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Managing Teachers' Social Skills As Correlate To Job Performance In Public Senior Secondary Schools In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the relationship between managing teachers' social skills as a correlate to job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The correlational research design method was adopted. The population of this study consists of all the 7,142 teachers in two hundred and seventy-six (276) public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, out of which three hundred and eighty (390) teachers representing 5.37% of the population were used as respondents. A set of structured questionnaire scales titled: Managing Teachers' Social Skills scale and Job Performance scale was used to obtain data from the field. The reliability coefficients of the of instruments (interpersonal skills 0.81, communication skills 0.77, and job performance 0.82 respectively) were determined using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Formula (r) and z ratio were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Findings revealed that teachers' interpersonal skills and communication skills will improve and guarantee job performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State and these were found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance; Based on the findings of the study, and the discussions on them, it was concluded that Teachers should have a positive interpersonal relationship with members of staff Principals should ensure that they set up conflict management committee (CMC) in their schools that will serve as the body responsible for managing teachers' conflict. Staff in this committee should be adequately trained on how to handle conflicts and other related matters.
Keywords: Social skills, management, teachers, job performance, secondary schools, and Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

One of the crucial components of a country's education system is secondary education. Secondary education plays a key role in connecting different levels of education and facilitating the achievement of objectives in primary and tertiary education. It serves as a remedial platform, addressing deficiencies in primary education and preparing students for higher levels of education. The government and other stakeholders closely monitor this level of education to ensure that educational expectations are met. Teachers in the secondary education system hold a crucial position as they significantly influence the attainment of educational goals and objectives in the classroom. The presence and quality of teachers determine the learning environment and the caliber of students produced by the education system. As Akanbi (2014) emphasized, the quality of a nation's education system cannot exceed the quality of its teaching force. Therefore, continuous professional development for teachers is essential to achieve educational objectives. Teachers must be given opportunities to enhance their skills and competencies to improve their performance. The knowledge,

skills, and attitudes of teachers must align with international best practices for the education system to remain competitive globally.

How a teacher communicates is just as crucial as the content of their communication. A balanced communication style is essential for success, as being overly assertive or passive can diminish a teacher's influence among colleagues and administrators. Through introspection and exploration, teachers can discover how a balanced communication style can maximize their impact and persuasiveness within the educational community. Conflict, like fire, is both necessary and perilous. It can be either extinguished or allowed to spread. Conflict is an inevitable reality in every school and our lives. Teachers must learn to anticipate and manage conflicts rather than exacerbate or ignore them. Through role-playing, teachers can learn the win-win approach to conflict, which has the potential to enhance job satisfaction, boost confidence, reduce stress, and improve outcomes. The overarching goal of social skills is to equip individuals with the tools to navigate social and situational interactions effectively. Social skills are classified based on the complexity of the observable and non-observable behaviors exhibited in various activities. These classifications include basic, primary, secondary, advanced, and complex social skills, all aimed at ensuring individuals' satisfactory development in their activities. The dimensions identified as indicators of social skills in teachers in this study shed light on the socio-psychological qualities that teachers must possess to facilitate seamless communication both inside and outside the classroom. These include perceptual abilities concerning oneself and others, meeting educational demands to stimulate students' reflection, exercising personal judgment, seeking novelty, and fostering student creativity through diverse approaches. Communication in education transcends the simple exchange of words; it encompasses the expression and delivery of messages, including the affective relationship established between teacher and student. Various competencies form the social skills of teachers, and different scholars have categorized social skills under different contexts. However, they all agree that these skills are indispensable for achieving educational goals and objectives. Gökel and Dağlı (2017:7365) classified social skills into four types: communication, interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict-resolution skills. These skills are crucial for meaningful interaction among teachers, facilitating the successful execution of educational tasks. Sharma et al. (2016) also emphasized the significance of conversation skills (communication), relationship skills, self-control skills, and mannerism skills in enhancing a teacher's work relationships and the outcome of their duties. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to diligently acquire a comprehensive set of social skills to excel in their roles within the school.

Teachers must have good interpersonal skills because they cannot work alone. Regardless of their qualifications, they need to interact with others. Interpersonal skills help teachers to provide and receive on-the-job support and to receive support from other school members. These skills, along with attributes such as caring, empathy, and openness, promote effective task performance individually and as a group. Communication skills are also essential for teachers to interact effectively with colleagues. This includes the ability to convey information clearly and concisely, which is crucial for decision-making. Good communication skills also help teachers stay informed about school activities, which is important for their job.

A teacher's job performance is more focused when they have a positive working relationship with other school members. The quality of these relationships depends on the teacher's social skills. According to Ukaigwe and Jack (2020:183), social skills are competencies that regulate human relationships and are crucial for teachers' performance. These skills are necessary for meaningful interaction and can greatly impact a teacher's performance. While many studies focus on soft skills for teachers, there is little emphasis on developing social skills, which are crucial for teachers' performance. Social skills not only benefit the teacher but also enable them to benefit from the support of others, ultimately improving their job performance.

Statement of the Problem

The activities of teachers in most public senior secondary schools in Rivers State indicate a teaching force that experiences underutilization, overutilization, and mis-utilization, impacting educational outcomes negatively. For a school to achieve its aims and objectives, its members must have similar goals and work together cooperatively. In cases where there is a lack of positive relationships among teachers, vice principals, and principals, conflicts may arise, which can be detrimental to the school's functioning. Therefore, a healthy atmosphere in any secondary school requires understanding of

differences and the practice of "give and take" in relationships. The job performance of these teachers has been below expectations in some instances, as reported by parents and observed in student performance. This may be linked to the teachers' inability to manage their social skills effectively. What specific strategies can be implemented to improve teachers' interpersonal and communication skills? What are the potential challenges in managing teachers' social skills and how can they be addressed effectively in the context of public senior secondary schools? What are the potential implications of enhancing teachers' social skills on job performance and overall educational outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State? The interpersonal and communication skills of these teachers seem to be lacking, contributing to their poor performance. The study aims to investigate the management of teachers' social skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine the relationship between the management of teachers' social skills as a correlate to job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. In specific terms, the objectives of the study were:

1. determine the relationship between teachers' interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. find out the relationship between teachers' communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between teachers' interpersonal skills for job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' communication skills for job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between male and female teachers on interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between male and female teachers on communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study hold significant implications for various stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, the Ministry of Education, government officials, future researchers, and the general public. The results of this study will offer valuable insights for educators, enabling them to identify specific skill sets that can be implemented in their respective roles to enhance their performance and contribute to more effective service delivery. Furthermore, school administrators will benefit from this study as it will furnish them with data to facilitate comprehensive planning of teachers' social activities, ultimately leading to improved job performance and the advancement of educational objectives within their schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' Social Skills and Job Performance

The management of social skills is a key predictor of teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding is supported by Wu (2008), who discovered that social skills can enhance interpersonal interactions, leading to more effective job outcomes. Social skills are essential for regulating human relationships, especially in the context of teachers needing to interact effectively with students, colleagues, and other associates. These skills are crucial for complementing teaching methodologies. In addition to the significance of an individual's emotional disposition, the social aspect of an individual is equally important. Given that humans are social animals, possessing strong social skills is vital for reducing conflicts and chaos that could disrupt the teaching process and the school environment (Joel, 2018). A lack of social skills may hinder collaboration, knowledge sharing, and team teaching in the school setting. Teachers need to develop and manage good interpersonal relationships to carry out their duties effectively in the school. Bullock (2013) defines job performance as the overall conduct of an employee over a specific period, while Campbell, as cited in Ukaigwe & Jack (2020), describes it as the tasks, duties, responsibilities, or obligations performed in

the workplace. Job performance refers to the completion of tasks for which an individual is employed. It is widely acknowledged that job performance involves a complex interplay of variables related to the job, the employee, and the work environment (Milkovich & Wigdor, as cited in Ukaigwe & Jack, 2020). Good social skills are believed to be associated with job performance, but it is still uncertain to what extent they can predict teachers' job performance both jointly and independently.

The concept of job performance, as described by Fapohunwa (2014), revolves around the idea of employees (in this case, teachers) achieving their assigned tasks within a specific timeframe. According to Fapohunwa, job performance is closely linked to the fulfillment of duties, which can be measured and evaluated. Peretomode, as cited in Amin (2013), views job performance as a structured process of employee participation in the day-to-day management of the school system to achieve desired outcomes. Quarterly (2012) emphasizes that employee training and job satisfaction are directly proportional to improved performance within an organization. In the context of schools, the quality of education largely depends on the performance of teachers. Therefore, the role of teachers is pivotal for the advancement of education. The foundation of every school system is to facilitate students' success through the competence of teachers in achieving educational objectives. This objective cannot be realized without teachers updating their knowledge and refining their teaching skills. It is essential for teachers to continuously advance their technological and pedagogical competencies. Amaelo (2010) underscores that teachers play a crucial role in imparting knowledge and skills to students, and their level of knowledge significantly impacts their job performance. This assertion is supported by Ukaigwe and Onuwmere (2018), who maintain that teacher involvement in capacity-building programs will enhance their knowledge and consequently contribute to improved productivity and academic performance of both teachers and students. There is a global emphasis on the importance of a competent workforce, particularly in the case of teachers. Qualified teachers with experience and a strong professional background are essential for efficient school job performance.

Ways of Managing Teachers' Interpersonal Skills for Job Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools

The term "Interpersonal skills" refers to social skills and social competence, and is often used interchangeably due to its widespread use. There is no universally accepted definition for this term due to its broad nature. Fontana, as cited in Thompson and Ofojebe (2020), defines social skills as the way people effectively manage their professional relationships. He believes that human relationships play a crucial role in determining the success of professional performance in many fields such as teaching, nursing, medicine, social work, management, law, and counseling, among others (Fontana as cited in Thompson & Ofojebe 2020). Interpersonal relationship skill involves the ability of school managers to interact and collaborate with subordinates to achieve the school's objectives. According to Giami and Obiechina (2019), interpersonal relationship skill includes the ability to work with people to motivate and inspire them. Principals' interpersonal skills enable them to develop positive relationships with their subordinates, which in turn contributes to the smooth operation of the school. Werang (2014) stated that interpersonal skills allow leaders to influence groups to work together to achieve organizational goals. Interpersonal skills enable principals to be attentive and empathetic to what motivates teachers, fostering a trusting atmosphere and considering teachers' needs when making decisions to achieve the school's objectives. Ayeni (2014) emphasized that interpersonal skills are essential for maintaining a positive work environment, as lacking these skills can lead to hostile relationships within the school organization and result in staff dissatisfaction.

The ability to effectively manage interpersonal skills has a significant impact on job performance. Research indicates a correlation between social skills management and teachers' performance, highlighting the importance of interacting with superiors, subordinates, co-workers, as well as external stakeholders. Participation in the day-to-day operations of an organization is argued to influence job performance, while job performance itself is defined as the successful execution of tasks and the skillful alignment of behavior with organizational goals. Various factors, such as interpersonal relations, have been linked to job performance among workers. Furthermore, studies have shown that friendships in the workplace can positively influence employee attitudes, including job satisfaction, commitment, and perceived organizational support. Conversely, negative work attitudes can be alleviated when colleagues serve as confidantes to discuss challenging work experiences. In today's fast-paced corporate environment, maintaining good professional relationships is crucial, and this is

facilitated by effective workplace communication and teamwork. Strong interpersonal relationships develop through active participation in a team, but they can deteriorate when a member leaves the group and loses touch.

Ways of Managing Teachers' Communication Skills for Job Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools.

Communication skills refer to conveying a message with shared understanding within the context of communication (Saunders and Mills, as cited in Alamgir, Salahuddin, Syed & Manzoor (2017). Additionally, effective teacher communication skills are crucial for delivering education to students (McCarthy and Carter, 2001). Communication skills encompass listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A teacher needs to be highly proficient in all these areas for effective teaching. Teachers with strong communication skills make things easier and more understandable (Freddie Silver). Effective communication skills are essential for teachers in transmitting education, managing classrooms, and interacting with students. Teachers must cater to students with different thinking approaches. To teach according to students' abilities and capabilities, teachers need to adopt motivating communication skills (Bee, 2012). Good communication skills are fundamental for students' academic and professional success. Teachers primarily convey instructions orally in the classroom. Poor communication skills in teachers may hinder students' learning and academic progress. Students' understanding of right and wrong depends on teachers' communication skills in the classroom (Sherwyn, Michael & Judy 2000). Good communication minimizes unkind feelings during teaching. Learners need to pay attention to their teachers during lectures to facilitate learning. Loss (2000) recommends that teachers communicate clearly and understandably. Communication is a dynamic process that requires a focused mind and the courage to effectively convey a message.

Communication involves the successful exchange of information and ideas between two or more individuals through speaking, listening, writing, body language, symbolic signs, or any other appropriate means. Akinwale and Okotoni (2018) emphasized that effective communication in a school begins with the principal conceptualizing ideas and sharing them with the staff and other stakeholders. They also stated that the principal is accountable for conveying visions and essential information necessary for the smooth operation of the school, as well as for transmitting ideas and emotions to foster collaborative support among all members of the school. Effective dissemination of information and exchange of ideas necessitate communication skills. Communication skill, in this context, refers to the principal's ability to exchange ideas and disseminate information to their subordinates in a timely and accurate manner. Previous studies have indicated a correlation between effective communication and teachers' job effectiveness. For example, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) surveyed conflict resolution mechanisms in public secondary schools in Nairobi province, Kenya. The study aimed to identify the various methods employed to resolve conflicts in public secondary schools in Nairobi province, employing a descriptive and exploratory research design. The sample included principals, representatives of Boards of Governors (BoGs), class teachers, students, and education officers, who were surveyed to understand their perceptions and experiences with conflict resolution mechanisms in their respective schools. The research instruments used were a questionnaire and an interview schedule, and the data collected were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including SPSS. The findings revealed that conflicts in public secondary schools have diverse causes and that specific strategies are required for resolving these various forms of conflicts due to their unique root causes.

Theoretical Review

The concept of systems theory was introduced by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1954 to address the relationship between a whole system and its parts. According to Von Bertalanffy, system theory explains how different parts of a system interact and depend on each other to perform various functions. In every organization, there exists an input–process-output system, characterized by an input from the outside, a conversion process, and an output exiting the system. The educational system shares similar characteristics with other systems, with educational resources serving as the input, management strategies as the conversion process, and the skills and quality of graduates as the output. Zelvys (2004) further emphasizes that a system comprises interrelated and interdependent parts, where the interaction of any part affects the entire system. This systems framework is

fundamental to educational theory, as educational institutions are complex, dynamic, and goal-oriented. Furthermore, the use of ICT facilities in teaching and learning aims to produce skillful and innovative students. Skyttner (2001) also notes that a system's theory explains how different parts perform various functions and interact with each other. An effective system is open, receiving input from the environment and releasing output back into the environment. This open systems approach is suitable for various organizations, including schools. In the context of schools, resources such as labor, students, and funding are transformed through an educational process to produce literate, educated students and graduates. Effective coordination of individuals and units within the organization is essential to achieve organizational goals. Specifically, in the school system, students from diverse backgrounds are admitted, requiring strategic approaches from school managers and teachers to effectively manage these students.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a correlational research design was utilized to investigate the relationship between multiple quantitative variables within the same group of participants. The study focused on 311 principals from public secondary schools in Rivers State, with a sample size of 160 principals selected using the Taro Yamane formula. The sampling techniques employed were stratified and simple random sampling. To collect data, two questionnaires were used: the "Administrative Strategies Principals' Questionnaire" (ASPQ) and the "Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning Questionnaire" (QATLQ). These instruments underwent face and content validity testing, with feedback from two experts in Educational Administration at the University of Port Harcourt taken into account for refinement. The questionnaires were administered through face-to-face interviews to ensure accurate data collection. Following data collection, the research questions were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation, and hypotheses were tested using a z-test at a 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between managing interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Hypothesis (Ho_1): There is no significant relationship between managing interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4.1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship between managing interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	Df	R	P (Sig.)	Decision
Interpersonal Skills	372	370	0.756	0.000	Reject Ho_3 (Not Significant)
Job Performance	372				P < 0.05

Decision Rule: 0.00 – 0.19 = Very Low, 0.20 – 0.39 = Low, 0.40 – 0.59 = Moderate, 0.60 – 0.79 = High, 0.80 – 1.00 Very High

To answer the research question, results from Table 4.1 produced a correlation coefficient, 'r' of 0.756; which means there is a high relationship between managing interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

For the hypothesis tested, Table 4.1 also revealed that r of 0.756 is significant with P < 0.05 because the calculated probability value of 0.000 is lesser than the critical probability value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implication, there is a significant relationship between managing interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between managing teachers' communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Hypothesis (Ho_2): There is no significant relationship between managing teachers' communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4.2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship between managing teachers' communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	Df	R	P (Sig.)	Decision
Teachers' Communication Skills	372	370	0.728	0.000	Rejected Ho_4 (Significant)
Job Performance	372				P < 0.05

Decision Rule: 0.00 – 0.19 = Very Low, 0.20 – 0.39 = Low, 0.40 – 0.59 = Moderate, 0.60 – 0.79 = High, 0.80 – 1.00 Very High

To answer the research question, results from Table 4.2 produced a correlation coefficient, 'r' of 0.728; which means there is a high relationship between managing teachers' communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

For the hypothesis tested, Table 4.2 also revealed that r of 0.728 is significant with P <0.05 because the calculated probability value of 0.000 is lesser than the critical probability value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implication, there is a significant relationship between managing teachers' communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Managing Teachers' Interpersonal Skills and Job Performance

The study's initial discovery highlights a strong correlation between the management of interpersonal skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This correlation is further supported by Werang (2014), who emphasized the role of interpersonal skills in enabling leaders to influence groups and achieve organizational goals. Moreover, interpersonal skills allow principals to be empathetic toward teachers' motivations and create a trusting atmosphere, thus guiding them toward achieving school objectives. Ayeni (2014) also emphasized the significance of interpersonal skills in maintaining a positive work environment, highlighting the detrimental effects on staff satisfaction when these skills are lacking. Additionally, Wheatley (2001) suggested that scholars should focus on how workplace relationships are organized, emphasizing the importance of building and maintaining interpersonal capacities within the workplace. These relationships encompass the interpersonal connections that individuals form while carrying out their professional duties.

Managing Teachers' Communication Skills and Job Performance.

The study's second discovery highlighted a strong correlation between effective communication skills and job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. It also emphasized the significant link between managing communication skills and job performance in these schools. This finding aligns with the views of Ehindero & Ajibade (2000), who emphasized the importance of teachers possessing good communication skills, effective classroom management, knowledge updates, and a strong personality for effective teaching. Additionally, Oboegbulem & Onwurah (2011) emphasized the role of effective communication in conflict management, highlighting its importance in providing necessary information, timely action, and appropriate feedback to prevent conflicts arising from poor communication. Effective communication, they argued, plays a crucial role in conflict management by ensuring clarity and precision to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings indicate that effective management of teachers' social skills is essential for enhancing and ensuring job performance. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to cultivate and demonstrate strong social skills in their teaching

practices. This includes the ability to effectively communicate, collaborate, and engage with both students and colleagues. By doing so, teachers can create a positive and productive learning environment that supports academic success and overall well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The establishment of positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and staff members is crucial. Principals should take proactive steps by setting up a conflict management committee (CMC) in their schools. This committee will be responsible for handling teachers' conflicts, so it's essential to ensure that the staff members involved are well-trained in conflict resolution and related matters.
2. Additionally, it's important to ensure timely communication of all relevant information to teachers and actively involve them in school decision-making processes. Teachers should also cultivate a positive attitude, being open to apologizing when their actions cause others to become upset. These measures can help prevent conflicts from arising or effectively manage them when they occur.

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