



MANAGING PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION STYLES FOR TEACHERS' COMPLIANCE TO RULES AND REGULATIONS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract: This study is about principals' communication styles for teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The theoretical position was anchored on the Human Capital Theory propounded by Becker in (1964). This study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 268 principals in secondary schools in Rivers State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 131 principals from the population. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Managing Principals' Communication Styles for Teachers' Compliance to Rules and Regulations Questionnaire (MPCSTCRRQ)" was used for data collection. Test-retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded an index of 0.86 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). Mean, Standard deviation and rank order were used in answering the research questions while t-test was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed among others: principals' assertive and aggressive communication styles enhanced teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals' forms of communication should be dynamic in order to aid the school to achieve its goals of teaching and learning and to enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations.

Keywords: Principals communication styles, teachers' compliance, rules and regulations.

Introduction

Communication is a basic need for human life. People communicate for a variety of reasons one of which is to create common understanding (Ibrahim, 2016). The transmission of facts, ideas, opinions, attitudes, and feelings enable humans to develop awareness and to learn. (Richmond, McCroskey & Powel, 2012). In any organization, communication is a necessity for coordinating most activities, and this is especially true in educational institutions to ensure compliance to rules and regulations. Given the wide spread changes in education today, educational institutions need effective leaders who

are good communicators. Lunenburg and Irby (2006) contended that effective leaders spend most of their time communicating with various stakeholders.

From the perspectives of Hindi, Miller and Catt (2004), organizational and administrative activities in and out of organizations require effective and functional communication system. In this context, communication is a vital part of organizations. Effective communication helps organizations to strengthen the employees to reach organizational goals. Groups and individuals are connected to an organization with communication phenomenon. Communication in today's organizations is

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not only complex and varied but more important to overall organizational functioning and success. Communication style on the other hand, is fundamental to social interaction. An individual's communication style can be understood in several different ways. Some researchers, in attempting to clarify what is meant by communication have proposed a tight but rather narrow definition. For example, Hartley (2013) defined interpersonal communication as a face-to-face meeting between two people. However, much of modern day communication especially organizational communication, is neither face-to-face nor confined to two people.

In schools, communication happens at all times, in all directions, and in many ways. However, principals have certain of communication. A communication style is the method by which one negotiates situations involving others. It is a distinctive way and mode of action by which one usually behaves when exchanging information, ideas, and emotions with others (Reece, Brandt, & Howie, 2010). Different leadership styles can be associated with different communication styles. Reversibly, different styles of communication indicate different leadership styles. For example, a human-oriented leadership style is strongly connected to an open communication style that respects people and their viewpoints. A charismatic style is connected to a communication style that inspires followers and encourages them. On the other hand, a task-oriented leadership style depends less on open and receptive communication styles and is directive and controlling (de Vries, Bakker Pieper, & Oostenveld, 2009). On the other hand Chandrasekar (2011) noted that communication styles can take the form of assertive, passive, aggressive and passive – aggressive communication.

Assertive communication is a style in which administrators clearly state their opinions and feelings, and firmly advocate for their rights and needs without violating the rights of others (Griffin, 2005). Being assertive means respecting yourself and other people. It

is the ability to clearly express your thoughts and feelings through open, honest and direct communication.

Aggressive communication style is a style in which an administrator expresses his feelings, opinions and his needs in a way that violates the rights of others. Aggressive communicators will often try to dominate others (Mohanty, 2011).

Assertive style of communication enhancing teachers' compliance to rules and regulations

Assertive communication is characterized by an ability to listen to the perspective of others and express oneself honestly and respectfully. It involves stating requests or ideas clearly and with confidence, without feeling guilty or apologizing. Assertive communicators are self-aware (i.e. know their own feelings, goals, etc.), responsible (for their own thoughts, behaviour, etc.) and honest (i.e. provide consistent verbal and non-verbal messages). Assertive communication is thought to be the most effective form of communication style, the assertive communication style features an open communication link while not being overbearing. Principals who are assertive in communication can express their own needs, desires, ideas and feelings, while also considering the needs of others. Assertive communicators aim for both sides to win in situation, balancing one's right with the rights of others.

A research study conducted by Mayo Clinic found that assertiveness can help one control stress and anger and improve coping skills. Being assertive is a core communication skill. Assertiveness can help someone express himself effectively and stand up for his point of view, while respecting the rights and beliefs of others. Also, being assertive can help boost one's self-esteem and earn others' respect. This can help with stress management, especially if one tends to take on too many responsibilities because of one's inability to say no.

de Vries, Bekker – Pieper, and Oostenveld (2009) investigated the relationships between leaders' communication styles on one hand, and charismatic,



human-oriented, and task-oriented leadership styles on the other hand. They collected data from 279 employees of a governmental organization via a survey consisting of 138 items. They used six communication styles: verbal aggressiveness, expressiveness, preciseness, assuredness, supportiveness, and argumentativeness. In line with expectations, the study found that charismatic and human-oriented leadership were mainly communicative, while task-oriented leadership was significantly less communicative. The communication styles were strongly related to knowledge sharing behaviours, perceived leader performance, satisfaction with the leader, and team commitment. For example, supportiveness had the strongest positive relationship with outcomes like satisfaction with the leader, sharing knowledge with leaders, and gaining team commitment, and it came second in rank in its relationship with perceived leader performance. Preciseness was found to have a direct relationship with leader performance. The expressiveness style of communication was correlated with sharing knowledge with the leaders but not to leader performance.

Aggressive communication style enhancing teachers' compliance to rules and regulations

Aggressive communication is a style in which individuals express their feelings and opinions and advocate for their needs in a way that violates the rights of others. Thus, aggressive communicators are verbally and/or physically abusive.

Principals who are aggressive communicators will often:

- Try to dominate others
- Use humiliation to control others
- Criticize, blame, or attack others
- Be very impulsive
- Have low frustration tolerance
- Speak in a loud, demanding, and overbearing voice
- Act threateningly and rudely

- Not listen well
- Interrupt frequently
- Use “you” statements
- Have an overbearing or intimidating posture

The impact of a pattern of aggressive communication is that these individuals:

- Become alienated from others
- Alienate others
- Generate fear and hatred in others
- Always blame others instead of owning up to their issues therefore seem to be unable to mature (Mohanty, 2011).

This style of communication is about winning – often at someone's expense. An aggressive person behaves as if their needs are the most important, as though they have more rights, and have more to contribute than other people. It is an ineffective communication style as the content of the message may get lost because people are too busy reacting to the way it is delivered (Richmond, et al., 2012).

In contemporary times, compliance is a known term not only in multinational enterprises but also in educational institutions. In general, compliance means conforming to a rule such as a specification, policy, standard or law (Roebuck, 2011). This scholar described compliance as a goal that any institution aspires to ensure the personnel are aware of at least the consequences of noncompliance and take steps to comply with the relevant laws and regulations or internal policies. Hence teachers' compliance to rules and regulations is a necessity for effective teaching and learning for goal attainment.

Educational institutions in this context, must comply with laws, regulations and internal policies designed to ensure smooth running of their activities. For example, teachers must comply with teaching regulations as set out by various treaties, they must seek accreditation of their study programmes regularly. Being compliant requires adopting and implementing a variety of costly



activities related to processes, people and technologies. These activities include ensuring that they have professional staff dedicated to compliance as well as enabling technologies to curtail risk.

Statement of the Problem

Communication is a powerful tool in the operations of any organization. It is also important to note that the way information is translated to a receiver could also play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of such information. It has been observed that effective communication is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. The competencies and skills the communicator possesses will enable him to exhibit work behaviours appropriate and relevant to performance of his jobs. Most of the school administrators likely assume positions of authorities not because of their professional training but by virtue of their years of service, gender, relationships with higher authority, nepotism among others therefore have no professional communication disposition.

In this regard, it is obvious that such school administrators will likely adopt “seat-of-the-pant” style in disseminating information to their subordinates as against professional style of communication. In such situations, subordinates are always disenchanted with the general administrative style of the administrators. Some schools of thought are of the opinion that being assertive in communication with subordinates would make organizations to function well, as well as employees to abide by rules and regulations. Some other schools of thought also believe that aggressive style, passive, manipulative styles etc if properly used could be the magic wand that would take the organization to the berth of success. Uncertainty then looms on which style exactly that is sustaining the interest of teachers in the face of poor salary, non promotion and not effecting teachers’ promotion for many years.

One begins to wonder whether there is any best style of communication. Then to what extent could any

style of communication facilitate teachers’ compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework upon which this study is based is the Human Capital Theory. This theory is a modern extension of Adam Smith’s Wage differentials and was developed extensively by Becker in (1964) in his book titled “Human Capital”: a theoretical and empirical analysis with special reference to education. The theory stressed that effective communication among organizational members increased productivity, skills and wages. According to this theory, education or training raises the productivity of workers by impacting useful knowledge, and skills, hence raising workers’ future income by increasing their life balance through earnings (Becker, 1964). It therefore calls for a continuous investment on education because it will not only result in the increase in pay but will also result in the human resources development of an employee or the educated.

The implication of this is that Human Capital Theory emphasizes that education and training of employees raise the productivity of staff; principals inclusive at work. This is carried out to ensure effectiveness and impact useful skills and knowledge in the employee. Furthermore, the theory emphasizes that the high productivity of workers depends largely on the education and training from which basic knowledge and skills are required. Human capital theory arises out of any activity, like effective communication style, that is able to raise individual worker productivity; this has been one of the most influential economic theories of western education and it is the hub of this research.

Aim and Objectives of this Study

The aim of this study is to examine the extent principals’ communication styles enhance teachers’ compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives were to:



1. find out the extent assertive style of communication enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. determine the extent aggressive style of communication enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. To what extent does assertive style of communication enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does aggressive style of communication enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the opinions of male and female principals on the extent assertive style of communication enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the opinions of principals in urban and rural secondary schools on the extent aggressive style of communication enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 268 principals in public secondary schools across the 23 Local Government

Areas in Rivers State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to get a sample of 131 principals representing 49% of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a 12 item self-structured questionnaire titled: "Principals' Communication styles and Teachers' Compliance to Rules and Regulations Questionnaire" (PCSTCRRQ). The instrument was validated by experts in the field of Educational Measurement and Evaluation of the University of Port Harcourt. Test-retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument using data from the pilot study carried out on 20 respondents outside the sample size. Reliability index of 0.86 was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which is high, reliable and adequate for the study. The instrument was administered by the researchers and three trained research assistants. All the copies distributed were retrieved without loss. Responses to the research questions were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and rank order. The mean scores of 2.50 and above were seen as agreed while mean scores below 2.50 were seen as disagreed. t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The instrument was structured in line with the modified Likert 4 – point scale of:

Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points (3.5 and above)

High Extent (HE) = 3 points (2.5 to 3.4)

Low Extent (LE) = 2 points (1.5 to 2.4)

Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1 point (1.4 and below)

Thus $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$. (Criterion mean)

Result

Research Question One: To what extent does assertive style of communication enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State?



Table 1: Weighted mean, standard deviation and rank order statistics of the opinions of male and female principals on the extent assertive style of communication enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/No	Items	Male principals (64) $\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	Female principals (67) $\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$ $\bar{x}$	Rank	Remarks
1.	Listening to others without interruption	3.01	1.74	High Extent	2.90	1.72	2.96	3 rd	High Extent
2.	Expressing of feelings without guilt	2.90	1.73	High Extent	2.90	1.69	2.90	4 th	High Extent
3.	Balancing one's rights with rights of others	3.20	1.79	High Extent	3.20	1.79	3.20	1 st	High Extent
4.	Clearly states needs	2.90	1.38	High Extent	2.50	1.23	2.70	6 th	High Extent
5.	Being tactfully honest	3.10	1.75	High Extent	3.10	1.75	3.10	2 nd	High Extent
6.	Voicing your needs confidently	2.80	1.68	High Extent	2.90	1.68	2.85	5 th	High Extent
	Grand mean	2.99	1.67	High Extent	2.92	1.68			High Extent

From the data in Table 1, items, 3, 5, 1, 2, 4 and 6 with a mean of 3.20, 3.10, 2.96, 2.90, 2.85 and 2.70 respectively were all accepted as their mean scores were above 2.50. The respondents agreed that, to a high extent, listening to others without interruption, expression of feelings without guilt, balancing one's rights with rights of others, clearly stating needs, being tactfully honest and voicing your needs confidently are ways assertive communication style

enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: To what extent does aggressive style of communication enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Weighted mean, standard deviation and rank order of the opinions of principals of urban and rural secondary schools on the extent aggressive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/No	Items	Male principals (64) $\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	Female principals (67) $\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$ $\bar{x}$	Rank	Remarks
7.	The principal uses threats to motivate teachers to achieve goals	2.95	1.72	High Extent	2.88	1.68	2.92	3 rd	High Extent
8.	The principal uses	2.88	1.69	High Extent	3.01	1.73	2.95	1 st	High Extent



	deceptiveness to achieve goals								
9.	The principal uses obscene language	3.01	1.73	High Extent	2.86	1.69	2.94	2 nd	High Extent
10.	The principal does not control his/her anger	2.88	1.69	High Extent	2.88	1.69	2.88	4 th	High Extent
11.	Tensions easily affect the principal	2.93	1.71	High Extent	2.78	1.67	2.86	5 th	High Extent
12.	The principal behaves friendly	2.02	1.42	Low extent	1.47	1.21	1.75	6 th	Low Extent
	Grand mean	2.78	1.67	High Extent	2.65	1.63			High Extent

From Table 2 above, items 8, 9, 7, 10 and 11 with a mean scores of 2.95, 2.94, 2.92, 2.88 and 2.86 respectively were accepted as their means are above 2.50, the respondents agreed that the use of threats to motivate teachers to achieve goals, use of deceptiveness to achieve goals, use of obscene language, inability to control one's anger and being easily affected by tensions are some of the ways the principals' aggressive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations. From the grand mean, aggressive communication style enhances

teachers' compliance to rules and regulations to a high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the opinions of male and female principals on the extent assertive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of z-test analysis on the mean ratings of opinions of male and female principals on the extent assertive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Category	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Level of sig	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	64	2.80	1.67					
Female	67	2.80	1.68	0.05	129	0.03	+1.96	Not significant

Table 3 showed that the calculated t is 0.03 and the Table t is +1.96 at 129 degree of freedom. Since the calculated t is less than the critical t, the null hypothesis was not rejected, which means, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of opinions of male and female principals on the extent assertive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals of urban and rural secondary schools on the extent the principals' aggressive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.



Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of opinions of urban and rural principals on the extent aggressive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Category	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Level of sig	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Urban	70	2.78	1.67					
Rural	61	2.65	1.63	0.05	129	0.45	+1.96	Not significant

Table 4 showed that the calculated t value is 0.45 and the table t value +1.96 at degree of freedom of 129. Since the calculated t is less than the critical t, the null hypothesis was not rejected, which means, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the opinions of principals of urban and rural secondary schools on the extent aggressive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The extent assertive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulations

It was generally accepted that listening to others without interruption, expressing of needs and feelings without guilt, balancing one's rights with rights of others, clearly stating needs and wants, being tactfully honest and voicing your needs and desires confidently are to a high extent principals' assertive communication styles that enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is supported by Griffin (2005) who opined that assertive communication enables school administrators to clearly state their opinions and feelings, and firmly advocate for their rights and needs without violating the rights of others.

The extent aggressive communication style enhances teachers' compliance to rules and regulation

The result of the analysis showed that the use of threats to motivate teachers to achieve goals, use of deceptiveness to achieve goals, use of obscene language, inability to control his/her anger and being easily affected

by tension are to a high extent principals' aggressive communication styles used to enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding disagreed with Mohanty (2011) who stated that in aggressive style, the administrator expressed his feelings, opinions and needs in a way that violates the right of others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that communication is a basic need for human life and that people communicate for a variety of reasons one of which is to create common understanding. Also, principals' assertive and aggressive styles of communication enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations through listening to others without interruption, expressing of needs and feelings without guilt. Finally, aggressive communication style can also be used in a particular situation; therefore no communication style is the best at all times and in all situations. The principals' management of their communication styles is vital to teachers' compliance to school rules and regulations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion, the researchers offered the following recommendations for implementation.

1. Principals' forms of communication should be concise and easy to understand in order to aid the school to achieve its goals of teaching and learning and to enhance teachers' compliance to rules and regulations.



2. Principals of public secondary schools should adopt appropriate communication styles and skills to continuously ensure that their administrative performance remains effective.
3. Finally, it is also imperative for the principals to manage effectively their communication styles.

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