

## COMMUNICATION IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE.

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### **Abstract**

This paper examined Communication and Administration of secondary schools in Zone A senatorial district of Benue State. It discussed fully the concept of Communication, Administration, Secondary Education and its goals, Process of communication in administration of secondary schools and supervision as an ingredient of Administration. The paper held that the success and failure of secondary school administration depends to a great extent on information transmission, effective administration, supervision and communication. Up, downward and vertical communications were highlighted. Barriers, strategies and recommendations were made, among the things recommended were that the bodies in-charge of secondary schools should make provision for supervisors, monitoring teams and effective follow-up services.

Communication issues in formal organization have received considerable attention in recent years. There is general awareness of the critical role of communication in modern organization today. In the school organization, for example, the work of the Principal/Administrator or supervisor is to influence teaching behavior in such a way as to improve the quality of teaching and learning for students. This can be done by working directly with the teacher in planning, description, analysis and evaluation of teaching and in the development and implementation of new approaches in process and programmes.

According to Ndu and Okeke (1997), in Ani, (2007) Education is one of the organizations whose functions depend on effective communication among those concerned. Apart from the need for effective communication and coordination in the management structures and process, the basic function of education rely almost entirely on communication among teachers, students, supervisors, coordinators and various organizational structures. The Paper deals with the following sub-headings;

1. Concept of Communication.
2. Meaning of Administration.
3. Concept of Secondary Education.
4. Process of Communication in the Administration of Secondary Schools.
5. Supervision as an Ingredient of Administration.
6. Barriers/Strategies to Overcome Communication Barriers.
7. Conclusion and Recommendations

### **Concept of Communication**

Generally, communication is explained as the transfer of information from one person to another. It can be formal or informal. The person who transfers the information is the sender or encoder while the person who receives the information is called the receiver or decoder. According to Jacobson (2001) Communication is the codification of a message by a sender who then transmits it along a channel to a receiver who decodes it, put it into context and thereby comprehends it. The Federal Ministry of Education (1993)

opined that Communication is the process by which information is exchanged in order to initiate action or solve a problem in a school, this may involve given notice about activities, events, decisions, and tasks which affect individuals or groups such as supervisors, teachers, pupils, non-teaching staff, visitors to the school and others. It also suggests the sharing of opinions and encouraging individuals to seek for information and advice. Iortyer & Achineku, (2010), defined communication as the process of information exchange between two or more individuals or organization. In other words, it is the process through which information, knowledge, ideas or messages are conveyed or transmitted from one source to another. When messages or information bits are exchanged, it is done with the intention of either persuading or changing the behaviour of the individual. In education, communication refers to the information transmitted from a teacher to the students/pupils or even by audio-visual means (Nwana, 2010).

#### **Meaning of Administration**

Administration is to an organization (school, establishment, industry, hospital or the church) what the central nervous system is to the body. It initiates, directs, activates, controls and monitors the functioning of the different organs of the system. Ene (2000), According to the NPE, (2004) Administration is a function of organization and structure, Proprietorship and control, inspection and supervision. In Secondary school the head of administration is the principal otherwise called the school Administrator who is in charge of the daily running of activities in the school. He occupied a unique position in the school system. He is responsible for the proper conduct of the school and its programmes. He is the centre of attraction where failures and successes are built upon. As an administrator, he communicates with a good number of people. His major weapon of administration is communication. Communication is very vital and

nothing can be compared with it, he communicates with the staff, community, the management boards, parents, public and officials from Education zone, Ministry of Education and more especially with the students or pupils because without them there will be no school business. He delegates duties to staff. Without that skill of communication, he cannot work effectively. This may be oral or written. He should create a rapport with the staff and students but maintain discipline to keep the image of the school. The administrator of secondary school should be knowledgeable in administration, communication and supervision if quality in education is to be achieved.

#### **Concept of Secondary Education**

Secondary school According to NPE (2004), is the education children received after primary education and before the tertiary stage. It is of six years duration given in two stages, Junior and Senior Secondary school stage each consisting of three years.

#### **Goal of Secondary Education among other includes:**

1. Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background.
2. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles.
3. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades.
4. Provide technical knowledge and Vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development
5. Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the view and

feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens.

### **Process of Communication in Administration of Secondary Schools**

Easy and quick flow of information is essential to every modern organization. Communication is important to both those who control and manage as well as those who are to benefit from education. A lot of information is needed for decisions in the school to be made for such information and ideas to be transferred or received different channels of communication should be adopted. Ene (2002), opined that the flow of information should move downwards, upwards or vertical. The principal or Administrator should encourage such flow of information in the school setting. While the flow moves only downward from the top to bottom, it may seem that those on top always use their super-ordinate position to give instruction or information about what is to be done, others may feel that their part is to obey or act on the information given. Those who have useful information may not feel free to go up to the head to discuss. A chart that presents this type of information is called organizational chart or organogram. It indicates the method of transfer of information officials manage and the routes.

For instance, in an organization such as secondary school environment, there are many workers teaching and non-teaching staff, some manage or administrate, some counsel, teach or learn, while others look after the day to day operation in areas such as students hostels, bursary unit, medical units, the registry etc. In a setting such as this, the organizational chart indicates at a glance, that is, who is in charge of what and who report to. It shows also how official information has to flow from one person to another through laid down line of authority.

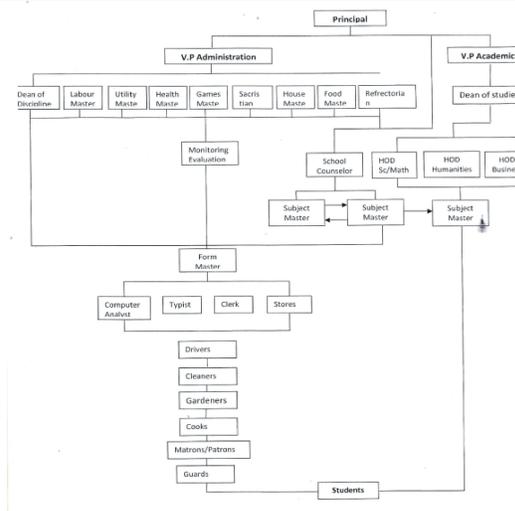
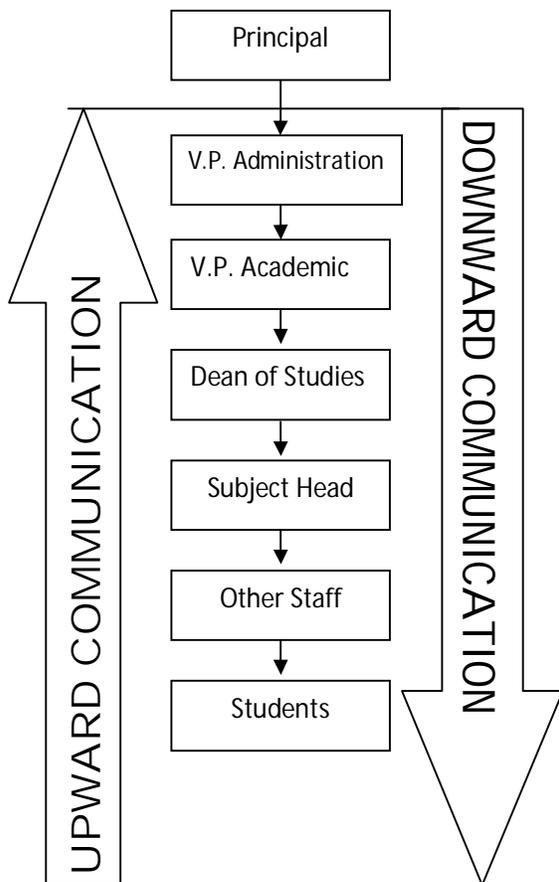
### **Downward Communication**

Communication is downward when it flows from top to bottom. In educational organization such as the secondary school, movement of information is through the Principal, Vice-principal Administration, Vice-principal Academic, Dean of studies, Subject Heads, Teachers, other staff and student. In this downward directional flow, information flows from the person with the greatest authority in the organization to the person with the least power; it may or may not necessarily pass through the strata of the organization. The nature of messages that move in this direction include, messages that gives instruction, provide information about organization and training of staff. The channel could be through the use of notice board, bulletins, and journals. Information can be conveyed in the form of circulars, memo and letters.

### **Upward Communication**

Upward communication moves from bottom to top. In the past, there was little or no upward communication. According to Ani (2007), it was wrongly assured that information could flow from top to bottom and can be seen more as response type of communication, because information ways comprises of reports, comments, disagreement to directives, orders, suggestions, opinion pool from workers which more or less provide class regarding employees' reaction to communication which has flowed from top to bottom. Upward communication can help to boost the employee morale and confidence in the organization. Through it, the pursuit or feeling of the employee in an organization can be charted.

**Diagram Showing Upward and Downward Communication**



**Supervision as an Ingredient of Administration**

Supervision has so many definitions all pointing to the improvement of teaching and learning in schools. Amenger et al, (2014) defined supervision as a process of helping, guiding, advising and stimulating growth in a teacher or subordinate in order to improve on the quality of his teaching/work. At the secondary school level, the Principal is the internal supervisor that oversees all the activities that goes on within the school while the external supervisor comes from outside the school either from the Education Zone or Ministry of Education. Effective Supervision leads to improvement of teachers' quality performance condition and learning condition of students in the school. Our discussions here will be based on the responsibilities owed by the Supervisor to the School, the Teacher and the Students. The next question that occupies the mind is who is that supervisor? That supervisor could be the Director Education zone, Officials from the Ministry of Education or any person saddled with the responsibilities to do the job of supervision.

- 1 **Responsibility to the School:** A school based supervisor is expected to visit and supervise one school in a day, although, some supervisors cover a maximum of two schools in a day, depending on the number of teachers in each school. For a thorough job a supervisor should concentrate on one school in each day, he comes to school at least twenty minutes before the official opening time and not leave the school before the official close of work. All these practices will help the supervisor understand how the school academic programmes are implemented and the seriousness of teachers and students to the teaching-learning activities.
- 2 **Responsibilities to the Teachers:** The supervisor owes the following obligations to the teacher in the various school of supervision.
  - Ensure that the teacher use the appropriate child centered method in teaching their lesson
  - Ensure that the teacher observe the time-table and conduct classes as schedule
  - The supervisor observe how the teacher teach different subject, appreciating, prescribing and evaluating each lesson and help the teacher improve on their methods of keeping academic records.
- 3 **Responsibilities to Student:** The supervisor should observe the students exercise and note books and ensure that the exercise books are used for the correct subjects. For example there are cases of students that use the same exercise book for English Language, Mathematics and Commerce. This practice should be discouraged by the supervisor .He also owes the regular check of students attendance registers, progress of the students to determine the regularity of students to school and the accuracy of such records kept by the teacher.

### **Barriers to Effective Communication**

Ngoka (2000) classified barriers to effective communication into four broad categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational and technological.

- 1 **Intrapersonal Barriers:** Selective perception and individual differences in communication skills are the two types of barriers under this category. Selective perception is a situation where people block out or distort new information and the receiver thus interprets the message transmitted quite differently as intended by the sender. Individual differences in communication skills depict differences in people's ability to develop and apply basic communication skills. Some people for instance, are able to read but find it difficult to comprehend; others are unable to express themselves verbally but are able to write clear and concise messages. The existence of such difficulties can affect the effectiveness of communication.

**Interpersonal Barriers:** The relationship between a superior and a subordinate emanating from the attitudes and treatment each receives from the other (especially if it is negative) may lead to a distortion of intended messages. Also lack of credibility, distrust and suspicion between a superior and subordinate is a potential obstacle to effective communication.

- 2 **Organizational Barriers:** These include hierarchical differentiation, organization size, time pressures, network breakdowns and status differences. Messages get distorted either as a result of the number of layers in the organizational structure it has to pass through before getting to the intended receiver, or due to the fact that the organization is too large and so, adequate communication is less likely to be

achieved. Message can be also distorted when people are working under time pressures, and the sender cannot fully develop the message before sending it. A misplaced memo or letter, or a message not received at the appropriate time by the right person, or when staff gets so busy that they forget to relay pieces of information (network breakdowns) can be another serious factor that brings about ineffective communication. Also, upward communication can be blocked when subordinates refuse to express an opinion that is different from that of their superior officers (status problem).

- 3 **Technological Barriers:** The most important factor here is that of information overload; The Principal or Manager may find himself not being able to make a decision or communicate because of excessive information. Administrators and Managers are sometimes deluged with information and data that it becomes difficult for them to respond appropriately or adequately to all the messages directed at them. In consequence, they sieve through or screen out majority of the messages and so do not respond to all.

#### **Strategies to Overcome Communication Barriers**

Obstacles which can make communication ineffective can be removed if proper care and caution is taken in the process of communication. The following points given by Wiles and Lovell (1975), in Ngoka (2000) can serve Principals/administrators, Supervisors and Teachers a great deal in ensuring effective communication in secondary schools;

1. Use clear and concise words.
2. Select appropriate channels to convey messages, that is, use the channel that is most suitable at hand.
3. Make use of multiple channels of communication that will work most

effectively with those you want to communicate with (e.g Personal discussion, memo, etc)

4. Encourage feedback.
5. Wherever and whenever it is possible, face-to-face communication should be used.
6. Repeat a message where necessary if it is complicated.
7. Important verbal discussions must be followed up.
8. Be sensitive to an individual's educational or official status.
9. You must carefully cross check by reading through letters or memos that are ready for dispatch.
10. Establish mutual trust between you (the sender) and the receivers to create an appropriate communication climate.
11. Time messages properly.
12. Develop and make use of effective communication skills e.g listening skills, etc.
13. Be mindful of the overtones as well as the basic content of your messages while you communicate.
14. Take the opportunity to convey something of help or value to the receiver.
15. Make sure that your action supports the type of communication.

#### **Conclusions**

Communication is any form of transmission of information worthwhile or not, verbal, non-verbal, symbolic, upward, downward, visual or non visual. What is central about communication is transferring information from one person to the other, it could be the learner or associate for the purpose of training to achieve an objective e.g. study outcome (feedback). In the school setting the purpose of communication is to enhance effective teaching/learning or administration.

### *Communication in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Benue State*

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Administration is a function of organization, control and supervision among other things, supervision on the other side is vital for school programmes to be successful and effective; communication greases the essence why schools are established for without communication there would be no effective teaching/learning process.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Communication should be studied just like other causes at the secondary school level of education.
2. Funds should be made available and used judiciously for workshops and seminars relating to information and communication as this will pave way for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.
3. The government should employ the services of competent supervisors to monitor the quality and flow of information and communication in teaching/learning at the secondary school level.
4. The Principal or Administrator as an internal supervisor in schools or organizations should make sure that computers are available in their schools and that computer training is effectively carried out to boost teaching and learning.
5. Communication leads to instruction therefore; it should be practically oriented and carried out both in the class and outside the class using concrete objectives of real life situation to bring the concept home.
6. Provision of monitoring teams and effective follow up services.

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