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Information Communication Management as a Predictor for Effective Administration of Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated the role of Information Communication Management (ICM) as a predictor of effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. Guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses, the study employed a correlational research design. The population consisted of 8,588 principals and teachers in government-owned secondary schools, with a sample of 12 principals and 356 teachers, selected using simple random sampling from three educational zones. Two instruments, the Information Communication Management Questionnaire (ICMQ) and the Effective Administration Questionnaire (EAQ), were developed and validated by experts in educational management and measurement from Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu. Test-retest reliability yielded coefficients of 0.83 and 0.86. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficients, and simple regression at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that ICM significantly predicted effective administration in secondary schools, showing a strong positive correlation. Based on the results, it was recommended that principals enhance their communication strategies to improve school administration.

Keywords: Information communication management, effective administration, predictor, secondary schools, Enugu State

Introduction

Information is the essence of enlightenment, serving as the response to inquiries of various kinds. It stands in close connection to both data and knowledge: data representing quantifiable values assigned to variables, and knowledge denoting comprehension of tangible entities or abstract ideas (Casagrande, 2019). Information manifests through the substance of a communication or by direct or indirect observation of phenomena. Anything perceived can be interpreted as a form of communication in itself, thus perpetuating the cycle of information exchange (Casagrande, 2019). Information management encompasses the gathering and administration of data from one or multiple origins, disseminating it to one or more recipients. Within the realm of secondary education, information management entails the collection and subsequent transmission of pertinent data from administrators to their subordinates regarding the school's status, policy adjustments, meetings, and other aspects pertinent to academic operations (Obi, 2016). Furthermore, this flow of information/communication is bidirectional, as feedback from teachers, students, or staff members can ascend to administrators, facilitating a dynamic exchange. On the flip side, communication acts as the vital link binding individuals within the school community, constituting a fundamental aspect of management. As defined by Unachukwu and Okorji (2014), communication involves the conveyance of messages or information from one person or group to another, fostering mutual comprehension. Within the school environment, the very existence of the organizational structure relies on

communication channels between students and teachers, as well as among departments and staff members. The effective transmission of necessary information hinges upon communication. Information Communication serves as the linchpin of human interaction and societal dynamics, facilitating the attainment of objectives. Ayanniyi (2016) emphasizes that information communication serves the purpose of accurately conveying information, instructions, sentiments, opinions, and factual data from one entity to another or to a group or school.

For a school, functioning as a social service entity, the implementation of effective information communication management is imperative to attain its objectives. The Centre for Management Development in 2013 argued that information communication management is a fundamental prerequisite for professional success and managerial efficiency. Koontz (2011) views organizational information communication management as the effective transfer of information comprehended by the recipient.

The significance of information communication management in the efficient administration of public secondary schools cannot be overstated. Ayanniyi (2016) states that a competent administrator must foster a healthy rapport with subordinates through effective information communication management. In line with this, Nwadiani (2012) underscores the importance of a shared vision within an organization. Furthermore, Nwosu (2018) asserts that effective information communication, whether oral, written, visual, or symbolic, is a crucial managerial factor. The success of a school organization largely depends on the principal's ability to manage information communication effectively with teachers, students, parents, and supervisors regarding the school's status, challenges, achievements, government policies, objectives, and various events within the school environment. Edem (2014) observed that a lack of communication is typified by the absence of student government and inadequate participation in significant school activities, negatively impacting students. From the foregoing, it is evident that there exists a correlation between effective information communication management and productivity in the educational sector. Ukairo (2016) examined communication patterns in Abia State secondary schools and found that common communication methods include morning and afternoon assemblies, meetings, notice boards, and verbal exchanges, with assemblies being the most prevalent mode of communication.

The primary objective in any organization is goal achievement. Therefore, organizational managers must facilitate the transmission of information to fulfill the organization's purpose. Miner (2016) identified four communication directions within an organization, which include downward, upward, horizontal, and diagonal flows, with schools being no exception. As per Anukam, Okinamiri, and Ogbonna (2010), upward information communication involves the transmission of information from subordinates to superiors within an organization, extending up to the highest levels of authority in the organizational hierarchy, typically flowing from staff members to principals. This type of communication commonly includes requests, information deemed significant by lower-level managers, suggestions, complaints, and financial data, as noted by Ukeje, Akabuogu, and Ndu (2019). Upward communication can be facilitated through various channels such as face-to-face interactions, staff meetings, conferences, grievance procedures, complaint systems, questionnaires, letters, school periodicals, or professional unions or associations (Miner, 2016).

It is important to recognize that the effectiveness of any of these processes' hinges on the leadership style prevailing within the organization, as explained by Okorie (2015). He further observes that horizontal communication involves the exchange of information among individuals at the same level or similar organizational levels, while diagonal communication occurs between individuals at different levels without a direct reporting relationship. Horizontal communication aims at coordinating activities within or across

departments, units, or divisions within the school system (Okorie, 2015). This lateral communication, involving peers or colleagues of the same level, is crucial for ensuring smooth operations, as highlighted by Unachukwu and Okorji (2014). Traditionally, communication in schools has been predominantly characterized by downward flow, where information is disseminated from higher to lower levels of authority within the school organization. In other words, information cascades from supervisors to teachers and then to students through various channels such as speeches, school bulletins, manuals, handbooks, individual instructions, policy statements, emails, inter-office memos, and notices.

On the other hand, diagonal communication occurs between individuals at different levels without a direct reporting relationship, operating across the formal lines of an organization's chain of command, as noted by Ekekwe (2013). Ukeje (2012) observes that the effectiveness of decision-making relies heavily on the adequacy of information communication at all stages. Lewis (2017) emphasizes the need for administrators to keep teachers and other subordinates informed about education system policies and programs. Poor management of information communication within any organization can lead to significant frustration and tension among top executives, as highlighted by Lewis.

Information communication serves as the backbone of essential personnel motivation and management components such as leadership, decision-making, delegation, planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Effective communication fosters a harmonious relationship between principals and staff members, as well as among staff members themselves. Uwazuruike (2016) categorized leadership based on decision-making strategies, highlighting the authoritarian leader who dictates policies unilaterally, the democratic leader who encourages group discussion and free flow of information, and the laissez-faire leader who allows complete freedom for group participation. This classification demonstrates that leadership styles influence the flow of information and communication within an organization, with authoritarian leadership restricting it while democratic leadership liberalizes it.

In the context of a school organization, information communication is recognized as the central axis around which all administrative activities revolve (Ukairo, 2016). Administrators are expected to possess communication competence to effectively convey ideas, directives, and guidance orally or in writing, eliciting positive responses from recipients. However, Anisiobi (2013), indicates dissatisfaction among teachers and principals with the communication styles employed. Effective information communication management, as explained by Etuk (2015), creates a conducive working and learning environment and enhances the efficient administration of public secondary schools. Nwosu (2018) emphasizes that effective information communication management leads to more efficient operations and aids in achieving organizational goals, a sentiment echoed by Okorie (2015) who stresses the importance of establishing communication patterns in both downward and upward directions within schools.

Various channels of communication exist within the school system, as outlined by Unachukwu and Okorji (2014), including telephone, telex and fax, postal and telegraphic services, face-to-face conversations, internet, and newsletters. Each channel serves specific communication needs and requires careful selection by administrators to effectively disseminate information and achieve organizational goals. This notwithstanding, it appears that in Enugu State a communication gap exists between school administrators and their subordinates, with many administrators neglecting information communication management responsibilities. This negligence may lead to misunderstandings, unrest among students, negative attitudes from teachers, and inability to participate in

decision-making processes. There is a pressing need for administrators to prioritize information communication management to bridge this gap and ensure common purpose and understanding within the organization. Given the pivotal role of information communication management in optimizing productivity, this study aims to investigate how information communication management influences the administration of secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The work was guided by the under-stated questions:

1. To what extent do principals' information communication strategies predict the effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. To what extent do principals' management and dissemination of information predict the effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

Null hypotheses formulated were:

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' and teachers' mean ratings on information communication strategies for the effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' and teachers' mean ratings on management/and dissemination of information for the effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State.

Methodology

This study employed a correlational research design as it explored a non-cause-and-effect relationship between two or more variables. The target population of the study is 8,588 comprising 301 principals and 8287 teachers in the 301 Government-owned secondary schools in Enugu State. Principals and teachers were chosen for the study as they were able to provide adequate information needed by the researcher on information communication management for effective administration in secondary schools. Krejcie and Morgan's (1971) formula was used to determine the sample size from the population. A sample size of 368 principals and 356 teachers was used for the study.

The sample size comprised 12 Principals and 356 Teachers. Multistage sampling was used. Firstly, a proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to select the schools. Two schools were selected from each of the six education zones of Enugu State. Secondly, a simple random sampling technique was used to select Principals and Teachers for the study. Two Research instruments were designed by the researcher titled Information Communication Management Questionnaire (ICMQ) and the Effective Administration Questionnaire (EAQ). The ICMQ instrument was arranged in two sections; Section A contained demographic facts while Section B contained 14 items that elicited the respondent views on information communication management. The EAQ questionnaire was also in two sections; the first section measured demographic information while section two contained 21 items used to elicit the respondent's view of secondary schools in Enugu State.

The two instruments were constructed on a 4-point Likert scale like Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE). The instruments were validated by 3 experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation, at Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu. The reliability of the instruments was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation which yielded coefficient values of 0.83 and 0.86 respectively. The instruments were administered to the 386 teachers and principals. The instruments were distributed by hand with the help of two research assistants with a 100 percent return rate. The data obtained

from this study were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient for research questions 1 and 2. The null hypotheses were tested with simple regression at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis if the calculated alpha value is less than the probability value and to accept it otherwise.

Result

1. The Extent principals' information communication management predicts effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 1: Extent Principals' Information Communication Management Predicts 'Effective Administration of Secondary Schools

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	R	r^2	% of Contribution	Remark
Principals	368	62.59	6.32	0.69	0.48	48	HPE
Teachers	368	64.49	5.76				

HPE= High Positive Extent

A cursory look at Table 1 shows that (0.69), as a linear correlation between the observed variables, indicated a high positive relationship between the Principals' and Teachers' mean ratings on information communication management while (R^2) of 0.48 indicated that 48% of the observed variance were accounted for by the mean ratings of Principals and Teachers on information communication management and effective administration in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between principals' and teachers' mean ratings on information communication strategies for the effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 2: Relationship between Principals' and Teachers' Mean Ratings on Information Communication Management Predict Effective Administration in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Variables	Term	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	Sig.	Decisions
Principals	Regression	432.748	1	432.748			
and Teachers	Residual	20500.758	366	56.013	7.726	.012	S
	Total	20933.506	367				

$r = 0.69^a$, $r^2 = 0.48$ (value of the consistent), S = significant at $P \leq 0.05$

Predicted = Effective Administration

Data in Table 2 showed an F- calculated value of 7.726 and a p-value of .012 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This means that there was a significant relationship between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on information communication management and effective administration of government secondary schools in Enugu State.

2. The Extent principals' management and dissemination of information predict effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State

Table 3: Extent Principals' Management and Dissemination of Information Predict Effective Administration in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	r ²	% of Contribution	Remark
Principals	333	61.79	7.23	0.66	0.44	44	HPE
and Teachers	333	64.49	5.76				

HPE= High Positive Extent

Data in Table 3 found a high relationship between principals' and teachers' mean ratings on management and dissemination of information and effective administration of secondary schools. While correlation coefficient r (0.66) indicated a high positive relationship between Principals' and Teachers' mean rating, the coefficient of determination (R^2) 0.44 indicated that 44% of the variance observed in the effective administration of secondary schools was accounted for by the mean ratings of Principals and Teachers on management and dissemination of information in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between principals' and teachers' mean ratings on management/and dissemination of information for effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 4: Relationship between Principals' and Teachers' Mean Ratings on Management/ Dissemination of Information and Effective Administration

Variables	Term	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	Sig.	Decisions
Principals	Regression	5315.302	1	5315.302			
and Teachers					99.608	.001	S
	Residual	19530.492	366	53.362			
	Total	24845.794	367				

$r = 0.66^a$, $r^2 = 0.44$ (value of the consistent), $S =$ significant at $P \leq 0.05$

Predicted = effective administration

Data in Table 4 of F- calculated of 99.608 and a p-value of .001 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05 showed that the hypothesis was rejected. This means that there was a significant relationship between Principals' and Teachers' mean ratings on management/ dissemination of information and effective administration in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Discussion of the Findings

Regarding principals' information communication management and effective administration of secondary schools, it was discovered that there was a high relationship between principals' and teachers' mean ratings on information communication management and effective administration of public secondary schools in Enugu State. The correspondents' hypothesis affirmed a significant relationship between the principals' and teachers' mean ratings on information communication management and effective administration. This finding is in line

with the findings of Anisiobi (2013) which 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 predicted effective administration. This finding corroborates the views of Etuk (2015) that effective information communication management helps to create a conducive working and learning environment and enhance effective administration of public secondary schools. The finding aligns with the views of Nwosu (2018) that effective information communication management results in more efficient operation and help to achieve organizational goals.

Concerning principals' Management and Dissemination of Information for Effective Administration of Secondary Schools, it was found that the relationship between the principals' and teachers' rating on management and dissemination of information predicted administration of secondary schools to a high extent. The correspondent hypothesis revealed that significant relationship between principals' and teachers' mean ratings influenced the management and dissemination of information and effective administration of government secondary schools in Enugu State. This implies that principals' management and dissemination of information predicted effective administration. This outcome is in line with the finding of Nwosu (2018) that effective information communication is a very essential factor in management. This also implies that the principals share important information with their staff and there are upward and downward flows of communication in the secondary schools. This result aligns with the view of Okorie (2015) that principals are beginning to lay down patterns of communication flow in both downward and upward directions to facilitate people's communication.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings, the researchers deduced and concluded that principals' and teachers' mean ratings on information management predicted the effective administration of government secondary schools in Enugu State. Furthermore, the relationship between the principals' and teachers' means ratings on management and dissemination of information predicted effective administration in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Finally, the study concluded that effective information communication management assesses the emotional atmosphere of the school and students' reactions to change.

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

1. Principals should be aware of various lines of information communication to be able to promote effective administration.
2. There should be interpersonal relationships between the teachers and the principals to promote effective administration.

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