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PRINCIPALS' EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the effective communication strategies of principals for improving teachers' job performance in Anambra State. One research question guided the study. This study was conducted in secondary schools in Anambra State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. All the secondary schools both public and private in all the 6 education zones in the state were studied. There are 257 public secondary schools and 298 private secondary schools in the 6 education zones. The population of the study consists of 3395 teachers in the six education zones. The sample for the study comprised 1,733 teachers in public and 1,662 teachers in private secondary schools in Anambra State respectively. The sample consisted 30% of the entire population. A researcher-developed questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Construction of the questionnaire was based on the purpose of the study and research questions. The face and content validity of the instrument was established by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the split-half method. Cronbach's alpha method was used to obtain correlation co-efficient of 0.85 for the instrument. The researcher collected the data from the respondents. Data collated were analyzed using mean scores statistics rated at 2.50 and standard deviation statistics. In this study, it is concluded, among others that, organizing continuous professional development or in-service training for principals in the art of effective communication strategies and skills using adequate financial support, fostering/building effective a culture of open communication, teambuilding and collaboration, leveraging technology for efficient communication channels, establishing clear feedback loops to monitor the impact of communication strategies on teacher job performance, establishing trust and create structures that promote principal-teacher communication (interactions), promoting effective school-community partnerships, are effective strategies for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was among others, recommended that the Anambra State government and Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC) should promote professional development training programmes for principals and teachers on effective communication strategies and teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

Keywords: Communication Strategies; Principals; Improvement; Teachers; Job Performance

Introduction

Education is continually changing, and effective communication builds the positive school culture required to implement change. The primary relationships in most schools, apart from the teacher-student link, are among staff, administrators, and parents. When implementing new programmes or initiatives, these stakeholders' voices disappear without established relationships and effective communication. Staff need to feel heard and valued to welcome changes, and changes without consultation alienates veteran teachers. Effective communication promotes motivation and builds staff culture, while poor communication creates dissatisfaction. School culture influences how the organization responds to change, and unwillingness to accept changes accompanies poor morale. Development of nation is primarily dependent on the education system available in the country. Education is nowhere without teacher's playing a pivotal role in ensuring achievement in an educational institution. Teacher's job performance plays a crucial role in student's learning process. It is known to be related to teacher's effectiveness. Teachers play a basic and dynamic role in the educational system. It is said that good performance of students depends upon effective teaching of their teachers. As professionals, teachers need to be appropriate role models and exhibit to their students a commitment to scholarly values and to life- long learning.

According to Ekwesianya, Okaforcha and Okeke, (2020), Enwezor, (2021) and Ojimba, (2024), education contains a variety of unique relationships, each with its own communicative needs and characteristics. The primary relationship in school is at the classroom level. Communication at this level serves two functions: to support the teacher to meet the learning outcomes and to build a relationship between the participants. As noted by Nwankwo, (2022), Obumse, (2022) and Nonyem, & Chimaa, (2020), classrooms must be a place where participants can be vulnerable and know that they will be safe. Creating a relationship with students is vital, but that relationship needs to be intellectually based and not focused on building a friendship. According to Nwabachili, Iloka, & Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2022), adults and students have different roles and levels of status in the school, even with open communication and established relationships. Challenging conversations with students, including honest feedback, often begin with the student perceiving the message negatively. The purpose of the conversation is to encourage the student to develop beyond what they feel is possible.

Effective communication is crucial for enhancing teacher job performance. It involves clear and concise language, active listening, providing constructive feedback, and building positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2025) and Nneka Anthonia Obumse & Uju Egenti (2021) stated that teachers can improve their communication by focusing on verbal and non-verbal cues, using appropriate tone and language, and actively seeking feedback to refine their skills.

Principals must therefore, utilize effective communication strategies to enhance teacher

job performance in secondary schools, including those in Anambra State. These strategies, according to Nwakoby, (2025), Nwakoby and Iloka, (2025) and Enwezor, & Obi, (2022), encompass both formal and informal methods such as regular meetings, professional development sessions, feedback mechanisms, and interpersonal interactions. Communication strategies as described within the context of this study are various ways, methods, mechanisms and means by which principals convey, transmit and pass information to the teachers in order to accomplish task and attain educational goals. It is associated with giving directives to teachers for task accomplishment. Communication strategies can be referred to deliberate plans or approaches employed to convey information, ideas, or directives effectively to achieve specific goals within an organizational context (Okaforcha, & Okeke, 2020; Nwankwo, & Ezeibe, 2021). However, scheduled staff meetings where principals communicate school goals, policies and expectations, and solicit feedback from teachers; likewise, mechanisms employed by principals for providing constructive feedback to teachers on their performance, facilitating professional growth and improvement; are examples of principals' communication strategies.

Teacher job performance can be referred to as the quality and effectiveness of a teacher's instructional delivery, classroom management, professional conduct, and contribution to students learning outcomes. Teacher job performance also refers to behaviours or activities that are performed towards accomplishing the school's goals and objectives. It is the result of work of a teacher in a school at a particular time which reflects how well the teacher reaches the qualification of a job in a mission of school's goal achievement. In line with the above statements, Nwankwo (2022; 2020) noted that job performance in the workplace is the accumulated results of activities which an employee performs. In the educational setting, this comprises what a teacher does in the school for achievement of school goals and the outcomes of his or her actions which are measurable through work. Therefore, high performance at work has been adjudged to be a major determinant factor in the success and profitability of any organization like the school. As noted by Okaforcha, & Iloka, (2025), Nwankwo, & Okoye, (2022), job performance is a very considerable factor influencing profitability of any school. It is important for schools as teachers' job performance leads to the school effectiveness and successes. As noted by Anushiem, (2023), Azubuike, (2024), Okeke, Okaforcha, and Ekwesianya, (2019), in the secondary schools, teacher job performance apart from classroom teaching or instructional delivery includes supervision and monitoring of students' assignments and academic achievements, counselling students in academics, conducting students' assessment, exam invigilation and scripts marking, keeping important school records such as roll calls, execution of assigned administrative duties, among others.

Teachers need to be mindful of student non-verbal communication, in order to understand the student's thoughts and feelings. Okaforcha, &

Okeke, (2020) and Nwankwo, & Ezeibe, (2021), stated that active listening and emotional intelligence are crucial for identifying and understanding students who have experienced trauma. Establishing and maintaining a classroom with effective communication supports teachers to accomplish the goal of meeting the learning outcomes while creating positive connections.

The department or unit is expected to be like a classroom: there are individuals with various personalities and communication styles that must work toward a common goal. Discussions with colleagues can be intimidating. It is essential to express ideas clearly and not take exception when others do not share points of view. When a colleague's disagreement occurs during a presentation or meeting, it is acceptable to ask for further discussion in the future. Experienced teachers may view colleagues who support new programmes or initiatives as challenging their experience and methods. Onyekwelu, (2024), and Ofozoba and Ofozoba, (2023), Enwezor, and Chukwunonye, (2021) observed that colleagues do not require the same deference as administrators or parents, but teachers are expected to practice effective communication techniques to promote a positive relationship in teaching and learning processes. Apathetic colleagues require set deadlines and clear guidelines; it is possible to avoid difficult conversations if everyone in the group is aware of their role and the purpose it serves. Dominant colleagues do not process subtle messages; therefore, they require responses with clear boundaries. The essential elements to remain assertive are knowing the facts, maintaining focus, finding common ground, and staying calm. In the light of the above, it is advisable to document conversations with authoritative colleagues in e-mail records or meeting minutes. Collaboration is necessary for growth, and communication promotes effective collaboration.

Honest conversations between administrators and staff are the prerequisite for growth. Growth occurs through reflection, and effective communication can reveal diversions from the goal in a teacher's practice. Both teachers and administrators must learn to listen and reflect on feedback, both positive and negative. According to Okaforcha, & Okeke, (2025), Enwezor, & Chukwunonye, (2022), Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2025), resistant or under-performing staff need to engage in difficult conversations with administrators. Participants need to paraphrase the concerns during the discussion, in order to ensure active listening and to clarify the message. This technique also helps the participants to remain mindful and keep them from becoming defensive while receiving feedback. Teachers need to remember that difficult conversations in class are part of the teaching job, and they should avoid venting frustrations to students or colleagues or creating an adversarial environment. Teachers are more likely to adopt the recommended changes if the relationship with the administrator is strong, and they feel safe and heard through the conversation. Of note, positive staff relationships form when teachers feel appreciated, and their strengths are acknowledged and honest conversations must occur between teachers and administrators; effective communication is key to maintaining the relationship.

The final relationship to be examined occurs between the school and the parents. Onyekwelu,

(2024) and Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2025) noted that the teacher's ability to communicate effectively is the essential resource to create a strong partnership between the school and the family. This relationship contributes to the students' increased academic success. To establish this relationship, teachers should inform parents at the start of the year of their expectations, support them when they assist, and thank them for their effort. Parents are more supportive when teachers ask for input about their students' strategies and listen without becoming defensive. Okaforcha, (2021), Adinna & Onyekwelu, (2021), Anthony (2014) stated that teachers engage in difficult conversations with families for a variety of reasons. Highly demanding parents require the teacher to inform the parents about whether their requests are realistic, and connect them to other professionals for additional support. Communicating with an overly protective parent necessitates patience, reassurance, and composure. Staff may need compromise when dealing with angry parents, in order to avoid a power struggle. If a solution is not evident, both parties may find common ground in a goal for the student (Onyekwelu, 2024, Obumse, & Chinwe, 2021). Teachers who discuss parent communication techniques with their colleagues' report increased confidence in their communication abilities. The characteristics essential for positive staff-family conversations are positive relationships, transparency, and cooperation. All school-based relationships require effective communication in order to fulfil the prime function of the school.

Authors such as Enwezor, (2021), Okeke, (2022), Okeke, & Okaforcha, (2025) stated that communication is the transmission of information from a source to an audience. Effective communication requires that the audience understand the message in its intended form. Challenging conversations include elevated emotions, differing points of view, and a resolution valued by at least one participant. Administrators in the schools communicate both directly and indirectly. As noted by Iloka, (2025), Ethelmary, Nwankwo, & Aroh, (2019), Ezeaku (2019), direct communication is intentional, while indirect communication includes expressions, physical behaviours, and speech patterns. Awareness of indirect communication and active listening are essential components of face-to-face conversations. For communication to be effective, communicators must be mindful of their message and indirect communication, actively listen, and engage in challenging conversations.

One of the ways to improve the process of communication with an organization and to remove the barriers to effective organizational communication is by forming a positive attitude within the workplace (Onyekwelu, 2021, Azubuike, 2025, Ucheagwu-Okoye, 2021 and Okoye, 2025). It is vital to be considerate, respectful and polite with one's colleagues, superiors and subordinates in order to create an integrated working environment. Barriers prove to be highly unproductive and will not lead to goodwill of the organization. It is up to the individuals to possess this responsibility of overcoming the barriers, working in coordination with the co-workers, efficiently supervising and managing the subordinates

and maintaining trustworthy relations with one's employers and superiors.

Communication, according to Ezeamama, Ofozoba (2023) and Ibe, (2022), Okoye, and Ezeaku, (2025), is one of the most crucial elements of the school system, which is essential to develop in all areas. It does not matter how good the communication system is, how well formed and well developed it is, barriers do occur within the communication systems, whether it is an organization, communication between the family members, social network, institution and so forth. There are number of barriers that do come within the course of communication, these are environmental and physical barriers, semantic barriers, cultural barriers, psychological barriers and perception of reality. Within an organizational structure, many barriers arise and there have been formulation of certain measures and procedures for overcoming them, these are perceptual barriers, emotional barriers, language barriers, cultural barriers and physical barriers; the most effective and successful means of overcoming barriers of effective organizational communication is by forming an optimistic approach within the workplace and it is regarded as mandatory to develop politeness, good manners and respect within ones approaches and attitude. Psychological barriers to effective communication can be marital barriers, academic culture and communication flow. Ekwesianya, (2025), Ezeaku and Okoye, (2025), and Okechukwu, (2025), noted that content barriers to effective communication are non-assertive behaviour, anger or frustration, personal bias, team diversity, lack of confidence, inappropriate priorities, organizational structure, distractions and interruptions, tunnel vision, rank differences and task preoccupation. In literature, there are several steps identified for overcoming the communication barriers, these are, eliminating differences in perception, use of simple language, reduction and elimination of noise levels, active listening, emotional state, simple organizational structure, avoid information overload, provide constructive feedback, proper media selection and flexibility in meeting the targets.

Barriers that take place within the communication systems are very unfortunate and unwanted, every individual wants that his functioning should be implemented in a smooth manner without the occurrence of barriers, for instance, when a person is discussing a vital issue with somebody, or two friends are having a friendly conversation and a doorbell ring or somebody enters then in most cases, it is displeasing. According to Onyekwelu and Adinna, (2022), Anthony, (2019), Anushiem and Anushiem, (2023), there are number of reasons due to which these barriers take place, most of the barriers carry a reason, for instance, if some important tasks are going on and a doorbell ring and somebody enters immediately, this might have occurred due to a particular reason and there are also numerous factors which can be physical barriers, such as faults that take place in the telephonic system, internet not working or any barriers which are random.

As noted by Ofozoba, (2020), Ibe, (2019), Anushiem, (2017), Ekwesianya, (2022), the intent of the communication can be complicated when the participant's lack of skills obscures the intended message. It is critical that body language and manner of speaking match the intention and set the desired tone. The absence of tough conversation can lead to passive-aggressive discussions occurring behind the scenes, so school administrators must work to overcome the barriers to effective communication (Okechukwu, 2025), Enwezor, & Obi, 2022, Ezeaku, 2025). There are basic barriers to communication which are of different kinds and possess various kinds of characteristics. According to Okaforcha, & Okeke, (2019), Ojimba, (2020), Iloka, and Nwakoby, (2025), Okeke, Okaforcha, & Ekwesianya, (2019) and Okoye, (2021), they include:

Environmental and Physical Barriers – Under the environmental and physical barriers, there have been classification of barriers as follows:

a) Time – This is the barrier which is concerned with developing quicker and speedy channels of communication. For example, when communicating with somebody, if the process is time consuming such as mailing letters, then it is a barrier, any kind of communication whether, it is done in a formal or an informal manner, if it is highly time consuming then it proves to be a barrier and for efficient working, individuals need to develop a faster means of communication such as electronic mail instead of sending letters by post.
b) Space – It is vital to eliminate the unwanted distance within the communication system, if the condition requires it, for example, it can occur in telephonic communication. If two persons need to discuss an important matter and one of them is in India, whereas other one is in the United States of America, then telephonic conversation may not prove to be very effective, then they can send each other details through the system of email.
c) Place – The area, the environment where the communication is taking place should be clear and not over-crowded. Noise pollution can be a barrier to effective communication, this is obvious, where there is noise, there a person cannot efficiently communicate, therefore places and areas with lesser people, proper ventilation is required for effective communication.
d) Medium – The medium via which the process of communication is taking place should be effective and appropriate. Communication takes place in various forms; it is oral, written, audio, video, formal, informal, the medium used for the purpose of communicating should be accurate, precise and understandable.

Semantic Barriers – When communicating with the other persons, no matter what kind of communication means is utilized, whether it is formal or informal, it is vital to make use of appropriate words, vocabulary and language; all kinds of communication should reflect decency. Language and vocabulary that is used in communication should be understandable to the persons; if a person speaks only English and a word is used in Spanish then he may or may not understand the word, for

instance, if a person speaks only English, then it could be a possibility that he might have studied other languages such as Spanish or French. Two or more persons when they are communicating with each other should use a common language, so that everyone can understand it well.

Cultural Barriers – Communication also takes place between people belonging to different nationalities, religions, castes, creeds, races, ethnicities etc. in other words, when two persons are communicating with each other, there may be differences in their cultural backgrounds. It is vital to overcome all the barriers that might occur within the course of communication. It is crucial to make people aware of one's own culture with whom they are communicating. In the form of communication, it is vital to form an understanding and acceptance of another person's culture.

Psychological Barriers – In the process of communication, it is vital to understand each other's mindset and mental capacity; this applies in every case whether it is a professor giving a lecture or a conversation between the employer and an employee. If someone is communicating with the other individual or a group of individuals with an attitude of disinterest or unwillingness then the process of communication will not be effective. In this case, it would have believed to be that attitude of the communicators is inappropriate for the purpose of making the process of communication effectual. It is therefore considered crucial to overcome the psychological barriers.

Perception of Reality – When communicating, it is important to understand various perceptions of a situation or of an issue or a problem. There are different levels of perceptions that are involved when communicating about a particular topic, condition, problem, issue, situation, dilemma, stress or a concept. Lacking understanding about different levels of perceptions may prove to be a barrier. In order to implement effective communication, it is vital to gain the 'perception of reality' which means information about facts, knowledge, figures, actuality and what is true. While communicating, it is important to be open, flexible and transparent.

School administrators or teachers who choose to ignore staff or students' feelings of apprehension will spend more time dealing with undesired behaviours. This means that engaging in challenging conversations by using effective communication and listening are necessary to implement changes that enable school improvement. Communication and relationship with stakeholders are more effective methods of school improvement than new policies or programmes.

The benefits of challenging conversations are clear, yet barriers exist that keep teachers and administrators from engaging in these conversations. There is an apprehension of challenging conversations because they can be unpredictable and

emotional. The prospect of managing upset or aggressive people in the school organization is one of the most daunting parts of engaging in difficult conversations. The cultural norm of being nice often hinders the school administrators' ability to have tough conversations or give honest feedback. Some school administrators often lack clarity in their communications in an attempt to be kind, but a clear message is more kind than an ambiguous message. Some school administrators often avoid challenging conversations due to fear of damaging relationships, fatigue, misinterpreting the significance of the issue, or lack of confidence in their skills. The result of this could be very devastating on the school generally.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain effective principals' communication strategies for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Specific objective of the study was to ascertain effective communication strategies of principals for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question: What are the effective communication strategies of principals for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Research Method

This study was conducted in secondary schools in Anambra State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. All the secondary schools both public and private in all the 6 education zones in the state which include Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha were studied. There are 257 public secondary schools and 298 private secondary schools in the 6 education zones. The population of the study consists of 3395 teachers in the six education zones. The sample for the study comprised 1,733 teachers in public and 1,662 teachers in private secondary schools in Anambra State respectively. The sample consisted 30% of the entire population.

A researcher-developed 43-item questionnaire titled: "Effectiveness of Principals' Communication Strategies on Teacher Job Performance (EPCSTJPQ)", organized on a 4-point rating scale, was the instrument for data collection. Construction of the questionnaire was based on the purpose of the study and research questions. The questionnaire items were structured on 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) - 4 points, Agree (A) - 3 points, Disagree (D) - 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) -1 point, in order to answer research questions one, three and four.

The face and content validity of the instruments was established by three experts: two in educational administration and planning and one in measurement and evaluation; all in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the split-half method. This was done by administering copies of the instrument to 20

teachers from public secondary schools and another 20 teachers from private secondary schools) in Enugu state. Cronbach's alpha method was used to obtain correlation co-efficient of 0.85 for the instrument. The researcher collected the data from the respondents. Data collated were analyzed using mean scores statistics rated at 2.50 and standard deviation statistics. The decision rule for taking decisions on the items on the questionnaire which was rated at 2.50 was that any mean score which rated at 2.50 and above was regarded to be in support of the statement and therefore termed as agree (A). Any mean score that rated below 2.50 was regarded as not in support of the statement and therefore termed disagree (D).

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Mean Scores and SD of Teachers on Principals' Effective Communication Strategies for Improving Teachers' Job Performance in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

S/N	Please, indicate your agreement with the principals' communication strategies for improving for teachers' job performance in your school:	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
1.	organizing continuous professional development or in-service training for principals in the art of effective communication strategies and skills using adequate financial support	182	191	103	88	2.83	1.05	**Agree**
2.	fostering/building effective a culture of open communication, teambuilding and collaboration	205	164	101	94	2.85	1.09	**Agree**
3.	leveraging technology for efficient communication channels	212	223	59	70	3.02	0.99	**Agree**
4.	establishing clear feedback loops to monitor the impact of communication strategies on teacher job performance	162	210	110	82	2.80	1.01	**Agree**
5.	establishing trust and create structures that promote principal-teacher communication (interactions)	203	241	63	57	3.05	0.93	**Agree**
6.	promoting effective school-community partnerships	188	198	92	86	2.87	1.04	**Agree**
7.	maintaining a high level of moral values including accountability	217	220	76	51	3.07	0.94	**Agree**
8.	employing effective leadership practices likewise styles	192	216	91	65	2.95	0.98	**Agree**
9.	organizing developers for continuous school improvement	207	195	72	90	2.92	1.06	**Agree**
	Overall Mean Score & SD =					**2.93**	**1.02**	**Agree**

Analysis of result in Table 1 revealed that none of the items from 1 to 9 were rated below 2.50 of the acceptable mean score by the teachers to show their disagreement with all these statements. All the items were rated above 2.50 of the acceptable mean score by the teachers to show their agreement with these statements. The overall mean score and standard deviation (SD) of 2.93 and 1.02 indicated closeness in the mean responses of the teachers. This result showcased the effective communication strategies of principals for improving teacher job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

It was discovered through the finding that the effective communication strategies of principals for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. These effective strategies include: principals' leadership styles, organizational factors such as school culture, availability of adequate written communication tools and technologies,

support from higher educational authorities through the Ministry and other education boards, principals' own communication skills and beliefs like establishing effective feedback system, interpersonal factors, intra/internal factors, use of overloaded or lengthy information, and teachers' cooperation with principal especially in areas of clarity of information, and having good listening abilities. This finding corroborates and relates with the findings of Mba and Maclean (2022) study which confirmed that factors to effective communication ranging from organizational or institutional factor, interpersonal factor, intrapersonal or internal factor and overload of information. However, for effectiveness in principals' communication strategies due considerations and attention must be given to these factors for enhancement of teacher job performance.

Conclusion

In this study, it is concluded that the principals' effective communication strategies for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State include principals' leadership styles, organizational factors such as school culture, availability of adequate written communication tools and technologies, support from higher educational authorities through the Ministry and other education boards, principals' own communication skills and beliefs like establishing effective feedback system, interpersonal factors, intra/internal factors, use of overloaded or lengthy information, and teachers' cooperation with principal especially in areas of clarity of information, and having good listening abilities. Hence, for improved teacher job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State maximum attention should be paid to the identified effective principals' communication strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been proffered:

1. Constant professional development training programmes should be organized for principals on effective communication strategies, including digital communication tools and techniques for improved teachers' job performance in secondary schools in from Anambra State.
2. There is need for principals to utilize technology which includes using social media and other platforms for sharing information, scheduling meetings, and providing timely updates on school policies and initiatives likewise other efficient means to enhance effectiveness of their communication strategies for improved teacher job performance in secondary schools.

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