

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION GAP IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ANAOCHA L.G.A OF ANAMBRA STATE

Asiegbu Chidubem Emmanuel (Ph.D)¹, Dr. Okorji Perpetua N¹ and Dr. Bosar Ify P²

¹Lecturer, Department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State, Nigeria

²Lecturer, Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *The study investigates the impact of communication gap in the Management of primary schools in Anaocha local government area of Anambra state, with the purpose of finding out its causes, impact and strategies. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population used for this study is 685 teachers from 50 public primary schools in Anaocha L.G.A of Anambra State. Using the simple random sampling technique, 150 teachers were drawn from the 50 public primary schools in Anaocha L.G.A. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire validated by three experts, which contained 15 items based on the three research questions formulated for the study. Meanwhile, it was subjected to reliability testing using spearman's formula, in which 0.82 was obtained as the reliability index (very high). Data collected was analysed using mean. Findings revealed the impact of communication gap in the management of public primary school as inaction, while misinterpretations, bad work relationship, lack of knowledge are identified as the causes. It was observed that when handbook of information for teachers is been provided, there will be an effective communication in the school as it will let them know the various activities in the school. To this end, the researchers recommended that head-teachers should use appropriate media for communication and manage barriers to effective communication adequately as it will help them in improving communication in school. Implications and suggestion for further studies were also made.*

KEYWORDS: Communication Gaps, Management, Primary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Education as one of the most building blocks for human development has a formative effect on the mind, character and accelerates the development of knowledge, skills, and attitude (Alumode, 2012). Primary education is the first stage of compulsory education. It is preceded by pre-school or nursery education and is followed by secondary education. It is the type of education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 years. Since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. The duration shall be six years (National Policy on Education 2004). The major goal of primary education is to achieve basic literacy and numeracy amongst all pupils. Typically, primary education is provided in schools where the child will stay in steadily advancing classes until they complete it and move-on to secondary school. Children are usually placed in classes with one teacher who will be primarily responsible for their education and welfare for that year. Much of head teacher's impact upon the operation of the school is achieved through his/her work with the staff. If quality school programmes are to be developed and maintained, careful attention must be given to staff administration.

Farrant (1982) opined that there should be proper coordination of staff through regular meetings, routine notices, motivation and encouraging friendship among staff. The head teacher is the chief management officer in the school system. He oversees, coordinates and supervises the activities of other staff (teaching and non teaching in the primary school). He is assisted by the Assistant Head Teacher. Usually, the management of the primary school allows the operation of committee system (delegation) as a way of facilitating the work of the school head towards improved efficiency. Effective communication is an important ingredient within the school management. Whether planning and organizing or leading and monitoring, school administrators communicate with and through other people. This implies that every person's communication skills affect both personal and organizational effectiveness (Brun and Summers, 2010). It seems reasonable to conclude that one of the most inhibiting forces to organizational effectiveness is a lack of effective communication (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). Moreover, effective communication skills are very important to ones' success as a school manager. Anyakoha et al (1995) observe that effective communication within the school is crucial because it enables the various actors to clarify individual perceptions and discern institutional norms. It helps individuals to produce the co-operation needed to reach institutional goals. Communication within the school is likely to affect the staff in all they do, as they organize and establish goals for their work, interact with students, balance their diverse responsibilities, participate in institutional affairs, and proceed through their careers.

It is only when the human and material elements of an organization are harnessed into a united whole, that the organizational objectives can be achieved. Effective communication helps to stimulate enthusiasm and raise the interest and motivation of those to whom they are directed, such as staff and students. Communication is not an inborn thing; every manager has to learn how to communicate. For example, teachers are trained in various methods of transmitting skill and knowledge to students. Thus, establishing communication should be first task of the manager. Eresimadu (2003) asserts that "no business or activity can take place in absence of communication". School activities cannot take place in the absence of communication; it is the root of interaction. It makes the transmission of cumulative knowledge possible. It promotes the transmissions of information, ideas and thoughts. Unfortunately, despite the enormous importance of communication, it is observed that a gap in communication exist in the management of public primary schools in Anaocha L.G.A.

The problem teachers experience in communication that led to the communication gaps in public primary schools today include: lack of communication skill, having different perceptions, difference in status, distrust, individual emotions, poor listening skill, gender differences, cultural differences and technological jargon. Other problems are misinterpretation of the message, bad work relationship and lack of knowledge. Unfortunately, no effort is being made to minimize these problems of communication that teachers in public primary schools experience. The implication of these, if not addressed, is that it will bring about school unconnectedness and dysfunctional system which will lead to failure on the part of the school management. The unique nature of communication process requires that school teachers and heads should critically observe the communication flows which are, downward, upward, and horizontally flow of communication for effective communication. A lot of schools have conducted seminars and conferences on the importance and impact of communication in an organization so as to promote improved communication culture in the school. It is evident that communication gaps still thrive in most of these schools. Although some Authors like Omenwa (2014), had argued that the problems teachers encounter in the school are not in any way, connected to communication gaps. It is based on these that this study sets out to find the Impact

of communication gaps in public primary school in Anaocha L.G.A. The result of this study will enable the members of School Boards, Local Education Authorities, Inspectors and Ministries of Education to understand the causes and the impact of communication gap in the management of primary schools. With this knowledge they will be able to map out functional strategies on how to assist the teachers in minimizing this communication gap.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the impact of communication gaps in the management of primary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State. Specifically, the study aims at finding out:

1. The causes of communication gaps in primary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area, Anambra State?
2. The impact of communication gaps in the management of primary schools?
3. The strategies to be adopted by the head teachers to minimize communication gaps in the management of primary schools?

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the causes of communication gaps in primary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area, Anambra State?
2. What are the impacts of communication gaps in the management of primary schools?
3. What are the strategies to be adopted by the head teachers to minimize communication gaps in the management of primary schools?

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive survey design in which the subjects were observed in their natural settings, and data were collected through the use of questionnaire. The study was carried out in Anaocha LGA of Anambra State which has nine towns with a total of 50 Public Primary schools. The population of the study comprised 685 teachers, made up of 50 head teachers and 535 classroom teachers. Using non-probability sampling procedure, 150 teachers (50 head teachers and 100 classroom teachers) were randomly selected from the 50 schools which represent about 28 percent of the total population. Instrument for data collection was a 4-point scale questionnaire of 15 items duly validated by three experts and was subjected to reliability testing using spearman's formula, in which 0.82 was obtained as the reliability index (very high). The researcher with the help of 2 trained research assistants distributed and collected the questionnaire using on-the-spot method, which enabled the researcher to achieve 100% return of the distributed questionnaire and used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores to answer the three research questions, while t-test was used to answer the null hypothesis. Based on the result, any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree while less than 2.50 were regarded as disagree.

RESULTS**Research Question 1**

The research questions sought to find out the causes of communication gaps in the management of public primary school in Anaocha L.G.A. The data in table 1 provide the answer in this research question.

Table 1: Responses of head teachers and classroom teachers in public primary schools in Anaocha L.G.A. on the causes of communication gaps.

SN	ITEMS	RESPONDENTS	F	S	A	D	S	TOT	X	DECISION
				A			D	AL		
1	When memos or instructions get too wordy, the real message may be lost	Head teacher	2	1	5	5	0	100	4	Agree
		Classroom teachers	5	5	1	1	5	155	3.	Agree
			5	2	0	0			1	
2	Information is sometimes sent to schools when they are on holiday.	Head teacher	2	0	1	5	1	50	2	Disagree
		Classroom teachers	5	5	0	2	0	125	2.	Agree
			5		2	0	5		5	
3	Feedbacks are not require from all that is concerned when information or instruction are distributed.	Head teacher	2	0	5	1	1	45	1.	Disagree
		Classroom teachers	5	1	2	0	0	130	8	Agree
			5	0	0	1	1		2.	
4	Student underestimate or Make fun of the person delivering the information	Head teacher	2	1	1	5	0	80	3.	Agree
		Classroom teachers	5	0	0	1	5	145	2	Agree
			5	2	1	5			2.	
5	Poor listening skill	Head teacher	2	1	1	0	0	90	3.	Agree
		Classroom Teachers	5	5	0	1	0	170	6	Agree
			5	3	1	0			3.	
6	Information pasted on the notice board may not get to all concerned	Head teacher	2	0	5	1	1	45	1.	Disagree
		Classroom teachers	5	2	1	0	0	155	8	Agree
			5	5	0	1	5		3.	
			0			0		1		

Table 1 above shows that out of six items, the head teachers disagree to the item of 2, 3 & 6 as the causes of communication gaps in primary school administration, while the classroom teachers agreed on all six items as the causes of communication gaps in the management of primary school.

Research Question 2.

The research questions sought to find out the impact of communication gaps in the management of public primary school in Anaocha L.G.A. The data in table 2 provide the answer in this research question

Table 2: Responses of head teachers and classroom teachers in public primary schools on the impact of communication gaps.

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONDENTS	F	S	A	D	S	TOTAL	X	DECISION
7	Poorly communicated directives Lead to confusion.	Head teacher	2	1	1	5	0	80	3.	Agree
		Classroom teachers	5	0	0	5	1	154	2	Agree
8	Parents cease to give maximum support to schools, when they are not communicated about their children performance and school events.	Head teacher	5	2	1	0	0	80	3.	Agree
		Classroom teachers	2	1	1	5	0	150	2	Agree
9	There is reduction in Information flow between school management and staff.	Head teacher	5	0	5	1	5	50	2	Disagree
		Classroom teachers	5	1	5	1	2	105	1	Disagree
10	When school administrator are not given enough information, their decisions fall below expected standard.	Head teacher	5	0	5	0	0	85	3.	Agree
		Classroom teachers	5	2	1	0	0	165	4	Agree
11	There is always Opposition when opinion of all concerned are not sought before any decision taken.	Head teacher	5	1	1	5	0	80	3.	Agree
		Classroom teachers	5	0	0	1	5	155	2	Agree
			0	5	0	0			1	

Table 2 shows that, in the above five items both of the respondents agreed that there are impact of communication gaps in the management of primary school in Anaocha L.G.A. Anambra state except in item 9, which is on reduction in Information flow between school management and staff.

Research Question 3.

The research questions sought to find out the strategies to be adopted by the head teachers to minimize communication gaps in the management of primary schools in Anaocha L.G.A. The data in table 3 provide the answer in this research question.

Table 3: Responses of head teachers and classroom teachers in public primary schools on the impact of communication gaps.

SN	ITEMS	RESPONDENTS	F	S	A	D	S	TOTAL	X	DECISION
12	Head teacher Understands the effort, teachers put into their jobs	Head teacher	2	1	5	5	0	100	4	Agree
		Classroom teachers	5	5	0	0	5	125	2.5	Agree
13	Teachers are informed of organizational goals	Head teacher	2	0	5	1	1	45	1.	Disagree
		Classroom teachers	5	1	5	0	0	110	8	Disagree
			5	0		2	1		2.	
14	Performance of feedback is provided in such a way that it helps teachers do a better job	Head teacher	2	0	5	5	1	40	1.	Disagree
		Classroom teachers	5	0	1	2		90		Disagree
			5		0	0	2		1.	
15	Clear goals are set for the job performance of teachers	Head teacher	2	1	1	5	0	75	3	Agree
		Classroom teachers	5	0	0	5	5	160	3.	Agree
			5	2	1				2	
			0	5	5					

Table 3, item 13 and 14 reveals that both the head teachers and classroom teachers disagree to the strategies in reducing communication gap, while for items 12 and 15, they agreed on the items as the strategies for reducing communication gap.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The result from table 1 showed that communication gaps have adverse effect in the management of primary school. According to Ogunsaju (1983), he identified four elements he felt were responsible for communication gap. These include distortion, superiority, overloading and timing. It is also observed that feedbacks are not required from all that is concerned whenever information's and instructions are distributed. According to Pauley (2010), a school manager has no greater responsibility than to develop an effective communication. When there is a communication gap in the organization, the organization will find it difficult to actualize their goals. It is only a good teacher who can make sure that communication in the school flows freely the way it should be. The research question two, results showed the impact of communication gap in public primary school. This thereby makes the school not to function effectively. This impact of communication gap in the school can affect the objective of that school from been achieved. According to Okezue (2001), perceived that communication gaps resulted in misunderstanding, rumour and counter-rumours mistrust in schools management, lack of unity of purpose and suspicion among staff. He further said that this can result in lack of commitment by the teachers, low morale, frustration among staff, indiscipline among staff and pupils, lowered standard of education and wastages in school management. The research question three, results showed that when teachers have knowledge of communication strategies

and make good use of them effectively, they will be no communication gap in school. When this strategies are been applied, it will make the teachers to feel a sense of belonging in the school, they will be happy that their decisions or their present in school matters a lot, which will make them to put in their best in their job. The findings of this study generally revealed the impact of communication gap as; misinterpretation of messages, bad work relationships, gender differences, lack for knowledge and poor listening skills. When all these are been noted by teachers and avoided, there will be free flow of communication in the school.

CONCLUSION

From the various discussions on the Impact of Communication Gaps on Primary School Administration in Anaocha Local Government Area, The following conclusions emerge:

- Communication gaps can be forestalled by identifying some of its causes and ensuring that they are avoided by all the management staff of the education ministry. This will go a long way in bringing about managerial effectiveness in our schools.
- The effect of communication gaps in the management of primary school is adverse because it leads to confusion and low performance of the school in general.
- Feedback takes place between the head teachers and the staff but the adequate is not enough.
- Failure of some of the head teachers in performing their roles effectively have contributed to communication gap in the management of primary school.
- When this education officers pay regular supervision visits to the school, organize meetings with the head teachers, organize workshops, conferences and seminars for change and innovation in education practice, communication gaps being noticed in the management of primary school will be averted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made the following recommendations based on the findings and conclusions:

- There should be a handbook of information for teachers so as to remind them of what is expected of them and for those who are new on the job.
- The timing of staff meetings should be convenient for teachers and should not be dragged on for too long.
- A notice board should be available in the staff room on which bills of information can be pasted for teachers.
- Circulars from state education commission through the head teacher should be revealed to the teachers.

- Head teachers should endeavour to allow their staff to meet and discuss with them anytime of the day and anywhere within the school compound, since they deal with human beings and not files which may need immediate action.
- The school head teacher must not starve their teachers of communication opportunities.
- Head teachers who do not have formal training in school management should be granted study leave for an in-service training in the field.

REFERENCES

- Alumode (2012), Communication in Staff Management. Ibadan: Paperback Publishers Limited.
- Brun, O.C. & Summers, J. (2010). Business ethics: Ethical decision making and cases. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Eresimadu (2003), Educational Management Theory and Practice, Enugu Jamoe Enterprises Nigeria.
- Farrant, N.J. (1982) Handbook of research on Educational Administration. New York: Longmans.
- Johns, G. (1996). Organisational behaviour: understanding and managing life206 at Work. (4th ed). New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
- Lutgen-Sandoik, J.M. (2010). The cultures of work organisations englewood cliffs. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Ogunsaju, Segun (1983), Educational Supervision, Perspectives and Practices in Nigeria, Ile-Ife, University of Ife Press, Nigeria.
- Okezue (2001), Persuasive communication, Study of Theory and Practice of the role of the Elementary School Principal.
- Omenwa, F.C (2014). Communication in the School System: Fundamental for organizational unity and Progress. Lagos: Johnsons Publications.
- Pauley, J.R. (2010). Organisational behaviour. (7th ed). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. 205