

# Management Communication Patterns and Staff Job Performance in Osun State Primary Schools, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated management communication patterns and staff job performance in Osun State primary schools with a view to determining various management communication patterns. It also investigated levels of job performance; and determined the influence of management communication patterns on staff job performance. This study employed the use of descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised school managers and the primary schools' staff members in Osun State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 36 school managers (head teachers) from the three senatorial districts in the State, and the sample consisted of 216 staff members (teaching and non-teaching). Two researchers-constructed instruments tagged: Management Communication Patterns and Staff Job Performance (MCPSJPQ) and Interview Guide (IGMCPSJP) were used to gather data. Data collected were analyzed using percentage count and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings showed that upward communication pattern was accepted and mostly used in schools. The hypothesis also showed a significant relationship between communication patterns and staff job performance. The study concluded that upward and downward communication patterns greatly influenced staff job performance in Osun State primary schools. It was consequently recommended that school managers/headteachers should carefully choose their communication patterns in order to achieve optimum staff job performance and there should be more encouragement for horizontal/lateral patterns of communication.

**Keywords:** Communication, Patterns of staff communication, Staff job performance.

## Introduction/Background to the study

Every organization's task is mostly performed by both the human resources and machinery. The educational system needs those that can exploit the human, physical and material resources available to achieve set goals and objectives. Staff, in school settings, comprises academic and non-teaching members who are expected to maintain orderliness, keeping accurate records of what really happened and always inform the managers of observed disruptive behaviors. The entire staff of the school must be sensitized on recognizing signs of anti-social behaviour while they are also employed to provide consistent form of guidelines and rules regarding students' activities. They display diligent and impartial behaviour when exercising their roles. These roles can only be ensured by the school head if he knows how to manage communication properly to achieve results.

The concept of staff job performance has become a fundamental tool for the management and its team in improving the performances of employees in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Teachers' job performance is seen from the point of view of their ability to undertake tasks related to discipline and teaching at minimum pecuniary and non-pecuniary costs. These tasks include recordkeeping, guidance, teaching, and communications within staff; with students; and with headteacher. It occurs when an employer, through development, accentuates, strengthens, amplifies and places more work on employees with the aim of making it more interesting, meaningful and increasing job challenges and responsibilities.

School managers are those who are involved in overseeing day-to-day both formal and informal operations in the school settings. While carrying out the directives of the educational board, they are generally responsible for providing recommendations for the ministry of education through the zonal and local inspectors of education. The headmaster/mistress is primarily in the affairs of directing, coordinating and monitoring the staff members and the students in building community relationships.

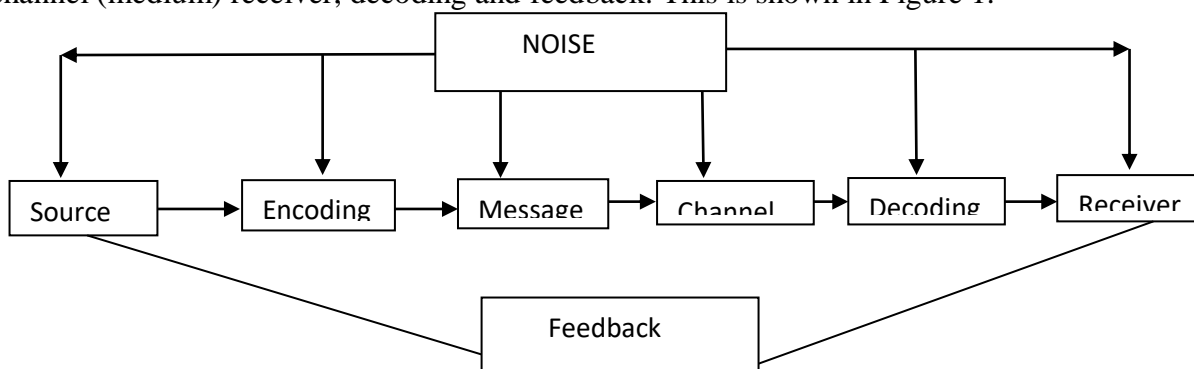
Teachers in schools are responsible for providing the students they serve with direct information and instructions towards teaching and learning. Teachers are expected to use the stipulated and approved curriculum of study, syllabus and scheme of work coupled with subject diaries to meet the set objectives. Counsellors, school librarian (if available) and other school support staff members like food vendor, security, school bus driver who are employed as non-teaching staff help the school to function on a day-to-day basis. Staff management in school environment involves management of both subordinate and teaching staff members, school children and the school plants. Often, large organizations have many of these functions performed by a specialist department, such as administration office, deputy or assistant head and maintenance but all managers are still required to supervise and administer the activities and ensure the well-being of the staff that report to them. Staff managers include people who lead revenue consuming departments, for example, accounting clerks. They serve the managers of the schools in a manner or support capacity by providing them with information and advice but they are limited to the scope or schedule of their duties in the school.

Communication has not been properly managed by the headteachers in many Nigerian primary schools. This accounts for the record of crises in many schools. There is therefore a need to interrogate the patterns of communication in Nigeria's elementary schools. There is a need for interaction and understanding of management-employee relations, which may bring about increased performance of all parties involved in the communication process or chain, an act which Banihashemi, (2011) also describes as a medium, a means to an end performance. In most school activities, communication plays an important role. How the aims of schooling are understood and communicated, becomes a prerequisite for how activities and perspectives are valued to lead to further actions. This implies that communication can be a way to analyse and understand processes in schools and a process to influence others' actions and understanding.

Meanwhile, Fashiku (2016) carried out research to determine the relationship between leaders' communication styles and lecturers job performance in Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria. The results of the investigation revealed the significant relationship existing between leaders' democratic communication pattern and lecturers' job performance. Elechi and Kalu (2019) investigated the influence of the patterns adopted by principals on the efficiency of teachers in Okigwe Education Zone. They concluded that the teachers' efficiency was a function of communication pattern.

Using a narrative research design involving five class teachers in one of the elementary schools in Cibitung Sub-district, Sofia et al (2023), the qualitative approach led to the fact that the dose of communication pattern impacted on teachers' task performance level.

Adebayo (2017) analysed the process of communication elements as sender (source), encoding, message, channel (medium) receiver, decoding and feedback. This is shown in Figure 1.



**Fig: 1: Diagrammatic expression of communication process.** Source: Fashiku (2016) – Leaders' Communication Pattern

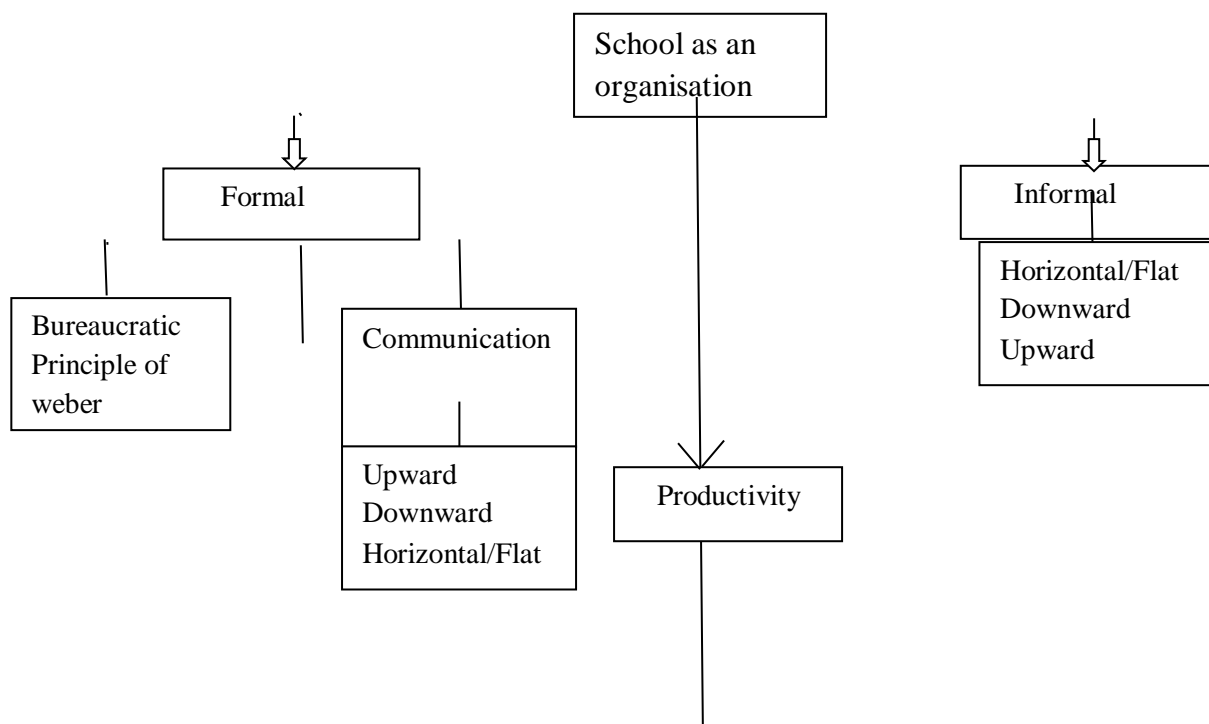
In an organization, according to Banihashemi (2011), communication is a basic element in organizational structure and functioning. It is the key mechanism for achieving integration and coordination of the activities of specialized units at different levels in the organization. A communicative leadership is especially important in organizations with values that are non-negotiable (Ericsson, 2020). Communication therefore also reveals what is in focus in the organization's everyday work. Organizational communication can be horizontal, upward, and downward. Horizontal (lateral) communication aims at linking related tasks, work units and divisions in the organization. The importance of horizontal communication increases with task specialization and communicator encoding receiver message and mediums decode feedback, feedback conceiving medium of encoding and reception decoding understating changes in noise. The need for lateral or horizontal communication was first stressed by Fayol (1949), when he suggested a 'gang plank' between similar hierarchical positions. Palistha (2018) stressed types of communication patterns as Circle pattern, Chain pattern, Y pattern, and Wheel pattern. Though the focus was not on the school system in the paper, as the school is both informal and formal, other organizations share some communication patterns' features with the school.

### Communication in School Settings

Communication in school management and administration can never be toiled with. It plays a very important role. The effectiveness of a school administrator and his ability to achieve the school objectives depend to a large extent on the quality and the medium of communication that takes place within the school, the administrator and the staff members. Communication is like a map representing features of a territory but it cannot be comprehensive, there is therefore a need to be selective, knowing why we are using it and what we hope to gain from it. Research shows that schools, teaching and non-teaching staff in a school and the management team make the difference (Leithwood, 2016).

The study was hinged on two relevant theories: Theory of Management by Max Weber and Theory of Human Relations Approach of Dubin Robert. Max Weber's theory focused on an ideal bureaucracy where everyone is respected and given equal opportunity, and work responsibilities are clearly divided by each team's area of expertise. Weber's ideas of bureaucracy favour efficiency, uniformity and a clear distribution of power

Figure 1 captures the school as a bureaucracy:



**Fig. 1.2.** Max Weber's Bureaucracy: Order of communication

## Human Relations Theory

Another theory that is applicable to this study is Human Relations approach of Dubin Robert (Omodan, 2020) which stated that communication is a tool that can be used by the management to buy cooperation from subordinates when the managers of school provide subordinates departmental information and allow the subordinate at all levels to engage in open communication about their departmental issues. Human relations perspective on organizational management notes that the work will be easier for managers if they could first make decisions and have their subordinates to follow accordingly. Employees are better productive in terms of their job performances whenever they are satisfied. Therefore, every individual employee wants to have a voice and provide input in their work.

## Statement of the Problem

Performance in any formal organization is partially dependent on the mode and system of communication within and among the superordinate and subordinate staff. Among these inputs are the teaching and non-teaching staff members. Members of staff in primary schools are expected to interact through the communication patterns as downward, upward and horizontal. The choice of appropriate communication patterns by the school which rest on the leadership and followership in the schools. The style involved may have a great impact and influences the depth at which staff members perform their statutory job. Poor job performance of staff members (both teaching and non-teaching) in public primary schools in Nigeria has become a common occurrence. Researchers blamed poor job performance on several factors, chief of which may be communication patterns, with little or no investigation. There is therefore a need to investigate this; hence this study.

## Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the Management communication patterns and staff job performance in public primary schools in Osun State Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- (a) determine various management communication patterns in Osun State primary schools;
- (b) investigate various levels of job performance in Osun State primary schools; and
- (c) determine the influence of management communication patterns on level of staff job performances in Osun State primary schools.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the study. These are

1. What are the existing management communication patterns in public primary schools in Osun State?
2. What are the levels of staff job performance in the study area?

## Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was raised:

There is no significant influence of management communication patterns on staff job performance.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The population for the study comprised 1,277 school managers and their staff (teaching and non-teaching) in Osun

state primary schools. The sample consisted of 36 randomly selected school managers (head teachers) from the three senatorial districts and 216 staff (teaching and non-teaching), two Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from each of the senatorial districts using multi-stage sampling procedure. From each of the six selected LGAs, six primary schools were selected using purposive sampling technique, only non-contiguous schools were selected. Four teachers and two non-teaching staff members were selected from each school using an accidental sampling technique. Two researchers-designed instruments were used for the study. These were Management Communication Patterns and Staff Job Performance (MCPSJP) and an Interview Guide on Management Communication Patterns and Staff Job Performance (IGMCP) for teaching and non-teaching staff members were used to gather the data. These instruments were validated by experts in the Department of Educational Management in the Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University for the face and content validity of the instruments. A test- retest method was used to test the reliability of the instruments and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. The trustworthiness of the interview schedule was equally ensured before the instruments were used. The researcher employed a qualitative and quantitative approach to analyze the data. The descriptive approach involved the use of percentages counts to answer research Questions One and Two while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the hypothesis.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1.** What are the existing management communication patterns in Osun State primary schools?

These items were grouped into upward, downward and horizontal/flat communication patterns.

**Table 1:** Existing communication patterns of the 36 school managers in Osun-State public schools.

Variables	SA%	A%	SD%	D%	Total %
<b>Upward Communication Patterns</b>					
I receive progress reports about the school from my staff regularly	18 (50.0)	16 ( 44.4)	2 (5.6)	-----	100%
I receive feedback from the staff in respect of their job duties and obligation in school	25 (69.4)	10 (27.8)	1 (2.8)	-----	100%
Members of staff usually give information to me concerning the school targets and difficulty	15 (41.7)	18 (50.0)	3 (8.3)	-----	100%
I give opportunity to staff members for regular discussion on students' assessment	7 (19.4)	14 (38.9)	5 (13.9)	10 (27.8)	100%
I receive information about the programme of the school regularly from non- teaching staff in my school	5 (13.9)	16 (44.4)	7 (19.4)	8 (22.2)	100%
I do receive information about the punctuality of students in my school from non- teaching staff members	2 (5.6)	21 (58.3)	10 (27.8)	3 (8.3)	100%
<b>Downward Communication Pattern</b>					
I usually communicate the decision of school management board to the staff members	6 (16.7)	20 (55.6)	7 (19.9)	3 (8.3)	100%
I usually have opportunity to discuss with member of staff about students'	8 (22.2)	21(58.3)	2 (5.6)	5 (13.9)	100%



performance in my school					
<b>Horizontal/ Flat Communication Pattern</b>					
Members of staff respond to calls for meeting regularly to pass information about new development in the school	24(66.7)	9 (25.0)	3 (8.3)	—	100%
Teaching and non -teaching staff members in my school often meet to discuss the programme of the school	3 (8.3)	26 (72.2)	5 (13.9)	2 (5.6)	100%

Source: Field work (2019)

Table 1 shows the major identified communication patterns used by managers in public Osun-State primary schools. It shows 34(94.4%) of the school managers strongly agreed and 2(5.6%) of the respondents disagreed that they received progress reports about the school from their staff members regularly. 26(72%) respondents agreed and 10(28%) respondents disagreed that they usually communicated the decision of the school management board to the staff members about their job. More so, 29(80.5%) of the respondents agreed while 7(19.5%) of the respondents disagreed that teaching and non -teaching staff members in the schools often meet to discuss the programme of the school. The results show the three patterns of communication (upward, downward and horizontal/flat) as being used by the managers in the study area. An upward communication pattern was commonly used by the school managers and administrators in order to achieve greater results.

**Table 2.** Communication Patterns among and within Staff Members (Teaching and Non-Teaching) in sampled schools.

Variables	SA%	A%	SD%	D%	TOTAL %
<b>Upward Communication Pattern</b>					
My Head Master/mistress allows me to discuss my job performance with him or her regularly	15 (6.9)	146 (67.6)	33 (15.3)	22 (10.2)	100%
I always opportune to share information with my Head Master/mistress as preserving my job demands	20 (9.3)	135 (62.5)	54 (25.0)	7 (3.2)	100%
I regularly meet my Head Master/mistress to discuss the program of the school	42 (19.4)	146 (67.6)	18 (8.3)	10 (4.6)	100%
<b>Downward Communication Pattern</b>					
I receive information about the school policy from my Head Master/mistress regularly	93(43.1)	123 (56.9)	—	—	100%
My Head Master/mistress calls for meeting regularly to pass information to the staff members about new development in the school	104 (48.1)	108 (50.0)	4 (1.9)	—	100%

My Head Master/mistress regularly gives information to me concerning the school targets to be met	75 (34.7)	127 (58.8)	14 (6.5)	_____	100%
<b>Horizontal/Flat Communication Pattern</b>					
I do receive information about the punctuality of students in my school from non-teaching staff members	22 (10.2)	104 (48.1)	71 (32.9)	19 (8.8)	100%
Teaching and non-teaching staff members in my school often meet to discuss the program of the school	35 (16.2)	137 (63.2)	39 (18.1)	5 (2.3)	100%

Source: Field work (2019)

Table 3 shows communication patterns among and within 216 teaching and non-teaching staff members in sampled schools. It shows that 216 (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed (when aggregated) that information is received about the school policy and other information from their head master/mistress, while 161(74.5%) of the respondents agreed and 55 (25.5%) disagreed to regularly meet Head master/mistress to discuss the programme of the school. It should be noted that (79.4%) of the respondents agreed and 44(20.4%) of the respondents disagreed that teaching and non-teaching staff members in schools often meet to discuss the programme of the school. Majority of the respondents preferred downward communication between the school management and among the staff members

**Research Question 2:** What are the levels of staff job performance in the study area?

**Table 3.** The level of staff job performance in public primary schools in the study area.

Variables	Very High %	High%	Low %	Very Low%	Total %
My Headmaster/mistress gives me opportunity to discuss my students performance with him/her	36 (16.7)	151 (69.9)	22 (10.2)	7 (3.2)	100%
I was able to manage and control my class room	82 (38.0)	67 (31.0)	58 (26.9)	9 (4.2)	100%
Punctuality of teachers in school determines his/her job performance	52(24.1)	117(54.2)	35 (16.2)	12 (5.6)	100%
Students performance in academic determines staff job performance	67(31.0)	82 (38.0)	52 (24.1)	15 (6.9)	100%
Students performance in extra-curricular activities determines staff job performance	149 (70,0)	40 (18.5)	18 (8.3)	9 (4.2)	100%

Source: *Field work (2019)*

Table 3 shows the level of staff job performance in public primary schools in the study area as the respondents agreed thus: 187(86.6%) indicated high level; 29(13.4%) indicated ‘very low’ since the Head of the school gives the opportunity to discuss students' performances. Not only that, 149 (69%) of the respondents opined ‘high’, while 67(31%) of the respondents indicated ‘very low’ to management of their classroom.

Likewise, 169(78.3%) of the respondents' position was ‘high’, while 47(21.8%) of the respondents indicated ‘very low’ that the punctuality level of teachers in the school determines their job performance. Meanwhile,

149(69%) respondents scored students' performance in academics to determine staff job performance 'high' while 67(31%) respondents considered it low.

More so, respondents considered students' performance in extra-curricular activities to determine staff job performance, 189 (88.5%) high and 27 (12.5%) low respectively.

**Research Hypothesis:** There is no significant influence of management communication patterns on staff job performance.

**Table 4.** The significant influence of management communication patterns and staff job performances in the study area.

Source of variation	Mean $\pm$ SD	Sum of square	df	Mean of square	F ratio	p- value
Upward	2.20 $\pm$ 0.89	18.446	3	6.149	186.33	<0.0001
Downward	1.63 $\pm$ 0.54	10.533	2	5.267	159.54	<0.0001
Horizontal	0.89 $\pm$ 0.32	8.414	5	1.683	51.00	0.005
Measurement of Job performance	1.75 $\pm$ 0.11	0.261	1	0.261	79.42	0.002
Error		8.001	240	0.033		
Total		45.655				

Source: *Field work (2019)*

**Table 4a**

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F ratio	P- value
Upward	18.446	3	6.149	192.16	<0.001
Job Performance	0.261	1	0.621	8.156	<0.002
Residual	8.001	248	0.032		
Total	26.708				

An Upward communication pattern is more efficient and effective tool that influences staff job performance since P- value is <0.05.

**Table 4b**

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F ratio	P- value
Downward	10.533	2	5.267	202.577	<0.0001
Job Performance	0.261	1	0.261	10.08	<0.0001
Residual	6.444	249	0.026		
Total	17.238				



Downward communication pattern is more efficient, an effective tool that influences staff job performance in schools with P- value that is  $<0.05$ .

**Table 4c**

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F ratio	P- value
Horizontal	8.414	5	1.683	56.100	$<0.0001$
Job Performance	0.261	1	0.261	8.7	0.017
Residual	7.001	245	0.03		
Total	15.676				

All of the variables are statistically significant but upward communication is more significant compared to others. Upward are better tools for communication among the management to the staff members.

Table 4 shows that upward and downward communication patterns have significant value which implies that the two communication patterns (upward and downward) were the best, but all communication patterns were very effective. There is a significant influence of management communication patterns on staff job performance. Hypothesis shows significant relationship between communication patterns and staff job performance with upward patterns mean of square 6.149, F-ratio 186.33 and P value  $< 0.0001$  and downward communication pattern mean of square 5.267, F-ratio 159.54 and P value  $< 0.0001$ .

### Discussion of interview results support the answer in Research Questions One, Two and the hypothesis.

To end the analysis and discussion, the researcher presents information on an interview (one-on-one) conducted involving the management team members (19 Head master / head mistress, 14 Assistant head masters/mistress and 04 head of the department of selected primary schools in the study area) were given questionnaire and were interviewed on their perception on influence of management communication patterns and staff job performance and likely suggestions on how they can be improved. One hundred and eighty one teaching staff members and 35 non- teaching staff members responded to the questionnaire. They described the role of communication as the most essential part of the school system, for that is how information is disseminated among teachers, non-teaching staff and students. Communication can help individuals to know the rules and regulations of the school. It would also facilitate the right of everyone to an organization.

In reaction to interview Question Two, all the 216 staff members agreed that sharing ideas with superiors and subordinates may definitely take the organization to a greater height. Likewise, the staff members were of the opinion that the success in school as community depends on how the students performed when evaluated.

The larger percentage of respondents (managers) agreed that staff members were carried along since they are the ones implementing most decisions taken, while 4% disagreed with the opinion.

Managers of education in school were of the opinion that, when the scheme for lessons was changed, the staff members were asked to make copies on their own from the disk given by the Ministry of Education both at the State and from the Federal level. Most of the people interviewed agreed that they moved directly to give information to staff members, writing the information down when needed for reference purposes.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that appropriate management communication patterns should be panacea for sustained and increased productivity of the workforce and organizational performances. Upward and downward communication patterns were in existence in the study area, while channels that were frequently used included oral, telephone, written (memos), and grapevines, with the most useful channel of communication being oral

and written. Internet communication has not been effectively used in public schools in the study area due to the epileptics' power supply and inadequate supply of computers to schools.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. School managers should carefully choose their communication patterns in order to achieve optimum staff job performance.
2. There should be more encouragement for horizontal/lateral patterns of communication.
3. Introduction of computers with other electronic means of communication in the primary school section of education and ICT laboratory and accessories should be provided in schools.
4. Government should provide adequate training for teachers and non-teaching.

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