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PRINCIPALS’ APPLICATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS AS A CORRELATES OF TEACHERS’ JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

ABSTRACT
This study ascertained principals’ application of communication skills as a correlates of teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlation survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 6,396 secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample 665 teachers for the study. The researchers-developed two sets of questionnaire titled “Principals’ Communication Skills Questionnaire (PCSQ)” and “Teachers Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ)” were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts comprising two lecturers from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and the other a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instruments were ascertained using Cronbach alpha and it yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.81, 0.78 and 0.76 for the three parts of PCSQ and 0.77 for TJPQ. The researchers together with five research assistants collected data for the study. A 98% return rate was recorded. Data analysis was done using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions and t-test to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that there is a moderate relationship between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. It was also found out that there is significant relationship between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Ministry of Education should sponsor principals to workshops, seminars and conferences to enable them up-date their knowledge and communication skills in order to create conducive school environment that would enhance teachers’ job performance.

KEYWORDS: communication, communication skills, listening skill, verbal skill, feedback skill, teachers’ job performance
Listening is one of the communication skills. Hacicaferoğlu (2014) stressed that listening carefully and with interest to the other person's words and observe her/his behaviors, is an essential skill of communication. Listening skill is the ability to pay attention so as to accurately receive and interpret information or ideas. Arguing in the same line, Nwite and Eze (2016) defined listening skill as the ability of someone who may be the communicated to pay attention to the communicator in order to decode the message property. Listening skill enables principals to understand staff views in the school. Effective listening promotes interpersonal relations, cooperation, understanding and harmony in the school. Listening requires concentration, attention and patience. Segiu and Tatiana (2016) stressed that active listening include behaviours such as: empathetic, appropriate gesture and expressions to indicate listening and asking helpful questions among others. Okoye (2014) asserted that listening does not just entail hearing but an active psychological process that involves meaningful information reception with adequate concentration. Listening skills also entails soliciting the teachers’ opinions and willingness to consider it during decision making. The listening skill enable principals to learn, understand and obtain information to foster good interpersonal relationship in school.

Verbal skill is the ability of the principals to express or exchange thoughts or information through sound, words or speech. In the view of Nwite and Eze (2016), verbal skill is the ability of the communicator to be outspoken so that one can hear and understand the message being communicated. This communication skill enables the principals to orally disseminate information to members of staff. Principals’ application of verbal skills is essential in rendering professional advice, assistance, guidance and counseling services to members of staff. Examples of verbal communication include: face-to-face conversation and use of electronic media for oral conversations among others. Okoye (2014) asserted that many school administrators may not be proficient at application verbal skills.

Feedback is another communication skill that is both critical to fostering loyalty and integrity of the school manager (Segiu & Tatiana, 2016). Feedback skill lies at the heart of communication. According to Nwite and Eze (2016), feedback communication skill means, the ability of the communicate respond appropriately to the message being communicated. In the views of Ayeni (2014); Keynton (2011), feedback is essential because it conveys to the sender that the message was received and understood. It serves as a powerful reinforce of what staff are getting right in school. Feedback occurs when the receiver responds to the sender's message and returns the message to the sender (Ejeh & Okoro, 2016). Some teachers rely on
Teachers' job performance is defined by various scholars in varying ways based on their perception of the subject matter. According to Uko, Umosen and Caleb (2015), teachers' job performance refers to the extent to which teachers are committed to pedagogical delivery and display of moral uprightness and academic excellence in the teaching profession. In the same vein, Owala, Odongo and Raburu (2016) defined teacher job performance as the teacher's ability to integrate the experience, teaching methods, instructional materials, knowledge. The researchers defined teachers' job performance as the level of commitment and dedication of teachers in executing their duties so as to achieve predetermined objectives of the school.

There are various indices of teachers' job performance. Duze (2012) pointed out that the teachers' performance could be measured through annual report of their activities in terms of performance in teaching, lesson preparation, lesson presentation, mastery of subject matter, competence, teachers' commitment to job and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, Duze asserted that other areas of assessment include effective leadership, effective supervision, effective monitoring of students' work, motivating students' interest, class control and disciplinary ability of the teachers. Similar to this, Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) pointed out that the indicators of teacher job performance is evaluated in his or her ability to make deliberate effort to enhance students academic performance, display in-depth knowledge of his or her subject matters, presenting of lesson in a well-organised manner, regularity and punctuality in the school, discipline, motivation and counseling of students and compliance to teachers professional code of conduct, among others. This implies that teachers' job performance could be ascertained through evaluation of their; lesson delivery, students' academic performance, school attendance, punctuality, compliance to teaching professional code of conduct, classroom control and management among others. There are decline in secondary school teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. The decline in teachers' job performance in secondary school in Anambra State is evident in their absent and lateness to school, leaving school before the official closing hours, irregular use of lesson plans and notes during instructional delivery among others. In the same vein, Ezeugbor and Emere (2017) who observed that in as much as it is important to appreciate the outstanding performance of secondary school students in Anambra State in the SSCE examinations from 2013-2016, there still exist evidences of teachers’ failures and laxities in the discharge of their onerous responsibilities. Communication gaps may contribute to laxities in teachers' discharge of their duties in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Unachukwu and Odumodu (2015) who observed that in secondary schools in Anambra State, principals communicate with their staff as if they are slaves and not colleagues whose efforts are also needed in achieving the school objectives. Some secondary school principals in Anambra State find it difficult to listen when teachers are speaking and some are reluctant to provide timely feedbacks to them. This seems to create misunderstanding, chaos, disorder and other forms of conflict among principals and teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State. In the same vein, Nwite and Eze (2016) observed that sometimes misunderstanding, misinterpretation and break down of law and order occurs as a result of breakdown of communication between the principals, students and the staff in secondary schools in Anambra State. This corroborates Ejeh and Okoro (2016) who observed that poor communication breeds misunderstanding, suspicion, mistrust, rumors, creates conflict between the management and members of staff, and causes students crisis among others. It is in the light of this unpleasant situation that this study was set out to investigate principals’ application of communication skills as a correlates of teachers’ performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The main purpose of the study is to ascertain principals’ application of communication skills as a correlates of teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, this study sought to find out:

1. The relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. The relationship between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. The relationship between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS
The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

4. **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant relationship between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

5. **METHOD**

The study adopted a correlation survey. The study population comprised 6,396 secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample 665 teachers for the study. The researchers-developed two sets of questionnaire titled “Principals’ Communication Skills Questionnaire (PCSQ)” and “Teachers Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ)” were used for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts who are lecturers; two in Department of Educational Management and Policy and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation, all from Faulty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established. The data used for computing the reliability indices were obtained from copies of the questionnaire administered on a sample of 30 teachers in Enugu state. The choice of Enugu state was because Anambra and Enugu states share similar characteristics and principals’ application of communication skills in the states seem to be similar. The data obtained were subjected to test for internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha. This yielded coefficient values of 0.81, 0.78 and 0.76 for the three parts of PCSQ and 0.77 for TJPQ respectively. The administration of the instruments was done by the researchers together with five research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Anambra State using direct administration method. A total of 665 questionnaires were distributed and 654 copies of questionnaire were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 98 percent return. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions. In answering the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship was interpreted using the interpretation of correlation coefficient by Downie and Heath cited in Nworgu (2015) as shown: 0.80 and above for high, above 0.30-bel row high and 0.30 and below for low respectively. The t-test statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses. In testing the null hypotheses, if t-calculated is equal to or greater than t-critical at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected, but if otherwise, it is not rejected.

6. **RESULTS**

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Listening Skill</th>
<th>Teachers’ Job Performance</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>654</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.803</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, r. (654) = .803. This is an indication that there is a high relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Research Question 2: What is the relationship between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?
Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Verbal Skill</th>
<th>Teachers’ job Performance</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Skill</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Job Performance</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, r. (654) = .712. This is an indication that there is a moderate relationship between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Feedback Skill</th>
<th>Teachers’ job Performance</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Skill</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Job Performance</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, r. (654) = .803. This is an indication that there is a moderate relationship between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ho 1: There is no significant relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: t-test analysis of no significant relationship between application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Skill</th>
<th>Teachers’ Job Performance</th>
<th>t-cal.</th>
<th>t-crit.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening Skill</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.803</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Job Performance</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>.803</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data presented on Table 4, the t-calculated value of 2.13 is greater than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 652 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance.
skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 5: t-test analysis of no significant relationship between application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>t-cal.</th>
<th>t-crit.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Skill</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Job Performance</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result presented on Table 5, the t-calculated value of 1.98 is greater than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 652 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between principals’ application of verbal skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: t-test analysis of no significant relationship between application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>t-cal.</th>
<th>t-crit.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Skill</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Job Performance</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that the t-calculated value of 2.07 is greater than t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 652 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is significant relationship between principals’ application of feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
The study found out that there is a high relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that an increase in principals’ application of listening skill will increase teachers’ job performance and vice versa. It also reported that there is significant relationship between principals’ application of listening skill and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in agreement with the finding of Nebo, Nwankwo and Okonkwo (2015) who reported that communication skills (techniques) have enhanced the performance of staff. This is supported by the finding of Nwosu (2017) who reported that there is a significant relationship between principals’ communication skills (strategies) and teachers’ job performance. The similarity in findings could be attributed to the fact the communication skills which also entails listening to staff, gives them the opportunity to air their views on issues affecting their performance. Principals’ paying attention to
suggestions or complaints of the teachers on issues  
afflicting their performance gives them a sense of  
belonging and motivates them towards higher  
performance. Principals’ patience in listening to  
agrieved staff who is complaining and tackling the  
problem creating conducive work environment that  
enhance their job performance.

The finding of this study revealed that there  
is a moderate relationship between principals’  
application of verbal skill and teachers’ job  
performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. It  
also found out that there is significant relationship  
between principals’ application of verbal skill  
and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools  
Anambra State. This is in line with the finding of  
Oyebode, Adeboyo, Oduntan and Afeisumse (2016)  
who reported that there was relationship between  
communication skills in an organization and staff job  
performance (productivity). This finding is supported  
by Asamu (2014) who reported that there is a  
relationship between communication and staff job  
performance. This agreement in findings could be as  
result that application of verbal communication skill  
plays crucial roles in directing and mobilizing staff  
towards accomplishment of the school objectives.  
Principals’ use of right choice words or sound in  
communicating with teachers helps to maintain staff  
self-esteem and enhance their commitment in  
performing their jobs. The principals’ application  
of verbal skill helps in improving teamwork, boost  
teachers’ morale and facilitate the execution of tasks  
delegated to them.

The study also reported that there is a moderate  
relationship between principals’ application of  
feedback skill and teachers’ job performance in  
secondary schools in Anambra State. It was reported  
that there is significant relationship between principals’  
application of feedback skill and teachers’ job  
performance in secondary schools in Anambra State.  
This is in agreement with the finding of Babatunde  
(2014) there was significant relationship between  
principals’ communication skills and teachers’  
effectiveness. This similarity in findings is not  
surprising owing to the fact that it is through feedback  
that the receiver of information or message reacts  
according in order to foster unity of purpose in  
performing a task. Prompt feedback to teachers on  
outcome of decisions enriches their knowledge and also  
informs them on possible modification of the roles in  
attaining the school objectives. Feedback is also a  
mechanism in which principals could use to clarify and  
explain conflicting issues to staff. This helps to  
promote understanding among teachers, cooperation,  
harmony and mutual interpersonal relationship which  
enhance teachers’ job performance.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it is concluded that there is  
significant relationship between principals’ application  
of communication skill and teachers’ job performance  
in secondary schools in Anambra State. It is also  
through communication that tasks, the resources  
needed to perform the tasks and the expected results are  
made known to secondary school staff in Anambra  
State and this makes the tasks easier for better  
performance. The ability of principals to make use of  
the right choice of words in communicating to staff,  
giving listening ears to them and providing a  
constructive feedback gives them a sense of belonging  
and motivates them towards higher performance.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Ministry of Education should sponsor principals to  
workshops, seminars and conferences to enable  
them up-date their knowledge and communication  
skills in order to create conducive school  
environment that would enhance teachers’ job  
performance.

2. Principals should pay attention to staff and provide  
constructive feedback so as to improve their  
performance.

3. Secondary school principals should endeavour to  
provide opportunities for staff to give feedback on  
various issues communicated to them so as foster  
good interpersonal relationship and cooperation for  
enhancing teachers’ job performance.

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