EXTENT OF PRINCIPALS' UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES FOR ENHANCING COMMUNICATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract
The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of principals' utilization of social networking sites for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 257 Principals in the 257 public secondary schools in Anambra State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample 178 principals for the study. Data collection was done using structured questionnaire of 13 items, which was validated by experts. Cronbach alpha was used for the reliability test and coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.75 were obtained for parts A and B respectively and overall reliability coefficient of 0.77. Out of 178 copies of the instrument distributed, 169 representing 95% return rate were dully filled and retrieved. Data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed among others that there was high extent of principals utilization of Whatsapp for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Ministry of Education should train principals through workshops and seminars on the use of social networking sites for enhancing communication in school.

Keywords: Principals, Social Networking Sites, Whatsapp, Facebook, Communication

Introduction

Technological advancement has resulted to the development of various social networking sites that bring individuals together for interaction and exchange of ideas in most fields of lives such as education, entertainment, and commerce. Ehibudu and Tusii-ma (2017) pointed out that the evolution of internet technology has led to its use as the best medium for communication, whereby, two-third of the world's internet population visit social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as communication and connection tool. Arguing in the same line, Maqableh, Lama, Walaa, Masa'deh, Khatib and Karajeh (2015) stressed that social Network Sites (SNSs) have attracted millions of internet users, who have integrated these sites in their daily lives routines.

Social networking sites are internet-based forum or applications that facilitates the creation, storage, sharing and exchange of files, pictures, videos, audio and other form of information. In the same vein, Ikwuka, Egwu, Onimisi and Obumneke-Okeke (2018) defined social networking sites as modern communication channels through which people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of interest. In the view of Abdulahi, Samadi and Gharleghi (2014); Boyd and Ellison cited in Yeboah and Ewur (2014), social network sites are web based services that enable individuals to construct a semi-profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share connection with. Social network sites are internet application that allows users to interact, share ideas, express their feelings, disclose personnel information and data which include; picture, and videos at a very increasing high rate and speed (Egenti & Ebenebe, 2018).These social networking sites include; WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, MySpace, Instagram, Wechat, and YouTube among others.

Social networking sites could be applied by principals sending messages, announcing or informing parents and teachers of forthcoming events in the school through social networking sites .Arguing in the same line, Sheninger (2014) asserted that principals could utilize these social networks to communicate; collaborate; acquire resources; elicit feedback; get support; and share ideas, data, strategies, and information with other principals. In the same vein, Ferriter and Ramsden (2011) stressed that principals who are master communicators can use social networking sites to empower teachers, keep stakeholders informed, and foster relationships.

WhatsApp is one of the most common social networking sites. WhatsApp application works on Nokia Smart Phone, Huawei, Tecno Phones, iPhone, BlackBerry, Windows phone and other Android phones. .This kind of platform allows school administrators to create a profile for discussions and interaction with staff, students and members of the school community. School administrators can send messages on WhatsApp with no charge other than the internet data plan that they already have on their phones. Yeboah and Ewur (2014) asserted that with WhatsApp messenger, communication through mobile phones has become easier, faster and cheaper. Yeboah and Ewur added that an individual can chat with friends and family overseas through WhatsApp without having to incur global SMS charges. Fawzi (2015) pointed out that WhatsApp supports many different message types, from simple text to pictures to audio files and videos, and this application gave one the ability to exchange information or to create a group that supports the social interactions of up to group members.

Facebook is one of the social networking sites that enables one send text, picture, audio and video. Ogbe (2014) asserted that Facebook is also one of the two most frequented websites in the entire internet. It routinely trades places with Google as the most visited web service and by the company's estimates, it now has over 800 million active users (Golam, 2015). Furthermore, Golam pointed out that Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles,

upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Principals can create a Facebook profile for school and add teachers, parents and other stakeholders in order to exchange information, updates and photos, share video and receive notifications on various administrative issues in the school. Through Facebook, school principals could posts updates about calendar events to parents and teachers. In the same vein, Rdouan, Abdellatif and Raddouane (2013) pointed out that school administrators can view the files uploaded by others, enrich them with tags, and share their thoughts through comments so as to enhance communication.

Communication is the act of creating, expressing and transmitting information, ideas, feelings or opinions from one person to another or group of people. It is the instrument that aid planning, decision making, organizing and controlling of various programmes in school. It may be extremely difficult or impossible to control and organizie personnel in school without effective communication. Akinnubi, Gbadeyan, Fashiku and Kayode (2012) pointed out that communication is essential for understanding roles and assignments; planning and carrying out activities; coordinating approaches with students; providing information to teachers on students' progress and behaviours; and building a positive relationship with students, teachers and other staff. It is through communication that principal informs staff of their various duties, when and how to perform them. Ejeh and Okoro (2016) asserted that through communication, management can establish mutual understanding and exchange of ideas, information, experience and innovation for peaceful co-existence, conflict resolution, cumulative development, progress and well - being of the organizational structure. Today, most secondary school principals in Anambra State seem to have Whatsapp and Facebook account. These social networking sites appear not to be used by secondary school principals in Anambra State for personal purposes. These could be the reason that principals engage in face-to-face communication, invite parents for minor discussion that could be sent through social networks and regularly organize staff meeting for exchange of information. Some secondary school in Anambra State still type an info memo and give to students hopingthat the parents would actually see the message. These messages may not reach parents for various reasons. This constitute the problem of this study which is set to ascertain the extent of principals' utilization of social networking sites for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State.

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the extent of principals' utilization of social networking sites for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, this study sought to find out the extent of:

1. Principals' utilization of WhatsApp for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' utilization of Facebook for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do principals utilize Whatsapp for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent do principals utilize Facebook for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was used in this study because the researchers collected data from given population of the study to ascertain the extent of principals' utilization of social networking sites for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 257 principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State (source: department of Research and statistics, post primary schools service commission, (PPSSC), Awka, June, 2018). Multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample 178 principals for the study.

The instrument for data collection was the researchers-developed questionnaire titled "Principals' Utilization of Social Networking Sites Questionnaire (PUSNSQ)''. The questionnaire was divided into two parts namely A and B. Part 'A' is made up of 8 items on principals utilization of Whatsapp and Part 'B' contains 5 principals utilization of Facebook. PUSNSQ contains 13 items structured on four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted at 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation; these experts are from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. These experts validated the instrument in relation to the appropriateness and coverage of the items, wordings and clarity of the instructions. The experts' useful suggestions led to some modifications especially in reframing some double barrel items before producing the final version of the instrument.

To determine the reliability of 'PUSNSQ' a pilot study was carried out in Enugu State. The instrument was administered to 15 principals in secondary schools in Enugu State. The data obtained were correlated using crombach alpha with a reliability coefficient of 0.78 and 0.75for parts A and B respectively and overall reliability coefficient of 0.77. They were considered reliable in line with Nworgu (2015) who stated that any instrument with a reliability coefficient of 0.60 and above is considered reliable. The instrument was administered by the researchers together with the help of four research assistants that are teachers in Anambra State.

Out of the 178 copies of PUSNSQ distributed 168 were retrieved duly filled, making a total of 95 percent return rate. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The mean value was used to

answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. In answering the research questions, mean rating that fall between: 4.00-3.50, 3.49-250, 2.49-1.50, and 1.49-below were taken to indicate VHE, HE, LE and VLE respectively

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals utilize Whatsapp for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: *Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of principals on their extent of utilization of Whatsapp for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State*

S/N	**Items**	**(N = 169)**		
		Mean	SD	Remark
1	Using of voice message for discussing academic matter with staff	2.45	1.12	Low Extent
2	Using video calls for disseminating information to staff	2.41	0.93	Low Extent
3	Chatting with staff on important academic issues	2.65	1.11	High Extent
4	Creating online group for exchange of information among members of staff	2.73	1.21	High Extent
5	Reminding staff of important events	2.54	1.05	High Extent
6	Inviting parents of important meeting	2.48	1.12	Low Extent
7	Briefing parents of their awards performance	2.55	1.17	High Extent
8	Providing instant update to the parent and teacher on the happenings in the school.	2.50	1.18	High Extent
	Mean of Means'	**2.54**	**1.11**	**High Extent**

Result presented on Table 1 showed that the mean scores of principals for items 1, 2 and 6 are with the range 1.50-2.49 indicating low extent of utilization of the items. On the other hand, Principals mean scores for items 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are within the range of 2.50-3.49 indicating high extent of principals utilization of the items. The pooled standard deviation scoreis 1.11 which indicates convergence of their responses implying that their responses are homogenous. The mean of means score of 2.54 is within the range of 2.50-3.49 indicating there was high extent of principals utilization of WhatsApp for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals utilize Facebook for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: *Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of principals on their extent of utilization of facebook for enhancing communication in secondary schools in*

S/N	**Items**	**(N = 169)**		
		Mean	SD	Remark
9	Creating profile for the school for updating of information	2.54	1.08	High Extent
10	Sharing video of important events of the school	2.38	1.14	Low Extent
11	Posting important pictures for parents to be aware of development projects in school	2.41	1.06	Low Extent
12	Inviting members of the public to attend programmes of the school	2.51	1.12	High Extent
13	Sending direct messages to stakeholders about the progress of the school	2.30	1.21	Low Extent
	Mean of Means'	**2.43**	**1.12**	**Low Extent**

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Table 2 shows that the mean scores of principals for all items except items 9 and 12 were between 1.50 and 2.49 indicating that there was low extent of principals' utilization for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State. The pooled standard deviation scoreis 1.12 which indicates convergence of their responses implying that their responses are homogenous. The mean of means score of 2.43 is within the range of 1.50-2.49 indicating there was low extent of principals utilization of Facebook for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion

It was found out that there was high extent of principals utilization of Whatsapp for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding is supported by Egoza and Yaffa (2017) who reported that Whatsapp is being used as an easy and accessible form of communication in school. This finding is not surprising owing to the fact that sending of message through Whatsapp is free, provided the principals is subscribed to the data or internet service. This implies that principals to high extent; chat with staff on important academic issues, create online

group for exchange of information among members of staff, remind staff of important events, briefing parents of their awards performance and providing instant update to the parent and teacher on the happenings in the school through WhatsApp.

The finding of the study shows that the extent of principals utilization of Facebook for enhancing communication in secondary schools in Anambra State was low. This contradicts the finding of Kasey and Green (2016) who reported that principals frequently use Facebook for disseminating information. This contradiction could be as a result of difference in geographical location. This finding shows that principals to a low extent; share video of important events of the school, post important pictures for parents to be aware of development projects in school and send direct messages to stakeholders about the progress of the school through Facebook. Sending messages through Facebook cost more data than through Whatsapp. This may account for low extent of principals utilization of Facebook for enhancing communication in school.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that secondary school principals in Anambra State have not adequately utilized social networking sites for enhancing communication. This gap is more observable in the area of utilization of Facebook. However, principals to a high extent utilize WhatsApp for enhancing communication in school.

Recommendations

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

1. The Ministry of Education should mandate all school principals to submit their various social networking sites for exchanging of vital information. The Ministry of Education should properly monitor those sites to ensure that they are properly utilized for the purposes of sharing important videos or pictures of events in school.
2. Non-governmental and community members through symposium should enlighten principals on the use of Facebook for enhancing communication in school.

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