

IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON TEACHERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated how principals' communication skills impact teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. The study was guided by two research questions and tested two null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. A descriptive survey design was used, with a population of 8,816 teachers. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Principals' Communication Skills on Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire (IPCSTPQ)," which was developed by the researcher. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Educational Management and the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology. To assess the instrument's internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha was computed, yielding values of 0.80 for cluster A, 0.79 for cluster B, 0.81 for cluster C, 0.79 for cluster D, and 0.81 for cluster E, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.80, indicating the instrument's reliability for data collection. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions, and t-test statistics were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that principals' oral and written, communication skills all had a significant positive impact on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. Furthermore, the study concluded that there was no significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of how principals' communication skills affect their productivity. This suggests that effective communication by principals is essential for enhancing teachers' productivity, irrespective of gender. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that educational authorities ensure uniformity in communication skills training for principals in secondary schools in Enugu State. It was suggested that principals should focus on improving their oral and written communication skills to better impact teachers' productivity. Additionally, the study recommended that school administrators offer ongoing training and professional development for principals to enhance their communication abilities, and establish regular feedback mechanisms to ensure that principals' communication skills meet teachers' needs.

Keywords: Principal, communication, productivity, and education

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in human development, encompassing the entire process of learning, in which knowledge is transmitted, cognitive abilities are nurtured, and skills are developed (Farrant, 2014). It is not just about learning facts, but also about character-building and intellectual growth. Education is seen as a dynamic force for change, influencing the social behavior and attitudes of individuals. As Bamisaiye (2016) notes, education is a cumulative process that develops intellectual abilities, skills, and attitudes, which shape our perspectives and actions in life. One of the primary objectives of any educational institution is to cultivate the skills and strategies necessary for enhancing productivity. Babalola (2019) suggests that while increasing labor supply, extending work hours, and raising wages are commonly believed to boost productivity, true progress comes not from working harder but from working smarter (Ashenden, 2020). Ultimately, productivity is about maximizing output in the most efficient way. While productivity and efficiency are related concepts, they are not the same. In the context of education, both refer to how resources (inputs) are transformed into outcomes. Inputs include resources such as funding, teacher qualifications, student-teacher ratios, and facilities, while outputs refer to the results of education, including student achievements, skills acquired, and the overall impact on the community (Marginson, 2020).

Communication is the lifeblood of any organization, and this is especially true in educational settings. Effective communication is crucial for achieving organizational goals and ensuring the smooth operation of schools. As David (2016) explains, communication is a dynamic, ongoing process that shapes relationships and events within an organization. Payne (2020) emphasizes that educational institutions cannot function without clear communication between teachers, students, and staff. Any breakdown in communication can lead to administrative challenges and undermine educational objectives. Effective communication is key to fostering cooperation, improving decision-making, and ensuring the success of the school. Communication in schools is essential for the administration to achieve its goals and boost employee morale. Schein (2018) further highlights that communication is vital for effective leadership, motivating staff, and ensuring smooth collaboration. Morgan (2021) adds that the success of school administration is deeply tied to the ability of principals to communicate effectively with their teams. Nwankwo and Luisggel (2018) suggest that keeping all stakeholders well-informed fosters cooperation and increases productivity. Communication in a school setting follows a structured process. It involves a sender, a message, and a receiver, and often includes feedback. For effective communication in schools, principals must clearly articulate their ideas to staff and students and expect a response. Clear communication helps reduce misunderstandings, anxiety, and misinterpretations, especially among teachers, who are the core of the educational system. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the quality of education in any nation, making effective communication within the school an essential component of educational success.

Inadequate communication has been identified as a key factor influencing teacher productivity in secondary schools across Nigeria, particularly in Enugu State (Warimu (2016) similarly pointed out that poor communication between school principals and teaching staff can lead to conflicts, hindered collaboration, or even result in unnecessary disciplinary actions. The negative impact of poor communication extends beyond education, affecting other sectors as well. For example, it was found that poor communication in the construction industry contributes to issues such as cost overruns, delays, disputes, and ultimately, project failure. Several studies have examined the relationship between principals' communication and its impact on teacher productivity. These studies have highlighted the critical role that effective communication plays in achieving organizational goals, enhancing job performance, and fostering job satisfaction (Halim & Rubimi S 2018). On the other hand, when communication breaks down, teacher productivity tends to decline, and staff turnover can increase (Haemann, 2015)). While these studies have focused on communication and productivity, they have not specifically explored how principals' communication skills influence teachers' productivity. This gap in knowledge forms the basis for the current study, which aims to investigate the impact of principals' communication skills on teacher productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which Principals' communication skills impact teachers' productivity in secondary school in Enugu State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. find out the extent to which principals' oral communication skills impact teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. determine the extent to which principals' written communication skills impact teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

1. To what extent do principals' oral communication skills impact teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. To what extent do principals' written communication skills impacts teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.5 level of significance.

- Ho₁:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' oral communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' written communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Methods

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. According to Akuezuilo and Agu (2012), this design involves gathering information from different groups of individuals, primarily through questionnaires or personal interviews. Kothari and Garg (2014) describe descriptive research as a method focused on detailing existing characteristics and providing specific predictions or narrations about a particular individual, group, or situation. By using this design, the researcher collected data via questionnaires from a selected group, which was then analyzed and generalized to represent the larger population. The study was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu, created from the former Anambra State in 1991, is bordered by Ebonyi State to the east, Benue and Kogi States to the north, Abia State to the south, and Anambra State to the west. Enugu covers approximately 8,022.95 km² and has a population of about 3,257,298 (NPC, 2006). The state consists of 17 local government areas and six educational zones: Agbani, Awgu, Enugu, Nsukka, Obollo-Afor, and Udi. Enugu, the state capital, is home to a diverse population of civil servants, businesspeople, and artisans. The state features both public and private secondary schools, primary schools, and tertiary institutions. The researcher chose Enugu State for its familiarity with the area and because education is highly valued in the region, reflected in the proliferation of secondary schools across the state. The study's population consisted of 8,816 male and female teachers from 298 public secondary schools in Enugu State, which includes 189 rural schools and 109 urban schools (PPSMB, Enugu State, 2024). A sample of 852 teachers was selected using a stratified proportionate random sampling technique. The sample was drawn by randomly selecting 10% of teachers from each stratum. This approach follows the recommendation of Uzoagulu (2011), who suggested using a fixed percentage when dealing with large populations. The data collection instrument was a researcher-adapted structured questionnaire, titled "Influence of Principals' Communication Skills on Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire (IPSTPQ)." The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A gathered personal data, while Section B contained items related to how principals' communication skills affect teachers' productivity. Section B had four clusters:

To ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by three experts: two from the Department of Educational Management and one from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education at Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). The experts evaluated the instrument's clarity, adequacy, and relevance to the study's objectives and hypotheses. Based on their feedback, modifications were made to the instrument, including rewording four items for clarity. These revisions guided the development of the final version used in the study. The instrument was pre-tested with 26 teachers from public secondary schools in Anambra State, which shares similar characteristics with Enugu State regarding school management. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha statistic, yielding the following coefficients: 0.80 for Cluster A, 0.79 for Cluster B, 0.81 for Cluster C, 0.79 for Cluster D, and 0.81 for Cluster E, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.80. These results indicated that the instrument was reliable for data collection in this study. The researcher, assisted by five research assistants, distributed and collected the questionnaires. The research assistants were trained in a one-day session on how to interact politely with respondents and how to guide them in completing the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean ratings and standard deviation to answer the research

questions. Hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics at a 0.05 significance level. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: Very High Extent (3.50-4.00), High Extent (2.50-3.49), Low Extent (1.50-2.49), and Very Low Extent (0.00-1.49). The hypothesis tests were interpreted based on the significance value from the SPSS output. Null hypotheses were retained if the probability value was greater than 0.05 and rejected if the value was less than 0.05

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does principals' oral communication skill influences teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of principals' oral communication skill that influences teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State

S/ N	Principals' oral communication skill influences teacher's productivity when:	Male Teachers 310			Female Teachers 527			Overall 837		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec
1	the principal gives clear messages to the teachers	3.59	.72	Very High Extent	3.60	.71	Very High Extent	3.60	.71	Very High Extent
2	the principal gives direct, messages to the teachers	3.14	.97	High Extent	3.17	.96	High Extent	3.16	.96	High Extent
3	the principal gives concise messages to the teachers	3.32	.63	High Extent	3.33	.63	High Extent	3.33	.63	High Extent
4	the principal discusses school issues with teachers regularly	3.05	.93	High Extent	3.06	.92	High Extent	3.05	.92	High Extent
5	the principal gives teachers' current information on teaching strategies	2.91	.79	High Extent	2.92	.79	High Extent	2.91	.79	High Extent
6	the principal gives teachers' timely information .	3.28	.80	High Extent	3.30	.79	High Extent	3.29	.80	High Extent
7	our principal listens to teachers when they discuss issues.	2.59	.78	High Extent	2.61	.78	High Extent	2.60	.78	High Extent
8	the principal appreciates teachers ideas when they give.	3.04	.71	High Extent	3.04	.71	High Extent	3.04	.71	High Extent
9	The principal stimulating the teachers to adopt a leader's role as a teacher.	2.86	.81	High Extent	2.87	.82	High Extent	2.87	.82	High Extent
10	the principal creates an environment for the teachers to feel comfortable when	2.50	.84	High Extent	2.53	.84	High Extent	2.52	.84	High Extent

communicating with

11	Good interpersonal relations exist in my school.	3.37	.64	GE	3.39	.64	GE	3.38	.64	GE
12	teachers are allowed by the principal to use their initiative in decision making in their assigned duties	2.82	.78	GE	2.83	.78	GE	2.83	.78	GE
Grand Mean		3.04		GE	3.05		GE	3.05		GE

Table 1 shows the data derived from the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding the principal's oral communication skills that influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. Teachers in table 1 confirmed that principals give clear message to them that enabled them to be productive to a very great extent. The Table shows that male teachers' had mean ratings ranging from 2.50 to 3.59, while female teachers' mean ratings ranged from 2.53 to 3.60. The respondents had cluster means of 3.04 and 3.05, with corresponding standard deviations of .78 and .78 respectively. Overall, the mean ratings of the respondents ranged from 2.52 to 3.60, with a cluster mean of 3.05 and a standard deviation of .78. The data analysis in Table 1 shows that male and female teachers aligned to a Great Extent (GE) that principal's oral communication skills influence teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. The similarity in standard deviations suggests that the respondents exhibited uniformity in their responses.

Research Question 2: To what extent does principals' written communication skill influences teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of principals' written communication skill that influences teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State

S/ N	Principals' written communication skill influence teachers' productivity when:	Male Teachers 310			Female Teachers 527			Overall 837		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec	$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec
13	principals in written communication unambiguous	3.09	.85	GE	3.12	.84	GE	3.11	.84	GE
14	Communicates with legible hand writing.	3.23	.73	GE	3.25	.73	GE	3.24	.73	GE
15	Principal's wards are friendly.	3.09	.67	GE	3.11	.67	GE	3.10	.67	GE
16	principals written information are not verbous	3.05	.83	GE	3.07	.83	GE	3.06	.83	GE
17	Principal's written communication is	3.01	.95	G	3.04	.94	G	3.03	.94	G

easily to understand.		E		E		E
WEIGHTED MEAN	3.09	G	3.12	G	3.11	G
		E		E		E

Table 2 shows the data from the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding the principal's written communication skills that influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. The Table shows that male teachers' had mean ratings ranging from 3.01 to 3.23, while female teachers' mean ratings ranged from 3.04 to 3.25. The respondents had cluster means of 3.09 and 3.02, with corresponding standard deviations of .81 and .80 respectively. Overall, the mean ratings of the respondents ranged from 3.03 to 3.11, with a cluster mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of .80. The data analysis in Table 1 shows that male and female teachers aligned to a Great Extent (GE) that principal's written communication skills influence teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. The similarity in standard deviations suggests that the respondents exhibited uniformity in their responses.

Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' oral communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Answer to hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 5

Table 5: Mean, SD and t-test analysis of the ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' oral communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2tailed)	Decision
Male	310	36.46	4.52	835	-.636	.525	NS
Female	527	36.66	4.53				

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' oral communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. with male (M = 36.46, SD = 4.52 and female counterpart (M = 36.66, SD = 4.53) on the extent to which principals' oral communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State., $t(835) = -.636$, $p = .525$ ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' oral communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' written communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Answer to hypothesis 2 is presented in Table 6

Table 6: Mean, SD and t-test analysis of the ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' written communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2tailed)	Decision
Male	310	15.47	2.50	835	-.595	.552	NS
Female	527	15.58	2.50				

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' written communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. With male ($M = 15.47$, $SD = 2.50$ and female counterpart ($M = 15.58$, $SD = 2.50$) on the extent to which principals' written communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State., $t(835) = -.595$, $p = .552$ ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals' written communication skills influence teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Discussion

The first research question explored the impact of principals' oral communication skills on teachers' productivity. The results showed that both male and female teachers agreed that principals' oral communication skills have a strong positive influence on their productivity. The mean scores for male teachers ($M = 36.46$, $SD = 4.52$) and female teachers ($M = 36.66$, $SD = 4.53$) were almost identical, and a t-test revealed no significant difference between the two groups ($t(835) = -.636$, $p = .525$), suggesting uniformity in their perceptions. These findings align with previous studies, such as Lawal, M. (2016), who also reported a strong positive correlation between principals' communication abilities and teacher productivity. The second research question focused on the role of principals' written communication skills. Both male ($M = 15.47$, $SD = 2.50$) and female ($M = 15.58$, $SD = 2.50$) teachers agreed that written communication by principals positively influences teacher productivity. The t-test result ($t(835) = -.595$, $p = .552$) showed no significant difference between male and female teachers' responses. This indicates that effective written communication by principals is crucial for enhancing teacher performance. Similar findings were reported by Okafor (2022), who noted a positive correlation with a slightly higher mean, while Eze (2020) observed a similar but somewhat lower influence. Nwosu (2019) also found a positive relationship between written communication (specifically emails) and teacher productivity, with comparable mean ratings.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important implications for education. Principals' communication skills, encompassing oral, written, visual, and non-verbal forms, were found to have a strong influence on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. This highlights the need for principals to prioritize the development and enhancement of their communication abilities in order to lead and motivate teachers effectively. By doing so, principals can create a positive and productive school environment, which ultimately benefits student outcomes. Effective communication by principals also fosters collaboration among teachers, departments, and other stakeholders. This collaborative approach promotes a culture of shared responsibility, open feedback, and collective problem-solving, which contributes to improved school decision-making, professional development, and student support. Furthermore, principals' communication skills play a critical role in school decision-making, policy implementation, and the allocation of resources. Clear and effective communication ensures that stakeholders are engaged, transparency is maintained, and accountability is upheld throughout the school system.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study confirmed that principals' communication skills—whether oral, written, kinetic (non-verbal), or visual—play a significant role in enhancing teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Enugu State. However, there was no significant difference in how male and female teachers rated the influence of these communication skills on their productivity. This suggests that principals' ability to communicate effectively is important for improving teacher performance, irrespective of gender. The study highlights the

need for principals to cultivate strong communication skills to foster a productive work environment, which in turn can enhance the educational outcomes of students.

Recommendation

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

1. Principals in secondary schools in Enugu State should prioritize developing and enhancing their oral, written, kinetic, and visual communication skills to effectively influence teachers' productivity.
2. School administrators should provide training and professional development programs for principals to improve their communication skills.
3. Regular feedback mechanisms should be established to ensure that principals' communication skills meet the needs of teachers.
4. Principals should use a combination of communication skills (oral and written) to effectively communicate with teachers and enhance their productivity.

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