senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State, administrators’ communication ability predicts effective decision making of public secondary schools in Eket senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State. The obtained data was coded statistically before the statistical analysis of the data.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument passed through face and content validated by the experts in test and measurement.

Reliability of the Instrument:

Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. In the trial test, a total of 30 respondents (teachers) who did not form part of the main study were randomly selected from one of the local educational committees in Eket Senatorial District and the instrument administered on them. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.75 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

Procedure for Collecting Data

A letter of introduction was written by the researcher. This letter was to introduce the researcher to the principals for permission, understanding and assistance to use their teachers as respondents.

The questionnaire were issued and retrieved latter from each respondent. The exercise took about six weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher subjected the data generated for this study was appropriate analyzed using Simple Regression Analysis technique. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results and Discussions

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the Administrators' communication ability predicting effective planning of public secondary school in Eket Senatorial District. In order to test the hypothesis, Simple Linear Regression Analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

Table 1: Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the prediction of communication ability and effective planning in public secondary schools

Communication Ability	sum of square	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit
Regression	1529.15	1	1526.15	825.24	3.84
Residual	1017.14	550	1.85		
Total	2543.29	551			

***Significant at 0.05 level; N=231; df =550; F-crit = 3.84.**

Entries in table1 reveal that the calculated F-value of 825.24 is greater than the critical f-value of 3.84 at .05 level with 1 and 550 degree of freedom. This result shows that communication ability significantly predicts effective planning of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the Administrators' communication ability predicting effective decision making of public secondary school in Eket Senatorial District. In order to test the hypothesis, Simple Linear Regression Analysis was performed on the data, (see table 2)

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the prediction of communication ability and effective decision making in public secondary schools.

Communication Ability	sum of square	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit
Regression	1236.53	1	1236.53	566.29	3.84
Residual	1200.95	550	2.18		
Total	2437.29	551			

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =550; F-crit = 3.84**

Entries in table 2 reveals that the calculated F-value of 566.29 is greater than the critical f-value of 3.84 at .05 level with 1 and 550 degree of freedom. This result shows that communication ability significantly predicts effective decision making of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study are discussed under the following sub-headings: Administrator's communication ability and effective planning of public secondary schools, Administrators' communication ability and effective decision making of public secondary schools.

Administrator's communication ability and effective planning of public secondary schools

The result of testing hypothesis 1 revealed that communication ability significantly predicts effective planning of public secondary schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The result showed that the calculated f-value of 825.24 was greater than the f-critical of 3.84. Thus, from the result of testing, the null hypothesis was rejected. This may be because planning is very needful in secondary school management in order to prepare policies and procedures. Thus, this result agrees with the findings of Anokye (2001) that principals' administrative effectiveness was significantly related with planning. Thus, it was observed that communication plans aids school administrators to effectively carryout school work.

Copper (2016) opined that effective communication plan is crucial in the organization like the school. Thus, planning will help the school administrators decide in advance the specific future courses of action to be adopted and implemented.

Administrators' communication ability and effective decision making of public secondary school

The result of testing hypothesis 2 revealed that the calculated f-value of 566.29 was greater than the f-critical of 3.84. Thus, the testing showed that the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, this result showed that communication ability predicts decision making of public secondary schools. This could be because school administrators' requires sound decision making skills in getting task done. This finding agrees with studies by Mbipom (2003) who observed that when staff contributes their ideas, decisions will be enriched y intelligence, value, training, and experiences of each participant. Egwuasi (2006) had also observed that principals who indulge in effective communication with staff would definitely understand the problems of the school with new and workable solutions to the problems.

This finding agrees with the view of Bassey (2011) that principals should have a proper knowledge of decision making to help them in using different types of decision making styles in solving problems in the school. Again this findings, agree with findings of Donnelly (2012) whose study on decision making and teaching effectiveness of high school teachers' had observed that communication problems are reduced when participatory decision making is employed in everyday activities within the school. Also, Donnelly (2012) observed that decision making encourages effective teaching and learning experiences in the school system. Therefore, administrators' who involve staff in decision making have better output because staff will willingly participate in the school activities.

Conclusion

In the light of the finding of this study, the following conclusions were drawn administrators' communication ability predicts effective planning of public schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Administrators' communication ability predicts effective decision making in public schools in Eket Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusion of this study:

1. Secondary schools administrators should attend leadership trainings and workshop on planning and decision making in order to become better school managers.
2. Administrators' should make plans on specific course of action to be adopted and implemented within each school year.
3. Secondary school administrators' should make use of participatory decision making style in the school because it will encourage staff to contribute their ideas for the smooth running of the school.

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