DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE LISTENING SKILL INVENTORY FOR PRINCIPALS

Nneka G. Nwaka (Ph.D)

Abstract

The study is aimed at developing and validating an instrument for assessing listening skills of secondary schools principals in Anambra State using three research questions and one null hypothesis. Population is all the 257 principals of government owned secondary schools. The instrument titled: Administrative Listening Skill Inventory (ALSI) was used. The initial draft of 43 listening skill items under six constructs was subjected to face validation and field trial using factor analysis. Three items were rejected. The remaining 40 items tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha obtained a co-efficient of 0.74, which was considered reliable. Then, the 40-item instrument was administered to respondents. Data were analyzed using Factor Analysis, Cronbach Alpha, t- test, Mean and Standard Deviation. Sequel to the analysis, a validated 24 item-ALSI was developed. The ALSI has a high inter-item consistency of 0.75 and as-such a reliable instrument for measuring the principals' listening skills. Recommendations are made.

Introduction

Communication makes administration in organizations more effective. It is a dynamic and an indispensable element in the process of administration. Accomplishment of educational goals and objectives and the sustenance of the school organization largely depend upon effective communication. To Ukeje et a (1992), communication is a process whereby we attempt to transmit our thoughts, ideas, wishes, attitudes or emotions to others. In a school organization, communication involves sharing and transmitting messages, ideas or attitudes among administrators, teachers, students, parents and other interested constituents. Close analyses of communication network in secondary schools have revealed that oral communication is the most predominant channel of communication (Ekeanyanwu, 1992; Wale, 1997). It is pertinent to note that if the thoughts, ideas, wishes, attitudes, etc are not received and accepted by the audience as intended, communication is not complete and efforts of the sender are jeopardized/wasted. Moorhead and Griffen (1998:264), noted that, the key for proper reception of the message is good listening.... Listening is an active process that requires as much concentration and effort from the receiver as sending the message does for the sender. Listening is an important skill for effective school administration and principals spend about 65% of their time listening in the school. (Osunde, 2000). It is paying close attention for proper understanding and not mere hearing. It is an important process of communication at the receiver's part of the communication model.

Based on literature information from experts, listening skills relevant to school administration include:

Social Listening skills -- which require the ability to listen with patience, courtesy and self-control
Secondary **listening skills—** demand that one must adjust to the distractions while listening. **Critical** Listening **skills**—expect the administrator to interpret and analyze fully the message received.
Concentrative listening skills—force one to listen not selectively but to all information
Creative listening skills— deal with the ability to weigh what is being received with objectivity and with a view to discover or create something new in order to improve administrative actions.

Empathic listening skills—expect one to put one's self into the communicator's condition and share his/her feelings with sympathetic hearing.

My preliminary interview with principals revealed that principals, like most people under pressure, are impatient with listening to people they consider boring and they are easily irritated. Effective listening requires self-imposed discipline. More importantly, it was clear that from my preliminary interview that many principals are not aware of the dimensions of listening. Probably, they thought it is not so important. In fact, one principal asked me, "Does it matter how I listen or whom I choose to listen to?" She went on to say that her interest is only in the area of financial management. This is in line with Nwafor's (2008), observation that we spend nearly half of our communication time listening, but few of us make any real effort to be better listeners. He outlined the dividends of listening as increased safety, higher productivity, faster earnings, and better relationship Yet, It has been established that listening skill is the most fundamental and most essential skill in listening comprehension and the least utilized (Griffin, 1997).

At the end of literature review it was found that: listening skill is vital to school administration, poor listening is a major factor that hampers better relationship. Effective school principals: male or female should be well equipped or armed with relevant listening skills. Finally, no instrument outlining the typology of listening skills was available to guide principals. Therefore, the conclusion was that a gap exists. To fill the gap, the study undertook the challenge of developing an administrative listening skill inventory to enhance and .sustain administration and management of education.

Problem of the Study

Organizational conflicts within the secondary school system are an issue of great concern to the education ministry as well as to the general public. Available research evidence linked this trend to a breakdown in communication between principals, teachers, students and other essential units within and around the school system (Obiajulu, 1998; Orisakwe, 1998). Speculations had it that most communication problems, organizational and interpersonal 'conflicts within the school system stem from poor listening skills of principals. Although this speculation is widespread, the extent of acquisition of listening skills by principals is merely speculated owing to the unavailability of measuring instrument in administrative listening skills. In support of this Ehiametaior (1998), stressed that, machines for accurate measurement of phenomena were not available in all spheres of endeavour.

Whereas there are recommendations for in-service training to be organized for principals who are deficient in administrative listening skills {Obiajulu, 1998; Onuoha, 1995), it has not been possible to provide an instrument capable of diagnosing administrative listening skills deficiencies of school principals. This implies that all efforts towards identification and remediation of administrative listening skills deficiencies hinge on, and are grossly challenged by the paucity of an assessment instrument in this skill domain.

Thus, there is a felt need to help principals in their listening skills and the researcher thought one way out of the problem is to develop an instrument that would be an invaluable asset to them.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to develop an Administrative Listening Skill Inventory (ALSI) for Secondary School Principals; carry out a reliability analysis of the ALSI and explore the influence of gender on the ALSI;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Which items of the ALSI survived factor analysis in terms of their factor loadings?
2. What is the reliability coefficient of the ALSI?
3. To what extent do the principals' gender influence the ALSI?

Null hypothesis

Hoi: Gender has no significant effect on the mean scores of the principals on the ALSI. Design and Area of the Study

The study was an instrumentation research, carried out in the five education zones of Anambra State namely: Onitsha, Awka, Ogidi, Aguata, and Nnewi. Population of the Study

The population used was 257 Secondary School principals in the five Education Zones of Anambra State. Since all principals could be reached, sampling was deemed unnecessary.

Instrument for Data Collection

A questionnaire titled Administrative Listening Skill Inventory (ALSI) was used. Part A sought information on personal data of respondents such as gender of the secondary school principals.
Part B contained 40 listening skills arrived at from literature. The instrument was a modified Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree-4, Ageed-3, Disagree-2 and Strongly Disagree-1.

Validation of the Instrument

The initial draft of the ALSI that contained 43 items was face validated by two specialists in Educational Research, four specialists in Measurement and Evaluation and one specialist in Language Education, who were requested to rate the relevance and adequacy of the items. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated in the modification of me ALSI still consisting of 43 items. The modified ALSI was administered on a sample of 30 principals in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State and also subjected to factorial validation using Factor Analysis. Three items were rejected thus, the ALSI of 43

items narrowed down to 40 items.

Reliability of the Instrument

The 40 items that survived the factor analysis were further tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha to ensure the homogeneity of the items in measuring each of the six constructs under study. The co-efficient obtained was 0.74 and it was considered highly reliable for data collection.

Method **of Data** Collection and **Analysis**

Draft copies of the 40-item ALSI were administered on all the 257 principals in all the five Education Zones of Anambra State. The researcher personally visited the principals .of schools in Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, and Onitsha Education Zones and met all the principals in Ogidi Education Zones at a meeting held on the seventeenth day of May 2008 at Ogidi Girls' Secondary School, Ogidi. The researcher waited patiently for all the principals to fill the responses at each visit. A hundred percent return of the instrument was achieved. To answer research question one, Factor analysis was used to determine items that survived. According to Meredith (1969), items, which failed to have a minimum of 0.35 in any of the factors, were rejected. Items with negative loadings as well as items, which loaded a minimum of 0.35 on more than one factor, were equally rejected. Items with positive loadings were accepted. Also, factors with less than four items loaded under them were rejected. Research question two and three were answered using Cronbach Alpha and Mean and Standard Deviation respectively, while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. Findings of the study were discussed under these three sub-headings for convenience. 1. Validity of the Administrative Listening Skill Inventory (ALSI). 2. Reliability of the ALSI. 3. Influence of gender on the ALSI.

Results

Research Question 1: Which Items of the ALSI Survived Factor Analysis in terms of their Factor Loadings?

Table 1: Factor Loadings for **ail the** 40 **Variables Analyzed**

Var	Facl	Fac2	Fac3	Fac4	Fac5	Fac6	Fac7	Fac8	Fac9	Facl O	Facll	Facl 2	Facl 3	Facl 4
1	J5239	.27328	.33976	.17848	-03905	-40746	-1286S	-16679	.25250	-00156	-04228	-24002	-03054	-20252
2	.35221	.30380	.07190	-19657	.02428	-07476	-06031	-13130	.06687	-27574	-15151	.16113	-23502	.00531
3	-02451	-12459	.21319	-01264	.19025	-42418	.53308	-03420	-08386	-02394	-06157	.10539	-06343	.14910
4	.15793	.26849	.29504	.41355	.22121	-32412	-13509	-14030	-19122	.08115	.16676	.14310	-33837	.24500
5	-25733	.49395	-11246	.07402	.27277	-00071	-1666i	.15520	-20435	.23951	-17964	-05431	-03518	.13145
6	.28303	-22702	.26675	-13803	.17611	.00464	-40587	.20052	-29517	-15435	-08640	-08951	-01973	-0590S
7	.36397	-36397	-21819	.33414	-02305	.13193	-05245	.21121	-16035	.13292	-29592	-12626	.08215	.08959
8	.36584	.31795	.04366	.12154	-00159	.OS153	-08619	-10384	-14812	.39539	.23079	-28029	.03398	.01646
9	-16454	.54012	-19819	-21577	.13696	-02308	-08233	-06796	.07238	.14640	1883	.02558	.03513	-24735
10	.22783	-21936	.13226	.08338	.44594	-20175	.06946	.26364	-11649	-10936	.20999	-21219	.22780	-03719
11	-09276	.43670	.06184	-02540	-27516	-11703	-09160	.27048	-12600	-28461	-17248	.22180	-15045	-05610
12	.11959	.24162	-00502	-50707	.11439	.07701	-14392	.10539	,21808	.OS196	-24002	.07817	-08038	.27009
13	-22938	-20104	.M952	-15860	-17817	04175	.39893	.10933	.05394	.04135	-19003	-02936	.16761	.02276
14	.34292	.35826	-24012	-217S8	1421	.32989	.01784	-11796	.28024	.13708	-08674	.05304	-12221	-24243
15	.19292	-06593	-24668	-26022	.59049	-19594	.13903	-10979	-04987	.24966	-02722	-09347	.00726	-04119
16	.14197	.43353	-02594	.02219	-35303	-00495	.35681	.01581	-08683	-10132	-08557	-09060	-00476	.25900
17	.30996	.31716	-25594	.40322	-30795	-06076	.11581	.23704	.0222!	-11776	-02258	-26094	1568	.08988
18	.32109	.04727	-15571	-27756	.33136	-05023	.33471	.33969	.02783	.08835	0831	-15820	-27621	.06800
19	.33034	-20221	.00667	-10235	.07585	-05292	.07009	.30436	.47709	17287	.20573	.11580	-06637	.06066
20	.26459	.15558	.30076	-08062	.11032	.12847	.02645	-10061	.13997	-17895	-11016	.03233	-09731	-10699
21	-65560	-!0288	.08852	.52266	.12022	-52266	.07211	-04104	-16564	-04557	-07290	-19827	-14783	.20252
22	.37553	.36338	-05621	.22713	-17392	-05192	.00846	-11389	-02404	-11218	-25472	-14950	-27032	.00531
23	-07715	.38764	-16824	.09270	.22643	.22347	.23863	-10777	.13021	.03364	-15615	.14951	.15722	.41229
24	.02153	.34407	.02892	.07702	.12198	.05556	.50140	-07665	-01897	-23872	.09123	.07218	.26905	-14368
25	.53601	.12984	-25852	.15653	.11854	01524	.10735	-12270	.05527	.03768	.14370	.13051	.09839	-14095

26	.25197	-00064	.29026	.35826	-27976	.13002	.02956	.14420	-13940	. 1 6690	.31125	.23836	.00550	.01661
27	-12486	.27197	-00 1 92	.02044	-10322	.23719	-17713	-06913	.46076	.28155	-20346	.16199	.04461	-12292
28	.33038	.02524	.06474	.25522	.33100	-09499	-02425	-29081	.07618	-12462	-01239	-01993	.47720	-08728
29	.31691	.25521	.16754	-00033	.19844	.20743	.08482	.37675	-26793	.29667	.14885	.05167	.09659	-08032
30	.2528!	.07727	.08470	.05092	.05186	-02874	.03794	.32967	-21195	.04729	-18800	.58976	.24600	-27060
31	.54158	-11777	-25715	-04488	-14380	-00598	-03849	.07524	.15422	-01117	-02138	.14599	.00435	.14541
32	.27791	-09383	-01710	.3S242	-16748	-06199	.31208	.02496	.09805	. 1 8242	-21166	.12041	05221-	.00133
33	-22391	.14800	.18659	.18585	.43020	,05923	.28527	.12380	.06752	-25901	. 1 5444	.12665	.02621	. 1 8207
34	.26087	.19958	.04890	.43360	.41146	.10393	-10551	.20465	.16933	.13640	-5563	-06069	-14640	-04253
35	.29963	.18083	.04554	.26855	.35892	.29533	-3 1 265	-11041	.15338	-22093	.11470	.09615	-08367	.2 1 746
36	.27726	.00043	-27265	.22177	-35989	-25325	-19591	-21526	.04033	.07052	.26413	.13613	-09479	.07623
37	-21443	-14629	-20722	.03541	-03219	-22I4C)	.54998	-09230	-01677	.04714	.16566	.06488	.08183	-17998
38	.25137	-08835	-36254	-16542	-29396	. 1 8497	.45658	-12739	.02755	-07567	. 1 2095	.04158	-12045	-19580
39	-56293	-38242	-06243	.18033	-17894	-00S93	.01766	-01712	.35269	.16684	-02057	.01342	. 1 1 240	.00890
40	.0093 1	.25476	.27348	.04746	.41999	.05091	-04627	.26467	.14787	-20554	.31298	-00315	-09034	-10948

Table 1, shows the factor loadings for all the 40 items loaded on it. From the table only 35 items loaded up to 0.35 (acceptance level for factor loading according to Meredith, 1969) on the 14 factors. Such items include2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,16,17,19,20,21,22,23,24,25, 26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35, 37.38.39, and 40. Five items (items 1, 6, 12, 18 and 36) do not have the minimum loading on any of the 14 factors. Five items were found to be complex, appearing in more than one factor, items 8,16,22,23, and 34. They were consequently discarded because the factorial pure items should load or appear in only one of the factors. Also, some factors have few items (i.e. less than four items). According to Meredith (1969), it is not easy to explain such factors that have few items loaded on them. Such factors where eliminated. The factors include factor 9(three items), factors 8, 10,12,13, and 14(only one item each). More so, some factors (3,6 and 11) do not have any item loaded on them. A factor that has at least four items adequately loaded on it was accepted as valid (Meredith, 1969). Thus, factors 1,2,4,5,and 7 with the minimum loadings survived.

the factor analysis

Research Question 2: What is the Reliability Co-efficient of the ALSI? **Table 2: The Internal Reliability Coefficient** using **Cronbach Alpha N = 257**

Statistics for scale	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	No of variables		-t
	66.2646	73.1328	8.5518	24		
Item mean	Mean 2.7610	Minimum 2.2840	Maximum 3.2296	Range .9455	Max/Min 1.4140	Variance .0666
Item Var.	Mean 1.4134	Minimum .9928	Maximum 1.6087	Range .6158	Max/Min 1.6203	Variance .0228
Inter .. Correlation	Mean .6481	Minimum -.3565	Maximum .8046	Range .761 1	Max/Min 1.1348	Variance .0218

Alpha = .7595 Standard item alpha = .7479

Data on table 4, show that the reliability coefficient of the 24 variables that survived factor analysis is 0.7595.

Research Question 3: To what Extent do the Principals' Gender Influences the ALSI?

The responses of the principles on the ALSI, based on the 24 variables that survived factor analysis, were computed variable by variable using mean and standard deviation to ascertain the influence of gender on the ALSI. The result is presented on table three below.

Tab 1 e_3 : Mean s Rating and Standard deviation for the Principals' Responses (by Gender). -257

S/No	Var	Listening skill	Sex	N	x	SD	Dec
1	2	Doesn't indulge in exploration of non-verbal signs accompanying an oral message	M	105	2.79	1.04	A
			F	152	2.75	1.09	A
2	3	Try to produce ;i lot of ideas while listening	M	105	2.92	1.06	A
			F	152	2.84	1.03	A
3	4	Consider myself;) good judge of non-verbal conversation	M	105	2.74	1.10	A
			F	152	2.78	1. 10	A
4	5	Interested in hidden message conveyed by the speaker	M	105	3.23	1.02	A
			F	152	3.28	1.91	A
5	7	Ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at meaning	M	105	2.54	1.12	A
			F	152	2.90	1.28	A
6	9	Make concerted effort to understand the speaker's view	M	105	3.02	1.02	A
			F	L_152	2.90	1.10	A
7	10	Pay attention to digression	M	105	2.88	0.97	A
			F	152	h277!	1.11	A
8	11	Good at monitoring sequencing of information	M	105	2.81	1.09	A
			F	152	2.96	1.31	A
9	13	Focus in all conversations to get at the main idea	M	105	2.61	1.03	A
			F	152	2.69	1.07	A
10	14	Predict what another is going to say before he or she says it	M	105	2.53	1.10	A
			F	152	2.84	1.00	A
11	15	Listen carefully to the entire information not just part of it	M	105	2.86	hTo	A
			F	152	2.90	1.01	A •
12	17	Not very necessary to bother about oilier people's view	M	105	2.85	hTohv	A
			F	152	2.52	1.02	A "
13	21	Project myself into communicator's message to understand fully	M	105	2.54	1.04	A
			F	152	2.62	111	A ',
14	24	Pay attention to emotional lone of (he speaker and respond lo it..	M	105	_2.83	1.03	A ;
			F	152	2.73	1.05	A
15	25	Nod, frown or in some other way, let the speaker know how I feel about what he/she is saying	M	105	2.71	1.04	A -•
			F	152	2.67	1.04	A
16	26	End a conversation not interesting by diverting attention	M	105	2.64	1.11	A
			F	152	2.62	1.10	A
17	33	Take the speaker's personality into consideration	M	105	2.56	1.08	A '
			F	152	2.98	1.72	A
18	32	Frequently hears what is expected rather than what is said.	M	105	2.77	1.01	A -
			F	152	2.86	1.81	A
19	33	Lose interest in discussion when the speaker deliberately begins to digress Sear	M	105	3.05	1.12	A
			F	152	2.76	1.06	A
20	35	Don't normally presume until I got the entire thing the speaker had to say.	M	105	2.66	0.96	A
			F	152	2.66	1.08	A
21	37	Judge what is said while it is being said	M	105	2.63	1.11	A
			F	152	2.50	0.95	A
22	38	On intermittent basis, seek clarification while listening	M	105	2.69	1.08	A
			F	152	2.69	0.97	A
23	39	Keep imagination in check while listening	M	105	2.59	1.08	A
			F	152	2.70	1.07	A
24	40	Search for reason to listen {i.e. motivation to listen)	M	105	2.75	1.02	A
			F	152	2.90	1.28	A

Data on table 3, show that both male and female principals' Mean Rating (MR) for each of the 24 listening skills range between 2.50 and 3. 28; the MR range corresponds to Agree in the Likert-type scale in the ALSI. In other words both male and female principals do not differ in their agreement with respect to the 24 items in the ALSI.

HO]: Gender has no Significant Effect on the Mean scores of the Principals on the ALSI. Table 4: t-test Result on MR of Principals' Administrative Listening skills (by Gender)Item by Item

S/No	Var	Listening Skills	Sex	N	X	SD	df	To	Tc At 0.05	Sig. At 0,05
1	2	Doesn't indulge in exploration of non-verbal signs accompanying an oral message.	M	105	2.79	1.04	255	0.25	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.75	1.09				
2	3	Try to produce 3 lot of ideas while listening.	M	105	2.92	1.06	255	-2.35	1.96	S
			F	152	2.84	1.03				
3	4	Consider myself a good judge of non-verbal conversation.	M	105	2.74	1.10	255	0-.29	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.78	1.10				
4	5	interested hidden message conveyed by the speaker.	M	105	3.23	1.02	255	-0.37	1.96	NS
			F	152	3.28	1.91				
5	7	Ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at meaning.	M	105	2.54	1.12	255	0.94	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.90	1.28				
6	9	Make concerted effort to understand the speaker's view.	M	105	3.02	1.02	255	0.76	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.90	1.10				
7	10	Pay attention to digression.	M	105	2.88	0.97	255	-0.91	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.78	l.ll				
8	11	Good at monitoring sequence of information.	M	105	2.81	1.09	255	-0.58	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.96	1.31				
9	13	Focus in all conversations to get at the main idea.	M	105	2.61	1.03	255	2.33	1.96	S
			F	152	2.69	1.07				
10	14	Predict what another is going to say before he says it.	M	105	2.53	1.10	255	1.11	1.96	NS
			L^F	152	2.84	1.00				
11	15	Listen carefully to the entire information not just part of it	M	105	2.86	1.02	255	-0.60	1.96	NS ;
			F	152	2.90	1.01				
12	17	Not very necessary to bother about other people's view.	M	105	2.85	1.00	255	2.56	1.96	S
			F	152	2.52	1.02				
13	21	Project myself into communicator's message to understand fully.	M	105	2.54	1.04	255	0.76	1.96	NS !
			F	152	2.62	1.11				
14	24	Pay attention to emotional tone of the speaker and respond to it.	M	105	2.83	1.03	255	0.33	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.73	1.05				
15	25	Nod, frown or in some other way, let the speaker know how I feel about what he/she is saying.	M	105	2.71	1.04	255	0.16	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.67	1.04				
16	26	End a conversation not interesting by diverting attention.	M	105	2.64	1.11	255	-1.49	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.62	1.10				
17	31	Take the speaker's personality into consideration.	M	105	2.56	1.08	255	-0.50	1.96	NS
			F	157	2.98	2.72				
18	32	Frequently hears what is expected rather than what is said.	M	105	2.77	1.01 .	255	1.07	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.86	1.81				
19	33	Lose interest in discussion when (he speaker deliberatively begins to digress	M	105	3.05	3.12	255	0.22	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.76	1.06				
20	35	Don't normally presume until I got the entire thing the speaker had to say.	M	105	2.66	0.96	255	0.98	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.66	1.08				
21	37	Judge what is said while it is being said	M	105	2.63	1.11	255	0.02	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.50	1.95				
22	38	On intermittent basis, seek clarification while listening	M	105	2.69	2.98	255	-0.81	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.69	0.97				
23	39	Keep imagination in check while listening	M	105	2.59	1.08	255	-0.99	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.70	1.07				
24	40	Search for reason to listen (i.e. motivation to listen)	M	105	2.75	1.02	255	0.61	1.96	NS
			F	152	2.90	1.28				

Key: NS= Not Significant. S= Significant.

Data on table 4 reveal that Hoi of the study was not rejected since the calculated T value was not found to be statistically significant on 21 out of the 24 variables of the ALSI. That means that gender has no significant effect on the mean score of the principals on ALSI as dependable parameter for measuring principals listening skills. However, the observed significant variables could be as a result of chance error.

Discussion of Findings **Validity of the Administrative Listening Skill Inventory**

Construct validity using the factor analysis (principal factor solution and normal varimax rotation) was carried out on the forty-item ALSI. Table I, shows that the Principal Components (PC) extracted fourteen factors but only five factors had items substantially loaded on them. Item \, 6, 8, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, and 36 were dropped completely from the ALSI. Specifically, items 3, 6, 32, 18, and 36 were not loaded on any factor. Meredith (1969), recommends that a loading of 0.35 should be the minimum for accepting any item. As such the items were dropped from the instrument. Item 19,30,27,28,39 and 30 have less than four items under their factors. According to Meredith (1969), it is not easy to explain such factors that have few items. Some items loaded on more than one factors and were also dropped from the instrument such as items 8,16, 22,23, and 34. The items are factorially complex or impure. (Meredith, 1969). However, five factors and 24 items emerged factorially pure and valid. The five constructs representing the five factors under which the items were loaded are Creative, Concentrative, Empathic, Social and Critical Listening Skills. Accordingly,

Factor 1 included such Listening Skills related to Creative listening skills such as, I do not indulge in exploration of non- verbal signs accompanying message. I try as much as possible to produce a lot of ideas while listening I consider myself a good judge of non-verbal conversation
I am always interested in the hidden message conveyed by the speaker during discussion. I usually ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at meaning.

Factor 2, concerns **concentrative listening skill** and it included such variable as;
I make concerted effort to understand the speaker's view
I usually pay attention to digression whenever I am into conversation.
I am very good at monitoring sequence of information in discussion.
My major focus in all conversation is to get at the main idea.
I usually predict what another person is going to say before he or she says it.

Factor four concentrated on the skills related to **empathic listening skills.** It included: I listen carefully to the entire information not just part of it. It is not very necessary to bother about others' peoples view. I usually project my selfinto communicators massage in order to understand fully. I pay particular attention to the emotional tone of the message and respond to it rather than referring only to the verbal.

Factor 5 could be explained by such skill as;
1 frequently nod, frown or in some other way let speaker know how I feel about what he or she is saying.
I usually end a conversation that doesn't interest me by diverting my attention from the speaker.
I don't take the speakers personality into consideration whenever information is given out to me.
I frequently hear what I am expected to hear rather than what is said
I usually lose interest in a discussion when the speaker deliberately begins to divert from the main fact. These pertain to **social listening skills/**

Factor 7 related to **critical** listening skill as indicated in the following variables. I do not normally presume until I have gotten ail that the speaker had to say. On intermittent basis, I seek clarification while conversation is still in progress.

I do keep imagination in check while listening.
I always search for reasons to listen (i.e. motivation.)

The factor loadings of these items above confirm the validity of the items. Findings from the factor analysis show that five factors and 24 items can explain the administrative listening skills. Each of the factors was made up of four or more items. The items have been reduced. This is in agreement with the opinion of Nie (1975), that the single most distinctive characteristic of factor analysis is its data reduction capability. That is condensing many items into a few underlying constructs. This is also in consistence with the findings of Okoye (1985), on the student evaluation of teachers of collages of education, which resulted in six factors with 30 items. The factor analysis pulled the liked items closer to themselves. It is also in congruence with the findings of Ogu (1990), in his study. The validated ALSI (see appendix A) will constitute little burdens for principals and ensure a valid and reliable assessment. The pool of items could be seen as validated ALSI. These items reduced from the comprehensive ALSI, was not done on the basis that the items are poorly constructed but because attempt was made to reduce items that do not have high factorial validity. It is however, worthy to note that if 24 items can adequately measure the Administrative Listening Skills, the use of 40 items may be out of place.

Reliability of the Administrative Listening Skill (ALSI)

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency of a measuring instrument, (Mehrens and Lehman, 1991). It ensures dependability, consistency, predictability and accuracy (Kerlinger, 1973). So, to get the reliability coefficient of the ALSI, the 24 items that survived factor analysis were subjected to a test of internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha. The data on Table 2, show reliability co-efficient of 0.7595. This indicates a high reliability index. This is in agreement with what Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) posited, "Larger values indicate greater reliability".

Influence of Gender **on the Administrative Listening Skill** (ALSI)

The data on Table 3, reveal that for the entire 24 variables, both male and female principals do not differ in (heir agreement on the influence of gender on the ALSI. The 24 listening skills were further subjected to t-test to determine whether there are differences in the principals' response to the ALSI due to gender. The t-test result on Table 4, shows that the t observed in 21 out of the 24 listening skills variables are less than the t-critical of 1.96 for 255 df at 0.05 significant levels. Thus, the null hypothesis of 'gender has no significant effect on the mean scores of principals on the ALSI' was accepted for the 21 variables. This finding is consistence with the findings of Peretomode (1999); Obioma and Ohuche (1985); Barufaldi and Swift (1980), who found that no significant influence was exerted by gender on listening skills.

However, for three of the listening skills, variables 3,13 and 17, their respective t observed of -2.35, -2.33 and 2.56 are higher than the t -critical of 1.96 for 255 df at 0.05 significant levels. This implies that the three variables are not dependable. Looking at the three variables individually, variable 3 "try as much as possible to produce a lot of ideas while listening as it pertains to creative listening skill. This result is not surprising since Nicholas and Stephens (1996), saw creativity as a talent everyone possesses to some degree; that can be learned; and certain people are more successful than others in utilizing it. Creative listening calls for a lot of thinking, patience, imagination and insight. Variable 13 pertains to concentrative listening skill. "Listeners focus in all conversations is to get at the main idea". That this significantly affects the ALSI with respect to gender cannot mean that the item is not stable; rather it should be judged as a matter of anticipatory set (Brown, 1988). That is the anticipating and comparing of expectation with outcome, which may cause the listener to pay more attention in order to see if he is right. However, Arinze (1993), posited that one learns more by listening attentively. For variable 17, "it is not very necessary to worry about other people's view". This is not out of place, but portrays that concentration on other peoples' view is a matter of individual differences. This is in congruent with the findings of Riding and Vincent (1980), Kemp and Duke (1991), who found the listening attitude of males different from females.

Educational Implications of" the Study

The findings of this study have implication for the government, administrators and managers of organizations, policy makers at the Ministry of Education, education supervisors as well as counsellors. Now that an ALSI, a valid and reliable inventory is available, the Ministry of Education as well as counsellors should use it to assess the listening of principals. It could also serve as self-evaluation inventory.

Haphazard ratings of principals are no longer necessary. Availability of the ALSI enhances effective performance evaluation of principals in this skill domain. This will help the government and

Ministry of Education in making effective decision on personnel to be deployed in a particular school to administer. Also, teachers and government could make comparability of principals listening ability across schools.

With the ability of ALSI, supervisors of education could make regular checks; aspect of listening skills where principals are deficient could be readily identified. Consequently, the deficient areas could form the basic for in-service training and counseling services to remedy such deficiencies/weakness and improvement and improve performance in organizational communications and also numerous organizational conflicts would be reduced.

However, the result of the t - tests on gender will guide the ministry of education on how to specify listening skill improvement programmes for both male and female principals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that:

1. The government should adopt the ALSI and use it in determining the level and nature of listening skills of principals before posting them to head schools. The Ministry of Education should ensure that only principals, who are capable of listening effectively, are deployed and orientation course on listening skills planned for them.

2. Principals should also use the ALSI for self-evaluation.

3. In principals' guidance counselling and training workshop should be organized for the principals irrespective of gender and job experience on aspects of creative listening and ways to stimulate it which must include sound state of the mind soul and body so that they would-be motivated to listen.

4. The Ministry of Education in the state should make regular inspection to schools to ensure that principals are given proper orientation, workshops and seminar to ensure maintenance and growth on good listening habits in schools.

5. Listening, an active process, as opposed to reading, writing or speaking, is the most important communication skill for occupational success, as such; more-emphasis should be placed on listening instruction in the colleges of education and universities for student teachers to help improve principal listening skills.

Conclusion

In summary, sequel to the analysis, an ALSI of 24 items was developed. The 24 items were found to be properly loaded and therefore acceptable. Five dimensions of listening skills found to explain the ALSI are creative, concentrative, empathic, social and critical. The ALSI has high inter-item consistency of 0.75 and as such is a reliable instrument for measuring the principals listening skills.

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Appendix A

Instruction: Go through the items in this inventory carefully and indicate with a tick ( ) your responses on the four point scale provided for each item as it formally applies to you as a dependable parameter to measure your listening skills.

Validated Administrative Listening Skill Inventory (VALSD

S/No	LISTENING SKILLS	SA	A	D	SD
1	I don't indulge in exploration of non -verbal signs				
2	I try to produce a lot of ideas while listening.				
3	I consider myself a good judge of non-verbal conversation				
4	I am always interested in hidden message conveyed by the speaker				
5	1 usually ask people to clarify what they have said rather than guess at meaning				
6	I make concerted effort to understand the speaker's view				
7	I pay attention to digression				

8	1 am always very good at monitoring sequencing of information.				
9	My major focus in all conversation is to get at the main idea.				
10	I usually predict what another is going to say before he she says it				
11	I listen carefully to the entire information.				
12	It is not very necessary to bother about other peoples' view				
13	I usually project myself into communicator massage to understand fully				
14	I pay particular attention to emotional tones of the speaker and respond to it.				
15	I frequently nod, frown or in some other way, let the speaker know how I feel				
16	I usually end a conversation not interesting by diverting my attention from the speaker				
17	I do take the speakers personality into consideration whenever information is given to me				
IS	I frequently hear what I expected rather than what is said				
19	I usually lost interest in discussion when the speaker deliberately begins to digress				
20	I don't normal presume until I got all the speaker had to say				
21	1 judge what is said while it is being said				
22	On intermittent basis, 1 seek clarification while listening to a speaker				
23	I do keep imagination in check while listening				
24	1 always search for reason to listen (i.e. motivation to listen)				