

**Principals' Communication Competence and Teachers' Attitude to Work in Public Secondary Schools in Oyo State. Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This study examined principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in Public secondary schools in Oyo State. Descriptive survey research design was applied. Path-goal theory of administrations served as a theoretical guide for the study. Two research questions which stated that what is the level of teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state and what is the level of significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state, were raised and two hypotheses which stated that there will be no significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state and there is a significant difference in teachers' attitude to work based on the level of principals' communication competence were raised for the study. Study population consisted of all principals (625) and teachers (14,508) in all public secondary schools in Oyo state. Two hundred and thirty eight (238) principals and three hundred and seventy four (374) teachers were sampled for the study using Cochran's sampling technique. Data were collected using two self-constructed questionnaires titled: Teachers' Attitude towards Work Questionnaire (TAWQ), ( $\alpha = .832$ ) and Principals' Communication Competence Questionnaire (PCCQ), ( $\alpha = .814$ ). Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study's findings showed positive attitude to work among teachers ( $\bar{x} = 2.559$ ); moderate level of principals' communication competency ( $\bar{x} = 2.520$ ) and significant positive relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work ( $r = .269$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) in public secondary schools, Oyo state. The findings reveal that Principals' communication competence and Teachers' attitude to work significantly predict teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools in Oyo state, Nigeria. It was concluded that moderate level of principals' communication competency is responsible for teachers' cognitive, affective and behavioural attitude to work. It was recommended among others that principals should undergo training to improve their communication competency to better the attitude of their teachers.

**Keywords:** Communication Competency, Teachers' Attitude, Work

**Word Count:** 324

## **Introduction**

Teachers' attitudes play a major role in determining the quality of learning outcomes of students. It could determine teachers' behaviour, like or dislike, affection or non-affection, interest and overall favour or disfavour towards their work duties. If their attitude towards their work is good then they will ensure that the quality of their work is good which invariably improve the quality of learning outcomes and vice versa. Attitude which is the tendency of teachers to respond positively, neutrally or negatively towards work (teaching and administration) is therefore crucial to goal attainment of public secondary schools in the Oyo state and the nation at large. However, there is a growing concern about the prevalence of negative attitude of teachers in public secondary schools in Oyo state.

Researches have shown negative attitudes among public secondary school teachers in Oyo state in recent times (Adisa-Oke, 2022). Some of the teachers have little or no affection for the teaching profession and would be willing to leave if they find alternatives. Some of them show lackadaisical behaviours towards their lessons and handling of students within the classroom. A research showed that teachers' acquired skills and attitude competencies from Business Education programme were lower than the required skills and attitude competencies (Aniah&Edeh, 2022). Teacher factors such as attitude was reported to be at a low level in public secondary schools, Oyo state (Lawal, 2021).

The implication of the above reports and findings on negative attitude among teachers is that students may not be properly taught and assessed which could hamper their learning outcomes in both internal and external examinations. As a result, there would be fewer manpower for the nation's economic and industrial sectors which could hugely hinder the economic growth and development in the nation. Given the implications of teachers' negative attitude, it is important to find out what factors may be responsible for these negative attitudes among teachers. Although, previous studies have examined factors such as - incentives, reward system, there are scarcity of studies on predictor such as principals' communication competence. When a principal communicates well, it can significantly boost Teachers' job performance. It was noted that communication helps leaders and groups improve performance in organizations (Nwachukwu, 2021).

Principal is the administrative head who takes charge of daily running of the activities of a public secondary school (Chiomalbezim, 2024). The principal is in charge of organizing, planning

and overseeing the smooth operation and functioning of a secondary school. The principal requires communication competences to effectively administrate the affairs of a secondary school. Communication competency enables the principals to be friendly, open-minded, speak to people in an appropriate way while maintaining eye contact, listen intently, speak clearly and concisely in writing and presenting ideas in an appropriate manner (Oguejiofor, 2023).

In recent years, the influence of principals' communication competence on teachers' lives has become a subject of growing concern, particularly with respect to teachers' attitude. Closely related studies examining the relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' work in Nigeria public secondary schools have showed mixed findings, necessitating a comprehensive investigation into the nuanced dynamics at play. On one hand, studies showed that principals' communication competence positively affect teachers' job performance and commitment *in public secondary schools in Anambra and Lagos states respectively* (Chiomalbezim, 2024). On another hand, studies show low positive and negative significant effect of principals' communication competence on teachers' productivity and job commitment in secondary schools in Delta and Anambra states respectively Ayoro & Onyeike, 2020).

Communication is important, it helps principals to supervise teachers. Effective communication ensure feedback and understanding between principals and teachers (Obilor, 2020). Given the ubiquity of principals' communication competence and its potential impact on teachers' attitude and scarcity of studies on the relationship in public secondary schools in Oyo state, there was a pressing need to contribute to the existing literature by investigating the relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Oyo state, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A critical assessment of the attitude of teachers in public secondary schools in Oyo state, reveals that some of the teachers have negative attitude towards their work. Literature identified that some teachers have poor attitude competencies lower than required standard of the secondary schools and low level of affective, cognitive and behavioural attitudes required for improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools, Oyo state (Adisa-Oke, 2022). This was not so in time past where many teachers had affection, value and positive beliefs towards teaching in the progress of students and the nation. In most schools, communication competence

of principals is a vital component that could influence teachers to work (Akinbode, Aderanti & Olanrewaju, 2023). Principals' communication competence influence how well teachers perform their jobs. Effective communication is crucial for principals to share information, provide supervision to teachers for better performance. School principals need good communication skills, along with classroom management and personal development to supervise effectively (Tende, Suobite & Okpor, 2025). This study showed that principals' communication competence significantly impacts teachers' attitude to work. However, studies are scarce on the influence of this factor (communication competence) on teachers' attitude in Oyo state. This is where this study sought to make a contribution by examining the relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state. The objectives were to:

1. Identify teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state.
2. Ascertain the level of significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state

### **Research Questions**

This study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state?
2. What is the level of significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state?

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state.

### **Significance of the Study**

By examining the influence of principals' communication competence on teachers' attitude to work, the research addresses a critical need for improvement of positive attitude among teachers that allows them to cater for students' diverse academic needs. The findings can contribute to the improvement in principals' communication competencies tailored to teachers' work that ultimately improves their attitude towards their duties. The practical findings provided from this study will inform principals on the level of their communication competence and provide awareness on how the level of their communication competence is affecting teachers' attitude to work, the lapses and key areas in their communication competencies that they should improve upon. The significance of this study also lies in its potential to inform teachers on the level of their attitude towards their work with the aim of ensuring that they improve their attitude as much as they can.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study's scope fundamentally focused on principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state, Nigeria. The variables for this study are one predictor variable and one dependent variable. The predictor variable is principals' communication competence and the dependent variable is teachers' attitude to work. All variables were treated as single variables. This study's geographical scope comprised all registered public secondary schools in Oyo state, Nigeria. The population consisted of all the public secondary school teachers and principals in Oyo state, Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Path-Goal Theory of Administration**

Path-Goal theory of administration was developed by a theorist in 1971. The path-goal theory of leadership is an outcome of Victor Vroom's Expectancy theory, which emphasizes that staff or employees' actions are carried out based on the administrative style and competence of their administration and expected reward to their action. Path-goal theory of administration is a "process in which administrators select specific behaviours and managerial abilities (such as communication skills) that are best suited to the employees' needs and the working environment so that they may best guide the employees through their path in the attainment of their daily work

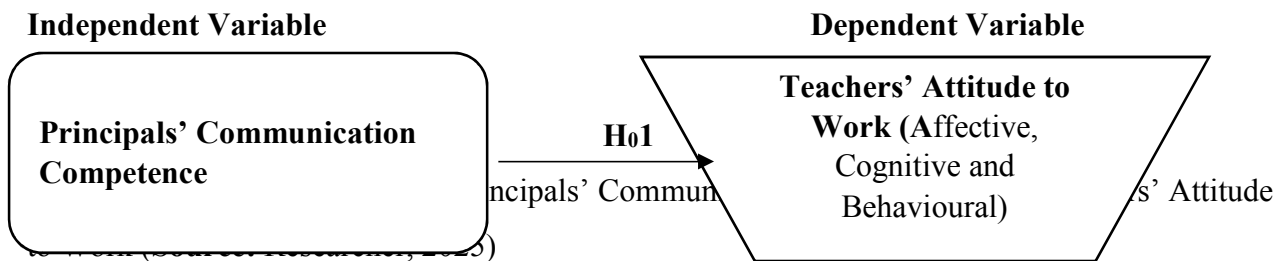
activities (goals and tasks)”. This implies that the administrators have different administrative skills, styles and or behaviours and consider the most appropriate in their administration to suit the employees or staff needs and the working environment so as to attract the best action of the staff in the organization

Four administrative behaviour in line with administrator’s competence were identified to include: directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented. Directive administrative behaviour connects with communication competence in that it is the ability of administrators to properly communicate the organizational goals and expectations to the staff with the view of keeping staff on the know and boosting their attitude to work. Participative administrative behaviour connects with communication competencies in that it is the ability of administrators to give opportunity to staff for consultation on the organizational issues, by allowing the staff to contribute to the organizational decisions (Okekeocha & Gilbert, 2024).

Path-goal theory is a leadership theory developed by Robert House, in 1971. It's a leadership theory that suggests a leader's behavior is contingent upon the satisfaction, motivation and performance of their followers. Leadership is defined as the ability of a leader to persuade, inspire and guide followers to contribute to the success and efficacy of the organization they are a part of. Principals’ communication competence sets clear expectations for everyone under their supervision, maintains complete control over all planning and schedules and requires that teachers follow all protocols and perform to the required expectation (Nurudeen, Margaret & Ifeoma, 2024). Directive leader provides clear direction and expectations thus, teachers with such principals depend on their ideas and opinions on the most effective ways to achieve the school goals with great ease and accuracy. These influences how motivated these teachers are to work. Supportive leader is friendly and shows concern for teachers’ well-being. Participative leader involves teachers in decision-making. Achievement-oriented leader sets challenging goals and expects high performance. Achievement-Oriented principals belief in their teachers talents and expect them to meet demanding standards and objectives. Despite the above, it is believed that a directive leadership style may not be advisable because teachers are prevented from thinking outside their immediate surrounding (Nurudeen, Margaret & Ifeoma, 2024). This theory thus serves as a roadmap for the possible influence of principals’ communication competence on teachers’ attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state.

**Conceptual Model**

A two-construct conceptual model was developed based on the research gaps identified for this study. These constructs or variables considered consisted of principals’ communication competence and teachers’ attitude to work. Principals’ communication competence was considered as the independent variable because it is the cause or stimulus that directly influence the outcome being measured. However, teachers’ attitude to work was considered as the dependent variable because it represented the outcome of the research. Figure 1 showed the illustration of the two-construct conceptual model for this study.



**Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This study’s population consisted of all the public secondary school principals and teachers (male and female) in Oyo State, Nigeria. The principals were six hundred and twenty five (625) while the teachers were fourteen thousand, five hundred and eight (14,508). Proportional Stratified Sampling technique was applied across the public secondary schools in Oyo State. Cochran sampling determination formula was used to sample two hundred and thirty eight (238) principals and three hundred and seventy four (374) teachers. Cochran (1977) developed a formula to calculate a representative sample for proportions as:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2} \dots\dots\dots \text{Formula 1}$$

where,  $n_0$  is the representative sample size,  
 $z$  is the selected critical value of desired confidence level,  
 $p$  is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population,  
 $q = p-1$  and  
 $e$  is the desired level of precision (Cochran, Wiley&Sons,1991).

According to above Cochran formula, the representative sample for two different confidence levels and three levels of precision (significance) is shown in the table 1 below:

**Table 1: Sample size calculated for different confidence level and precision**

Confidence Level	Representative Sample Size (n <sub>0</sub> )		
	e = 0.03	e = 0.05	e = 0.1
95%	1067	384	96
99%	1849	666	166

Source<sup>3</sup>

Since the confidence level and level of precision for this study was 95% and 0.05% respectively, it therefore meant that the representative sample size for this study is 384. This representative sample size (n<sub>0</sub>) was then used to calculate the actual sample size for each population of public secondary schools principals and teachers in Oyo state using the formula below:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}} \dots\dots\dots \text{Formula 2}$$

Here, n = actual sample size,

n<sub>0</sub> is the representative sample size derived from equation (3.1) and

N is the population size (in this case, public secondary schools and principals)

According to the above Cochran’s formula, the sample number of public secondary school principals and teachers are two hundred and thirty eight (238) and three hundred and seventy four (374) respectively.

The instruments that were used to collect data for the study included: “Teachers’ Attitude towards Work Questionnaire (TAWQ)” and Principals’ Communication Competence Questionnaire (PCCQ)”. Face and content validation were used to validate the questionnaires with the help of two assistance researchers in order to ensure that the questionnaires are suitable for what they intend to measure. Test-re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Reliability coefficient values of .832 and .814 were obtained for the TAWQ and PCCQ respectively. These values meant that the instruments were reliable.

The instruments (questionnaires) were produced into several copies in accordance with the sample number of principals (238) and teachers (374) both personally and the aid of one field work assistant. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential (Pearson correlation) statistical methods. Demographic data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. Research questions were answered using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

**Answers to Research Questions**

**Research Question One:** What is the level of teachers’ attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state?

**Table 4: Attitude of Teachers to Work (n = 238)**

S/N	Items (My teachers)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Std. Dev
1	have interest in teaching	13 (5.5%)	110 (46.2%)	99 (41.6%)	16 (6.7%)	2.504	.84
2	derive pleasure from teaching	23 (9.7%)	105 (44.1%)	90 (37.8%)	20 (8.4%)	2.550	.77
3	have value for teaching	47 (19.7%)	132 (55.5%)	26 (10.9%)	33 (13.9%)	2.811	.70
4	believe teaching is easy for them	18 (7.6%)	45 (18.9%)	126 (52.9%)	49 (20.6%)	2.134	.92
5	are involved and participate in all activities during teaching	32 (13.4%)	98 (41.2%)	75 (31.5%)	33 (13.9%)	2.542	.79
6	teach whenever and wherever possible	70 (29.4%)	98 (41.2%)	25 (10.5%)	45 (18.9%)	2.811	.71
<b>Average <math>\bar{x}</math> (Std. Dev.) = 2.559 (0.79)</b>						<b>Decision = Positive</b>	

**Source:** Field Work, 2024

**KEY:** Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1; Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation;  $\bar{x}$  = Mean

**\*Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Strongly Disagree (Highly Negative); 1.751-2.500 = Disagree (Negative); 2.501-3.250 = Agree (Positive); 3.251 - 4.000 = Strongly Agree (Highly Positive)

From table 4, the teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state is positive as shown by the average mean and standard deviation of 2.559 and 0.79 respectively.

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state?

**Table 5: Level of significant relationship between Principals' Communication Competence and teachers' attitude to work (n = 374)**

S/N	Items (My principals)	HL	ML	LL	VLL	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Std. Dev
1	skillfully encourages self-expression, creativity and interaction among staff in the school	58 (15.5%)	134 (35.8%)	120 (32.1%)	62 (16.6%)	2.503	.84
2	knows how to adequately use interpersonal communication, such as making eye contact with others while speaking and meeting in person	82 (21.9%)	106 (28.3%)	108 (28.9%)	78 (20.9%)	2.513	.81
3	knows how to adequately use verbal communication, including voice tone, language, and sound to explain the activities of the school to teachers in clear terms to enable them to work towards the attainment of the school goals	72 (19.3%)	114 (30.5%)	100 (26.7%)	88 (23.5%)	2.455	.89
4	has the ability to utilize active listening and hearing techniques to avoid misunderstandings and improve administration management	102 (27.3%)	119 (31.8%)	62 (16.6%)	91 (24.3%)	2.620	.77
5	skillfully uses non-verbal communication techniques and writing in a clear, precise manner constantly	92 (24.6%)	104 (27.8%)	81 (21.7%)	97 (25.9%)	2.511	.81
<b>Average <math>\bar{x}</math> (Std. Dev.) = 2.520 (0.82)</b>						<b>Decision = Moderate Level</b>	

**Source: Field Work, 2024**

**KEY:** HL = High Level (4), ML = Moderate Level (3), LL = Low Level (2) and VLL = Very Low Level (1); Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

**Threshold:** mean value of 1.000-1.750 = Very Low Level; 1.751-2.500 = Low Level; 2.501-3.250 = Moderate Level and 3.251 to 4.000 = High Level

From table 5, the level of significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state is also moderate as shown by the average mean and standard deviation of 2.520 and 0.82 respectively which implies that the majority of the principals have moderate communication competence in public secondary schools, Oyo State. The findings agree Ololube and Egbezor (2019) assessed principals' managerial competence in Nigerian secondary schools using a survey design. Results showed a moderate level of principals' communication competence. The finding also agree with Okumbe and Okecha (2019) who examined the relationship between principals' administrative effectiveness and teacher performance. Result showed a high positive correlation between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo State.

**Discussion of Findings**

This research examined principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Oyo State. The finding from research question one showed that the teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state is positive. The study agrees with Oyekan (2020) who revealed a moderate level of teachers' effectiveness. This finding disagrees with that of a study which revealed that teacher factors such as attitude was reported to be at a low level (negative) in public secondary schools, Oyo state (Ileuma & Adesope, 2023). This study support Obilor, (2020), who looked at how principals communication competence affect teachers performance. He found that principals' communication competence influence how well teachers perform their jobs. Effective communication is crucial for principals to share information (Tende, Suobite, & Okpor, 2025). This finding also disagrees with that of a study which showed that teachers displayed negative attitudes towards the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their teaching exercise in the classroom in Oyo state (Aderibigbe, Abang & Daniel, 2017). The sharp contrast in both findings could be that the former study was carried out

in all Southwest states including Oyo state in 2017, on special needs students and with reference to ICT whereas this present study was carried out specifically in Oyo state public secondary schools and in the year 2024.

The above result partially agrees with the finding of a study which showed that teachers have positive (good) cognitive but negative (bad) affective and behavioral attitudes towards teaching in Oyo state. The differences in the finding maybe the year in which both studies were carried out. Furthermore, the former study separated teachers' attitude into various indices such as cognitive, affective and behavioural whereas this study treated teachers' attitude as a single variable. The above result completely agrees with that of a study which showed positive attitude of teachers to work in secondary schools in Oyo state. The results revealed that teachers attended class regularly, bother about the achievement of their students, attend class on time, avoid late coming to school and ensured that their lesson notes were prepared on time and ready for signing (Lawal, 2021). The similarities in the study could be that they were both specifically carried out in Oyo state and in public secondary schools.

The finding from research question two showed that the level of significant relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state is moderate. This result however differs from that of a study which revealed high principals' communication competency in public secondary schools in Aguata Education Zone, Anambra state (Okekeocha & Gilbert, 2024). The differences in the study could be that they were both carried out in different states in different geopolitical zones of the nation. This result is supported by that of a study which revealed that principals' interpersonal and communication competence is at a moderate level in Oyo state (Adisa-Oke, 2022). The similarities in the study could be that they were both specifically carried out in Oyo state and in public secondary schools.

The finding from hypothesis one revealed a positive significant correlation or relationship between principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools, Oyo state. This finding aligns with that of a study which revealed a positive and significant relationship between principals' communication competency and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Aguata Education Zone, Anambra State (Okekeocha & Gilbert, 2024). The similarities in the finding could be because of the fact that communication of school heads is believed to affect subordinates' world in any part of the world. Moreover, both studies were carried out in Nigeria. This finding also agrees with that of a work which established that principals'

communication skills have low positive relationship with teachers' productivity in the Mission schools in Delta state (Ayoro & Onyeike, 2020). The similarities in the finding could be because both studies were carried out in Nigeria and thus subjected to similar terrains and educational administration. This result corroborates that of a study which showed that interpersonal competence of principals has a significant relative influence on teachers' attitude towards teaching in public secondary schools in Oyo state (Adisa-Oke, 2022).

### **Conclusion**

Based on the study, it was concluded that there is a strong and positive correlation between principals' communication skills, leadership skills and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools, Oyo State. Though the research has attained its objectives, there were some unpreventable limitations. Due to finance, material resources and time constraints, it was not possible to extend the study to cover both primary and secondary schools but for the limiting factor of time and finance, this study was conducted on secondary school teachers in public secondary schools, Oyo State.

On the basis of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the moderate level of communication competency of principals is responsible for the positive attitude of teachers towards their work in public secondary schools in Oyo State.

### **Implication**

The implications of principals' communication competence and teachers' attitude to work are very important for the effective functioning of a schools in Oyo state, which are stated:

1. When Principals communicate clearly, concisely and in respectful manner, policies and expectations are well understood by teachers. This improve coordination, strengthens trust between principals and teachers.
2. Effective communication from principals such as giving feedback, recognition and guidance always boost teachers' morale and help them to develop positive attitude toward their work.
3. Principals with good communication skills create an environment where teachers feel heard. This leads to higher job satisfaction, reduced frustration and stronger dedication to teaching responsibilities.

4. Good communication encourages collaboration among staff. Teachers are more willing to work as a team, share ideas and support school goals, creating a healthy and productive school environment.
5. When principals communicate expectations and changes effectively, teachers are more likely to accept and implement school policies with a positive attitude, leading to smoother school operation.

### **Recommendation**

The following recommendations are stated:

- i. It is recommended that the government and school management implement policies aimed at enhancing teachers' motivation. These should include seminars, workshops, infringement benefits, competitive salaries and a conducive environment. Such initiatives will promote and encourage teachers' attitude to work in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.
- ii. Since principals' communication competency directly affects the attitude of teachers positively, then all hands must be on deck in ensuring that principals are trained to communicate better with their teachers.
- iii. Principals should establish interpersonal relationship with their teachers to enhance higher positive attitude towards their work among the teachers.
- iv. A body that checkmates the way and manner with which principals communicate with their teachers should be established so that teachers are free to voice their complaints about the way and skill with which their principals communicate to them.

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