



**ASSESSING THE MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS POSSESSED BY PRINCIPALS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE**

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**Abstract**

The study assessed the managerial communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 1485 consisting 285 principals and 1200 teachers were drawn using multi-stage sampling technique. Questionnaire instrument titled “Managerial Communication Skills Inventory” (MCSI) adapted from Ogbo (2010) was utilized for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and subjected to internal consistency test using Cronbach’s alpha method which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80. Mean and t-test were used to answer the research questions and hypotheses. The findings of the study indicated among others that principals of public secondary schools in Enugu state possess two of the five electronic communication skills for administrative effectiveness. They are: sending messages to teachers and parents through mobile phone and storing and retrieving school records and students results from computer. Principals possess only one of the four creativity communication skills for administrative effectiveness which is initiating new things as new ideas come into their minds. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the electronic and creativity communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others things that the State Education Commission should ensure that only teachers who possess relevant communication skills and are capable of communicating

effectively are appointed as principals. This will help maintain a crop of principals with managerial communication skills in secondary schools in the state.

**Keywords:** *managerial communication, communication skill, administration, administrative effectiveness.*

## **Introduction**

The role of administration in an educational system is to provide working conditions favorable for good teaching and effective learning. Good administration provides teachers and students with adequate facilities and favorable environment. In secondary school system, the principal is the chief executive who is responsible for the general administration of the school. He is responsible for running the school and determining the direction and objectives of the school. Igwe (2003) listed the duty of the principal as overseeing the proper running of the school in terms of staff and students' welfare, development and implementation of educational programmes, provision of proper instruction, school-community relations, discipline and proper keeping of school records. Hence the growth and development of secondary schools depend largely on the administrative effectiveness of the principal.

Administrative effectiveness can be seen as the achievement of operative goals, capabilities, experiences, energy goals and value. It is also the satisfaction derived by members and subsequently the internal structure and operation of the organization. Adeniyi and Omotoso (2014) conceived administrative effectiveness as the extent to which secondary school principals achieve the goals and objectives of their schools. It also refers to the ability of principals to carry out administrative tasks of coordinating both human and material resources available and using them systematically for the achievement of educational objectives. Uche (2001) identified administrative effectiveness a symbol of good administrative style, team work, morale or motivation of staff, good teaching, conducive social climate as well as maintenance of rules and regulations. Principal's ability to control and maintain school infrastructural facilities, initiate good projects and complete both new ones and also those abandoned by his predecessors is exemplary of effectiveness.

One of the ways through which principals can achieve administrative effectiveness is through effective communication. Communication can be seen as an administrative tool employed by principals to influence school operations through human interactions. It serves as the life wire of

any effective school and successful administrators are trained and equipped to impact the whole school process through effective communication. Communication involves two or more persons sharing personal feelings, purposes and knowledge, and making concerted efforts to understand each other. Communication in school takes place between and among principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, students as well as other stakeholders. The goals of school are shared by the principal with relevant individuals within the school system through communication. Not only this, the management of human, material, time and information which are the main resources in schools cannot be effectively and efficiently utilized without effective communication skills.

Communication skills are the communication competencies required for coordination and integration of people and materials to accomplish objectives. Wright, Kroll and Parnell (1996) defined communication skill as the ability to employ strategic, effective and result-oriented communication acts as a means to an end. Akudolu and Olibie (2002) saw communication skill as the propensity and dispositions, which people manifest in the process of transmitting attitudes, feelings, insights and facts to others. Vale (2005) argued that communication skill is better understood in terms of the strategies, attitudes, manner and dispositions which a person employs while transmitting ideas to another with a view to influencing the other. From the above discussions, communication skill is the communicative competence needed for information processing and dissemination. The communication skill of a principal is one of the major requirements for effective implementation of school's programmes and objectives.

Managerial communication skills on the other hand are set of activities, processes or sequences of coordinated events concerned with planning, directing, organizing and controlling of people's effort towards the achievement of organizational goals (Hynes cited in Ogbo, 2010). Hynes pointed out that managerial communication skill is a tool for performing managerial functions of the school manager. It involves internal and external behaviour that provides accurate information necessary for managerial decision making and problem solving. These skills refer to a repertoire of behaviour that serves to convey information to individuals. The eight dimensions of managerial communication skills within the school are listening, critical, creative, observational, persuasive, transactional, collective bargaining, and electronic communication skills. In this study, only three dimensions were implicated and they are electronic communication skill, creative communication skill and collective bargaining skill.

Electronic communication skill involve the ability to manipulate electronic gadgets like computers and storing and downloading information from them. Creative communication skill are concerned with clear articulation of vision, optimism, and plans that an organization hopes to achieve. Integrating new ideas into the receiver's framework of ideas and concepts; developing new insights to overtake the former knowledge, leading to innovation. Collective bargaining skill includes the ability to apply diplomacy, collaborative communication, brainstorming and proficiency in writing (Ogbo, 2010).

Principals are expected to employ a range of managerial communication skills to ensure the achievement of school objectives. However, observable situation appear to indicate that most principals of secondary schools in Nigeria, Enugu State inclusive do not possess necessary managerial communication behaviour and skills which is manifested in increasing cases of teachers' poor performance, incompetence, lack of commitment, lateness to school as well as poor implementation of school programmes (Nwaora, 2005). This situation was highlighted by Joe-Onyali (2007), he lamented that majority of teachers view their principals communication skills as inappropriately used while interacting with them. They exhibit postures showing snobbish attitude and impatience to teachers' needs, feelings and problems. Poor communication skill could lead to ineffective communication and disagreement with staff. Communication skills, no doubt, have an overwhelming impact on effective school administration, because the information that is expected to bring about the change in behaviour or situation must be properly communicated, understood and applied in some way before most administrative actions can take place. It therefore became imperative to assess the managerial communications skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Communication is very crucial in administration and any break in communication or misconstrued information results to conflicts, suspicion and disagreement with teachers which can undermine the competence of principals. However, most principals in secondary schools in Enugu State appear not to possess relevant managerial communication skills needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the school. This could be observed in low staff morale, staff disciplinary issues and low teacher motivation which exit in secondary schools in Enugu state. There are also cases of interpersonal conflicts, teachers' poor commitment to duty and antagonism among staff of secondary schools in the state. This situation tends to suggest that

most principals in Enugu State do not possess relevant managerial communication skills necessary for the coordination and integration of the various components of the school system and such situation affects the overall performance and effectiveness of the school. This study therefore assessed the managerial communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Enugu State.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to assess the managerial communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically the study assessed the:

1. Electronic communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness.
2. Creativity communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness.
3. Collective bargaining communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the electronic communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness?
2. What are the creativity communication skills of principals for administrative effectiveness?
3. What are the collective bargaining communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the electronic communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the creativity communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness.

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the collective bargaining communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness.

## Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was carried out in Enugu State on a sample of 285 principals and 1200 teachers drawn using multi state sampling technique. Questionnaire instrument titled “Managerial Communication Skills Inventory” (MCSI) adapted from Ogbo (2010) was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained using Cronbach’s Alpha method. Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean for the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses.

**Results Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Electronic Communication Skills Possessed by Principals for Administrative Effectiveness n=1460**

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Remark
1.	Sends messages to teachers and parents through mobile phone	3.54	Agree
2.	Stores and retrieves school records and students results from computer.	3.39	Agree
3.	Provides advice and guidance to professional staff on information and communication Technology development issues.	2.45	Disagree
4.	uses email to connect teachers/principal to foreign countries for exchange of information on school management	2.33	Disagree
5.	Links teachers and students to an online library	2.05	Disagree

The result in Table 1 shows that the respondents agree that principals sends messages to teachers and parents through mobile phone (mean=3.54), stores and retrieves school records and students results from computer. (Mean=3.39). They however disagree that principals provide advice and guidance to professional staff on information and communication technology development issues (mean= 2.45), uses email to connect teachers/principal to foreign countries for exchange of information on school management (mean= 2.33) and links teachers and students to an online library (mean 2.05).

**Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Creativity Communication Skills Possessed by Principals for Administrative Effectiveness n=1460**

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Remark
1.	Provides opinion box where teachers are encouraged to give suggestions on how to move the school ahead	2.19	Disagree
2.	Introduces a lot of ideas while communicating with a speaker	2.37	Disagree
3.	Interested in the hidden messages conveyed by a speaker during discussion.	2.33	Disagree
4.	Initiates new things as new ideas come into my mind.	3.00	Agree

Table 2 shows that of the four items listed, the respondents agree only on one item which is that principals initiates new things as new ideas come into my mind (mean=3.00). The respondents however disagree to the remaining three items which are that principals: provides opinion box where teachers are encouraged to give suggestions on how to move the school ahead (mean= 2.37), introduces a lot of ideas while communicating with a speaker (mean= 2.37) and are interested in the hidden messages conveyed by a speaker during discussion (mean 2.33).

**Table 3: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Collective Bargaining Communication Skills Possessed by Principals for Administrative Effectiveness n=1460**

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Remark
1.	Gathers information needed before writing	3.54	Agree
2.	Prepares agenda before staff meeting	3.39	Agree
3.	Summarizes discussions at the end of my talk	3.22	Agree
4.	Sticks to terms of agreement on any issue deliberated upon and communicate teachers promptly	3.00	Agree

The result in Table 3 shows that the respondents agree to the four listed items as the collective bargaining communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness. They are that principals: gathers information needed before writing (mean=3.54), prepares agenda before staff meeting (mean= 3.39), summarizes discussions at the end of my talk (mean=3.22) and sticks to terms of agreement on any issue deliberated upon and communicate teachers promptly (mean=3.00).

**Table 4: t-test Comparison of Principals' And Teachers' Mean Ratings on the Electronic Communication Skills of Principals for Administrative Effectiveness**

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	280	3.02	.68	1458	1.22	1.96	Not-Sig
Teachers	1180	2.97	.58				

As shown in Table 4, the mean score for principals ( $M=3.02$ ,  $SD=.68$ ) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers ( $M=2.97$ ,  $SD=.58$ );  $t(1458) 1.22$ . The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore not rejected.

**Table 5: t-test Comparison of Principals' And Teachers' Mean Ratings on the Creativity Communication Skills of Principals for Administrative Effectiveness**

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	280	2.56	.57	1458	1.53	1.96	Not-Sig
Teachers	1180	2.48	.51				

Table 5 shows the mean score for principals ( $M=2.56$ ,  $SD=.57$ ) was not significantly greater than that of the teachers ( $M=2.48$ ,  $SD=.51$ );  $t(1458) 1.53$ . The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore not rejected.

**Table 6: t-test Comparison of Principals' And Teachers' Mean Ratings on the Collective Bargaining Communication Skills of Principals for Administrative Effectiveness**

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	280	3.30	.79	1458	3.12	1.96	Sig
Teachers	1180	3.10	.71				

Table 6 shows the mean score for principals ( $M=3.30$ ,  $SD=.79$ ) was significantly greater than that of the teachers ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=.71$ );  $t(1458) 3.12$ . The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore rejected.

## Discussion

The results in table 1 indicates that in the opinion of the respondents, principals communicate electronically by sending messages to teachers and parents through mobile phone, stores and retrieves school records and students results from computer. In line with this study, Onyali, Asiegbu and Nnebedum (2018) asserted that principals could utilize social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp to communicate, collaborate, acquire resources, elicit feedback; get



support; and share ideas, data; strategies, and information. The findings also shows that principals are unable to: provide advice and guidance to professional staff on information and communication technology development issues, the use email to connect teachers/principal to foreign countries for exchange of information on school management, and also to link teachers and students to an online library. It is not strange because most principals do not have smart phones, digital skills and knowledge to help teachers exchange information online. This position agrees with Ogba and Igu, (2016), they noted that majority of teachers, lack the requisite knowledge, techniques and professional capabilities in computer operation and that significant percentage of teachers have not shown interest in computer literacy. This lack of interest in the use of electronic gadgets make information exchange difficult among different people for different purposes in administration. No wonder Onuselogu and Olibie (2007), emphasized that ICT training is a means, of encouraging and creating supporting conditions for staff continuous acquisition of competencies, knowledge and skill in ICT for administrative effectiveness.

The result in table 2 shows that of the four items listed, the respondents agree that principals initiates new things as new ideas come into my mind. The respondents however disagree to the remaining three items which are that principals: provide opinion box where teachers are encouraged to give suggestions on how to move the school ahead, introduces a lot of ideas while communicating with a speaker and are interested in the hidden messages conveyed by a speaker during discussion. This finding is not surprising because such kind of freedom will amount to giving teachers too much leverage to dive into sensitive issues on school management. However, principals with creative minds can allow new ideas and approaches that are quite different from the prescribed way of doing things. In line with this, Ani, Igwe and Igwe (2004) explained that creative thought is thinking that leads to new insights, novel approaches, fresh perspectives, and whole new ways of understanding and conceiving things. When principals use creative skills, it will help in performing some cognitive actions as scanning for alternatives, discovering and inventing relationships, instituting connections and gauging differences. This skill is an essential tool and liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and public life.

In Table 3, the respondents agree to the four listed items as the collective bargaining communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectiveness. They are that principals: gather information needed before writing, prepares agenda before staff meeting,

summarizes discussions at the end of my talk and sticks to terms of agreement on any issue deliberated upon and communicate teachers promptly. This finding is not surprising owing to the fact that before a principal calls for staff meetings, he/she must have met with the school management team, prepared an agenda, be tactful in following each discussion and should stick to terms of agreement on issues discussed. If there is any reason for divergence from decisions taken, the principal must notify and give proper explanations to the teachers on reasons for the change. This brings about democracy into the school for administrative effectiveness.

The finding also indicted no significant difference between the opinion of principals and teachers on electronica and creativity communication skills possessed by principals for administrative effectives. A significant difference was found between the opinion of principals and teachers regarding principals' collective bargaining skills for administrative effectiveness. In essence, principals and teachers do not share similar view in this area. Principals seem to have rated themselves high regarding their possession of this skill as compared to teachers.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that of the five electronic communication skills assessed, principals possess two for administrative effectiveness. They are: sending messages to teachers and parents through mobile phone as well as storing and retrieving school records and students results from computer. They possess only one of the four creativity skills for administrative effectiveness which is initiating new things as new ideas come into mind. Lastly, principals possess the four collective bargaining skills listed for administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Enugu State. They include: gathering information needed before writing, preparing agenda before staff meeting, summarizing discussions at the end of talk and sticking to terms of agreement on any issue deliberated upon and communicate teachers promptly.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. In order to achieve desired level of effectiveness in schools, training and retraining of principals on managerial communication skills should be made a priority. This could be achieved through organizing workshops and seminars for principals. This training will

help them relate cordially with their staff as well as handle situations and issues in the school effectively.

2. The State Education Commission should ensure that only teachers who possess relevant communication skills and are capable of communicating effectively are appointment as principals. This will help maintain a crop of principals with relevant managerial communication skills in secondary schools in the State.

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