

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' NON-VERBAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: ASSESSING THEIR IMPACTS ON TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN UNITY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

By

Dr Otonkue, Raymond Emmanuel.
Institute of Education
University of Calabar, Calabar.

And

Ikwen, Amokeye Banbeshie.
University of Calabar, Calabar.

ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the impact of school administrators' non-verbal and written communications on teachers' job performance in unity schools in South-South, Nigeria. A correlational design was adopted for the study. The research area was South-South Nigeria. The population of this study was 1,644 respondents which comprises all the 17 principals and 1,627 teachers of all the seventeen (17) unity schools of 2020/2021 academic session in South-South education zone, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a total of was 510 respondents which comprises of 50 teachers from the 10 selected unity secondary schools and 10 principals from each of the 10 selected unity secondary schools. The instruments for data collection were 'School Communication of Administrators Questionnaire (SCAQ) and 'Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ). The data obtained were analysed using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient. Linear Regression analysis (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Conclusions made from the study states that the findings show that on the overall that school administrators' communication; (non-verbal and written) to a high extent relate to teachers' Job performance in unity secondary schools. Thus, implying that communication of school administrators predicts teachers' job performance. One of the recommendations made from the study states that School administrators should portray a positive body language. He should always adopt a friendly attitude when interacting with his teachers. He should ensure that the use of eye contact and gesture do not display negative intentions in order not to derail their teachers' job performance.

KEYWORDS: Unity Schools, Non-Verbal Communication, Written Communication and Job Performance

INTRODUCTION

Unity Schools, once the bastion of quality education, like many others of its kind across Nigeria, appear to have quietly sunk in standard; and now, what is remaining is memories of good days, awaiting revitalization. The scenario has been like this for some time now and nobody seems to care. Really, nobody cares, because the lucre-minded principal with flair for commerce and no scruples for conscience is not bothered by what happens to the children. This

also is aided by a government that does not listen to tales of the children, but waits for disaster to happen all league together to define the new narrative of unity schools (Lawal, et al, 2021).

Specifically, communication is central to the management of secondary schools. Effective communication serves as a veritable tool and skill that inspires trust, enhances morale, and empowers teachers to higher job performance. As noted by Nwachukwu (n.d) The school principal has important roles to play. Among this roles include providing effective leadership in secondary schools, thereby enhancing better job performance among teachers. The principal, at the apex of secondary school administration must develop communicate queues with teachers and students. The paths for communication are as diverse, yet this is also the source of solution to many problems that may arise within schools (Hanson, 2013). One critical area of interest in school administration is the communications that take place between principals and their faculties.

Non-verbal type of communication is subtler. It takes place in the daily lives of the individuals as well as within organizational structures. In the implementation of this form of communication, there are number of factors that need to be taken into consideration. These include facial expressions, gestures, body language, eye contact, touch, space and the personality of the individuals. In this type of communication, there are three important features, which need to be identified. These are, what is said with words, what is shared with postures and gestures and the feelings of the individuals influence the messages and information that is imparted. The non-verbal information cues, the way one looks, listens, moves and reacts convey to the individuals that one is communicating with whether or not they are concerned.

Written communication is the type of communication that takes place in a written form. The common forms of written communication are letters, notices, emails, messages, advertisements and so forth. When the information is lengthy and comprise of images, pictures, charts, graphs, statistical data and so forth, then it cannot be imparted orally to the individuals. In such cases, written communication is regarded as one of the indispensable ways of imparting information. When the individuals are to send documents and reports, then they simply get them scanned and send them through email.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Unity schools' teachers are well-trained personnel in knowledge, skills, attitude and values, in formal training institutions, to teach or impart same to the learners in the most acceptable way. The issue of poor task performance of unity school teachers in South-South, Nigeria has been a long-standing problem that has received concern. This is manifested through the teachers' negative attitude to work in form of absenteeism, irregular class attendance, lateness to classes, non-preparation of lesson notes, non-usage of instructional materials during classes, lack of interest in students' discipline within the school, lateness to classes, poor assessment of students, leaving school before dismissal time for their private business among others.

This cannot be tolerated considering the relevance of teachers' job performance to the school system. It was on this basis that the researcher deemed it pertinent to raise a query which this study sought to answer: to what extent do school administrators' communication typology

which is non-verbal and written correlate with teachers' job performance in unity schools in South-South, Nigeria?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to:

- examine the extent to which school administrators' non-verbal communication relates with teachers' job performance in unity schools.
- ascertain the extent to which school administrators' written communication relates with teachers' job performance in unity schools.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. To what extent do school administrators' non-verbal communication relate with teachers' job performance in unity schools?
2. To what extent do school administrators' written communication relate with teachers' job performance in unity schools?

HYPOTHESES

1. School administrators' non-verbal communication have no significant relationship with teachers' job performance in unity schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between school administrators' written communication and teachers' job performance in unity schools.

THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is important for all educational institutions. It facilitates the development of good conditions for teaching and learning. Without it, the goals of an organization cannot be achieved because thoughts and expectation cannot be shared. Thus, educational coordination cannot be possible without communication. Communication has been defined by Osasona (2010) as the transfer of ideals or knowledge in ways that enable the recipient to understand, react to and act upon the information received. Thus, the success of principals as supervisors depends to a large extent on their ability to communicate to all the people for whom they are responsible.

School principals can enhance communication by using the most effective and efficient lines of communication, depending on the situation at hand. Such efficient communication may involve the use of the latest technologies, such as local area networks; school leaders should set an example in using these technologies to bolster communication. Overall, principals are the educational focal point within the school or local community, and they must be able to communicate effectively any concerns, ideas, or news (Lapointe & Davis, 2016).

PRINCIPALS' NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

In its simplest form, nonverbal communication can be viewed as communication without words. It refers to all aspects of message exchange without the use of spoken or written words (Zoric, et al, 2017). It includes all expressive signs, signals, facial expressions, body movement, personal appearance, and cues which may be audios, visual etc. Nonverbal communication

includes facial expressions, eye contact, touching, tone of voice, dress posture and spatial distance. Nonverbal communication includes the tone loudness, speed, and timing of words used in communication, but it does not include words and their articulated meanings.

Thus, when communication occurs, in a face context, it can and likely does include more than just words. According to Godswill & James (2024) Sharing our thoughts, feelings, and opinions with others is communication. In fact, of all the physical activities that are involved with communication, the overwhelming majority is done in a non-verbal manner. Reportedly, 73% of all face-to-face communication is non-verbal (Miller, 2012). Non-verbal actions assist in the communication process in ways that simple verbalization cannot. This is because words alone have limitations (challenges of using e-mails). Non-verbal communication is considered to be relatively genuine free of deception, and can also be used to express feelings that are too disturbing to state otherwise. Thus, in school settings, it is expected that administrators develop competencies in using non-verbal cues to achieve organization goals and enhance teachers' performance.

Research in many settings outside the school has indicated that non-verbal communication can serve a range of functions in human interactions as submitted by Hartley and Karich (2017). These include:

- Supplementing, reinforcing, or regulating verbal exchange
- Revealing emotional state and personality traits.
- Providing cues for impression formation, and indicating and disliking for individuals, situations, or ideas.
- Influencing the performance of others and motivating actions.

Given these functions, it is more likely that non-verbal communication functions in a similar manner in teaching and school administration. In fact, many education researchers have presented cogent arguments for the importance of non-verbal communication skills in teaching, learning and administration (Trenholm & Tenson, 2018; Miller, 2012). For instance, Worrell and Kuterbach (2019) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between teachers' expressive behavior and students' evaluation of teachers' effectiveness showed that expressive teacher behavior includes use of gestures, classroom movement, vocal inflection dramatic expression, and facial affect. Their study found that teachers who incorporated these expressive non-verbal behaviours during class instruction received high ratings of teachers' effectiveness.

A seminal study on the effect of teacher non-verbal expressiveness, proposed that the subject matter presented in a dynamic manner, involving humour, expressive speech, movement and gesture is easily recalled better by students than the same material presented in a static manner (Naftulin, et al 2013). Non-verbal communication skill is also associated with principal immediacy behavior. This refers to behavior that reduces the physical or psychological distance between people.

The researcher found that principals who were skillful in immediacy behaviours such as smiling, maintaining eye contact, and proximity were perceived to be warm, approachable and effective in motivating teachers' performance than principals with poor immediacy behavior. Thus, principals who are educated in the effective use of immediacy behaviours generate positive interactions amongst teachers, which can have a direct effect on teachers and students effectiveness. One foundation underlying the use of non-verbal communication focuses on

individual differences in the abilities to communicate non-verbally. This ability or approach is akin to personality perspective in that it focuses on individual differences in the sending (encoding), receiving (decoding), and regulation (management) of non-verbal communication (Havris & Rosenthal, 2015). Non-verbal communication are important for success in various aspects of life. Specifically, there is evidence that non-verbal communication and abilities are important in initiating and maintain social interaction, developing interpersonal relationships, and managing impression. Non-verbal communication and abilities are also linked to stress management and to success in career. In another study, Chaudhry and Arif (2012) investigated teacher's non-verbal behavior and its impact in learners' achievement. Cluster sampling technique was used to select 90 teachers as participants. Flanders non-verbal interaction instrument was used to collect data from the dimensions of non-verbal communication skill. It was found that the non-verbal behavior of teachers was consistent with students' achievement scores.

An important challenge in effecting change in behavior or attitude is the ability of the message receiver to decode non-verbal cues. This calls for skillfulness in the use of non-verbal cues. Inability to decode non-verbal cues leads to ineffective communication, poor feedback and dysfunctional behavior. Graham, et al (2010) carried out a study that surveyed the perception of 50 managers on the impact of non-verbal communication in their organizations, the methodology was observational approach with respondents drawn from both product and service companies in Europe. Their findings showed that non-verbal communication was more important to self-rated decoders than others. By their study, better decoders relied most on facial expression for accurate information, while less skilled decoders preferred voice level or tone. Skills can be considered as soft and hard skills needed. According to Akpan, Udoibok & Etuk (2025) Skills enhance liberalization of employment opportunities. Moreover, their study found that communication with non-verbal expressions increases workers productivity, employee satisfaction and leadership perception.

In similar manner, Coker and Coker (2016) found that eye contact is important in the case of a positive verbal message, gaze aversion led the receiver to perceive an overall negative message. Specifically, gaze aversion conveyed lack of trust and non-receptivity. Studies have also found that the effect of voice tone (especially negative voice tone) make a disproportionately stronger impact or decoders than verbal content (Mehrabian & Wiener, 2018). Non-verbal communication also plays important role in class room instructional delivery. Sathick and Jonathan (2013) examined the effect of facial expression on students' comprehension in a virtual educational environment. Their goal was to identify physical behaviours of the face that are linked to emotional states, and then to identify how these emotional states are associated with student's comprehension. Experimentation was done through survey involving observations of lectures in the classroom, and the behavior of students were recorded and statistically analyzed. The authors found that facial expression is the most frequently used non-verbal communication mode. Facial expression was also significantly correlated to student's emotions which help to recognize their comprehension towards the lecture.

There is ample research evidence that non-verbal communication is important in classroom management. For instance, Anderson and Withrow (2018) in a survey of the use of non-verbal communication by primary school teachers found that majority of teachers use non-

verbal communication in the classrooms to help in instructional procedures, desisting deviancy, providing physical social and emotional needs of students and physical classroom management. In a study of 355 teachers in elementary and pre-intermediate schools, Salah (2011) explored the use of nonverbal communication in the classroom. Use was made of the survey instruments together primary data. It was reported that the effective use of non-verbal cues assists in wide range of classroom practices including: reduction of unnecessary teacher talking time, increasing learner participation, reducing fear of silence, clear instructions, improving listening communication, and improving classroom atmosphere.

PRINCIPALS' WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

In its simplest form, written communication takes the form of written symbols that is transmitted between people or groups. Written communication involves the use of letters, memos, bulletin, procedures, policy manuals, notices, books, etc. to transfer information in an organization. Inyang, Oden and Esu (2013) noted that written communicating is the presentation of ideas that make a clear point, supply details supporting that point and demonstrate coherence of thought. It should be noted that regardless of changes in technology, there will always be the demand for a well-crafted written message.

School principals would normally resort to written communication when the message is not too complex or require lengthy explanations and discussions. Lengthy discussions by written communication such as sending e-mail are not efficient, and each exchange risks meaning getting lost. Krotov (2016) identified factors that drive the choice of written communication to include: the emotional state of the topic (the more intense the emotions around the topic or the more important the message is, the less likely writing will be a successful form of communication), level of formality also determining choice of written communication (the higher the level of formality the more likely the use of written communication). The need for future reference also influences choice of written communication. Written letters become very relevant for future references purpose. Thus, school principals should learn to know when sending a written message will make sense and elicit better performance from teachers (King, 2013).

What principles should guide principals while writing to teachers? Omoregie (2015) provided the following principles: striking subject lines, putting the main point first, knowing the audience, and organization of message. King (2013) also gave five principles for effective written communication as writing coherent sentences, coherent paragraphs, use of short sentences, being specific, and keeping it simple by omitting verbose words. In a study of effectiveness of school principal communication and teachers' job satisfaction, Haja (2016) showed that principal's written communication style has significant relationship with teachers performance quality, task satisfaction, task clarity, and intellectual stimulation. Nir and Kranot (2016) also investigated principals' communication strategies and teachers' job performance. The study made use of survey questionnaire administered on 450 secondary school teachers in Frankfurt. Job performance in the study was conceptualized by classroom management, quality of instruction and teachers-parent relationship. It concludes that principals' written and non-verbal communication is significantly related to quality of instruction and parental relationship but negatively related to classroom management.

Written communication is the type of communication that takes place in a written form. The common forms of written communication are letters, notices, emails, messages, advertisements and so forth. When the information is lengthy and comprise of images, pictures, charts, graphs, statistical data and so forth, then it cannot be imparted orally to the individuals. In such cases, written communication is regarded as one of the indispensable ways of imparting information. When the individuals are to send documents and reports, then they simply get them scanned and send them through email. Alfaresey (2019) also discusses the issue of poor written communication style between principals and educational supervisors in Oman. The researcher surveyed 20 principals and 20 educational supervisors. The exploratory study reveals that there is a weakness in many practices related to principal's written communication. The author concludes that the work of the educational supervisors will not integrate with the school administrative work unless they inculcate coherent written communication.

When the individuals are communicating with each other in a written form, they need to take into account various factors, these include, addressing appropriately, making use of decent words, stating the information in a clear and understandable manner, stating all the necessary concepts and concluding well by saying thank you and putting the name and signatures. In order to implement written communication in an effective manner, it is vital for the individuals to upgrade their skills in terms of various forms of technologies. When they are well-equipped in terms of usage of computers, lap-tops, iPads and mobile technologies, they will be able to carry out written communication satisfactorily.

JOB PERFORMANCE

According to Porter and Lawler (2010) performance is a function of individual ability and effort in a given situation. Effort is an internal force of a person which makes him or her willingly when teachers are satisfied with their job and their needs are met, they develop an attachment to work or we say that they make effort to perform better performance. Collinson (2010) concluded that the more teachers are well communicated with their job will lead to high performance outcome.

Furthermore, the contribution of employees on job is the most important factor for development and excellence in the organization (Korkaew & Suthinee, 2012). Rich et al, (2010) identified two types of employee performance for organizational effectiveness: task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to behaviors that are directly involved in activities that provide indirect support for the organization's core technical processes. These behaviors directly relate to the formal organization reward system. On the other hand, contextual performance is defined as individual efforts that are not directly related to their main task functions (Werner, 2010). However, these behaviors are important because they shape the organizational, social, and psychological contexts serving as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes.

METHODOLOGY

A correlational design was adopted for the study. The research area was South-South Nigeria. The population of this study was 1,644 respondents which comprises all the 17 principals and 1,627 teachers of all the seventeen (17) unity schools of 2020/2021 academic session in South-South education zone, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a total of was 510 respondents which comprises of 50 teachers from the 10 selected unity

secondary schools and 10 principals from each of the 10 selected unity secondary schools. The instruments for data collection were ‘School Communication of Administrators Questionnaire (SCAQ) and ‘Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ). The data obtained were analysed using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient. Linear Regression analysis (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULT AND HYPOTHESES

Research Question 1

To what extent do school administrators’ non-verbal communication relate with teachers’ job performance in unity schools?

Table 1: Correlation matrix on the extent school administrators’ non-verbal communication relate with teachers’ job performance in unity schools

| | | School administrators’ non-verbal communication | Teachers job performance in unity schools |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| School administrators’ non-verbal communication | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.56* |
| | N | 510 | 510 |
| Teachers job performance in unity schools | Pearson Correlation | 0.56* | 1 |
| | R ² | 0.31(31%) | |
| | N | 510 | 510 |

*** Correlation Significant at 0.05 level, N = Number of respondent R² coefficient of determination**

Data in Table 1 reveal that there was a moderate extent of correlation between school administrators’ non-verbal communication and teachers’ job performance in unity secondary schools in South South, Nigeria as indicated by the correlation coefficient of (0.56) which is positive and within the coefficient limit of +/-0.40 to 0.59 as established by Creswell (2008). Similarly, the coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.31 indicates that 31% of the variance observed in teachers’ job performance in unity secondary schools in South South, Nigeria was accounted for by school administrators’ non-verbal communication. Meanwhile, the corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is

Research Question 2

To what extent do school administrators' written communication relate with teachers' job performance in unity schools?

Table 2: Correlation matrix on the extent school administrators' written communication relate with teachers' job performance in unity schools

| | | School administrators' written communication | Teachers job performance in unity schools |
|---|---------------------|---|--|
| School administrators' written communication | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.87* |
| | N | 510 | 510 |
| Teachers job performance in unity schools | Pearson Correlation | 0.87* | 1 |
| | R ² | 0.76(76%) | |
| | N | 510 | 510 |

*** Correlation Significant at 0.05 level, N = Number of respondent R² coefficient of determination**

Data in Table 2 reveal that there was a very high extent of correlation between school administrators' written communication and teachers' job performance in schools in South South, Nigeria as indicated by the correlation coefficient of (0.87) which is positive and within the coefficient limit of +/-0.80 to 1.00 as established by Creswell (2008). Similarly, the coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.76 indicates that 76% of the variance observed in teachers' job performance in unity secondary schools in South South, Nigeria was attributed to school administrators' written communication.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between school administrators' non-verbal communication and teachers' job performance in unity secondary schools in South South Nigeria.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of school administrators' non-verbal communication and teachers' job performance in unity schools

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | P-value |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|---------|
| | Regression | 1485.118 | 1 | 1485.118 | 261.55 | .011 |
| 1 | Residual | 2890.148 | 509 | 5.6781 | | |
| | Total | 4375.266 | 510 | | | |

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed

The result in Table 3 shows F – calculated value of 314.563 at 0.05 level of significance. The table also shows a p -value of .011 which is less than the significant value of 0.05. Thus, null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between school administrators' non-verbal communication and teachers' job performance in unity secondary schools in South-South Nigeria is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school administrators' non-verbal communication and teachers' job performance in unity secondary schools in South-South Nigeria. This finding agrees with Salah (2011) who affirmed that non-verbal communication skill of school administrator, assist in wide range of classroom practices which include reduction of unnecessary teacher's talking time, increases learning participation, reducing fear of silence as well as enhancement of teachers' productivity.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between school administrators' written communication and teachers' job performance in unity secondary schools in South South Nigeria.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of school administrators' written communication and teachers' job performance in unity schools

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | P-value |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|---------|
| | Regression | 4485.354 | 1 | 4485.354 | 394.977 | .018 |
| 1 | Residual | 5780.296 | 509 | 11.356 | | |
| | Total | 10265.650 | 510 | | | |

Df= degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed

The result in Table 4 shows F – calculated value of 394.977 at 0.05 level of significance. The table also shows a p -value of .018 which is less than the significant value of 0.05. Thus, null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between school administrators' written communication skills and teachers' job performance in unity secondary schools in South South Nigeria is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school administrators' written communication skills and teachers' job performance in unity secondary schools in South South Nigeria. This finding is in line with Nir and Kranot, (2016) who concluded in their findings that school administrators' written communication is significantly related to quality instruction and teachers' task performance. Meanwhile, Alfaresey (2019) affirmed that poor written communication by school administrators' retard teachers' job performance.

CONCLUSION

The study examined communication of school administrators and teachers' job performance of unity schools in South South, Nigeria. Based on the findings accruing from this study there was a high and significant relationship among the extent school administrators' communication (non-verbal) and teachers' Job performance in unity secondary schools whereas there was a very high extent of relationship between school administrator communication (written) and teachers' job performance. In conclusion, the findings show that on the overall that school administrators' communication; (non-verbal and written) to a high extent relate to teachers' Job performance in unity secondary schools. Thus, implying that communication of school administrators predicts teachers' job performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that;

- School administrators should portray a positive body language. He should always adopt a friendly attitude when interacting with his teachers. He should ensure that the use of eye

contact and gesture do not display negative intentions in order not to derail their teachers' job performance.

- The school administrators should always ensure that every notice, circulars and other forms of written communication are well worded, grammatically constructed and devoid of ambiguity as this will enhance their job performance.

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