



**International Journal of Economics,  
Environmental Development and Society  
(IJEEDS)**

## **IMPROVING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Isaiah Leopold MBA**

Department of Educational Management  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria  
mbaisaiah@yahoo.com

**Imaowaji Felix MACLEAN**

Department of Educational Management  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria

---

### **ABSTRACT**

The success of any public institution is dependent largely on the mutual relationship and interaction among the various parts and groups through improved effective communication. This paper examined the ways effective communication can be improved in public institutions. For the paper to be properly guided the concepts of communication, effective communication and the school as an institution were clarified, aims, roles and challenges of the school were stated and identified. Despite the need to improve effective communication in public institutions, this paper discussed the main factors or barriers to effective communication ranging from organizational or institutional factor, interpersonal factor, intrapersonal or internal factor and overload of information. The paper suggested among others that leaders of public institution should initiate internal mechanisms for improving effective communication, that a variety of communication channels should be adopted by the school to facilitate information dissemination, that leaders of schools should take the issue of PTA very seriously, leaders of public institutions should not hoard information as important information may be hoarded unknowingly and that private institution should also follow suit by improving effective communication in the system. The paper further reiterated the School as a Public Institution, the roles of the school as a public institution, challenges of the school as a public institution in Nigeria and therefore suggested ways of improving effective communication in public institutions thus downward communication and upward communication and finally suggested solutions for improving effective communication in public institutions as leaders of public institutions not hoard information as important information may be hoarded unknowingly, and private institutions should also follow suit by improving effective communication in the system.

**Keywords:** Improving, Communication, Effective Communication, Public, Institutions.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Mba, I. L., & Maclean, I. F. (2022). Improving Effective Communication in Public Institutions. *International Journal of Economics, Environmental Development and Society*, 3(3), 328-345.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The success of any organization is dependent on the mutual relationship and interaction among the various parts and groups that form it. This institutional process is measured by the level of goal attainment through effective dissemination of information, ideas, attitudes and activities carried out by people within the institution. In public institutions like the school, the directing, coordination and circulation of information become possible through improved effective communication. According to employees a sense of belonging through effective communication is what organizations do to create harmonious relationships among employees, and between the employees and the management (Armstrong, 2012).

Most organizations have failed due to the inability of leaders to provide enabling work environment and employee relations owing to ineffective communication. Therefore, it is imperative to create a situation in which members of the organization share ideas and communicate accurately to one another as well as the management aimed at achieving organizational goals. Maintaining cordial relationships between institutions and their external agencies through the transmission of the mission statement, aims and objectives is the focus of effective leadership with the improved effective communication process. In the school system, the importance of improved effective communication is felt in terms of the relationship between the principal and staff in ensuring that directives, rules and regulations are adequately channelled for effective implementation of the purpose for which the institution is established. It is interesting to also say that, despite different barriers identified with effective communication, employees' contributions to expectations of public institutions are possibly collated for subsequent policy implementation. The interdependence between the school and its immediate community facilitated by objectively transmitting the culture and values of the society is due to improved effective communication adopted by the leader of the school (Koko & Nwiyi, 2006).

In achieving the goal of admitting students into educational institutions, improved effective communication is needed. This is based on the ground that institutions need effective communication to advertise their programmes to interested persons through billboards, newspapers, radios, televisions. The improved effective communication is needed to bring about effective management resources available to public institutions since they are formally and hierarchically structured. Universities, colleges, polytechnics and other government enterprises need improved effective communication to effectively manage their resources and adequate service delivery.

## **BACKGROUND**

In public institutions like the school, maintenance of effective communications is quite indispensable. It is therefore, required of an effective school leader to adopt measures that can bring about improved effective communication in the school system. This is because, human beings need some information for them to either respond or to accept directives for the progress of the system they find themselves. Even leaders need improved effective communication for their ideas and feelings to be transmitted downwards to others for possible feedback to be made upward for the actualization of the general goals of the organization.

In extolling the above grounds, Nicholas in Hoy and Miskel (2008), declared that human beings live by communication, and human practices that contribute to the success of the society are carried out through communication of reasoning, languages, morality, ideas and the social

organizations to which human beings belong. Okoroma (2007), added that, the communication of ideas and languages or attitudes in every organization such as the school should be clearly made for effective dissemination or transmission. It means that, in the delivery of instruction in the classroom, the teacher is expected to communicate accurately and clearly for students to accurately give feedback which is evident in their improved performance in achievement tests or examinations, which is also the aim of classroom interaction between the teacher and students.

Despite the complexity of communication, Hoy and Miskel (2008) stressed that communication is exceptionally important in every sphere of an institution. According to Hoy and Miskel, teachers are made to orally and in writing carry out instruction as well as other media aids like computers, projectors or slides, e-mail, and audio-visual aids for effective teaching and learning to be attained through improved effective communication. These are also be regarded as the appropriate communication media or channels according to (Peretomode, 2006). Peretomode, added radios, televisions, new letters, bill- boards, Web pages and bulletins as media of improving effective communication. A school leader adopts these in transmitting ideas and decisions to both his staff and other stakeholders like the community and non-governmental organizations that are very significantly for the progress of the school.

Te'eni (2001) considered communication in schools as what cannot be dispensed with in terms of accomplishment of educational goals which is the cardinal focus of the school and the maintenance of good relationships between the school and its external agencies. According to Te'eni, this is the multi- purpose function of a school administrator to improve effective communication. It means, therefore, that a leader of an institution who is described as the main source of any information should be explicit and clear in setting goals with associated strategies for ensuring that the set goals are actualized. The goals of effective communication which include the following:

- Leader's ability to making the receiver to follow rules of communication;
- Ensuring that relationships and interactions among receivers are well managed; and
- Ensuring that the behaviours and attitudes of receivers are properly influenced and guided.

In 2001, Te'eni also said that in accomplishing the set goals, there should be specific messages; affective tone to be maintained and adjust where necessary; controlling and coordinating the communication process for proper feedback which is the result of the communication. These are some of the strategies of improved effective communication. The receiver is made to mark the destination of the message, read and listen very actively. Possibly, a sender can use symbols and words that can convey the meaning of the message for easy understanding. A sender of a particular message is expected to adopt symbols or words that have identical meanings for the receiver to decode easily.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS**

### **The Concept of Communication**

Communication is derived from a Latin word 'communis' meaning to make common, to speak, share, to impart and to transmit. In every successful organization and society, communication is needed between two friends; members and allies to strengthen the relationship; communication is

also important in employee relations in both public and private organizations since information must be sent from one person to another or from one part to another and hierarchically for the purpose of achieving their goals.

Communication may be conceptualized to be the exchange of information, ideas and attitudes within an organization (Armstrong, 2012). This goes to support the idea that, in education, communication is applied for the exchange of information or interaction between the teacher and students during the evaluation of lessons. In human organizations, communication becomes the network that brings the people and activities that are carried out together for realizing the expectations of the organization. Communication is concerned with the impartation and exchange of ideas, information attitudes through the application of technological media and human abilities (Okoroma, 2007). In other words, when communicating, ideas and messages are transmitted from one person to another or from a teacher who is a professional to students in the school. This also means that the process of communication involves a sender, the message and a receiver whose feedback is expected.

In maintaining effective interrelationship between the school as an institution, the immediate community and other external agencies communication are needed using the mass media like radio, television, poster and billboards in enlightening the public and disseminate information to parents and other well-meaning members of the community in important issues. Therefore, communication is defined as a means of transmitting and receiving ideas and information (Koko & Nwiyi, 2006).

In the education sector, communication is a veritable tool or a vehicle through which educational administrators or leaders direct and coordinate the affairs of the institutions. The Ministries of education, boards and other agencies in the sector deem it fit to adopt communication effectively to ensure that information and directives are transmitted to the institutions for quality service delivery and educational goals attainment.

There are two major types of communication according to the Okoroma (2007), viz: formal and informal communication:

**Formal communication:** The formal type of communication involves the transmission of organizational goals, instructions, procedures and practices from a higher level of management to lower level (subordinates) through designed channels in the organization. This is the downward communication through which authority flows from up downwards; from superiors to subordinates. In formal communication, letters and newsletters, annual reports, memoranda, notice boards, bulletins, intranet, etc are used in transmitting information or ideas effectively within the organization for goal achievement (Armstrong, 2012).

In the institution or school, this form of communication is used by the principal to ensure that directives and information are disseminated to subordinates. In formal communication, there is a lateral or horizontal direction of communication which occurs among employees of the same level within an organization. Personnel or employees are made to coordinate their own affairs and relate with another in the system for effective delivery of services. There is also upward communication that flows from subordinates to superiors. This is another channel through which the ideas, feelings and attitudes of subordinates are transmitted to top management for quality coordination and commitment to organizational goals (Ololube, 2017, 2019).

**Informal Communication:** This is the type of communication that creates room for employees to interact and communicate among themselves; help one another to gain information that is available to them. It is also a medium of socializing employees through communication. It

is the type of communication that occurs between employees and among employees independent of the institutional authority. In an organization where informal communication is popularized, clues are provided for effective ordination of the system not minding the formal system (Ololube, 2017).

The grapevine is an aspect of informal communication that allows rapid dissemination of information without due process of the formal communication, even misinformation is most recorded through the grapevine and this in most cases makes formal communication ineffective (Okoroma, 2007). The aim of informal communication is to ensure that adequate transmission of information and sharing of ideas among organizational members is done for effective management of public institutions like the school.

**Effective communication:** Effective communication is very essential for effective institutional management whether public institutions. This is owing to the fact that among the employees and between superiors and the subordinates effective communication is needed to be improved. Many organizations have crumbled for not realizing their expectations for inability to clearly and effectively communicating ideas, feelings and emotion. This requires also the maintenance of various skills to attain effective communication. Effective communication may mean understanding the feelings and intentions that are associated with the information (Peretomode, 2006). This confirms the notion that effective communication clearly transmitting ideas and messages from the sender to the receiver for favourable feedback. This requires also the maintenance of various factors to attain effective communication. These factors are:

**Listening abilities:** Communication is said to be effective if the receiver avoids distractions and gives proper attention to the information. In public institutions like the school announcements or directives from the principal should be necessarily listened to, and carried out by both staff and students adequately for the progress of the school. Even in the classroom setting, during interactions and evaluation, both the teacher and students are needed to listen very attentively for the understanding of the lesson.

**Feedback:** In the management of public institutions, the acknowledgement of the information received is very important. Student response and performance determine the success of the teaching/ learning process; other stakeholders' feedback including parents and employees are harnessed by the school principal for the effective administration of the school.

**Clarity of ideas:** According to Okoroma (2007), in order to enhance effective communication, the idea being transmitted should be clear. Leaders of institutions or organizations ensure that the ideas or attitudes they are communicating are cleared and accurate for favourable feedback.

**Appropriate communication channel:** In order to achieve effective communication in institutions, appropriate media and channels should be adopted. The school leader may decide to communicate ideas or decisions to his subordinates, other stakeholders and the community through newsletters, radio, television, billboards, bulletins; words or number, pictures and web pages.

For communication to be effective there are some important steps to be followed. This is otherwise known as the communication process. They are stated as follows:

**The Idea:** In the communication process, the first important step is the idea and thought of the sender. This is the idea and thought by the sender of a message to be communicated to another person or more persons.

**The sender:** The sender is the originator of the communication; an initiator of the communication. This means that a sender who is the initiator and originator of the communication usually has a purpose for communicating. It could be human needs, information, idea, emotion and feelings (Peretomode, 2006).

**Encoding:** In this communication step, the ideas, actions and thoughts are carefully put together with their suitable symbols and words for the purpose of would-be receivers. The ideas, symbols and words are made known for us not to see it difficult.

**The message:** This is when the sender encodes or expresses the information either written or orally through radio, television, etc. This also means that selected channels are used in transmitting the message.

**The medium:** This step or process is known as the message carrier. In public institutions, communication may be through the following media: face-to-face, telephone, staff meetings, reports, written records, newsletters etc.

**The Receiver:** In the communication process, of the receiver of the message is nothing but the recipient. In public institutions like the school, there are different receivers of the message. Teachers-students and students-teachers communication usually take place during the evaluation of what is taught.

**Decoding:** In this step, words are changed into ideas or messages and interpreted or decoded by the receiver. If the receiver is capable of interpreting the message communicated by the sender, it means there is effective communication.

**Feedback:** This is the last step in the communication process. The impact of the message sent is felt here, whether right or wrong. At this stage, the sender receives the effects of the original message or the reversal of the message. According to Kreitner in (Peretomode, 2006), there are three types of feedback. These are informational, corrective and reinforcing feedback:

- ***The informational feedback:*** This type of feedback does not evaluate what is communicated because whether the information is right or wrong, it is not interesting.
- ***Corrective Feedback:*** This type of feedback is evaluative and educative. It is essential in the system since it is interested in teaching and learning. The sender's message can be corrected by the receiver if what is communicated is wrong. In a classroom, the teacher corrects the student to improve performance.
- ***Reinforcing feedback:*** In this type of feedback, the receiver of a message positively acknowledged and follows clearly the sent message.

### **The School as a Public Institution**

An institution is an establishment or organization founded for the purpose of achieving educational, religious, social and professional objectives. An institution could be a social structure formed by the government or a group of individuals to influence their activities and behaviours as collectively agreed with laid down rules and regulations. Institutions are structured

to function as permanent and formal organizations that cannot go into extinction when a member decides to discontinue. An institution or organization is formed to continually exist in the society, and serve the interests of members of the society.

In this paper, the school as an institution is exhaustively discussed. The school is a microcosm of the larger society is established to provide learning spaces and environments for teaching pupils and students under the instruction and control of the teacher to serve or impact the larger environment. Koko and Nwiyi (2006) supported this ground by saying that the school is an artificial social institution established to deliberately manage the process of cultural transmission and social integration. Okoroma (2007) stressed that the school is created by society to continue to exist in the society, carry out specific functions and prepares the young members of the society.

In doing this, the existence of the school is not in isolation from the society; the school maintains and respects the traditions, values, norms and the total way of life of the society. This is usually possible through orientation programmes of the school held for the newly admitted students and newly employed staff to consciously accord recognition to the value system of the immediate communities to avoid misunderstanding. This is one of the cardinal functions of educational administration or leadership which presupposes that the maintenance of effective interrelationship between an educational institution and the community or other external agencies is paramount for the success of the school.

The school as an organization is formally structured with the official body of rules, regulations and procedures through which its goals are effectively achieved. The formal structure of the school notwithstanding does not mean that there is no aspect of informal and unofficial relations existed due to the social interaction of group members (Koko & Nwiyi, 2006).

### **Aims of the School as a Public Institution**

The aims of the school are enshrined in the National Policy on Education of Nigeria and embedded in the goals of education as:

- The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
- The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social activities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society.

Examples of the school or educational institutions are early childhood pre-primary schools, primary school, secondary schools and further or tertiary education (FRN, 2004). In implementing the goals of education, the school head or leader plans, organizes, commands coordinates and controls teaching-learning activities with special reference to the motivation of teachers and human resources in the school.

The resources in the school are harnessed toward effective management through effective leadership in the system. The school leader possesses the ability to organize and anticipate challenges or problems; possesses confidence in his own ability to gain the confidence of other professional colleagues; also possesses the ability to be courageous and willing to decisively

carry out his roles. He is as well creative, and capable of developing solutions to problems, and tries to change these educational challenges to full opportunities (Amadi-Eric, 2008).

### **Roles of the School as a Public Institution**

The following are highlighted as the roles reserved by the school as a public institution in society:

- The past culture and the scientific heritage of the society is transmitted by the school to benefit the present and future generation
- The school selects members of the society, trains and places them to also benefit in society.
- The school transforms and educates the child socially, culturally and vocationally to be a useful member of the society.
- The school puts together and organizes the knowledge of man into teaching disciplines and imparted to the child in the society.
- The school, also develop the individual in the society intellectually, physically, morally and socially to be fit (Koko & Nwiyi, 2006).

However, there are several issues confronting the school in most developing countries. These problems will be discussed for the purpose of addressing them.

### **Challenges of the School as a Public Institution in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, there are key factors impeding the smooth running and provision of quality education as a result of poor implementation, ranging from inadequate or poor funding, control problem, inadequate staffing and instability of teachers, examination malpractice, cultism and corruption; poor infrastructure, insecurity, inadequate training and development of teachers, influence of the community on the school and politicization of education among others:

- ***Inadequate or poor funding:*** Poor or inadequate funding of education by the government at all levels has been the most critical bottleneck of education. It is a known fact that national expenditure on education cannot be measured or felt due to the inability of the government at all levels to allocate sufficient funds to education without following the UNESCO recommendation of 26% of national budgets. This means that a sufficient amount of fund is expected to be allocated to education in Nigeria. But, this has been the devil-may-care situation when successive governments could not provide and equip schools. There are inadequate and dilapidated laboratories, libraries, textbooks, institutional materials, etc. in schools across the states. The funding of schools by governments is only at the level of furniture in Nigeria. (Amanchukwu, 2013).
- ***Control Problem:*** The conflict among the federal, state and local government in terms of management of education in Nigeria has posed a lot of threats to educational development. The control of primary education is wholly not in the hand of the federal government; neither state nor local government has full control and responsibility. In Rivers State, it was recently, former governor Rotimi Amaechi removed the control of primary education from local governments. This uncertainty in the control of education



leads to the poor performance of students on one side and the ineffective management of the school.

- ***Inadequate staffing and instability of teachers:*** The problem of education in Nigeria is not only that the public schools are understaffed but teachers are unstable for the purpose of the poor condition of service; several teachers seek alternatives for a relief; schools they can have access to extra benefits and not depending on salaries on monthly basis. Lack of teachers and poor quality of teachers are also identified with the educational system since primary and secondary education do not have staff that can positively input in the implementation of goals. Recent statistics in Rivers State showed that there has been a low number of teaching staff in the senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The recruitment of unqualified staff in most organizations has negatively affected students' performance and entire school management over the years (Rivers State Post Primary Schools Board, 2015).
- ***Examination Malpractice, Cultism and corruption:*** The development of education in Nigeria is increasing impeded by these vices. At present, students find it unnecessary to engage themselves in academic activities but are associated with events that are anti-social and inimical to academic excellence. This compels most teachers to award marks to students without merit. Those who do not have money consequently prefer examination malpractice to hard work academically, that could benefit them and their families. Several students are being initiated into cult groups, and the effect is that students will be made to go home as a result of violence and cult activities in the school.
- ***Poor Infrastructure:*** Inadequate or lack of provision of infrastructure in educational institutions adversely affect educational development in Nigeria. The inability of the government to provide infrastructure in schools affects teaching and learning greatly; many schools do not have enough classrooms and laboratory equipment. This situation makes teachers be redundant and forces school principals to be involved in extra fees demands from students even amidst the poor economy.
- ***Insecurity:*** It is pertinent to note, that presently, the lives of teachers and others are regularly under security challenges as a result of not putting in place measures by the government that could bring about security within and around school environments, and even the homes of teachers are most insecure. Insecurity in Northern Nigeria occasioned by deadly Boko Haram and kidnapping of teachers. This menace has forced many teachers back to areas where safety and security are provided for themselves and their families (Amanchukwu, 2013). For security to be beefed around school environments, law enforcement agencies should be drafted to school gates for policing within and outside the school. Also, there is a high risk when schools are not protected with walls or fences. The government and leaders of public institutions are implored to ensure that schools are protected from being vandalized by unscrupulous elements
- ***Inadequate Training and Development of Teachers:*** In the school, many teachers perform below average for poor training and inability to afford to develop themselves professionally. The leaders of schools are not left out since they cannot afford with the limited resources. Teachers who are interested do not have the funds to do so and are not also given the opportunities to take part in the programmes that could boost their teaching abilities. The opportunities for in-service training are not given the required support by the government for teachers to encourage and develop themselves. Staff training and development are properly achieved through seminars, workshops, conferences and other

professional programmes to update their knowledge. Poor training of teachers has increasingly resulted in a poor quality of teaching and learning in schools. The school and the community are charged to support teacher development. Most teachers are not able to deliver on the contents of what they are supposed to teach, due to lack of support.

- ***Influence of the Community on the School:*** The school is situated in the community; the school works harmoniously with the immediate community for its success and stability. Although, the community wields undue influences on the school, irrespective of the fact that the school is a formal system. The school incorporates members of the community in its activities and programmes but the community sees as a slight when the school leader or principals fail to initiate programmes that members of the community who are more or less the parents of the students could participate in. This, in most times, severs the relationship between the school and the community due to a breakdown in the effective communication process. This also exposes the school to security challenges since the community may decide to withdraw its support. This situation also affects various media through which the school and the meeting to deal with the affairs of the students, for example, parents-teachers association. This increases the disagreements between the school principal and the community. This is, also, as a result of not allowing community members to fully partake in decision-making even when the community is not expected to take part in all affairs of the school (Amanchukwu, 2013).
- ***Politicization of Education:*** In Nigeria, educational activities have been politicized due largely to the interests of the public, parents and the government since education has become a potential instrument of change and development; even the mass media also play the role of a watchdog or informant ensuring that programmes and activities of the school effectively communicated. The general public has seen education does not see education as the internal affair of school administrators and teachers alike. The legislative arm of government is more interested in making laws that will benefit the government in generating revenues than educational development; the judiciary is willing to interpret education laws and intervene where necessary; parents are interested in the admission process of their children in schools whether on merit or not.

### **Ways of Improving Effective Communication in Public Institutions**

Public institutions like the school will achieve their goals if leaders are able to improve effective communication within the institutions and between the institutions and their immediate communities and external agencies. The following are the various ways effective communication can be improved in public institutions:

- ***Respect for the time of others:*** In improving effective communication, proper timing is taken into consideration to respect the time of the listening audience or receiver. Many people appreciate greatly if the focus is made on key issues at the right time. For example, a school leader who calls for an announcement or a meeting at the close of the school for the day may end up offending his staff because staff meetings require being scheduled properly and in the interest of every employee in the system.
- ***Active Listening:*** Another way of improving effective communication is by listening to others without distraction. An effective communicator is expected to be an engaged listener. A school leader with good listening skills is bound to succeed in managing his

school because people are interested in a leader who listens and responds to issues rapidly. Listening ability helps in interpreting messages or ideas in parents-teachers association meetings, and some illiterate members may wish to give their own opinions through interpretations which require accuracy and a leader's patience to also give feedback that could be beneficial to the school. Also, a teacher is expected to listen actively to ask and answer questions during an interactive session and evaluation. Note, that issues bothering the school and employees are necessarily solved through active listening (Okoroma, 2007). Note, that there is a difference between engaged listening and simply hearing. An engaged listener focuses on the speaker, and does not constantly check his phone avoiding interrupting or redirecting the conversation, encourages the speaker by verbal comments like "yes" or "yeah" with little smiles.

Listening is also considered as a process of actively receiving, comprehending and responding to spoken words or messages. Listening can be differentiated from hearing in that, hearing is less complex but listening is more complex (Sheila, 2007). This is because listening requires one to pay attention, to understand, sense, respond, remember and interpret a message or an idea. In the classroom setting, the teacher teaches the students to change in behaviour through active listening that also requires attention, understanding, remembering, responding and interpreting (Marvin, 2003). It also requires an instructional leader to create an atmosphere in which learning environment or classroom is conducive for improved effective communication through active listening. Active listening in the school involves paying attention to information; clarifying, reflecting, summarizing and sharing the information among employees. When listening actively, one is not expected to stop doing that until the message is comprehended (Michael, 2006). A leader in the school does this to be able to understand the feelings and needs of others. Many leaders have failed because they have failed to listen actively.

- ***Improved non-verbal communication skills:*** For effective management of the school as a public institution, the leader tries to strengthen his skills in reading the body language of others. It could be in the form of gestures, signs, look of approval or disapproval etc. since they convey messages, they should be seriously taken into account; they could be facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, etc.
- ***Improved feedback skills:*** Feedback is expected to be provided at the right time for directing and coordinating the institution. The views of students during meetings with the school leader are transmitted without unnecessary delay; the opinion or views of parents especially that of P.T. Decisions and the immediate community are fully received and taken into cognizance for the effective management of the school.
- ***Strengthening community- school relations:*** Sincerely, the school is located in the community, to train and develop members of the community. This relationship has been cordial through improved effective communication. The school teaches the child the right type of values for him to be able to demonstrate it in the community which is the larger environment. In transmitting the activities and programmes of the school to the community, the print and non-print media are used, namely; radio, television, newsletter, magazine, poster. The joint affairs of the community and the school are communicated to the Ministry of education, external agencies and other interest groups who are also interested in assisting and supporting the school financially (Amanchukwu, 2006).
- ***Respect for the principle of objectivity:*** In order to improve effective communication, it is necessary to maintain and strengthen the principle of objectivity in communication.

The leader of the school is generally believed for his upright judgment and impartiality; reporting accurately and sincerely for the protection of the integrity of the school is of utmost necessity. Hence the effective management of the school through improved objective communication.

- ***The right attitude towards communication:*** The sender's attitude towards the receiver and the attitude of the receiver towards the message have a great influence on the message. It is important to note that the attitude of an individual may be positive or negative towards another individual or activity. In sending messages to another person, one is expected to exhibit a positive attitude, an attitude that could be acceptable and favourable to others, knowing that the end of any effective communication is feedback that will consequently bring about the progress of the institution. The school as the public institution requires a favourable attitude for improved effective communication that could lead to goal attainment. For example, if the sender of a piece of information portrays a favourable attitude, the receiver will be confident but wrong attitudes could bring about a negative mood. The attitude of the receiver of the message if unfavourable will make the sender feel unaccepted, therefore, will not be able to give accurate information. Most people feel rejected when the needed audience is not given; harsh language is most unacceptable in effective communication. The wrong attitude towards the subject matter of the message could also influence effective communication. Some individuals do not receive information that will not have positive effects on their lives. This also makes them understand the message differently and not giving attention at all. Therefore, the right attitude towards transmitting ideas and feelings to others should be encouraged without hesitation. In the school situation, information from teachers should be simple and understandable for students to have full comprehension.
- ***Strengthening assertive communication:*** Assertive communication means maintaining integrity and honesty when expressing one's feelings, emotion and needs. In doing this, the feelings and ideas of others are taken into account; respecting the feelings, ideas and needs of other people while communicating. In improving effective communication, one's assertion is expected to be strengthened, to ensure that genuine information is given to guarantee a mutual relationship with others in the system. An assertive communicator does not associate with anxiety that can easily result in fear and failure in a system rather he takes responsibility for his actions. It means also that when communicating assertively there will be no ill-feelings or threats since there is a high level of control and confidence (Anthony & Swinson, 2000). Empathy is demonstrated when communicating to carry others along in the system.

A teacher communicates assertively to students by recognizing their situations or feelings, needs and opinion in the classroom. This enables the students to follow the lesson and perform expectedly during their evaluation and assessments.

- ***Improved written communication process:*** Effective communication can be improved in public institutions through written communication from the management and written communication from employees. In the school a public institution, importance is attached to the written process when the principal communicates to the staff and students to ensure that instructions and information are documented for reference purposes. This is also due to the erratic attitudes of students toward teachers and school management. Serious punishments like suspension and expulsion require documentation through written

communication. The time and period to commence and end the punishment must be recorded in the punishment or black book (Adiele et al, 2010).

In achieving this, the reader must ensure that any information communicated is reliable and clear. In order to also improve the process, the leader should encourage others in the system to see written communication as a necessity. Training and research in writing should also be encouraged by the school leader for all stakeholders. On the other hand, employee written communication to the management is essential. This is more preferable to the face-to-face or verbal method through which staff transmits their feelings and ideas to the management. Minutes of staff meetings with the principal, staff welfare association meeting, Parents-teachers' association meetings and assessment records also form important parts of the written communication. Also, demands by employees on the need to cultivate discipline in the school, and application for further studies and medical attention require documentation for reference purposes. The above measures if maintained and controlled will bring about improvement in effective communication in public institutions like the school.

- ***Establishing formidable parent-teachers associations:*** Effective communication is improved by well-formed Parents Teachers associations in the school. Matters that concern students are discussed in the association's meetings through healthy interactions and improved effective communication. Therefore, the inability of the school to ensure that the association achieves its desired expectations, the students and the entire system are affected. Therefore the parents –teachers association is necessary for achieving improved effective communication in the school as a public institution (Amanchukwu, 2013).
- ***Integrating ICT and developing websites in public institutions:*** In order to improve effective communication in the school, the leader deems it fit integrating and developing a web page for the school. Website is an important and improved channel of effective communication institutions designed to benefit the school in terms of disseminating information to employees, students, parents and the immediate community. The web page is made publicly official for teachers to communicate students' academic records to the academic department through uploading results for students to have access through downloading the file or data. It is important for the website to be accessible on computer and mobile devices like cell phones for every stakeholder and the public to also have access. The school web page could be used in announcing and advertising an important programme of the school. Such as admission forms through the school website; tuition fees are also paid through the web page of the school. ICT is also widely used to access WAEC result in homes without difficulties of moving from a locality to the city where WAEC office situated. Also, in e-education, the use of slide projectors improve effective communication in the classroom as the use of chalkboard is fast fading away. Teachers are trained to adopt slide projectors in teaching students. The teaching of road signs and speed limits becomes effective through the use of projectors because such a topic in Geography requires drawing and demonstration.

In improving effective communication in public institutions, the different directions of flow of communication in the school system are also improved. According to Peretomode (2006), the following important directions are necessary for the school:

**Downward communication:** In this direction of communication in the school system, Communication from top to bottom. This form of communication direction could be in the form of verbal or written directives or instructions from superiors to subordinates. Examples of downward communication are official announcements, memos, school publications, notice boards etc.

The downward communication facilitates directing, instructing and commanding roles in the school. There are five reasons for adopting downward communication in the school according to Katz et al. (1978). They are:

- To give directives or instructions on specific jobs or tasks
- To give information on the policies, procedures and practices of the school
- To contribute or present information that concerns the ideology of the school as it reflects on the goals.
- To provide subordinates' performance feedback mechanisms for the school
- To give information on the need or a task in the school.

Therefore, downward communication is adequate for improved effective communication in public institutions.

**Upward communication:** This communication is directed upward and flows from bottom to top. The subordinates communicate to superiors on the issues of great importance that could also lead to goal achievement. Suggestions in public institutions and ideas, suggestions from subordinates; explanations, requests, progress reports from subordinates are communicated through upward communication. This also emphasizes trust but suspicious subordinates cannot confide in a superior who is not empathetic or flexible.

Milliken et al (2003), stressed that subordinates are made to give accurate information or data rather than inaccurate ones. This is based on the belief that their superiors will never accept any information that will not bring about goal attainment of the school. Therefore, the principle of objectivity is associated with the upward process of communication in the school system. Employee communication should be based on horizontal precept to ensure that falsehood and inaccuracy in information dissemination are withheld for the progress of the school. Leaders of public institutions are required to promote modalities that could bring about objectivity and effectiveness in school communication as inaccurate information can lead to the failure of the organization.

**Vertical communication:** This occurs through the chain of command within the school system. It is concerned with the downward and upward communications. It is a two-way communication process that flows from superiors to subordinates and from subordinates to superiors. The leader of the school is urged to encourage this communication process to improve effective communication in the school.

**Diagonal communication:** This is concerned with all types of communication that take place in public institutions. It emphasizes the interaction between line and staff in an organization which positively affects the chain of command. Diagonal communication is the least among communication channels, but very indispensable a channel for effective communication (Donnelly et al, 1984).

**Horizontal communication:** Another name for horizontal communication is literal communication. Horizontal communication takes place during meetings, informal interactions among employees; through written memos. Literal communication also facilitates employer /employee relations; employees who are on the same levels and ranks, communication between employees of equal ranks and across departments. School activities are well coordinated through literal or horizontal communication. This is where employee relations and communication are sufficiently practised in the school system to improve service delivery (Armstrong, 2012). It is a problem-solving communication process that also reduces the burdens on the management; facilitates information sharing among members of the organization; rapport building and task coordination within the organization like the school (Harris,1993). It is also interesting to point out that since horizontal communication flows across the organization in the same hierarchy and equal ranks, a leader of a school can give information to another leader who further shares the information with other leaders or principals for their usefulness and effectiveness. This communication process also brings about interrelationship building among school leaders (Lewis, 1975). By this process of communication, teachers on their own part could communicate freely and chat over their areas of specialization and assist one another where necessary in classroom activities. Therefore, leaders of public institutions are urged to improve horizontal communication direction.

It is worthy of note, that the measures discussed above should be well maintained by the leaders of public institutions especially the school to bring about the desired outcome of improving effective communication.

However, there are some factors that militate against the efforts toward improving effective communication in public institutions. These factors are also considered as barriers to effective communication in the school as a public institution. Thayer in Peretomode (2006) identified four main barriers to effective communication as:

**Organizational factor:** Improving effective communication in public institution may be hindered by an inability to get the message sent to the right person or receiver at the right time accurately. This is also as a result of the organizational structure that is formally arranged hierarchically due to the nature or size of the institution. The school as a formal organization is formally and hierarchically structured with different departments, units, status and ranks of the personnel. This arrangement is usually criticized for its red-tapism which delays the performance of tasks due to its formal procedures. Directives from the hierarchically or top to the lower level are also delayed for the official layers and segment created within the system. The information may be distorted before getting to the right person or unit; the expected time and aim of transmitting the message may be defeated as feedback is also delayed in the process. This may also be owing to the size of the school.

If the school's organizational structure is taller so a message to be received by the appropriate person or unit, it passes through the layers, thus, it takes a longer time for such message to be delivered (Bedecian, 1980). In a large school, information transmission is usually mismanaged or distorted by middlemen before it gets to the final consumer. For example, the transmission and reception of information among the school leader, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents and other stakeholders are adversely affected due to multiple branches in the school system. Therefore, organizational factors are serious barriers to practices leading to improved effective communication.

**Interpersonal factors:** In a school system, there is usually an interpersonal relationship required to be cordial and trusted. The school leader and teachers are needed to have a positive relationship in order to jointly contribute to the goals of the school but when the leader who is considered as the communicator is not terms with the teacher who is the receiver, the messages or instructions may be distorted. In most cases, there is trust when a superior and a subordinate understand each other but when this trust is lacking effective communication is affected. Effective communication is affected when there is a negative perception due to distrust from both the sender and the receiver. This consequently affects the entire progress of the institution.

**Intrapersonal or internal factors:** This barrier occurs when individuals or employees within the system have different views and perceptions about a piece of information especially when the information does not favour the employee who is the receiver will distort it against the interest of other. The receiver of the information will tend to disseminate the information wrongly or inaccurately. There are also situations when some employees find new information unfavourable to them in the organization and they decide to block it from seeing the light of the day. Therefore, a school leader is expected to create an atmosphere of positive interpersonal relationship and flow of accurate communication within the school system.

**Overload of information:** This arises from the use of ICT to collate inordinate data that may not be able to be transmitted at a time by the leader and others responsible for managing information within the system. Some of these data are difficult to be responded to by the school head. Thereby, not communicating to subordinates at when due or not transmitting at all. Some of these pieces of information could be beneficial to the school but are not transmitted or responded to. Poor listening skills, misinterpretations, bias, unclear messages, etc. are some impediments to improved effective communication in the school (Okoroma, 2007). It is interesting to note that, school leaders can prevent and curb these barriers if the various measures of improving effective communication are adopted and maintained in public institutions.

## CONCLUSION

It is deduced that the success of any organization is largely dependent on the desire and ability of leaders to provide measures of improving effective communication. Essentially, for improved management and quality service delivery in public institutions, leaders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and improving ways, channels and process of effective communication within their domains. Leaders of schools as public institutions despite several barriers to effective communication, deal with the issue of improving effective communication through right attitude towards communication, establishing formidable parents-teachers associations, promoting active listening, respect for the time of others, improved feedback skills, improved written communication process, strengthening community-school relations; improved downward and upward communication, respect for the principle of objectivity and strengthening communication process. Thus, an improved effective communication enhances the effective management of public institutions.



## Suggestions

The paper suggested among others that:

- Leaders of public institutions should initiate internal mechanisms for improving effective communication within the system;
- A variety of communication channels should be adopted by the schools to facilitate information dissemination;
- Leaders of schools should take the issue of PTA very seriously as an effective communication channel among the school, teachers, students and parents;
- Leaders of public institutions should not hoard information as important information may be hoarded unknowingly; and
- Private institutions should also follow suit by improving effective communication in the system.

## REFERENCES

- Adiele, E. E., Leigha, M. B., & Abraham, L. N. (2010). *Introduction to Teaching Profession*. Harey Publications.
- Amadi-Eric, C. (2008). *Introduction to Educational Administration: A Module*. Harey Publications
- Amanchukwu, R. N. (2013). *Education Management and Planning Education Resources*. Harey Publications.
- Amanchukwu, R. N. (2006). Exploring Community Power Structure for Effective Administration of Public Schools in Nigeria. In J. M. Ebong & J. EzekielHart, (Eds), *Contemporary Issues in Education*. Eagle Lithograph Press.
- Anthony, M., & Swinson, R. (2000). *Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook: Proven Techniques for Overcoming your fears*. New Harbinger.
- Armstrong, M. (2012). *Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice 12<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Ashfold Colour Press.
- Donnelly, J. H., Gibson, J. L., & Ivancevich, J. M. (1984). *Fundamentals of management, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Business publication.
- Harris, T. E. (1993). *Applied organizational communication*. Erlbaum.
- Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2008). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice (8th ed.)*. McGraw-Hill.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. (1978). *The social psychology of organization 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed*. John Wiley.
- Koko, M. N., & Nwiyi, G. U. (2006). *Educational Management: A Practical Perspective*. Rodi Printing & Publishing.
- Lee, Y., & Kedey, K. (2006). Effects of a teacher-made multimedia Programme on Teaching: Driver Education Teaching. *Exceptional Children Plus*, 2(5). <http://escholarship.bc.education/tecplus/vo/2/iss5/art 5>.
- Lewis, P. V. (1975). *Organizational communications: The Essence of effective management*. Grid.
- Marvin, G. (2003). *Managing Group Process*. Praeger Publishers
- Michael, H. H. (2006). *Active listening: Improve your ability to listen and lead*. Centre for Creative Leadership.

- Okoroma, N. S. (2007). *Perspectives of Educational Management, Planning and Policy Analysis*. Paul Matex Printers.
- Ololube, N. P. (2019). *Practical guide to human resources management and organizational theory*. Pearl Publishers.
- Ololube, N. P. (2017). *Educational management, planning and supervision: model for effective implementation (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Pearl Publishers.
- Peretomode, V. F. (2006). *Educational Administration: Applied concepts and Theoretical Perspectives for students and Practitioners*. Toja Educational Research and Publishers.
- Rivers State Post Primary Schools Board (RPSB) Port Harcourt (2015). Number of subject teachers and principals per school by LGA.
- Sheila, S. (2007). *An Introduction to communication studies*. Juta.
- Sollier, P. (2005). *Listening for Wellness: an introduction to the Tomatis Method*. Mozart Centre Press.
- Te-eni, D., (2001). Review: a cognitive-affective model of organizational communication for designing it. *MIS Quarterly* 25(2), 251-312