

Open and Aggressive Communication Patterns: Impacts on Administrative Performance of Principals in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study was carried out mainly to investigate the impact of open and aggressive communication patterns on the performance of administrative duties by principals in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of correlational study was used for the study. The population for this study consisted of 203 public secondary schools and 7,538 teachers. Validated instruments entitled, ‘Open and Aggressive Communication Patterns Questionnaire’ (OACPQ) and ‘Performance of Administrative Duties Questionnaire’ (PADQ) were employed to collect data from the sample of 300 teachers. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select two Local Government Areas from each of the three Senatorial Districts. The second stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select five public secondary schools from each of the six Local Government Areas. The third stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select 10 teachers from each of the 30 public secondary schools. The study revealed that the level of performance of administrative duties as well as the extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns by the principals in public secondary schools in Ekiti State were relatively moderate; there was significant positive relationship between open communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals; and there was no relationship between aggressive communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals. The level of performance of administrative duties and the extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns were moderate. Open communication pattern made significant contribution to the performance of administrative duties while aggressive communication pattern was unable to.*

KEYWORDS: open communication, aggressive communication, communication, communication patterns, administrative duties

INTRODUCTION

Administration in education involves planning activities which aim at fulfilment of goals of educational system. Educational administration is therefore, concerned with the effective and efficient utilisation of human and material resources for the attainment of goals of teaching and learning in the school system. The fundamental objective of any organisation (school) is the accomplishment of its goals. This could be achieved and realised when human, material and financial resources of the organisation (school) are well harness and judiciously used by the administrator (principal).

There is growing concern about the deteriorating performance of principals in school administration. Indeed, over the last few decades or so, number of research in educational administration worldwide have focused their research activities on identifying ways and means of reversing the deteriorating performance of principals in school administration. Meanwhile, performance in school does not come by chance, as their success to some extent, depends on the heads of such schools. It is believed that the level of interaction and communication of the principal is significantly related to the administrative performance of the school principal. The principal as the Chief Executive of secondary school has multifarious duties to accomplish for successful administration of the school system. According to Abiodun-Oyebanji (2019), principals as the administrative heads of schools, they are to co-ordinate human and material resources toward the attainment of some pre-determined goals and objectives of their schools; they are expected to work with both the teaching and non-teaching members of their schools to harness material resources for the accomplishment of their school goals; they are equally to mobilise the efforts of their staff members towards the achievement of common goals. In Ekiti State, Nigeria, there have been complaints about the poor performance of principals in most of the public schools. These complaints include, non-involvement of teachers in policy making, taking of decisions without involving the teachers and so on. Evidence available in literature has it that principals are often accused of being nice to their like and unduly harsh to those they dislike; and most often, being accused of not informing the teachers about school affairs. It has been observed that teachers on their own side, exhibit non-commitment to effective teaching and learning, lack sense of belonging, feel non-chalant towards what happens in the school, lack interest in extracurricular activities, lack cooperation which at times, results in some teachers flouting the principal's order, and inciting the students against the principal.

In view of the above, it has been noted that misunderstanding usually erupts between the principal and the staff who hold widely divergent views on issues bothering on learning process. He also asserted that teachers put little or no effort in executing their duties such as not preparing their notes, not giving or marking assignment, lateness to school, absenteeism, truancy, and unwillingness to co-operate with the principal which in certain cases culminates in factions within the school, namely, the principal and his faction and the faction of the disagreeing staff members. This ugly situation above is unhealthy for any educational system as it results in low commitment to effective teaching and learning and lacklustre performance in school administration.

Students' welfare services are focal point of school administration. It has been observed by the researcher that performance of this duty by the some principals of public secondary schools in Ekiti State is below expectation which is evident in their inability to dialogue with the students in choosing a suitable profession; facilitate the placement after graduation; organise orientation programme; and ensure students' discipline and so on. Teachers' welfare services appear not to be adequately provided. This is evident in the inability of the principal to ensure, through dialogue that members of staff do not overwork themselves; staff bus, well-furnished offices and club are provided; staff cooperative society is organised and so on.

It seems, supervision of instruction by some principals has not been thorough which is evident in the inability of the principal to hold individual conference with teachers to exchange views and discussing ways of improving instruction; to ensure the progress of each student is systematically and accurately monitored, recorded and regularly communicated to parents; organise orientation programmes for new staff members; work with teachers in the development of instructional goals and objectives; inspect teachers' lesson notes, class registers, diaries and teaching aids and offer professional advice for their improvement. It appears some principal's relationship with the community has not been so cordial which is evident in the principal's inability to develop common understanding about the aims and objectives of the school with the community; improve communication link with the community; engage in inviting key figures in the community to give talks to the students.

In Nigeria, much effort has been geared towards improving the educational system. In line with international trends, one of the primary thrusts of these efforts has been on improving the management of communication in schools (Elmore, 2005; Babayemi, 2006; and Fuller, 2007). In this study, performance of administrative duties by the principal can be viewed from the perspective of leadership effectiveness, especially, his or her open and aggressive communication patterns in working towards the accomplishment of school goals. According to Atanda and Lameed (2006), principals being leaders, they monitor and support teachers through periodic communication on the ideas teachers can use to ensure students' academic progress. They also ensure discipline, and as administrative leaders, plan budgets, manage school facilities and develop productive communication relationships with the broader community.

Communication in school setting is seen as the life wire of a school. No meaningful activity can take place in the school without communication. School principals carry out their management functions through effective communication. Akinwale and Okotoni (2018) said that communication is a basic element for the school leader in the course of directing and mobilising the workers towards the achievement of the school objectives. The vision and mission of the school, decision making process, delegating of responsibilities, school planning and other related matters are being communicated by the principal to the stake holders through effective communication. From this statement, one can know that communication play a prominent role in the administration of school and in the accomplishment of the school goals. More so, in the absence of an effective communication in the school, it becomes difficult for the school to attain success because people will not be properly informed of their

responsibilities and expectations. Ndu, Ocho and Okeke (1997) asserted that communication that is not effective has been shown to be a source of school administrator's failure.

Communication establishes relationships and makes organising possible. Every message has a purpose the sender intends, whether consciously or unconsciously, to accomplish something by communicating. Lunenberg and Ornstein (2008) asserted that a good understanding of the communication patterns could lead to improved performance in school administration. According to them, communication patterns interlinks with most of the processes that take place in school districts such as, planning, organising, staffing, directing and so on. In organisational (school inclusive) contexts, messages typically have a definite objective to, motivate, inform, teach, persuade, entertain, or inspire. This definite purpose is in fact, one of the principal differences between casual conversation and managerial communication.

It has been observed by the researcher that some principals consciously do not create an atmosphere where all members of staff can freely express their views and opinions on issues like staff welfare, students' welfare, students and staff discipline. Hence, such principals are autocratic. More so, it has been observed that some principals express their feelings and opinions in a way that violate the right of staff, students and other stakeholders which may affect their performance of administrative duties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance of Administrative Duties

Administrative duties performance means an action considered in relation to how well or badly an administrator has done or executed a task (Hornby, 2010). In the school system, administrative performance means how successful the school administrator has attained goals and objectives. It is measured by the administrator's flair in development and implementation of educational programmes of the school, procurement of staff, provision of facilities, keeping of school records including records of school funds as well as creating a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere in school. Onyeike and Nwosu (2018) saw the duties of the principal as student welfare, staff welfare, supervision of instruction, school-community relations, maintenance of school facilities, student discipline, staff discipline and management of school finance. These duties if not properly carried out, may endanger the effective functioning of the entire school system. Therefore, it is important that principals keep abreast of the above duties and regularly map out techniques to accomplish them, otherwise, school objectives may be in danger. Two of these techniques are open and aggressive communications.

According to Pertomode (2001), it is a critical responsibility of the school head to direct and control the activities of human and non-human resources in order to achieve educational goals and objectives. Kelechukwu (2011) described the duties of the school head as 'head teacher, leader of the school, school father adviser, chief administrative executive, public relations officer, curriculum director, innovator, policy maker, organiser, communicator, school authority educator, perfectionist and philosopher.' In the same vein, Ezeocha (1992) cited in Bolarinwa (2014) saw the duties of the school head as supervision of instructions, curriculum

development, community relations, and management of school finance, staff and student personnel administration.

Open Communication Pattern

Open communication pattern deals with a situation whereby the principal consciously create an atmosphere where all the members of staff and students freely express their views and opinions on issues concerning the school. It is when all parties are able to express ideas to one another such as in conversation or debate; it establishes an environment where all employees have a good understanding of the goals and what needs to be done to accomplish those goals. Guo and Wu (2015) submitted that open communication pattern has great impact on the administration of any organisation.

In the school system, the principal is not working alone. He has to share information, transfer ideas and feelings through open communication pattern to enhance the collective cooperation of others in the school. In a study conducted by Ojobor (2010) titled, the influence of communication on administrative climate of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria found out that inadequate communication among the school personnel creates an environment of rumours, and negative remarks which are injurious to the school administration. Ezenweke (2013) carried out a research on teacher-principal communication patterns as correlates of effective school administration in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria found out that the communication patterns that are commonly used by the public secondary school principals are open, inclusive, two-way, result driven and multi-chances.

Aggressive Communication

This communication can be hostile, threatening, and comes from a place of wanting to win at all costs. An aggressive communicator behaves as if their contribution to the conversation is more important than anyone else and the content of their message is often lost because of the tone of their delivery. According to Adubato (2014), aggressive communication pattern is the communication style in which individuals express their feelings and opinions and advocates for their needs in a way that violates the right of others. He further proved that aggressive communicators will often try to dominate others; use humiliation to control others; criticise; blame, or attack others; have low frustration tolerance; speak in a loud, demanding and overbearing voice; act threateningly and rudely. Ogunyemi and Olagbaju (2020) opined that aggressive communicators are individuals who seek a position of superiority which is often likened to authoritarian.

In a study carried out by Yaran and Uludag (2012) titled, the impact of verbal aggression on burnout: an empirical study on university students. They found out that verbal aggressive was positively associated to emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy. Ogunyemi and Olagbaju (2020) carried out a research on the effects of assertive and aggressive communication styles on students' self-esteem and achievement in English Language found out that there was a significant difference in the English Language achievement of students

taught by teachers using assertive and aggressive communication styles in favour of those taught by assertive teachers.

Speech Act Theory

This theory was developed by Austin in 1975. He believes that people not only use language to assert things but also use it to do things. This implies that language has the dual role of assisting users express their thoughts, feelings and opinions and imposing one's will on others. Therefore, this theory could thus be conceived of as a theory where the effect of an utterance is analysed in relation to the speaker and listeners' behaviours. The theory is divided into three different categories thus:

(i) The Locutionary Act: This is seen as the act of saying something in such a way that it conveys a clear and understandable meaning to the listener (Esan, 2018).

(ii) The Illocutionary Act: This is what is majorly referred to as speech act and it has to do with the performance of an action sent by the illocutionary (Esan, 2018) and

(iii) The Perlocutionary Act: This refers to the effect of what is said on the attitude, feelings, emotions, self-esteem, actions and thoughts of the receiver.

This is the act on which this study is based. In the school setting, the speech act theory applies to the effect of what is said by the principal (open and aggressive communication patterns) and how it is said on teachers' output.

Research Questions: The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. What is the level of performance of administrative duties by the principals of secondary schools in Ekiti State?

2. What is the extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns by the principals of public secondary schools in Ekiti State?

Research Hypotheses: The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between open communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between aggressive communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools.

METHODS

Descriptive research design of correlational study was employed for the study. This is because, it focuses on the observation and perception of the existing situation, describes and interprets

what is concerned with issues, conditions, practice or relationship that exist; views, belief and attitude that are held, processes that are going on and trends that are developing.

The participants as at the time of this study consisted of 203 public secondary schools and 7,538 teachers (Source: Ministry of Education, Ekiti State, Nigeria). The sample consisted of 300 teachers. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select two Local Government Areas from each of the three Senatorial Districts. The second stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select five public secondary schools from each of the six Local Government Areas. The third stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select 10 teachers from each of the 30 public secondary schools.

Open and Aggressive Communication Patterns Questionnaire (OACPQ) and Performance of Administrative Duties Questionnaire (PADQ) were designed and adopted to collect data for this study. A 4-point rating scale was employed for the instrument. The reliability co-efficient (r) calculated were 0.72 and 0.80 for OACPQ and PADQ respectively through the test-retest method, which was high enough to ensure the reliability of the instruments. The two sets of instruments were administered with the help two trained research assistants. The hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson product moment correlation statistics.

Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select two Local Government Areas from each of the three Senatorial Districts. The second stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select five public secondary schools from each of the six Local Government Areas. The third stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select 10 teachers from each of the 30 public secondary schools.

RESULTS

Table 1: Level of performance of administrative duties by the principals in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Level of Performance of Administrative Duties by the Principals	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low (47-142.14)	60	20
Moderate (142.15-167.85)	215	71.67
High (167.85-188)	25	8.33
Total	300	100

Table 1 presents the level of performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The result showed that out of 300 sampled, 60 represent 20 percent of those who agreed that the principal had low level of performance of administrative duties. Those who agreed that the principal had moderate level of performance of administrative duties were 215 representing 71.67 percent while those who agreed that the principal had high level of performance of administrative duties were 25 representing 8.33 percent that showed that the level of performance of administrative duties by the principal was moderate.

Table 2: The extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns by the principals of public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Open communication pattern	300	80.47	7.35	High
2	Aggressive communication pattern	300	12.36	2.87	Low

Table 2 shows the extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns by the principals of public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The result shows that the principal mostly use open communication pattern which is closely followed by aggressive communication pattern. This shows that the extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns were moderate.

Table 3: Test of relationship between open communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Open communication pattern	300	15.08	4.59
Performance of administrative duties	300	80.46	7.36

0.194
0.426*

Note: *p<0.05 (significant result)

Table 3 shows the relationship between open communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools. The result shows that the value of r-calculated (0.426) is greater than r-table (0.194). Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier formulated is rejected. This then means that there is significant relationship between open communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Test of relationship between aggressive communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Aggressive communication pattern	300		24.16		
				0.86	0.996
Performance of administrative duties	300	36.34	14.04		

Table 4 shows the relationship between aggressive communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools. The result shows that the value of r-calculated (0.86) is less than r-table (0.996). Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier formulated is accepted. This then means that there is no significant relationship between aggressive communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals of public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the level of performance of administrative duties by the principals was relatively moderate during the period of investigation. This might be as a result of their planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting ability during the course of discharging their administrative duties. This finding agrees with Abiodun-Oyebanji (2019) who asserted that principals as the administrative heads of schools, they are to co-ordinate human and material resources toward the attainment of some pre-determined goals and objectives of their schools; they are expected to work with both the teaching and non-teaching members of their schools to harness material resources for the accomplishment of their school goals; they are equally to mobilise the efforts of their staff members towards the achievement of common goals.

It was also revealed that the extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns by the principals in public secondary schools in Ekiti State was relatively moderate during the period of investigation. This might be as a result of the ability of the principals to have countered some of the barriers of communication like, psychological, organisational, and

personal barriers as well as obstruction in the process of encoding and decoding of messages due to the use of wrong words, faulty translations, and different interpretations and so on. This is in agreement with Ndu, Ocho and Okeke (1997) who asserted that communication that is not effective has been shown to be a source of school administrator's failure; and Lunenberg and Ornstein (2008) who asserted that a good understanding of the communication patterns could lead to improved performance in school administration. According to them, communication patterns interlinks with most of the processes that take place in school districts such as, planning, organising, staffing, directing and so on. In organisational (school inclusive) contexts, messages typically have a definite objective to, motivate, inform, teach, persuade, entertain, or inspire. This definite purpose is in fact, one of the principal differences between casual conversation and managerial communication.

It was revealed that there was significant positive relationship between open communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals. This could be due to the personal trait of the principals. This agrees with Guo and Wu (2015) who submitted that open communication pattern has great impact on the administration of any organisation; and Ezenweke (2013) who found out that the communication patterns that are commonly used by the public secondary school principals are open, inclusive, two-way, result driven and multi-chances.

It was also revealed that there was no relationship between aggressive communication pattern and performance of administrative duties by the principals. This could be as a result of hostile nature of the principals. This agrees with Adubato (2014) who asserted that aggressive communication pattern is the communication style in which individuals express their feelings and opinions and advocates for their needs in a way that violates the right of others. He further proved that aggressive communicators will often try to dominate others, use humiliation to control others, criticise, blame or attack others, have low frustration tolerance; speak in a loud, demanding and overbearing voice, act threateningly and rudely; Ogunyemi and Olagbaju (2020) opined that aggressive communicators are individuals who seek a position of superiority which is often likened to authoritarian; Yabatan and Uludag (2012) who found out that verbal aggressive was positively associated to emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy; and Ogunyemi and Olagbaju (2020) who found out that there was a significant difference in the English Language achievement of students taught by teachers using assertive and aggressive communication styles in favour of those taught by assertive teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the level of performance of administrative duties by the principals and the extent of the use of open and aggressive communication patterns by the principals were moderate. Open communication pattern made significant contribution to the performance of administrative duties by the principals while, aggressive communication pattern was unable to make significant contribution to the performance of administrative duties by the principals.

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