

# **PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' JOB COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.**

**BY**

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## **Abstract**

The study examined principals' communication styles as predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 5,552 respondents made up of 266 principals and 5,286 teachers in the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample for this study consisted of 660 respondents made up of 135 principals and 528 teachers drawn using multi stage sampling technique. Two sets of questionnaires titled: "Communication Styles Questionnaire (CSQ)" and "Teachers' Job Commitment Scale (TJCS)" were used for data collection. The face and construct validity of the instruments were established by experts. The internal consistencies of the instruments were determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded average reliability indices of 0.80. Simple regression was used to answer research questions and test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that principals' assertive communication style is a strong and a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The result of the study showed that principals' aggressive communication style is a weak predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also revealed that principals' passive communication style is a moderate and significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Principals should apply more of assertive communication style by expressing their feelings comfortably without

denying the rights of staff to improve the job commitment of teachers. Government should organize seminars for principals to enable them acquire skills of controlling their use of aggressive communication style by having regard for the ideas and feelings of teachers which could motivate them to exhibit high job commitment. School principals should control the use of passive communication style by sharing their real opinions of school affairs and ultimately stand up for them to earn the right of teachers, thereby improve their job commitment.

**Keywords:** Principal, Communication, Teachers, Job Commitment.

## Introduction

Education is the act or process of gaining knowledge. Onyekazi et al. (2022) asserted that education is a vital instrument for individuals, society and general development of nations. It is a process of inculcating the right values and skills mostly through a school. Secondary school is the level of education after primary school and it is composed of students, staff, other individuals who work together to attain a common purpose which is effective instructional delivery for the achievement of educational goals. The activities of individuals and groups in secondary schools are controlled and managed by principals. Principals are heads in secondary schools and they are in charge of managing the affairs of students and teachers. Teachers are very important resource in the school for the actualization of education goals. They help to support students as well as deliver instructions. They provide engaging lessons to inspire and motivate their students and enhance their academic output. This is to say that teacher's job commitment play an important role in student's learning process. It is pertinent for Principals to ensure that the goals of

secondary of education stated in FRN (2013) which is nurturing young adults to adapt favourably and contribute meaningfully to the environment is achieved through teachers' commitment to their job.

Commitment is the worker's zeal and attachment to the function assigned to him or her in an organization in order to contribute effectively to the promotion interest and the realization of the objectives of the organization. Baraka and Luicensi (2017) defined job commitment as a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values. The authors added that it depicts willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and strong desire to attain organizational goals. The school is an organization established as the instrument for the achievement of educational goals and teachers are among the employees in the school, just like other organizations, it is expected that teachers should be committed to their job. There is need therefore need for every employee in every organization to be committed in their job. Teachers are employees in school organizations and therefore, it is necessary for them to be committed in their work.

Teachers' job commitment is the devotion of efforts, energy and time by members of teaching staff while executing their duties in school. Abaiola and Nwafor (2021) asserted that teachers' job commitment is a physical, psychological and mental attachment to the demands of one's job. The authors added that teachers' job commitment entails showing adequate knowledge and willingness to sacrifice for the attainment of the goals and objectives of an organization. The committed teachers tend to be more dedicated, determined and proactive in rendering their support for attainment of school goals. Iroegbulam (2021) pointed out that committed teachers complete their tasks diligently and are also willing to sacrifice their time and personal agenda whenever their attention is needed for the academic achievement of the school. Commitment involves effective communication. The functions of principals as head in secondary schools include ensuring good communication in the school.

Communication is the dissemination of information or change of ideas between two or more persons. Kaegon and Okere (2020) defined communication as the creation or exchange of thoughts, ideas, emotions, and understanding between senders and receivers. It is through communication that principals give instructions, assign tasks to teachers and also made known of their expectations. Communication is the act of transmitting information in an understandable manner. Abeer (2020) opined that communication is a set of activities that include listening,

meditation and expression of ideas between two or more people. Communication is a process where two or more people exchange information or share idea.

Communication styles are the verbal and non-verbal patterns of flow of information in an organization. Sdeeq et al. (2021) defined communication style as specific methods of disseminating and receiving information in an organization. Communication styles are the various patterns and strategies through which managers give directive or instructions to members of staff. Muhammad (2020) opined that communication styles are ways of giving and receiving information as well as expressing an idea. The author added that it is typical ways in which a person usually behaves when exchanging information, ideas, and emotions with others. Communication styles are means for exchanging information, expressing opinions and giving instructions to attain a common goal. Suyu-Tattao (2019) defined communication styles as the approaches involving the combination of oral and written elements in disseminating and receiving of information. Communication styles are series of patterns in which information is disseminated, ideas are shared and feelings expressed in the school system.

Several scholars have outlined different components of communication styles. Ogunyemi and Olagbaju (2020) identified communication styles as follow aggressive communication style and assertive communication style. Similarly, Adeogun et al. (2016) outlined three communication styles namely assertive, aggressive and

passive communication styles. In the same vein, Okotoni and Akinwale (2019) listed communication styles as follows: aggressive, open, inclusive and assertive communication styles. The focus of the study was on aggressive, assertive, passive and open communication styles which are commonly patterns of communication in schools.

Assertive communication style involves the expression of ideas, while respecting the rights of teachers. Nwabueze and Ohia (2020) noted that assertive communication style is characterized by an ability to listen to the perspective of others and express oneself honestly and respectfully. Assertive communication style is one in which the principals listen to teachers and also encourage them to share their views on school matters and give prompt feedback. Okotoni and Akinwale (2019) noted that a school principal who engages in assertive communication is willing to hear the opinions of others and feels comfortable enough to express his own opinions as well. While engaging in conversations with teachers, the principals who apply assertive communicators speak in moderate and are always careful with the choice of words to avoid offending the teachers. However, the principals who speak in harsh ways without being careful with the choice of words apply the aggressive communication style.

Aggressive communication is a style in which managers express their opinions as they desire without considering if it violates the rights of subordinates. Aggressive communication is a style in which

individuals express their feelings and opinions and advocate for their needs in a way that violates the rights of others. Several scholars noted that principals who are aggressive communicators will often: try to dominate others, use humiliation to control others, criticize, blame, or attack others, be very impulsive, have low frustration tolerance, speak in a loud, demanding, and overbearing voice, act threateningly and rudely (Nwabueze & Ohia, 2020). The principals who use aggressive communication styles tend to frequently use abusive words and discourage the use of initiatives among members of staff. The information disseminated through aggressive style of communication is in forms of directive that must be followed by the subordinates without questioning. Muhammad (2020) averred that aggressive communicators dominate, threaten, criticize and blame others during interaction. On the other hand, the communication style that is transparent and devoid of threatens during discussion is open communication.

Open communication style is the pattern of interaction gives members of staff the opportunity to express their opinions on issues under discussion. This type of communication style encourages teachers to express their views on issues affecting their jobs. Yakubu and Afolabi (2020) asserted that open communication style provides necessary information that will help and allow all workers in the school to perform optimally and maximally. Furthermore, the authors stressed that the use of open

communication style encourages participation of teachers in running the daily affairs of the school. Sancar and Yalcin (2022) asserted that the managers who apply open communication style are successful in their social and professional life due to the fact that it encourages participation, cooperation and team work in an organization. The principals who apply open communication style allow and accept the inputs of people within and outside the school system. The principals that allow the inputs of teachers without making any contribution has apply passive communication style.

Passive communication style is the pattern of avoiding expressing ideas and feelings on a given issue. Principals who apply passive communication styles are open to criticisms from members of staff. Adeogun et al. (2016) pointed out that the leaders who apply passive communication styles are willing to take orders and rarely speak up in social settings. The passive communicators feel shy to express their opinion and tend to share limited information and ask limited questions. Obeya (2020) posited that passive communication styles are exhibited by individuals who are indecisive, not in control of situations and easily lose self-esteem. Passive communicators are usually quiet and always hide their feelings toward an issue. Muhammad (2020) pointed out that someone that applies passive communication style often avoid to express his or her thought, feeling and opinion in a given issue. The principals who apply passive communication style allow teachers to dominate interaction

and always tend to apologize to teachers in any given issue and thereby foster peaceful co-existence that enhances their job commitment.

Teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State is below expectation. This is evidenced from their absenteeism without permission, coming to school late almost on daily basis, inability to complete their scheme of work, inability to deliver to instruction appropriately, showing non-challant attitude in managing student discipline among others. The reason could be because of communication gap in some of the public secondary schools in the State. Manafa et al. (2021) observed that some secondary school principals create the communication gap which build mistrust, increase absenteeism, reduce morale and induce bad interpersonal relationship. Poor communication triggers misunderstanding and unclear instructions which could adversely affect the commitment of public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Okafor et al. (2020) observed that the principals fail to openly communicate to teachers and hardly listen to their needs. This background prompted the researchers to investigate principals' communication styles as predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The researchers observed that some teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State are not committed to their job. Their show of lack of seriousness in form of constant late



coming to school, leaving before school dismissal, using school time to run petty trading, inability to complete their scheme of work, inability to deliver to manage the classrooms assigned to them properly among others is clear evidence of their lack of commitment towards their job. The problem that necessitated this study is posed as a question which is: Could the teachers lack of committed to their job be due to poor motivation, inadequate infrastructure in the school, work overload, family and environmental issues, communication gap, poor students learning attitude among other factors. The cases of ill -timed communication from the principal seems to contribute to issues such as confusion, frustration, mistrust and a sense of futility among teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Some principals fail to respond to information or problems that teachers brought to their knowledge. Some speak rudely to teachers, blame them for their mistake and demand respects from them in secondary schools in the state. It is based on this backdrop that this study examined principals' communication styles as predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to examine if principals' communication and decision-making styles predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in

Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. verify the extent principals' assertive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. determine the extent principals' aggressive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. examine the extent principals' passive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does principals' assertive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent does principals' aggressive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. To what extent does principals' passive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principals' assertive communication style is not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' aggressive communication style is not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Principals' passive communication style is not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Method

Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 5,552 respondents made up of 266 principals and 5,286 teachers in the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State.

The sample for this study consisted of 660 respondents made up of 135 principals and 528 teachers drawn using multi stage sampling technique. The sample comprised 10% of teachers and 50% of principals in the 266 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The instruments for data collection were two sets of questionnaires titled: "Communication Styles Questionnaire (CSQ)" and "Teachers' Job Commitment Scale (TJCS)".

The first instrument was titled: "Communication Styles Questionnaire (CSQ)" was adapted from Agarwal (2019). The instrument measured Communication Styles among principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument

contained two sections A and B. Section A sought background data of the respondents (teachers) such as gender and age. Section B contains 30 items spread in three clusters (1-3) to elicit information on communication styles of principals. Clusters 1-3 which focused on assertive communication style contains 10 items, Cluster 2 contains 10 items on aggressive communication style and Cluster 3 which centre on passive communication style contains 10. Those items are placed on a four-point rating of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The second instrument TJCS was adapted from Oredein and Ebo (2021). This instrument measured job commitment among teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument contains 24 items which measure job commitment of teachers. The items of the instrument are placed on a four-point rating of Always (A), Seldom (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N), weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The principals rated the job commitment of teachers in their various schools, while teachers rated the communication styles of their various principals. The average score of the teachers in each school was used for data analysis.

The face validity of the instruments were determined by three experts who are lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations, two specialists in Educational Management and a specialist in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of

Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus.

Construct validity of the instruments was explored using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) approach. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value, which is used as a measure of sampling adequacy was obtained as 0.788 which is greater than 0.500 and it indicated that the number of the respondents in the study was large enough to perform the PCA.

Cronbach alpha procedure was used to determine the internal consistency of the

instruments. The average reliability index was 0.80 and the instruments were considered reliable for this study. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Duly filled questionnaires were retrieved. 629 copies of questionnaire were duly filled and retrieved out of 660 copies distributed. Data collected from the respondents through the questionnaires were used for analysis. The research questions were analyzed using simple regression and simple regression was also used to test the null hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

## Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does principals' assertive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
1	0.871	0.758	0.756	0.25233	Strong

**Table 1:** The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Assertive Communication Style as a Predictor of Teachers' Job Commitment

Table 1 revealed that the correlation coefficient of simple regression analysis between assertive communication style and teachers' job commitment is 0.871 with a coefficient of determination of 0.758. This shows that 75.8 % variation in teachers' job commitment can be attributed to assertive communication style of principals. The regression Coefficient  $r$  of 0.871 indicated that principals' assertive communication style is a strong predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.



**Research Question 2:** To what extent does principals' aggressive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 2:** The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Aggressive Communication Style as a Predictor of Teachers' Job Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
1	0.341	0.117	0.109	0.48242	Weak

Result presented in Table 2 revealed that correlation coefficient of simple regression analysis between aggressive communication style and teachers' job commitment is 0.341 with a coefficient of determination of 117. This shows that 11.7% variation in teachers' job commitment can be attributed to aggressive communication style of principals. The regression Coefficient  $r$  of 0.341 indicated that principals' aggressive communication style is a weak predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does principals' passive communication style predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 3:** The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Passive Communication Style as a Predictor of Teachers' Job Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
1	0.686	0.470	0.466	0.37368	Moderate

As shown in Table 3, correlation coefficient of simple regression analysis between passive communication style and teachers' job commitment is 0.686 with a coefficient of determination of 0.470. This shows that 47% variation in teachers' job commitment can be attributed to passive communication style of principals. The regression Coefficient  $r$  of 0.686 indicated that principals' passive communication style is a moderate predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## Testing of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** Principals' assertive communication style is not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 4:** The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Assertive Communication Style as a Significant Predictor of Teachers' Job Commitment

Predictor	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P-value	Remark
Assertive Style	0.871	0.758	392.166	0.000	*S

\*Significant

As shown in Table 4, the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.871 while the R<sup>2</sup> is 0.758 showing that assertive communication style of principals makes 575.8% contribution to the variance in teachers' job commitment. The  $F(1/127) = 392.166$  and the  $p$ -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the  $p$ -value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, principals' assertive communication style is a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Hypothesis 2:** Principals' aggressive communication style is not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 5:** The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Aggressive Communication Style as a Significant Predictor of Teachers' Job Commitment

Predictor	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P-value	Remark
Aggressive Style	0.341	0.117	16.490	0.000	*S

\*Significant

As shown in Table 5, the simple regression coefficient (R) is .341 while the R<sup>2</sup> is 0.117 showing that aggressive communication style of principals makes 11.7% contribution to the variance in teachers' job commitment. The  $F(1/127) = 16.490$  and the  $p$ -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the  $p$ -value is less than the stipulated .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, principals' aggressive communication style is a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Hypothesis 3:** Principals' passive communication style is not a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 6:** The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Passive Communication Style as a Significant Predictor of Teachers' Job Commitment

Predictor	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P-value	Remark
Passive Style	0.686	0.470	110.816	0.000	*S

\*Significant

Table 6 revealed that the simple regression coefficient (R) of .686 is obtained, while the R<sup>2</sup> is 0.470 showing that passive communication style of principals makes 47% contribution to the variance in teachers' job commitment. The  $F(1/127) = 110.816$  and the  $p$ -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the  $p$ -value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, principals' passive communication style is a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Discussion of the Findings

The results of the study were discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

#### Principals' Assertive Communication Style and Teachers' Job Commitment

The finding of the study revealed that principals' assertive communication style is a strong predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This agreed with the finding of Okotoni and Akinwale (2019) which revealed that there was strong positive relationship between assertive communication style and teachers' job commitment. The agreement in the findings could be attributed to the fact that the studies were conducted in secondary schools in the same country. Assertive

communication style which promotes and respect the feelings and opinions of teachers boost their self-esteem that strongly predicts their job commitment.

It was indicated that principals' assertive communication style is a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This supported the finding of Companero et al. (2018) which revealed that there was significant relationship between assertive communication style and job commitment of employees. This affirmed the finding of Okotoni and Akinwale (2019) which showed that there was relationship between assertive communication style and teachers' job commitment. The similarity in secondary schools across Nigeria in which the studies

were conducted could account for the agreement in findings. The use of assertive communication style make principals to earn respect from staff and also build mutual relationship that could be connected with the significant predictor of teachers' job commitment.

### **Principals' Aggressive Communication Style and Teachers' Job Commitment**

The result of the study showed that principals' aggressive communication style is a weak predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This disagreed with the finding of Brown et al. (2019) which indicated that there is low negative relationship between aggressive communication style and job commitment of employees. The disagreement in findings could be connected with the geographical locations of the two studies. The hostility, blame and asking questions in a harsh manner which are associated with aggressive communication style could account for the weak predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools. The aggressive communication style lessens trust and mutual respect which could be associated with the weak predictor of teachers' job commitment. The principals who apply aggressive communication style could easily intimidate and embarrass teachers in such as way that result in weak job commitment.

Further result indicated principals' aggressive communication style is a significant predictor of teachers' job

commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This refuted the finding of Companero et al. (2018) which showed that there was significant relationship between aggressive communication style and job commitment of employees. This disagreed with the finding of Brown et al. (2019) which indicated that there was no significant relationship between aggressive communication style and job commitment of employees. The disagreement in findings could be connected to dissimilarities in time span and geographical locations. The aggressive communication style installs fear and discipline in teachers that could explain the significant predictor with their job commitment.

### **Principals' Passive Communication Style and Teachers' Job Commitment**

The finding of the study revealed that principals' passive communication style is a moderate predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This disagreed with the finding of Brown et al. (2019) which indicated that there is weak negative relationship between passive communication style and job commitment of employees. The disagreement in the findings could be connected to difference in time span and geographical locations. Passive communication style exhibited by principals who fail to stand for their right and express their role expectation may be unvalued by teachers which lead to the moderate predictor

of teachers' job commitment. The principals who apply passive style apologize unnecessarily which lead to worthlessness and disrespect by teachers and thereby result in moderate job commitment.

It was also found out that principals' passive communication style is a significant predictor of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This contradicted the finding of Brown et al. (2019) which showed that there was no significant relationship between passive communication style and job commitment of employees. The difference in time span that have brought about changes in the styles of passive communication could explain the difference in the findings.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that principals' communication and decision-making styles are positive and significant predictors of teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Teachers who perceive their principals to be fair, respectful and unbiased in their communication and decision-making styles are bound to display desirable attitude towards work by being dedicated and committed to their duties. The communication styles allow teachers to remain informed of the tasks ahead and decision-making styles improves the quality of decision made, which positively shape their job commitment. Communication is

necessary for the promotion of the job commitment of teachers.

Conclusively, Principals who use assertive communication disseminate information without hurting the feeling of teachers which boost their morale towards high job commitment. Principals who apply aggressive communication style resort to loud and angry tone in passing information which makes teachers feel disrespected and thereby reduce their job commitment. Principals who apply passive communication style often remain silence, struggles to express their expectations and stand by their convictions which make teachers to behave any how they desire in the workplace.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should apply more of assertive communication style by expressing their feelings comfortably without denying the rights of staff to improve the job commitment of teachers.
2. Post Primary School Service Commission should organize seminars for principals to enable them acquire skills of controlling their use of aggressive communication style by having regard for the ideas and feelings of teachers which could motivate them to exhibit high job commitment.
3. School principals should control the use of passive communication style by



sharing their real opinions of school affairs and ultimately stand up for

themselves to earn the right of teachers, thereby improve their job commitment.

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