INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

A correlational research design was used to examine "Information and Communication Management as a Predictor of Effective Administration of Secondary Schools in Abia State". The population of the study was 8,588 comprising of the Principals and the Teachers in the Government owned secondary schools in Abia State. The sample comprised of 12 principals' and 356 teachers given a total of 368 respondents drawn from the three Educational Zones using simple random sampling techniques. Three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire on information and communication management as a predictor for effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State" (ICMEA) with 16 content items using 4-points likert scale model and validated by one lecturer in Administration and Planning Department and two experts in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The test-retest method of reliability of the instrument was used and the data obtained was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.85. The findings amongst other things was that the effective administration of secondary schools by the principals is influenced by the use of effective communication information technology. Based on the above findings, it was concluded that the principals should be trained and get acquainted with the importance and use of information communication management for effective administration.

Keywords: Information communication management, effective administration, predictor

Introduction

Information is that knowledge which is obtained from investigation, study or instruction. In other words, it is a kind of answers to a question or questions. It is therefore related to data and knowledge, as data represents values attributed to parameters, and knowledge signifies understanding of real things or abstract concepts (Casagrande, 2009). Information is conveyed either as the content of a message or through direct or indirect observation of something. That which is perceived can be construed as a message in its own right, and in that sense, information is always conveyed as the content of a message.

Information management is the collection and management of information from one or more sources and the distribution of such information to one or more audience. In secondary school system, information management involves the collection of relevant information and sub-sequent transmission of such information from the administrator downward to his subordinates and to the students on the state of affairs of the school, changes in policies, meeting, and other areas of the school for proper

academic activities Obi (2006). He continued by positing that this information can also flow upward from students to the teachers and other staffers upwards in the form of feedbacks to the administrators.

Obi (2006) cited in Unachukwu and Okorji, (2014), defined communication as the transfer of a message or information from one person to another or to a group of people for common understanding. The school organization cannot exist without communication between students, teachers, departments, other employees and the host communities. Ayanniyi (2006) asserts that the intention of information communication was to convey information, instruction, advice, feelings, opinions and facts correctly and accurately from one person to another or group of persons. The Centre for Management Development in (2003) argued that information communication management is a basic requirement for success as professional and managers. Koontz (2001) sees organizational information communication management as the transfer of information being understood by the receiver.

A good administrator must be in a position to maintain good working relationship with his subordinates via proper Information communication management. In the light of the above, Nwadiani (2002) stressed the need for the common purpose to be known by the members of any organization. Furthermore, Nwosu (2008) asserts that effective information communication whether oral, written, and visual or by symbol is a very essential factor in management. He further posits that much of the success in school organization depends upon the principals' ability to manage information communication effectively with teachers, students, parents, supervisors and the host community on the state of affairs of the school. Edem (2004) observed that lack of communication with the students brings about the absence of students' union government, and hence leads to lack of students participation in major school activities which may invariably affects them or brings in students unrest.

From the forgoing, it can be observed that there is a relationship between effective information communication management and productivity in the educational sector. Ukairo (2006) examined the patterns of communication in Abia State Secondary Schools, he found out that the commonly used communication pattern in Abia State secondary schools include morning and afternoon assembles, meetings, notice boards and verbal methods. He however found out that the assembly is the most widely used method of communication in the areas of this study. He further stated that, the essential aim of communication in any organization is goal achievement. Miner (2006) cited in Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) identified four directions of communication flow in any organization as well as the school. They include downward, upward, horizontally and diagonally.

According to Anukam Okinamiri and Ogbonna (2010), upward information communication refers to those information that is passed to sub ordinate in an organization, through the superior and continues up to the highest level of authority in the organizational process and flows from staff members to the principals. Ukeje, Akabuogu, and Ndu, (2009) opined that upward communication can be carried out through face to face contacts, staff meetings and conferences, a grievance procedure, a complaint system, a questionnaire, letter or school periodical newsletters, professional union or association. It must be noted that the effective use or application of any of the process mentioned above is dependent on the leadership style that is in operation in the organization.

Okorie (2005) explained that horizontal flow of information with people on the same level or similar organizational level is the diagonal flow with people at different level who have no reporting relationship. Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) posited that the traditional views of process of communication in schools have been dominated by downward communication flow. Diagonal information communication takes place between persons at different levels who have no reporting

relationship. It operates across the formal lines of an organizations' chain of command (Ekekwe 2003).

Obi (2006) posits that information and communication remains one of the major component of personnel management and motivation in leadership decision making, delegation, planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Effective communication helps promote harmonious relationship between the principal and staff in the school. Uwazuruike (2006), classified leadership according to the decision-making strategies and the taxonomy of leadership styles which encourages the subordinates' greater participation in decision making. The type of leadership determines the degree of liberality of information communication in an organization. Ukairo (2006) stated that information communication has been recognized as the pivot on which every administrators' activity revolves a school as an organization. He continued by positing that every administrator is expected to possess administrative competence that will help him to harness the translation of ideas, facts, directions, command or guides in oral or written words in a manner that the communication will convey and transfer the ideas from his mind to the mind of the receiver who is expected to react positively or negatively to it.

However, Anisiobi (2003) affirmes that teachers and principals are not satisfied with the level of communication style used. Etuk (2005) explained that effective information communication management helps to create a conducive working and learning environment and enhance effective administration of public secondary schools. Nwosu (2008) maintained that effective information communication management will results in more efficient operation and help to achieve organizational goals. He went further to ascertain that effective information communication is a very essential factor in management. Okorie (2005) explained that principals are beginning to lay down pattern of communication flow in both downward and upward directions to facilitate peoples' communication. Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) explained that information flows from principals' to teachers through speeches, individuals' instruction, and inter-office memo among others enhanced effective administration.

According to Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) there are various channels of communication in the school system. These are: Memos, Telephone; Telex and Fax; Postal and Telegraphic Services; Face to Face Conversation; Newsletters; Internet; and different types of media, like, newspaper, radio, television, etc. It is evident therefore, that the school administrator has many channels of information communication. It is now left for him or her to choose an effective channel that suits the situation on ground and use it for the achievement the set organizational goals of the school. However, this study seeks to identify the type of channel used by the Abia State secondary schools principals for effective dissemination of information communication.

Statement of the Problem

Presently in Abia Sate, there is communication gap between school administrators' students and their subordinates. Most administrators do not take information communication management seriously. They rarely attend the assemblies and meetings leaving it in the care of the compound master or chapel prefect. The administrators do not carry their subordinates along in terms of briefing the staff and students on new government policies and programmes, setting goals, discussing on the school challenges and prospects, holding Parent Teacher Association meetings, meetings with prefects and host of other events in the school.

These often time lead to students' unrest, disagreements with the host communities and may brew some negative attitudes that could lead to some civil unrest within and around the school community. More so, many teachers and other staff of the school may not understand what may be happening in

the system and may not take part in the decision making process. There is need for common purpose to be known by members of any organization through information communication management as this will bridge the gap created by lack of proper dissemination of information.

From the above, it becomes an undisputable fact that information communication management is the exclusive responsibility of the administrator (principals) to organize and manage the flow of information in the school to bring about optimal productivity. It is against this background that this study is designed to investigate information communication management as a predictor for effective administration and it influences secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the methods of information communication used by principals' for effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State?

2. To what extent do the principals' information communication strategies influenced effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State?

3. To what extent do principals' management of information dissemination promote effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' information communication management and effective administration of secondary schools.

2. There is no significant relationship between principals' management/ dissemination of information and effective administration

Methodology

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. This is because the study attempts to explore a non-cause and how it affects the relationship between two or more variables. The research work is aimed at determining the extent to which the independent variables correlates with the dependent variables. The target population of the study consists of 8,588 principals and teachers in the Government owned secondary schools in Abia State. There are 284 principals and 8,304 teachers respectively from the three educational zones of the state. The sample comprised of 12 principals' and 356 teachers given a total of 368 respondents drawn from the three Educational Zones using simple random sampling techniques.

The principals' and teachers were chosen for the study among others as they will provide the adequate information needed by the researchers on information and communication management for effective administration in secondary schools. Research instrument was designed by the researchers titled Information and Communication Management for Effective Administration (ICMEA). The questionnaire was divided into two sections; Section A contains demographic data while Section B contains 16 items that will elicit the respondents' views on information communication. The instrument was on a 4 (four) point Likert scale like Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was adopted and validated by expect in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation Department, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.85.

A total of 386 copies of instrument were administered to the 386 teachers and principals. The instrument was distributed by hand with the help of two research assistants and all the copies of the

instruments were returned. The data obtained was analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and the hypotheses with simple linear regression and correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

RQ₁: What are the methods of information communication used by principals for effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State?

Table 1 Mean Responses of respondents on method of information communication used by principals for effective administration

Item No	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Individual instructions	3.09	0.76	Agreed
2	E-mail	2.33	0.53	Disagree
3	Inter-office memo	3.07	0.75	Agreed
4	School bulletins	2.39	0.55	Disagree
5	School manual and hand book	2.41	0.55	Disagree
6	Telephone mobile	3.10	0.76	Agreed
	Average Mean	**2.73**	**0.65**	**Agreed**

Data in Table 3 shows that item 11, 13 and 16 had mean scores above 2.50. It implies that the items are accepted since they received mean scores above the acceptance level of 2.50. Moreover, item 12, 14 and 15 had mean scores below the acceptance mean of 2.50. It implies that the respondents do not accept the e-mail, school bulletins and school manual and hand book as the principals' method of communication for effective administration. However, responses from the respondent with Average Mean scores of 2.73, show that principals' method of communication for effective administration are individual instruction, inter-office memo, and telephone mobile.

RQ₂: To what extent do the principals' information communication management strategies influenced effective administration of secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on the influence of Principals information communication management strategies on effective administration.

Item No	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
7	The principal communication channel is known and clear	3.17	0.78	Agreed

8	There are complete lines of communication in my schools	2.82	0.68	Agreed
9	In my school every staff are carried along in decision making	2.84	0.69	Agreed
10	Communication lines is direct and short as possible	3.16	0.78	Agreed
11	Clarity of Information Communication Makes the message easy and simple to understand	2.85	0.69	Agreed
	Average Mean	2.97	0.72	Agreed

Data on Table 1 shows that item 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 have mean scores of 2.50 and above. It implies that all the items are accepted since they received mean scores above the acceptance level of 2.50. However, one finds out that from the responses of the teachers and principals' information and communication management has influenced effective administration of schools as shown by the Average Mean scores of 2.97.

RQ₃: To what extent do principals' management and dissemination of information promote effective administration of secondary schools?

Table 3 Mean Responses of the respondents on Principals' Management and Dissemination of Information for Effective Administration.

Item No	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
12	Information is provided to the right people in sufficient details and on time	3.14	0.77	Agreed
13	Principals' communicates to the staff on how to discharge their duties in efficient manners	2.77	0.66	Agreed
14	Principals' shares important information with their staff	2.85	0.69	Agreed
15	There are interpersonal relationship between the teachers and the principals	2.26	0.50	Disagree
16	There are upward and downward communication in my schools	3.06	0.75	Agreed
	Average Mean	**2.82**	**0.68**	**Agreed**

Data in Table 2 shows that item 6, 7, 8 and 10 had mean scores above 2.50. It implies that the items are accepted since they received mean scores above the acceptance level of 2.50. Moreover, item 9 had mean scores below the acceptance mean of 2.50.it implies that the respondent do not accept that there are interpersonal relationship between the teachers and the principals in secondary schools. However, one finds out that from the responses of the respondents that principals' management and dissemination of information promotes effective administration of secondary schools as shown by the average mean of 2.82.

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HO₁: There is no significant relationship between principals' information communication management and effective administration of secondary schools.

Table 4: Model Summary For principals' information communication management and effective administration

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F-ratio	P-value	R	R²	Standard Error	t-value
Regression	0.247	1	0.247						
Error	0.038	2	0.019	13.087	0.03	0.867	0.801	0.493	3.618
Total	**0.285**	**3**							

Data in Table 5 show that there are significant relationship between principals' information communication management and effective administration. This implies that principals' information communication management predict effective administration as indicated from regression results, the model performed relatively well with correlation coefficient (R-Square) which is 0.87. The F-statistics is 13.087; this shows a significant difference between the variance of the estimate and the variance of the independent variables.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between principals' management/ dissemination of information and effective administration.

Table 5: Model Summary for Principals' Management/ Dissemination of Information and Effective Administration

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F-ratio	P-value	R	R²	Standard Error	t-value
Regression	0.279	1	0.0279						
Error	0.004	1	0.004	6.764	0.023	0.876	0.742	0.221	2.60
Total	**0.032**	**2**							

Data in Table 6 show that there are significant relationship between principals' management/ dissemination of information and effective administration. This implies that principals' management/ dissemination of information predict effective administration as indicated from regression results, the model performed relatively well with correlation coefficient (R-Square) which is 0.88. The F-statistics is 6.764; this shows a significant difference between the variance of the estimate and the variance of the independent variables.

Discussion of Findings

The study accepted that principals' information communication management influenced effective administration of secondary schools. The correspondents' hypothesis affirmed that there are significant relationship between principals' information communication management and effective administration. This finding is in line with the findings of Anisiobi (2003) who affirmed that teachers and principals are not satisfied with the level of communication style used. This finding revealed that principals' information communication management have positive relationship on effective administration. This implies that principals' information communication management predict effective administration. This finding is in agreement with the view of Etuk (2005) who explained that effective information communication management help to create a conducive working and learning

environment and enhance effective administration of public secondary schools. The finding is also similar to the finding of Nwosu, (2008) who maintained that effective information communication management will results in more efficient operation and help to achieve organizational goals.

This study accepted that principals' management and dissemination of information promotes effective administration of secondary schools. The finding is in line with the finding of Nwosu (2008) who ascertain that effective information communication is a very essential factor in management. The correspondent hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' management and dissemination of information and effective administration. This implies that principals' management and dissemination of information predict effective administration. This also implies that that the principals shares important information with their staff and there are upward and downward flows of communication in the secondary schools. This finding is in agreement with the view of Okorie (2005) who explained that principals are beginning to lay down pattern of communication flow in both downward and upward directions to facilitate peoples' communication.

The study found out that principals' method of communication for effective administration are individuals instructions, inter-office memo and telephone mobile. This finding is in line with the view of Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) who explained that information flows from principals' to teachers through speeches, individuals' instruction, and inter-office memo among others enhanced effective administration. They further maintained that principals' can communicates effectively with teachers and staff by way of calling and texting through telephone mobile.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the Principals' information and communication management as a predictor for effective administration in Abia State secondary schools. From the findings, the researcher can deduce and conclude that principals' information management influenced effective administration of secondary school, clarity of information communication makes the message easy and simple to understand. Principals' management and dissemination of information promotes effective administration in secondary schools, teachers do not communicates freely with principals. Principals method of communication for effective administrations are individual instruction, inter-office memo and telephone mobile, school manual and hand book, school bulletins and email as a method of communication are not used by the secondary school principals' in Abia State. Finally the study concluded that effective information communication management assesses the emotional atmosphere of the school and students reaction to change.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, discussion and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals' should be aware of the various lines of information communication in order to promote effective administration;

2. There should be interpersonal relationship between the teachers, students and the principals to promote effective administration;

3. The principals should use e-mail, school bulletins and school manual and hand books to disseminate their information for fast and easy communication in order to promote effective administration;

4. The students should also be communicated through morning assemblies, Senior Prefect and other students executive; and

5. The principal should also communicate parents on the performance of their children through

Newsletters, results and having meetings with the PTA and SBMC.

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