

INFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence communication on students' academic achievement in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population consisted of six hundred and forty-nine (649) of principal and teachers in senior public secondary schools in Rivers State while the sample size consisted of the same number of respondents. One set of self-structured instruments titled "Total Quality Management – Students' Academic Achievement Questionnaire (TQM-SAPQ). The cronbach alpha method of reliability was adopted. The pre-test and post- test scores were correlated using taro yamene analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable enough to carry out the study. The findings shows that principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State are in consensus that communication to a very high extent influences students' academic achievements in public schools. It was recommended that amongst others, there should be a high level of training and continuous improvement of personnel, team work and cooperation amongst management staff and students and teachers' communication and recognition should be accorded high training.

Keywords: Communication, Students Academic, Achievement, Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school performance and students achievement particularly among the public sector in Rivers State over the years has not been encouraging because of inadequate funds and poor implementation of Total quality management. And these as resulted to the poor performance of the student in external exams. The principles of Total quality management which includes ethics, staff training, team work, communication and leadership are found to align with academic performance of students, and as Padhi (2010) argued, TQM is built on a foundation of ethics, integrity and trust. Teamwork, leadership, training, recognition and communication are also key components of total quality management that enhance academic performance of students (Psychogios & Priporas, 2007; Jumaa, 2010; and Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Total Quality management fosters fairness and sincerity, openness and thus allows everyone in school to fully involve in school and other administrations. Padhi (2010) emphasised that TQM is a key to opening the ultimate potential of all those involved in its proper implementation.

Effective communication and common understanding of roles and responsibilities are essential for optimizing the system. If the benefits of a component, subsystem or function are not of concern to the whole system, the whole system is optimized. The system objectives must be clearly communicated to everyone and meet the needs of the customers of the system. School is a system that needs to be optimized. It is possible that some of the school activities do not contribute to the objectives of the whole system: optimization of the extra-curricular program and allocation of additional resources to the department can optimize the whole system or undermine the curriculum program. It should be noted that the action taken to improve each activity affects others. Schools should therefore communicate regularly with pupils, parents and other interested parties, informing them of student progress and school challenges. School managers must also inform parents of their children's goals and expectations and encourage parents to take responsibility for meeting their goals and expectations. Academic achievement means the ability of a student to

successfully complete his/her year of study in a school system. The student displays such a knowledge, skills and ability over time, that is the individual (student) inherent potentials and competencies.

Purpose of the Study

1. Determine the extent communication influences academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State."

Research Question

1. To what extent does communication influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

1. Principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean scores of the perceived influence of communication on the academic achievement of students.

Social Systems (Process) Theory

The Social Systems Theory, also called Systems Theory by Getzel and Guba (1957) stated that "the study of society is a complex arrangement of elements, including individuals and their beliefs as they relate to the whole. They believed that a social system is a function of the interaction between the institution sub-systems (homothetic dimension) and the individual personal sub-system (idiographic dimension)." And that each behavioural act is conceived as being driven simultaneously from the homothetic and idiographic dimensions (Getzel & Guba, 1957). Ukwueje (1992) concluded that

Organisation effectiveness requires a harmonious interplay between the person and institutional sub-systems. Effectiveness is a function of the congruence of expectation and need dispositions. So, the effectiveness of the system is enhanced when the blending of role and personality are harmoniously matched. Congruence among the key elements within social system promotes effectiveness and efficiency because when these basic elements of system fit well together, they function effectively and efficiency bringing about organizational satisfaction. (Pp.122-123)

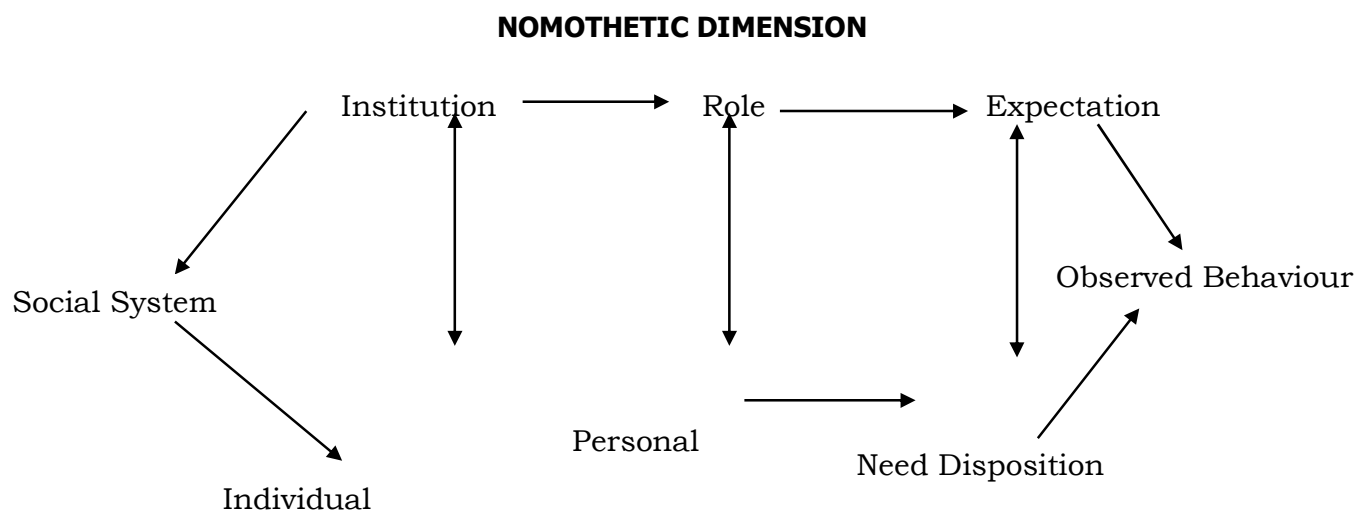


Figure 3: The dynamic Interplay between the Institutional and Personal Sub-System.

Source: Getzel & Egoni. G. (1992) Educational Theory and Practice. (p.122).

Based on these two factors (homothetic and idiographic) secondary school principals, administrators, and teachers are challenged with various responsibilities ranging from administration to managing of men and materials and physical resources. This is very paramount to ensure that harmonious congruence exists between the sub-systems for the achievement of organisational goals. The diagram above, establishes the fact that effective organisational performance has a direct relationship between persons (principals) and other personnel and outputs (ie teachers and students).

Communication

Effective communication and common understanding about roles and responsibilities is important to the optimisation of a system. When one component, function, or subsystem benefits without concern for the impact on the total system, then the total system is sub-optimised. The objectives of the system must be clearly communicated to all and consistent with the needs of the system's customers. A school is a system that should be optimised. Some of the school activities may not contribute to the objectives of the total system: optimising the extracurricular and assigning extra resources to one department may optimise the total system or may damage the curricular programme. It must be noted that each action taken for the improvement of one function has implications for the others. Therefore, schools must communicate regularly with the students, parents, and other stakeholders, informing them of the progress of the students and challenges of the school. The school managers must also notify parents of the goals and expectations set for their children and encourage the parents to take responsibility for ensuring that their children reach the set goals and expectations.

Customer (Client) Focus:

Customer focus is the hallmark of TQM. According to Teeter and Lozier (1993), unless we involve the participants, we are unlikely to understand a process well enough to improve it. We had stated earlier that the definition of quality must incorporate the views of the customer. In other words, customer satisfaction is the hallmark of TQM. Organizations practicing the tenets or principles of TQM must necessarily be customer focused. That is why Disney (1999) frowned at the 'take it or leave it' attitude of the dysfunctional product orientation which has been replaced by a new approach that requires the identification and satisfaction of the customers' needs. Modern Organizations therefore strive to understand who their customers are, identify what their needs are, and then ensure that such needs are adequately satisfied.

Dean and Bowen (1994) viewed the principle of Customer Focus as the most fundamental goal of any organization. Thus, organizations should strive to design and deliver products and services that meet the needs of their customers. If customers' needs are properly understood, all machines are put in place to meet them. In addition, Ross (1995) noted that the client is not as interested in the complexity of the process control, training program, or their corporate culture as they would receive the desired product. The customers' right should therefore, not be ignored as they are often physically present within the organization.

Ho (1995, p. 34) highlighted that "the means by which customer expectations are generated includes, word of mouth communication, personal needs, experience and external communications that influence customers' expectations." Furthermore, "practices which exemplify customer focus includes, promoting direct contact with customers, collecting information about customers and disseminating such information within the organization" (Dean & Bowen, 1994). In the case of educational institutions, the learning system according to Teeter and Lozier (1993), cannot improve unless the students who are doing the learning are involved. This therefore requires the identification and satisfaction of the students needs. Because it is , when students needs such as enabling learning environment becomes the primary focus of school's administration or management they are given the treatment of importance, as an integral part of the school's existence.

Workers (employee) empowerment:

It is an established fact that organizational effectiveness largely depends on the skills and knowledge of the work force, In modern work organizations, the concept of workers' empowerment is gradually replacing the old practice of close supervision. According to Ivancevich, (1997,p.67), "workers' empowerment is a process that increases people's involvement on their work design, flow, interactions and decision making. They went on to state that it is recognizing and releasing into the organization system the power that people already have in their wealth of useful knowledge and internal motivation." Teeter and Lazier (1993, p. 102) said that a conducive atmosphere is needed where people (employees) "feel comfortable, confident, motivated and responsible for conducting their work. They should be involved in their work design, flow, interactions and decision making." In TQM paradigm shift practice therefore, where workers are allowed to take decisions that affect their immediate jobs. This implies that workers have access to relevant information that would be useful for their effective job performance. When workers are empowered to take decisions, they feel motivated and when they achieve results, they fill a sense of self actualization. Management should primarily function "to prepare the individuals and teams within the organization to function in an autonomous manner, by being an enabler, pace setter and supporter rather than a director of employee action" (Lawler et al, 1998, p. 54). With the above management principle, individuals and "teams need to be given the power, information and knowledge they need to work autonomously-independent of management control and direction." They argue that sharing information about business performances, plans, goals and strategies are basic to employee involvement, and as such information will among other things, help them make meaningful contributions to the improvement of products and services. Improvement in work processes, change behaviour in response to changing conditions, help give feedback about the effectiveness of their performance, and that of the organization. Lawler et al (1998) examined three approaches to employee involvement as follows:

- i. Suggestion involvement through improvement of teams or participation groups which entails the power to make suggestions for change, not necessarily the power to make decision.
- ii. Job involvement which is based on changes in work design, offering employees more control over the day-to-day decisions that are relevant to their jobs.
- iii. Business involvement which encompasses the two approaches above, but also stresses the involvement of employees in managing the business. Employee education and training, employee performance and recognition and employee well-being and satisfaction are all aspects of employee involvement and workers empowerment (Dean & Bowen, 1994).

METHODOLOGY**Design of the Study**

This study adopted the exploratory survey research design. sidered appropriate. This study was carried out across the (3) three Senatorial Districts of Rivers State, covering all 268 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Rivers State is one of the 36 States of Nigeria situate at the South-South Geo-Political Zone of the country. It is made up of 23 Local Government Areas and its capital city is Port Harcourt. The population of the study was 8,394 consisting of 268 Principals and 8,126 teachers of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population represents the total number of Principals and Teachers in the 268 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State (Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2019). The sample size of the study consisted of 649 respondents (268 principals and 381 teachers). The above sample size was obtained using a combination of census sampling and Taro yamene formula. Considering the fact the population of principals (268) was not very high, census sampling (which involves using the entire population) was employed while the sample size for teachers (381 from a population of 8126 teachers) was obtained using the Taro yamene sampling formula.

The study employed one data collection tool: a researcher-designed questionnaire

A researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled "Total Quality Management - Student Academic Achievement Questionnaire (TQM-SAPQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was of the 4-point scales rating format rated as follows:

Very High Extent	4
High Extent	3
Low Extent	2
Very Low Extent	1

A total of 24 questionnaire items were used to measure the variables. And there were also six(6) sections comprising of four(4) questions per section. The researcher-designed instrument, to elicit information on total quality management and students' academic achievement, was subjected to face and content validation by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts in the fields of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation of the Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. Cronbach alpha was adopted in this study.

Data obtained was analyzed using the mean (\bar{X}) and Z-test. Specifically, the mean (\bar{X}) was used to answer the research questions while the z-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule for Mean: To determine the criterion mean for scoring the questionnaire, all the points from the alternative responses were added up and divided by four, for example; $(4+3+2+1)/4=10/4=2.5$. Therefore any mean that is 2.50 and above was accepted while any mean value below 2.50 was rejected. While for hypotheses (z-Test): When the z-calculated value is greater than the z-critical value; the hypothesis was rejected while when the z-calculated value is less than the z-critical value, the hypothesis was accepted.

Research Question 6: To what extent does communication influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.6: Mean Scores of Principals and Teachers on the Influence of Communication of Academic Achievement of Students of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State (N = 649)

S/No.	Statement	Principals [$n_1 = 268$]		Decision n	Teachers [$n_2 = 381$]		Decision
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁		\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	
21	The objective of the school system is clearly communicated to all staff and students to enable them perform better in external exams.	3.59	0.50	HE	3.53	0.68	High Extent
22	School management holds regular meetings with staff and students to access their challenges and prospects, strengths and weaknesses.	3.56	0.51	HE	3.48	0.37	High Extent
23	School management notifies students, parents and all stakeholders of the school's expectations.	3.43	0.47	HE	3.32	0.83	High Extent
24	There is regular consultation and meetings with parent-teachers association to keep them abreast of school challenges and prospects.	3.18	0.62	HE	3.34	0.47	High Extent
Total		3.44	0.53	HE	3.42	0.59	High Extent

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The information in Table 4.6 presents that Principals have a total mean of 3.44, and standard deviation of 0.53, while Teachers have total mean of 3.42 and standard deviation of 0.59 on their rating of the extent of "influence of teamwork on academic achievement of students of public

senior secondary schools in Rivers State." Both the Principals and Teachers have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 – 3.5 implying high extent "influence of communication on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State." Therefore, communication influences to a high extent, the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 6: Principals and Teachers of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean scores of communication on the academic achievement of students.

Table 4.12: z-test on the opinions of principals and teachers on the influence of communication in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	Z _{cal}	α	Z _{crit}	Decision
Principals	268	3.4	0.5	0.41	0.05	1.9	Retain H ₀ : Z _{cal} < Z _{crit}
		4	3			6	
Teachers	381	3.4	0.5				
		2	9				

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 4.12 above presents an analysis of the opinions of principals and teachers on communication in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State using z-test statistical tools. The table also shows that, 268 Principals and 381 Teachers respectively have mean scores of 3.44 and 3.42 and standard deviations of 0.53 and 0.59 on the opinions of principals and teachers on communication in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The calculated z-value is 0.41, chosen alpha is 0.05 for a two-tailed test, and the critical z-value is 1.96. Since the calculated z-value (0.41) is less than the critical z-value (1.96), the null hypothesis of "no significant difference in the mean rating of Principals and Teachers on the influence of communication on the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State" is retained. Thus, Principals and Teachers of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State are in a consensus that communication enhances students' academic achievement to a "High Extent".

Influence of communication of principals and teachers on academic achievement of students, Research question 6 explains the extent to which communication influence the academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. From the table, items 21- 24 with mean responses of 3.59 and 3.53, 3.56 and 3.48, 3.43 and 3.32 and 3.18 and 3.34 respectively both principals and teachers are in agreement with the fact that the extent to which communication influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary school in Rivers State. The principal have a total mean of 3.44 and standard deviation of 0.53 while teachers have total mean of 3.42 and standard deviation of 0.59 on their rating of the extent of influence of teamwork on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This shows that communication affects the academic achievement of students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State on a high extent.

This result shows that principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State are in consensus that communication influences students' academic achievement to a high extent. Willis and Taylor (2009) support this finding when they asserted that "schools communicate regularly with the parents, informing them of the progress of their children. They also notify parents of the goals and expectations set for their children and they encourage parents to take responsibility for ensuring that their children reach these expectations." According to Simon (1975), without communication there can be no organization. Thus, in a school organisation, communication involves sharing and transmitting ideas and attitudes amongst administrators, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders, thereby promoting total quality management in schools.

CONCLUSION

Total Quality Management recognizes that education system has little value if contents are not student centred. Therefore, quality education system must be able to develop and attend to the needs of students and the teachers. Colleges and universities have begun implementing total quality management beyond the administrative, service, and non-academic units of their institutions. And some higher education institutions who have ventured with total quality management into their academic units are primarily still in the planning stages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following were recommended were drawing from the research findings reported in chapter four of this work, the following recommendations are made as follows;

- 1) Teachers' communication has a very high extent on students' academic performance. Therefore, staff members must be sufficiently empowered to make independent contribution to their job schedules, their useful knowledge and internal motivation is used to achieve the academic objectives of the school.
- 2) Staff training enhanced school productivity. Hence, in-service training, forums, seminars, workshops, conferences should be given top priority by the schools' board and ministry of education via the government.
- 3) Teachers/staff motivation should be made plays vital role to focus on students' educational need. Motivated teachers can perform better than non-motivated ones; by these incentives are effective implementation of minimum wage, prompt payment of salary, promotion, provision of imprest and other fringe benefits associated with the teaching profession.

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