

PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE NORTH-EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

***Janet Ngohile Tyosaa¹ & Prof. Adejo Okwori²**

^{1&2}Department of Educational Foundations, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi

**Corresponding Author: janettyosaa1@gmail.com/+23490772341425*

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated principals' communication strategies as correlates of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population was 971 teachers from 115 public secondary schools. A sample of 324 teachers representing 33.4% from 38 public secondary schools was selected for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample size. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaires titled "Principals' Communication Strategies Questionnaire (PCSQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ)" with reliability coefficient of 0.89 and 0.86. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that principals' use of meetings and virtual communication have significant strong positive correlation with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study concluded that principals' communication strategies have significant strong positive correlation with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that the relevant stakeholders like Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning should integrate findings on effective meeting practices into principal training programmes and virtual communication strategies should be reinforced by principals' to enhance communication with teachers and improve their job performance in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Communication strategies, job performance, meeting, virtual communication

Introduction

Teachers' job performance is considered a key driver of student achievement and educational excellence. However, in many schools, there seems to be poor lesson delivery, low motivation and reduced collaboration among teachers. In advanced countries like Finland and Singapore, effective teacher performance is supported by transparent leadership communication, collaborative planning and consistent professional feedback (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021). In Nigeria particularly in Benue North-East Senatorial District, challenges such as irregular information flow, poor conflict resolution and lack of inclusive decision-making appear to weaken teachers' job performance. Strengthening principals' communication strategies through clarity, openness, active listening and timely feedback could greatly enhance teachers' job performance, fostering better instructional quality and improved learning outcomes.

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 (Akem, et al, 2024). According to Nwosu (2017), job performance is the act of completing or carrying out a specific task. Job performance is concerned with overall ability of teachers to exhibit the right attitude to work, being committed and dedicated to the teaching roles and making deliberate efforts toward the attainment of educational goals and objectives (Iloh, et al, 2016). The authors further note that the indicator of teachers' job performance is evaluated in their ability to make deliberate effort to enhance students' academic performance, possession and display of in-depth knowledge of their subject matters, presentation of lessons in a well-organized manner and effective classroom organization and control. Others are participation in the school curricular activities, regularity and punctuality in the school, maintenance of good interpersonal relationship with subordinates and superiors, discipline, motivation and counseling of students and compliance to teachers' professional code of conduct. Teachers' Job Performance could be associated with a variety of principals' communication strategies.

Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, feelings and meanings between individuals or groups through mutually understood symbols, signs, or behaviours (Ngwakwe, et al, 2018). In the educational context, communication serves as the lifeblood of school operations, enabling principals, teachers, students and stakeholders to interact effectively for the achievement of institutional goals (Okoli & Mba, 2021). Effective communication encompasses verbal, non-verbal and written channels, ensuring that messages are accurately encoded, transmitted and decoded. It fosters collaboration, reduces misunderstandings and promotes mutual trust within the school environment (Ogunyemi, 2022). As an indispensable managerial function, communication ensures that policies, instructions and feedback are effectively shared, thereby enhancing decision-making and operational efficiency (Olaleye, 2023). Understanding the concept of communication provides the foundation for exploring communication strategies.

Communication strategies refer to deliberate plans, methods and techniques employed to convey messages effectively, engage audiences and achieve desired responses (Uche & Okafor, 2022). In schools, these strategies include active listening, open-door policies, feedback mechanisms, participatory decision-making and the use of modern communication technologies (Bua, 2020). Effective strategies require clarity, timeliness and adaptability to the audience's needs and context (Onyema & Nwankwo, 2021). They are essential for building trust, fostering collaboration, resolving conflicts and aligning staff efforts with institutional objectives (Okeke & Chukwuma, 2020). Principals who adopt well-structured communication strategies can influence

teacher motivation, instructional quality and overall school performance (Oluwole, 2023). Communication strategies operationalize the principles of communication, making them actionable tools for achieving educational leadership goals, thus demonstrating the practical application of the communication concepts discussed earlier.

Without communication of any kind, neither a school nor a principal can thrive since communication is necessary for schools to operate well and achieve their goals and objectives. This implies that communication is the life wire of every forward-looking school. Thus, principals' use of communication seems to be the basis of school existence as well as the life-blood of the school system. Ayeni (2018) maintains that by using communication strategies, schools can increase teacher value and job performance while also ensuring that people complete tasks that are essential to the organization's success and generate fresh ideas.

The importance of effective communication strategies in schools cannot be over emphasized. Communication strategies foster good planning, raise awareness, facilitate teachers' smooth work, establish effective leadership, serve as the foundation for decision-making, encourage cooperation and peace, boost managerial efficiency and aid in the advancement of moral development and motivation (Bua, 2020). The effectiveness of principals' communication strategies such as meetings and virtual communication, could improve teachers' job performance.

Meeting is an assemblage of members of an organization for exchange of information virtually and/or physically (Nwogbo, et al, 2019). A meeting is a formal information-sharing gathering of organization. For exchanging information, boosting confidence and making better decisions, many people think that meetings are the best tools available. According to Nwosu (2017), meeting allows for discussion and the expression of opinions from all attendees, making it the most democratic system. It is sometimes not easy for principals to converge teachers physically for a meeting probably as a result of tight schedules hence, may result to the use of virtual communication.

Virtual communication is defined as a mode of interaction that relies on technology such as audio, video and digital platforms to connect with individuals who are not physically present (Ajagbe, 2018). Principals can employ virtual communication to convey messages to teachers whether they are in the next office, staff room, another floor, a classroom, within the neighborhood or even miles away at home. It enables teachers to collaborate and engage with one another when they are not working in the same physical space (Ayeni, 2018). Collaboration software is often used to share information efficiently, while real-time tools such as virtual calls, online meetings, chat workspaces and instant messaging have become integral components of this communication mode. By leveraging these tools, schools can significantly reduce the challenges and delays associated with organizing physical meetings. It is against this background that the researchers were interested to investigate principals' communication strategies as correlates of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' job performance remains a critical determinant of educational quality, yet in many public secondary schools, it appears to be on a disturbing decline. Communication is the hub that connects school administrators and teachers and principals' communication strategies play a central role in establishing the flow of teachers' job performance. However, troubling signs have emerged in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District such as teachers missing deadlines for submission of school records, irregular participation in staff functions and persistent complaints of being unaware of directives or important information. Such lapses raise serious questions about whether there is an underlying breakdown in communication within schools. Recent years have seen mounting concerns from stakeholders such as students, parents

and even fellow teachers about the ability of secondary schools to achieve their objectives. Alarming incidents include habitual lateness to work and lessons, chronic absenteeism, inadequate lesson planning and failure to prepare lesson notes. Despite efforts by the Federal and Benue State governments to motivate, supervise and inspect teachers, the situation remains worrying.

The researchers observed a number of incidents in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District such as negligence in essential duties: incomplete or missing reports, delayed document submission, conflicts over welfare matters, poor lesson delivery, lax enforcement of discipline, weak classroom control and irregular marking and compilation of students' results. These persistent deficiencies point to a possible crisis in principals' communication strategies. This raises a critical question: could communication strategies correlate with teachers' job performance? This question necessitates investigation into principals' communication strategies to ascertain their correlation with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate principals' communication strategies as correlates of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. determine the relationship between principals' use of meetings and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.
2. examine the relationship between principals' virtual communication and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the relationship between principals' use of meetings and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District of Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between principals' virtual communication and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance;

1. Principals' use of meetings has no significant relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.
2. Principals' virtual communication has no significant relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication, developed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in 1948. The model conceptualizes communication as a linear process involving a sender who encodes a message, transmits it through a channel, and a receiver who decodes it, with the possibility of interference or "noise" that may distort the message.

The model applies to this study as it explains how principals (senders) convey instructions, policies and feedback to teachers (receivers) within public secondary schools, and how clarity of encoding, choice of communication channels and minimization of noise (such as ambiguity, poor timing or administrative bottlenecks) can influence teachers' understanding, motivation and ultimately their job performance; thus, effective communication strategies by principals, aligned with the principles of this model, are essential for enhancing teachers' productivity and overall school effectiveness. Although, Shannon-Weaver Model is a good model of communication

however, it has limitations because it views communication as a one-way linear process, ignoring feedback, context and the complexity of human interaction which are actually central to the study's findings about meetings and participatory communication. Despite these limitations, the model shapes the study by guiding the design of instruments and analysis to examine how principals encode messages, select channels (meetings or virtual platforms), manage noise, and obtain feedback to ensure effective communication.

Research Methodology

The study adopted the correlational research design. The area of the study was Benue North-East Senatorial district, Nigeria. The population was 971 teachers from 115 public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. A sample of 324 teachers representing 33.4% of the population from 38 public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria was used for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample size for the study. The first stage was purposive random sampling technique where the researchers purposively selected 38 public secondary schools. The second stage was proportionate random sampling technique where the researchers proportionately selected the schools proportionate to the number of the schools in each local government area. The third stage was simple random sampling technique where the researchers selected the actual respondents through balloting where each participant was given equal chance of being selected. The instrument used for data collection were questionnaires titled "Principals' Communication Strategies Questionnaire (PCSQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ)" which was validated by one expert in Measurement Evaluation from the Department of Science and Mathematics Education and two experts in Educational Management from the Department of Educational Foundations Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.89 and 0.86. A total number of 324 copies of the questionnaire were taken to the field and administered to the respondents. However, only 317 copies of questionnaires were returned and used for data analyses because the 7 copies got damaged. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool was used because it enables the researcher to determine the relationship between and among the independent variable (meetings and virtual communication) and dependent variable (teachers' job performance).

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between principals' use of meetings and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District of Nigeria?

Table 1: *Relationship Between Principals' use of Meetings and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District of Nigeria*

Variables	N	r	Decision
Principals' use of Meetings	317		
		0.78	Strong Positive Correlation
Teachers' Job Performance	317		

* Correlation coefficient is strong at 0.5 to 1.0 (or -0.5 to -1.0)

Source: *Field Survey Results 2026*

Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient of 0.78 falls within 0.5 to 1.0. This indicates a strong positive correlation. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between principals’ use of meetings and teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District of Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between principals’ virtual communication and teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial district, Nigeria?

Table 2: *Relationship Between Principals’ Virtual Communication and Teachers’ Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria*

Variables	N	r	Decision
Principals’ Virtual Communication	317	0.84	Strong Positive Correlation
Teachers’ Job Performance	317		

* Correlation coefficient is strong at 0.5 to 1.0 (or -0.5 to -1.0)

Source: *Field Survey Results 2026*

Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient of 0.84 falls within 0.5 to 1.0. This indicates a strong correlation. This implies that there is a strong positive correlation between principals’ virtual communication and teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial district, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: Principals’ use of meetings has no significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Table 3: *Significant Relationship between Principals’ use of Meetings and Teachers’ Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria*

Variables	N	r	P	Decision
Principals’ use of Meetings	317	0.78	0.000	Significant Strong Positive Correlation
Teachers’ Job Performance	317			

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$; level (2-tailed).

Source: *Field Survey Results 2026*

Table 3 shows that $r = 0.78$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Since P-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that principals’ use of meetings has no significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that principals’ use of meetings has significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Principals’ virtual communication has no significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial district, Nigeria.

Table 4: *Significant Relationship between Principals’ Virtual Communication and Teachers’ Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Benue North-East Senatorial district, Nigeria*

Variables	N	r	P	Decision
Principals’ Virtual Communication	317	0.84	0.000	Significant Strong Positive Correlation
Teachers’ Job Performance	317			

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$; level (2-tailed).

Source: *Field Survey Results 2026*

Table 4 shows that $r = 0.84$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Since P-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that principals’ virtual communication has no significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial district, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that principals’ virtual communication has significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial district, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding revealed that principals’ use of meetings has significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. This finding aligns with Nwosu (2017), who discovered a significant positive relationship between principals’ use of meetings and teachers’ job performance in Ikenne LGA of Ogun State. The result of his study indicated that meetings facilitated effective communication, participatory decision-making and professional clarity among teachers. Similarly, Nwogbo, et al (2019) found in Anambra State that regular staff meetings enhanced teacher effectiveness by promoting collaboration and shared understanding of school goals. In line with the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication, meetings serve as effective channels through which principals transmit clear instructions, expectations and feedback to teachers, while also allowing for clarification and interaction. When communication is well-structured and free from distortions (noise), teachers better understand their roles and responsibilities, leading to improved efficiency, commitment and overall job performance.

The second finding revealed that principals’ virtual communication has significant relationship with teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. This finding is corroborated by Ajagbe (2018), who found that virtual communication tools significantly influence teachers’ collaboration and job performance in Akwa Ibom State. Similarly, Ayeni (2018) in Ondo State revealed a strong correlation between principals’ virtual leadership communication and teacher motivation and performance, especially in hybrid teaching contexts. In line with the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication, this finding suggests that when principals effectively encode and transmit clear messages through appropriate digital channels and teachers accurately decode and receive them with minimal noise or distortion, communication becomes more efficient. As a result, teachers are better informed, guided and coordinated in their duties, which enhances their overall job performance.

Conclusion

The study established that principals' communication strategies have a statistically significant and strong positive relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Benue North-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. This finding reinforces the central role of effective communication in school administration, suggesting that when principals adopt clear, consistent, and interactive communication approaches, teachers are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, instructional effectiveness and overall productivity. Specifically, the use of structured meetings provides opportunities for collaboration, clarification of goals, and feedback, while virtual communication enhances timeliness, accessibility and continuity of information flow. This study adds empirical evidence to the growing body of literature on educational management by demonstrating the combined influence of traditional (meetings) and modern (virtual communication) strategies on teachers' job performance within the Nigerian secondary school context. The implications of these findings are significant for educational administrators and policymakers. Future studies could explore other dimensions of communication strategies, such as feedback mechanisms, interpersonal communication styles, and communication climate and how they influence different aspects of teacher effectiveness.

Recommendations

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

1. The Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning should integrate findings on effective meeting practices into principal training programmes by developing structured modules on participatory leadership. This can be achieved through workshops and policy briefs. As a result, principals nationwide will be better equipped to use meetings strategically, thereby improving teachers' job performance and overall school effectiveness.
2. The principals should reinforce the use of virtual communication across public secondary schools. This strategy will help principals to effectively communicate with teachers, drive their satisfaction towards their job and enhance maximum performance.

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