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PRINCIPALS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS: A PREDICTOR OF TEACHERS' MORALE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

[*]Busuyi Francis OLOWO and Oyinkansola Arin OGUNGBEMI

Department of Educational Management, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
[*]Correspondence Author: bfolowo@oauife.edu.ng; +2347038611108

Abstract

An integral part of school leadership that greatly affects teachers' morale and school performances overall is communication. The study looked at principals' communication skills, especially clarity, openness, and feedback, to see how they influenced the morale of public secondary school teachers in the Southwestern part of Nigeria. The researchers employed a descriptive research design selecting a total of 975 respondents made up of 75 principals and 900 teachers chosen through multistage sampling from the six Southwestern states in Nigeria. For data collection, the researchers used two self-designed instruments. Data were analyzed using regression statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that principal communication clarity ($F=38.624$, $p<0.05$), communication openness ($F=45.922$, $p<0.05$), and feedback strategies ($F=52.318$, $p<0.05$) significantly influenced teachers' morale. Among the predictors, feedback strategies contributed mostly ($\beta=0.234$), followed by openness ($\beta=0.198$) and clarity ($\beta=0.177$). The study concluded that principals' communication skills have a substantial and positive influence on teachers' morale. It was recommended that school administrators and educational policymakers should strengthen principals' communication training, particularly in clarity, feedback, and openness, to enhance teachers morale.

Keywords: Teachers' Morale, Principals' communication Skills, Openness, Clarity, Feedback

Introduction

The ability to communicate effectively is regarded as one of the foundational elements of good educational leadership. For public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria, the capabilities of school leaders to communicate have a great impact on the teaching staff's morale, which in turn shapes the students' academic performance. The communication skills consist of the ability to give information clearly, to be a good listener, and to create a space for dialogue that is open and honest. In such situations, school leaders with communication skills can clearly present the school's vision, give feedback that is helpful, and solve problems promptly. This kind of openness and quickness to respond creates a good school atmosphere and increases teacher happiness (Dairo et al., 2024).

Morale, according to Olowo (2023), is simply described as "a feeling of enthusiasm and willingness," and it can greatly influence the motivation of teachers towards their performance. Olowo (2023) also remarked that the teacher's role is very important in education, and the teacher's morale may have a positive or negative impact on all aspects of the educational process since it is the factor that boosts their performance. Thus, teachers' morale denotes their eagerness, loyalty, and general disposition towards their profession. High morale is related to a greater level of job satisfaction, a lower turnover rate, and better student outcomes. On the other hand, poor morale can result in teacher withdrawal, lack of attendance, and lower effectiveness in teaching. The connection between principals' communication abilities and teachers' morale is interdependent. Those heads of schools, who are good at communicating, would surely create such an atmosphere that would nurture teacher morale. On the other hand, teachers with such morale would invite open communication with their principals and thus a positive feedback loop would be created which would benefit the whole school community (Anyaeji, 2023).

Southwestern Nigeria's educational sector is composed of various cultural backgrounds, different levels of resources, and various stakeholder expectations. This is a situation where principals' communication skills are of utmost importance as they help to assess the problem, get the stakeholders' expectations aligned, and also make sure that the teachers feel appreciated and are given support. The investigation on the communication skills of principals that will elevate and arouse the teachers' morale as they interact is vital, hence the study

Statement of the Problem

Besides being the administrator, the principal in a public secondary school in Southwestern Nigeria is also in charge of the most human resource management, where communication is a crucial element. Although the role of the principal has been acknowledged as the key to a school's success, still the majority of the studies in this field have pointed out the fact that there are still issues in terms of communication between school leaders and teachers which are negatively affecting the process. Unsuccessful communication may cause the misunderstandings, the teacher morale to become low, the job satisfaction to drop, and ultimately the schools to be less productive (Ehineni, 2017; Bolanle, 2013). The morale of the teachers is the main factor for the sustainability of their motivation, commitment, and hence, the quality of teaching. Nonetheless, various reports have pointed out that teachers working in public schools are faced with low morale which is mainly caused by such reasons as lack of recognition, poor feedback mechanisms, and being left out of the decision-making process (Dairo, 2024; Eziuzo, 2025). This low morale has a negative impact, not only on their teaching performance but also on the overall academic achievement of the students.

Although the subject of school leadership and management has been dealt with in studies, still there is a dearth of empirical research that specifically investigates the link between communication skills of principals and teachers' morale in public secondary schools of Southwestern Nigeria. The lack of effective communication strategies may result in principals not being able to sufficiently inspire, motivate, or engage the teachers which then will trigger problems in the attainment of the school's objectives and the improvement of educational outcomes. As such, it is of utmost importance to carry out a study that will unravel the impact of the principal's communication skills on the morale of the teacher, trace the communication gaps, and suggest the needed interventions for the enhancement of the teacher's satisfaction and school performance. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the influence of principals' communication skills on teachers' morale in public secondary schools in that specific area.

Research Objectives

1. To measure how clarity of principal communication significantly influence teachers morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria is not significant.
2. To evaluate if principal communication openness significantly influence teacher morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.
3. To investigate the extent of which the feedback strategies of principals significantly influence teachers' morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.
4. To point out the significant influence of the principal's communication (clarity, honesty, feedback) on the teachers' morale.

Hypotheses

H01: The clarity of principal communication do not significantly influence teachers morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria is not significant.

H02: The principal communication openness do not significantly influence teacher morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

H03: The feedback strategies of principals do not significantly influence teachers' morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

H04: There is no significant influence of the principal's communication (clarity, honesty, feedback) on the teachers' morale.

Literature Review

Teachers' Morale

Morale among educators is defined as the degree of vitality, delight, and loyalty that teachers display to their jobs. It is the opposite of low morale engaged with disengagement and poor performance and is thus a factor affecting teachers' capacity to influence students positively (Ehineni, 2017). There are several factors that play a role in determining the level of teachers' morale, such as the amount of work they have, salary, the balance between work and personal life, and opportunities for professional development. Teachers, who perceive their workload as

within reasonable limits and that they possess the required support to accomplish their tasks, are more inclined to declare greater job satisfaction than others (Olatunji & Olatunji, 2022).

According to Ayodele et al. (2015), money is the primary attraction, or alternatively, other incentives or motivational techniques that can prompt a worker to give his or her best in any organisation. Ayodele et al. (2015) focused on the issue of teachers' knowledge concerning fringe benefits and its correlation with their performance. The same researcher also pointed out a link between teachers' knowledge of financial and non-financial incentives given by the government and their attitude towards these benefits. This finding is consistent with Vashistha and Khan's (2020) study in which they examined the role of fringe benefits in determining job satisfaction levels among faculty members in both public and private universities. The outcomes demonstrated a positive and strong correlation between the granting of fringe benefits and job satisfaction levels of faculty members.

Monetary compensations or salaries are considered very important, however, teachers are expecting to get fringe benefits from the school that they are working at, which would help them to a certain extent in the matter of wages and salaries and the same benefits would also be a strategy for retention of the teachers (Nwakaego, Obona & Andeshi, 2024). Fringe benefits play an important part in boosting employee job satisfaction and performance. These benefits are considered as incentives offered by the employers besides regular salaries or wages to keep the employees motivated and make them productive in the workplace (Ayodele et al., 2015; Vashistha & Khan, 2020). Ikegbusi and Eziamaka (2018) revealed in their study that teachers who receive periodic recognition for their contributions and who are allowed to participate in workshops and professional development programs are likely to consider themselves appreciated and energized. The researcher pointed out that the provision of career advancement and skill development opportunities not only increases teachers' job satisfaction but also strengthens their capacity to cope with the continuously evolving educational demands. Wang and Chen (2023) stated that teachers in well-endowed schools, where salaries and perks are competitive, expressed considerably higher job satisfaction levels than their counterparts in less-funded schools. Job security, including tenure policies and stable contracts, was also recognized as an essential factor in the cultivation of teachers' satisfaction.

Muhammad, Aja, Zahara Ssali, Lubega, and Otitoju (2025) argue that teacher satisfaction is a major factor influencing the performance of students in government secondary schools in Uganda. The current salary packages do not mainly satisfy the needs of teachers. So in effect, the morale of the teachers is at its lowest, thus making them less effective in their teaching. The measures taken in the education sector will depend on this very aspect of teacher payment, their job satisfaction, and student performance.

Negative aspects among which the lack of job satisfaction is one, come along with the low job satisfaction itself, these being: more absenteeism of teachers, burnout of teachers, and, more importantly, high turnover rates. Dissatisfied teachers may be the one feeling that they are pushed backward, the result of which is their performance being lowered and involvement in the school community being reduced (Nguyen & Dang, 2022). Such teachers are more likely to quit their jobs or take sick leaves very often, which will disrupt the learning process and put extra pressure on educational systems, especially in areas with a shortage of teachers. The instability and not being able to count on the same staff will undermine the quality of education that these children will receive, thereby making the situation even worse for schools and neighborhoods (Bryant & Li, 2023). On the opposite side, poor pay is often referred to as the main source of discontent. When teachers feel that their salaries do not match the amount of time, energy, and expertise they put into their work, it leads to feelings of being undervalued and being annoyed (Shah & Khurshid, 2023). In the same manner, lack of accommodation for the teachers' professional development can cripple their growth and contribute to their dissatisfaction because teachers are more likely to be motivated and satisfied when they are given skill enhancement and career advancement opportunities (Ikegbusi & Eziamaka, 2018).

Principals' Communication Skills

Communication is a key aspect of effective school leadership. The communication skill of principals consists of being clear, open, giving feedback, and being able to involve teachers in dialogue and decision-making (Bolanle, 2013). Communication that is effective allows principals to identify school goals, policies, and expectations in a very clear way that positively influences the school climate (Dairo, 2024). Manafa (2018) argued that the communication skills include speaking properly to people while keeping good eye contact, making use of presentations with the choice of language, and listening effectively, writing clearly with brief and easy-to-

understand language, being self-assured, friendly, and understanding, and asking questions, being open-minded, and presenting one's thoughts in an appropriate manner. Ukaigwe and Jack (2020) emphasized that communication skills are crucial because the staff members need to be aware of what they are supposed to do, what the performance standards are for them, and how much time they have to complete any task assigned to them.

Unambiguous communication eliminates all doubts, brings teacher actions in line with school objectives, and at the same time misunderstandings (Eziuzo, 2025). Odu-Dikoro (2023) defines verbal communication skills as the ability to communicate effectively by means of speech. It encompasses the clear articulation of thoughts and ideas, active listening, and appropriate responding in conversation or presentation. Moreover, verbal communication skills require that the right language, tone, and nonverbal signals such as body language and eye contact are used. Bello and Oredein (2023) maintained that the verbal communication skills are the communicators' power to express themselves clearly and audibly in such a way that the receiver can comprehend the conveyed message. Malama (2021) characterizes listening communication skill as a capacity of a person who might be a speaker to actively listen to the speaker and decode the message rightly. Listening skills allow principals to grasp the staff's views in the school. Effective listening facilitates the development of interpersonal relations, cooperation, understanding, and tranquility among all in the school.

Egboka and Igbokwe (2022) observed that feedback skill is a communication process involving both parties trying to take the best part from the other's remarks. It is a matter of mutual comprehension, recognizing the validity of one another's opinions, and learning through each other's experiences. Feedback communication skills refer to the capability of the communicator to react properly to the message being communicated. According to Akinnubi et al. (2024), feedback is important as it informs the sender that the message was received and comprehended. It also confirms what the staff are doing right in the school as a strong reinforcement. Feedback takes place when the receiver replies to the sender's message and sends it back to the sender. Some teachers depend on feedback from principals on a certain matter for performing necessary actions. Principals who promote dialogue and remain attentive to teachers' concerns cultivate trust and a feeling of inclusion (Ndalu, 2022). Constructive feedback assists the teachers in refining their professional practices, thereby increasing their confidence and commitment to the school's mission (Akporehe & Asiyai, 2023).

Nevertheless, Manafa (2018) claimed that the deficient employing of communication skills at secondary schools in Anambra State has been a major issue for the management and the staff of those schools. According to Manafa, most principals of those schools do not want to hear the staff members out and do not possess the skill to use clear, brief, and simple words while communicating, thus causing confusion, stress, and disputes in the schools. The communication skills that the researchers are most interested in because of their impact on the teachers' behavior towards the organization are verbal, listening, and feedback communication skills.

The Influence of Principals' Communication Skills on Teachers' Morale

Communication skills of the principals have a positive effect on the morale of the teachers. Ehineni (2017) has shown that the teachers that had the principals as effective communicators reported higher morale and job satisfaction in the Southwest of Nigeria. A study conducted by Dairo, Bamikole, and Afolabi (2024) suggest that the communication skills of the principal had an impact on the academic performance of secondary school students in the southwestern region of Nigeria. Further, the researchers Okpara, Okaforcha, and Ohamobi (2025) reported that in Anambra State public secondary schools, there is positive and significant relationship between the competence of the principals and the commitment of the teachers to their jobs. The study by Tende, Suobite, and Okpor (2025) indicated that principals' communication skills and leadership skills were very closely related to the performance of the teachers in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Besides, there was an interaction between the skills of the principals in communicating, leading and the teachers' performance which was of a larger magnitude.

The research of Akporehe and Asiyai (2023) reported that the principals in secondary schools in Owa communities possess the necessary soft skills of communicating, relating to people, and the technical knowledge for effective management of the school. Teachers' job performance in the schools is rated moderate. There exists a strong connection between the principals' soft skills of communicating, relating, and technical knowledge, and the performance of the teachers. Eziuzo (2025) stated that the strategies used by the principals to communicate

brought about enhancement in the confidence, morale, and performance of the teachers in the classroom. Ndalu (2022) pointed out that the principals' communication which was open and participatory improved the relationships between the teachers and the principals and thus contributed to the creation of a school climate that was positive and had high morale. Obilor (2020) undertook a research project with the aim of discovering the impact that teachers' communication skills have on the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools located in Rivers State. The findings of the research indicated that speaking, listening, the right attitude, gestures, and facial expressions are the components of the teachers' communication skills that have a great impact on the academic performance of the students. The findings of Chike, Agu, and Ekweogu (2024) show that assertive communication style is a strong predictor of teachers' job commitment which accounting for as much as 75.8% of the variation in commitment. Similarly, Sani et al. (2025) established that principals' communication skills (such as listening, feedback, and friendliness) have a strong positive relationship with teachers' job performance.

However, most of the reviewed studies focused on job performance rather than teachers' morale. For instance, Sani et al. (2025), Dairo et al. (2024), Eziuzo (2025) emphasized performance. Likewise, there is a geographical gap. The study by Chike et al. (2024) was conducted in Anambra State (South-East Nigeria), while Sani et al. (2025) focused on Kwali Area Council in the Federal Capital Territory, and Obilor (2020) focused on public senior secondary schools located in Rivers State. Although Dairo et al. (2024) covered Southwest Nigeria, its focus was on student achievement rather than teacher-related outcomes. Therefore, there is limited empirical evidence specifically addressing teachers' morale in Southwestern Nigeria, creating a contextual gap that the present study aims to fill.

Conceptual Model of the Study

The conceptual model represents the interaction of the communication skills of principals, namely communication clarity, openness, and feedback strategies, with the teachers' morale in public secondary schools located in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. Effective feedback strategies (clear, timely, and supportive responses) help teachers improve and feel valued, which boosts morale. Communication openness creates a safe environment where teachers can share ideas and concerns, increasing trust and job satisfaction. Communication clarity ensures that instructions and expectations are well understood, reducing confusion and enhancing confidence. Conclusively, the model implies that when principals communicate effectively in these three ways lead to higher teacher morale. On the other hand, deficiencies in any of these communication components may result in low morale, disengagement, and reduced productivity among teachers.

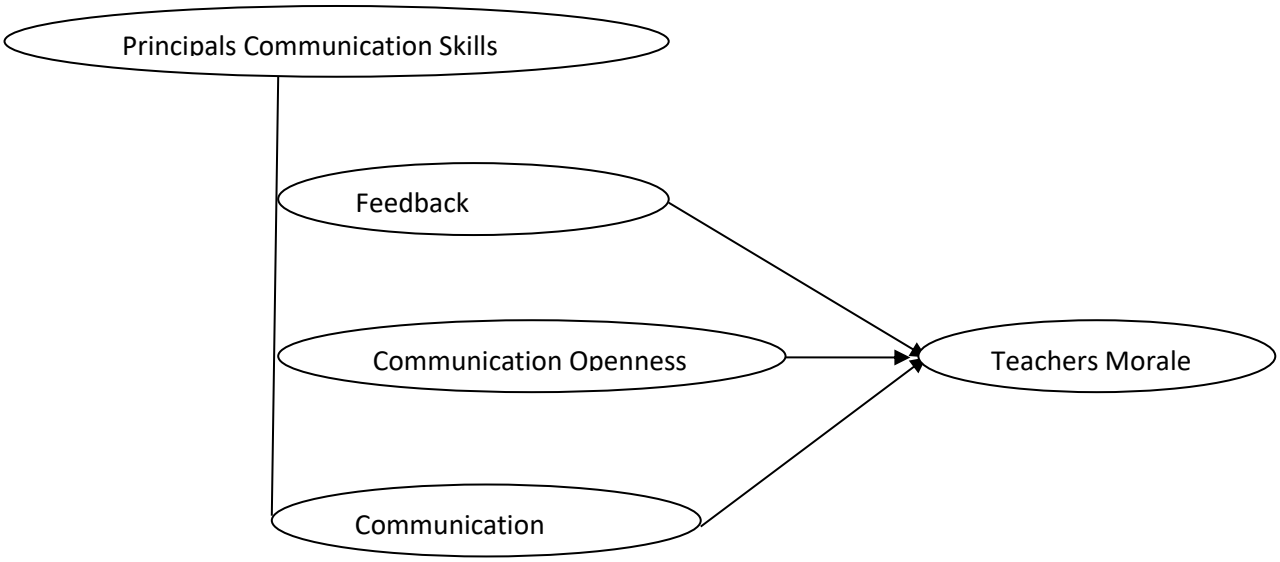


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Principals' Communication Skills and Teachers' Morale.

Note: The arrows show the positive and significant impact of each communication dimension on teachers' morale.

Theoretical Framework

The study builds on both Human Relations Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory.

The Human Relations Theory, associated with Mayo (1945), is the most central theory for this study. It emphasizes that employees' performance and morale are strongly influenced by social interactions, communication, and emotional well-being rather than just economic incentives. Principals' communication skills (feedback strategies, openness, and clarity) align directly with this theory. When principals communicate effectively, they create a supportive and inclusive work environment where teachers feel valued and respected. This sense of belonging enhances teachers' morale, motivation, and productivity. Poor communication, on the other hand, can lead to dissatisfaction and low morale.

Transformational Leadership Theory was developed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), this theory highlights how leaders inspire and motivate followers through effective communication, vision sharing, and individualized support. This study aligns directly with the topic. Principals who communicate clearly, provide constructive feedback, and maintain openness exhibit transformational leadership behaviours. These practices inspire teachers, build trust, and enhance commitment, thereby improving morale. The theory supports the idea that communication is a core leadership tool for influencing teachers' attitudes.

Among the two theories, Human Relations Theory serves as the primary framework because it directly emphasizes communication and employee morale. However, Transformational Leadership Theory provides complementary explanations by showing how communication inspires, motivates, and builds reciprocal relationships. Together, these theories justify the model by demonstrating that principals' communication skills are not just administrative tools but powerful predictors of teachers' morale.

Methodology

A descriptive research design was adopted in the study. This design gives researchers the possibility of measuring the variables' relationships in terms of both strength and direction without affecting those variables (Akorede et al., 2022). The study population was 56,232, which consisted of 2,596 school principals and 53,636 teachers in all the 2,596 public secondary schools in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. The area covered by this research included the six states: Ondo, Oyo, Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti, and Osun.

The sample of the research study was made up of a total of 75 principals and 900 teachers, thus, summing up to 975 respondents. The samples from the population were selected through a multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, the six states in southwestern Nigeria were stratified into three groups based on their socio-demographic characteristics such as language, culture, and religion, occupation, etc., through the use of a stratified sampling technique. Hence, Lagos/Ogun; Oyo/Osun; and Ekiti/Ondo were formed. A simple random sampling technique was then used to select one state from each of the pairs. After that, the selection of a senatorial district in each state was done using the simple random sampling technique, followed by the selection of five Local Government Areas (L.G.As.) from the senatorial district picked from each state through another round of simple random sampling. Each L.G.A. was then subjected to purposive sampling for the selection of five secondary schools, where the principals and teachers had already been working for more than two years. The advantages of this practice are that not only would the teachers be familiar with more aspects of the school than the newer ones, but also, they would be able to share their knowledge with the students. Based on the numbers of teachers in each state, the proportional sampling technique selected 13, 12, and 11 teachers from secondary schools in Ogun, Ekiti, and Osun states, respectively. These were then supplemented with the principals of the chosen secondary schools. Sets of self-designed questionnaires were used as data collection instruments for the study.

The questionnaires labelled "Teachers' Morale Questionnaire" (TMQ) and "Principals Communication Skills Questionnaire" (PCSQ). The items were organized on a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument was scrutinized by specialists in the Educational Management Department for its content validity. A pilot study was conducted in which 30 participants from schools not included in the sample area completed the questionnaires. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability, with a minimum acceptable coefficient of 0.79 (0.78 coefficient for principals and 80 coefficient for teachers). The principal of each school was asked for permission, and the questionnaires were then hand-delivered to the selected principals and teachers, who were allowed a considerable amount of time for their completion. Out of the 900 questionnaires given to teachers, 805

were returned, and out of the 75 given to principals, 74 were returned. Altogether, 879 questionnaires returned. At the 0.05 significance level, regression was employed to analyze the four research hypotheses of the study.

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Findings

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One H_{01}: There is no significant influence of the clarity of principal communication on teachers' morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Principal Communication Clarity on Teachers' Morale

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	0.312	0.097	0.096	0.072	38.624	0.000

The analysis of the data revealed that communication clarity of the principal is the most important factor in determining the teachers' morale ($F = 38.624$, $p < 0.05$). The adjusted R^2 of 0.097 suggests that the principal communication clarity accounted for almost 9.7% of the variations in the teachers' morale. The null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value (0.000) is lower than the significance level of 0.05. Communication clarity significantly predicts teachers' morale, although the effect size is relatively small. Therefore, the clarity of principal communication may play role in uplifting teachers' morale in public secondary schools located in the Southwestern region of Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two H_{02}: The principal's communication openness does not significantly influence teachers' morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Principal Communication Openness on Teachers' Morale

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	0.338	0.114	0.113	0.080	45.922	0.000

As shown in Table 2, another aspect of the principal's communication that significantly influenced teachers' morale was openness ($F = 45.922$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that 11.4% of the fluctuation in morale among teachers was due to the degree of openness in principal communication. The null hypothesis is rejected as the p-value (0.000) is less than the α of 0.05. Communication openness significantly influences teachers' morale and has a slightly stronger effect than communication clarity. Thus, this can be concluded that the communication openness of principals has a significant impact on the morale of teachers in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three (H_{03}): The feedback strategies of principals do not significantly influence teachers' morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of Principal Feedback Strategies on Teachers' Morale

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	0.354	0.125	0.124	0.078	52.318	0.000

The result showed that the feedback strategies of communication exhibited by the principals positively affected the morale of teachers in the school ($F = 52.318$, $p < 0.05$). The feedback methods of the principals accounted for about 12.5% of the changes in the morale of teachers. Since p (0.000) < 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Feedback strategies have the strongest predictive influence among the three variables, though the overall effect remains modest. Thus, it could be said that the principal's effective feedback strategies significantly raise the morale of teachers in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis Four (H_{04}): There is no significant joint influence of the principal's communication dimensions (clarity, openness, and feedback) on teachers' morale in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

Table 4: Multiple Regression of Principal Communication Dimensions on Teachers' Morale

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	16.827	1.146	—	14.685	0.000
Communication Clarity	0.275	0.064	0.177	4.291	0.000
Communication Openness	0.318	0.071	0.198	4.479	0.000
Feedback Strategies	0.401	0.069	0.234	5.812	0.000

As shown on the Table 4, the feedback strategies of communication displayed by the principals (β= .234, P<0.05) were the ones that most significantly and positively affected teachers' morale. This means that the skill of principals in providing precise and timely feedback not only uplifts but also raises the spirits of the teacher. The use of the openness strategy of communication by the principals (β= 0.198, P<0.05) was rated as the second strongest factor contributing to teachers' morale. Lastly, the leading strategy of clarity (β=.023, P<0.05), which was practiced by the principals, was determined to be the third factor that contributed to teachers' morale. To sum up, each of the communication components (clarity, openness, and feedback) made a significant, but different, contribution to predicting teachers' morale.

Discussion of Findings

The research examined how the communication abilities of the principal (clarity, openness, and feedback) affected the morale of the teachers in public secondary schools of Southwestern Nigeria. The results of the primary hypothesis indicated that the principal's communication clarity was a major factor in positively affecting teachers' morale. The communication clarity significantly predicts teachers' morale, which means that when the principal communicates those things teachers understand, they become more likely to feel motivated, with confidence, and to have a purpose in their work. This conclusion is consistent with Dairo (2024), who pointed out that principals using a clear, concise, and consistent mode of communication will not only reduce confusion but also boost the teachers' sense of being directed. Eziuzo (2025) also shared similar views when stating that lack of clarity in communication from school leaders often results in misunderstandings and consequently low morale among teachers. It also goes to support Ehineni (2017), who stated that when school leadership communicates objectives in simple terms, it leads to an increase in teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. In essence, the clarity of communication creates an environment of openness, trust, and flow of information in the running of the school, which then makes the teachers be more motivated and willing to give their best.

The outcome of the second hypothesis indicated that the communication openness of principals had a major impact on the morale of teachers. Communication openness significantly influences teachers' morale, this may imply that when principals encourage open discussions, involve the staff in decision-making, and share necessary information with them, a more positive and inclusive school climate is created. This finding aligns with Ndalu (2022) who maintains that through open communication, teachers feel they belong and are involved in the decision-making process of the school. When teachers see that their views are acknowledged and appreciated, the morale and organizational commitment among them rise to a considerable extent. The finding also corroborates the research of Okpara et al. (2025) that found that communication openness leads to teacher trust, lowers disputes, and increases cooperation in schools. Moreover, communication openness contributes to the creation of psychological safety—teachers feel free to share their opinions or worries without fearing to be targeted (Akorede et al., 2021). This openness is a source of shared responsibility, excitement, and better teaching effectiveness.

The third hypothesis pointed out that the methods of giving feedback used by principals had a considerable positive effect on the teachers' morale. The feedback strategies have the strongest predictive influence of teachers' morale, and this made it the principal communication dimension with the most influence. This result echoes Akporehe and Asiyai (2023), who maintained that efficient feedback systems are requisite for the growing up of teachers' professional confidence and the feeling of success. Likewise, Egboka and Igbokwe (2022) defined feedback as a two-way communication process that assists teachers in evaluating their performance, rectifying their errors, and rewarding them for their efforts. Feedback not only reinforces the good behaviors but also makes the teacher-principal relationship stronger by showing that the principal considers the teachers' work important. Constructive feedback—when given in a nurturing and prompt manner—fuels self-improvement, motivation, and

maintaining a positive morale. In contrast, lack of feedback or harsh criticism may lead to the teachers' discouragement, loss of motivation, and emotional separation from the school. Thus, feedback continues to be a very effective communication method for the maintenance of high teacher morale and performance.

The fourth hypothesis indicated a very strong combined impact of communication clarity, openness, and feedback on teachers' morale. The predictor variables were feedback strategies that received the highest standardized beta value ($\beta = 0.234$), communication openness ($\beta = 0.198$), and communication clarity ($\beta = 0.177$) respectively. This implies teachers' morale is mainly influenced by the quality of feedback provided by principals, which is the strongest influence among all aspects of communication. This finding concurred with Dairo (2024) Tende, Suobite, and Okpor (2025) studies.

Conclusion

This research investigated how the communication skills of principals (clarity, openness, and feedback) affected the morale of teachers in public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria. It was found that the very clear communication, openness in sharing information and providing constructive feedback of the school principals resulted in the teachers being higher in motivation, job satisfaction, and professional commitment. Among these three aspects, the feedback strategies had the strongest impact, then closeness and clarity. Teachers' morale may be therefore enhanced to a maximum degree when they are given feedback that is regular, supportive, and timely from their school heads. The results indicate that communication which is efficient is not only a skill of administration, but also a leadership quality that is important for the school to be effective. Principals who practice communication effectively build up trust, partnerships, and emotional ties in their schools, all of which are needed to keep teacher morale up and the school successful overall. Thus, the communication efficiency of the principals is one the major factors deciding the morale of the teachers in secondary schools of the public sector.

Recommendations

Recommendations for improving teachers' spirits and enhancing communication skills of principals are as follows:

1. The Ministry of Education along with the Teaching Service Commission should implement a plan of organizing regular communication workshops and other professionals' development for school principals with the focus on clarity, openness, and feedback. This will not only ensure principals' competence in staff and organizational communication but also raise their proficiency level.
2. A formal and informal feedback loop such as appraisal meetings, suggestion boxes, and open-door policies should be instituted so that there is ongoing effective communication between management and teachers. The feedback should be constructive, timely, supportive, and goal-oriented.
3. School administrators should welcome teacher input on 'ideas', 'concerns', and 'innovations' by creating a climate of openness. This participative approach does not only improve teachers' morale by giving them a sense of belonging but also contributes to even better collaboration and problem-solving.
4. Principals should be selected, trained, and evaluated with their communication skills being a part of the assessment process. Educational policies in every state and at the federal level must acknowledge proficient communication as one of the essential qualities of a leader in school management.
5. The principal should create good communication by showing empathy, being transparent, and respecting the teachers' opinions. The factors of positive interpersonal relationships are trust, motivation, and emotional well-being among the staff.

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