



BEYOND INFORMATION SHARING: PRINCIPALS' STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AS A CATALYST FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Chioma Mercyjenny Okeke

Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka.

Department of Educational Management and Policy

Phone contact: 08160419223

Email: mj.okeke@unizik.edu.ng

&

Nnatu Echezona Zimuzo

Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka.

Department of Educational Management and Policy

Phone contact: 08069267348

ez.nnatu@unizik.edu.ng

(Corresponding Author)

ABSTRACT

This study argues that principals' strategic communication is more than the transmission of information. it is a vital leadership tool for effective management of secondary schools. Through purposeful communication, principals strengthen relationships, facilitate informed decision-making, encourage teamwork, resolve problems, and promote the active participation of teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. These practices enhance school effectiveness by aligning stakeholders with the school's vision and goals. The paper examines the shift from traditional communication to digital communication technologies and discusses their implications for school leadership and stakeholder engagement. It also identifies major challenges affecting the implementation of strategic communication in secondary schools and proposes practical strategies for improvement. The paper concludes that principals should promote transparency, accountability, and inclusive communication through appropriate channels and digital platforms to strengthen collaboration, improve school administration, and achieve sustainable educational goals. Strategic communication should therefore be regarded as an indispensable leadership resource for effective management of secondary schools.

Keywords: Principals, Strategic Communication, Catalyst, Effective Management, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Schools are dynamic learning communities where teaching, learning, leadership, and collaboration converge to nurture future generations. Secondary education serves as the bridge between basic and tertiary education, equipping students with the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies required for further education, employment, and responsible citizenship. At the centre of every successful secondary school stands a principal whose leadership shapes the attitudes, relationships, and commitment of teachers, students, parents, and the wider community. Although adequate funding, infrastructure, and sound educational policies contribute to school effectiveness, they cannot substitute for effective communication. Through effective communication, principals inspire confidence, resolve conflicts, strengthen professional relationships, and mobilize stakeholders towards achieving shared educational goals. As Leithwood (2021) emphasized, effective school leaders improve educational outcomes by



building productive relationships, fostering collaboration, and promoting shared commitment among members of the school community.

Principals also promote teamwork, motivate teachers, and strengthen staff commitment towards achieving school goals. These leadership responsibilities cannot be accomplished effectively without strategic leadership communication. Communication is therefore a powerful leadership resource through which principals coordinate school activities, guide decision-making, influence behaviour, and enhance school effectiveness. Against this background, communication emerges as one of the most significant leadership resources through which principals influence people, coordinate school activities, respond to emerging challenges, and achieve educational objectives. However, effective school leadership requires deliberate and well-planned communication rather than routine exchanges of information. Instead of simply transmitting directives and announcements, principals use communication to influence understanding, motivate stakeholders, manage change, encourage participation, and align the efforts of teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community with the school's vision and goals. Such communication improves coordination, enhances decision-making, minimizes conflicts, encourages stakeholder participation, and creates a positive school climate that supports effective teaching and learning.

In today's rapidly changing educational environment, principals are expected to perform responsibilities that extend beyond routine administration. They must lead diverse groups, respond to emerging challenges, embrace technological innovations, and make informed decisions that address the evolving needs of their schools. These responsibilities cannot be effectively accomplished through traditional one-way communication. Instead, they require intentional communication that promotes dialogue, transparency, stakeholder participation, and shared responsibility. While previous studies have examined communication as an important administrative and leadership function, this paper argues that principals' strategic communication should be more explicitly understood as a leadership catalyst for effective school management, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable school improvement in secondary schools.

Therefore, principals' strategic communication serves as a catalyst for effective school management. By communicating with purpose, clarity, and consistency, principals are better positioned to inspire commitment, coordinate school activities, facilitate innovation, strengthen professional relationships, and promote the achievement of educational goals. Consequently, communication should be viewed not merely as an administrative function but as a strategic leadership capability that enhances school effectiveness, strengthens stakeholder engagement, and supports sustainable school improvement. It is the authors' view that strategic communication has become an indispensable leadership competency for contemporary school principals. According to Chukwuma (2026), when communication is intentional, inclusive, and strategically aligned with school goals, it enhances organisational effectiveness, strengthens stakeholder commitment, and creates an environment in which teachers feel valued, students feel heard, parents become genuine partners, and the wider community actively supports school development. Consequently, strategic communication provides the foundation for effective school leadership, continuous school improvement, and the successful achievement of educational goals in secondary schools.



Understanding Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is fundamental to effective school management because it goes beyond the simple transmission of information. It involves intentionally planning communication so that teachers, students, parents, stakeholders, and the wider school community understand, participate in, and support the achievement of educational goals. In doing so, it promotes understanding, trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to the success of the school. More than simply passing messages, strategic communication enables school leaders to build relationships, encourage participation, and cultivate a shared sense of purpose that strengthens the entire school community.

Hallahan et al. (2007) defined strategic communication as “the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission.” They further explained that it involves the development, implementation, and evaluation of communication activities that support organisational objectives. Similarly, Zeffass et al. (2018) described strategic communication as “the purposeful use of communication by an entity to engage in conversations of strategic significance to its goals.” In the school context, strategic communication should not be viewed merely as an administrative function or a means of transmitting information. Rather, it is a vital leadership practice through which principals intentionally engage people, coordinate school activities, strengthen relationships, build trust, and promote collaboration. Effective communication enables principals to create an atmosphere where teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders feel respected, listened to, and actively involved in the life of the school. Such an inclusive approach enhances cooperation, reduces misunderstandings, and strengthens collective responsibility for achieving educational goals.

From this perspective, principals' strategic communication serves as a catalyst for effective school management because it transforms communication into a deliberate leadership strategy. Through careful planning, the appropriate use of communication channels, active stakeholder engagement, and continuous feedback, principals can improve coordination, strengthen organisational relationships, support informed decision-making, and enhance the overall effectiveness and sustainability of school management.

Principals Strategic Communication for Effective School Management

Principals serve as planners, organisers, instructional leaders, and managers of secondary schools who coordinate both human and material resources to achieve educational goals and promote effective school management. As instructional leaders, they supervise teaching and learning, organise school programmes, allocate responsibilities, coordinate staff, and ensure the implementation of educational policies. According to Leithwood (2021), effective school leaders improve educational outcomes by setting clear directions, developing people, and creating organisational conditions that support quality teaching and learning.

These responsibilities cannot be effectively discharged without intentional and well-planned communication. Every decision made by a principal depends on the ability to communicate clearly, listen actively, and build meaningful relationships with members of the school community. Through strategic communication, principals share the school's vision, goals, policies, and expectations in ways that inspire understanding and commitment. They also coordinate teachers and other staff, engage parents and community stakeholders, clarify roles and responsibilities, encourage feedback, and foster



trust, teamwork, and collaboration. When communication is intentional and people-centred, it creates an environment where individuals feel informed, valued, and motivated to contribute to the achievement of shared educational goals.

Effective School Management through Principals' Strategic Communication

Effective school management depends largely on strategic communication because school leaders rely on effective interaction to plan, coordinate, direct, and manage school activities in the pursuit of educational goals. Beyond issuing instructions, principals use communication to foster shared understanding, build trust, strengthen teamwork, and cultivate meaningful relationships across the school community. By communicating intentionally, they inspire commitment, encourage collaboration, and create an environment in which everyone works collectively toward the success of the school. Canatan et al. (2023) emphasized that communication is indispensable for coordinating school activities and promoting organisational effectiveness. Successful school management requires the harmonious coordination of teachers, non-teaching staff, students, parents, and educational authorities. Through staff meetings, consultations, dialogue, digital platforms, and the timely dissemination of information, principals coordinate instructional programmes, administrative responsibilities, and school improvement initiatives. These communication practices ensure that school activities remain aligned with institutional goals while helping every member of the school community understand his or her role in achieving them.

In addition to coordination, this leadership approach supports informed and responsive decision-making through continuous feedback. Canatan et al. (2023) described communication as a reciprocal process in which school leaders not only transmit information but also receive valuable feedback from members of the school community. Such two-way interaction enables them to understand emerging concerns, respond to challenges promptly, make informed decisions, and strengthen relationships founded on trust, cooperation, and mutual respect. When dialogue is encouraged and communication remains open, teachers feel respected and motivated, parents become active partners in their children's education, and students develop greater confidence in school leadership. This people-centred approach nurtures a positive school climate where collaboration, shared responsibility, and continuous improvement can flourish.

Viewed from this perspective, strategic communication is more than an administrative function; it is a vital leadership resource that aligns teachers, parents, students, and the wider school community with the school's vision and goals. By listening actively, communicating intentionally, and encouraging participation, principals enhance coordination, strengthen organisational relationships, increase stakeholder commitment, and improve the overall effectiveness and sustainability of school management.

A Shift from Traditional Communication to Strategic Communication

Traditionally, communication in secondary schools was viewed primarily as the transmission of information, instructions, and directives from principals to teachers and other members of the school community. Although this approach served important administrative purposes, it offered limited opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and shared decision-making. However, the increasing complexity of school management, rapid technological advancement, and rising stakeholder



expectations have transformed this conventional pattern of communication. Contemporary school leadership now demands communication that is intentional, interactive, and relationship-centred rather than merely informational (Opatunde & Oredein, 2023).

Strategic communication is a deliberate, planned, goal-oriented, and participatory process through which principals engage teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community to strengthen relationships, positively influence attitudes, encourage collaboration, and achieve the school's vision and educational objectives (Egbeji, 2026). Egbeji (2026) explained that this transition reflects the evolving role of principals from information providers to transformational leaders who inspire participation, build collective commitment, and promote continuous school improvement. The advancement of digital technologies has further accelerated this transformation. Fox (2021) observed that communication tools such as email, WhatsApp, school websites, social media, and virtual meetings have expanded the ways principals interact with the school community, making communication more timely, inclusive, and responsive. Supporting this view, Simatupang, Marsidin, and Sulastris (2024) argued that effective communication extends beyond delivering messages. Instead, it requires school leaders to adopt communication strategies that promote understanding, strengthen cooperation, encourage stakeholder engagement, and improve school administration. Through this approach, opportunities are created for dialogue, shared problem-solving, and active participation, enabling teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of educational goals. Viewed in this light, principals' strategic communication extends far beyond the transmission of information. It represents a purposeful leadership practice that builds trust, nurtures collaboration, supports informed decision-making, deepens stakeholder engagement, and fosters a positive school climate where teaching and learning can thrive. Consequently, it should be recognised as an indispensable leadership and administrative resource for achieving effective and sustainable management of secondary schools.

Technology as a Communication Transformation for Effective Management in Secondary Schools

Technology has fundamentally transformed communication in secondary schools, shifting it from slow, paper-based, one-way exchanges to fast, interactive, collaborative, and data-driven processes. In contemporary educational settings, principals use digital technologies not only to disseminate information but also to facilitate decision-making, strengthen stakeholder engagement, improve instructional leadership, and enhance overall school management. As a result of this, communication has become more efficient, accessible, timely, and responsive, enabling stronger collaboration among principals, teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community. According to Egbeji (2026), technology has revolutionized school communication by enabling principals to communicate instantly with teachers, students, parents, and external stakeholders through digital platforms such as email, WhatsApp, school portals, SMS, video conferencing, and social media.

This timely communication enhances the coordination of school activities and improves administrative effectiveness. Similarly, Fox (2021) argued that digital communication technologies have strengthened relationships between schools, parents, and communities through websites, email, messaging applications, and social media, thereby increasing parental involvement and reinforcing home-school partnerships. Furthermore, Ahmed (2026) found that principals who effectively utilize digital communication platforms improve teachers' job performance by providing timely instructional guidance, policy updates, and professional development information.



Sani et al. (2025) also observed that digital communication promotes collaboration among principals, teachers, students, and parents by enhancing feedback, teamwork, and collaborative problem-solving. Overall, technology has transformed communication from a routine administrative function into a strategic leadership tool that supports transparency, stakeholder engagement, instructional leadership, collaboration, and effective management of secondary schools. In my view, technology has significantly enhanced principals' communication practices by making information dissemination faster, improving opportunities for timely feedback, supporting collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, reducing administrative delays, and strengthening engagement among teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders. Consequently, principals who effectively integrate digital communication technologies into school administration are better positioned to promote organizational effectiveness and achieve educational goals.

Digital Strategic Communication by Principals for Effective School Management

Digital strategic communication refers to the intentional use of digital technologies and online communication platforms by principals to communicate, collaborate, share information, and engage stakeholders in achieving the school's goals. These platforms include email, WhatsApp groups, school websites, social media, SMS, video conferencing applications, learning management systems, and other digital communication tools. When used strategically, these technologies enhance information dissemination, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and administrative efficiency (Egbeji, 2026).

Egbeji (2026) explained that digital strategic communication has transformed school leadership by enabling principals to communicate quickly and effectively with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders regardless of geographical distance. Fox (2021) also maintained that the effective use of digital communication platforms strengthens relationships with parents and community members, thereby promoting stronger home-school partnerships. Ahmed (2026) further found that strategic communication improves teachers' job performance in post-basic schools through timely communication, constructive feedback, and professional support. Supporting these findings, Kawinzi, Kiilu, and Mulwa (2024) observed that communication strategies supported by digital technologies facilitate the implementation of school strategic plans by improving stakeholder participation and collaboration. Likewise, Kuteli, Waweru, and Okech (2025) reported that principals' use of digital communication platforms strengthens communication with parents, while Sani et al. (2025) established that effective communication competencies among principals contribute to improved teacher performance and students' academic achievement.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that the effective use of digital communication technologies is no longer optional for school leaders but an essential leadership practice for improving coordination, strengthening relationships, encouraging stakeholder participation, and supporting sustainable school improvement. They also suggest that principals who communicate strategically through digital platforms are better positioned to respond to emerging challenges, promote transparency, and build a collaborative school culture that enhances teaching, learning, and organisational effectiveness. Building on these insights, principals should integrate digital platforms such as WhatsApp, school websites, email, social media, and other online communication channels into school administration to facilitate the timely dissemination of information, improve feedback mechanisms, strengthen collaboration, and encourage meaningful stakeholder participation. To maximise these benefits, school leaders should receive



continuous professional development in the effective use of digital communication technologies for educational leadership and school administration.

Equally important is the establishment of clear communication policies to guide the responsible use of digital technologies within schools. These policies may include open-door, confidentiality, official communication, two-way communication, feedback, timely communication, equal access, digital communication, and crisis communication policies that promote responsible and effective information sharing. Adherence to these guidelines promotes transparency, accountability, professionalism, and effective information management while reducing communication-related challenges. Ultimately, digital communication should be used to strengthen trust, teamwork, collaboration, and active participation among teachers, parents, students, and the wider school community in achieving the school's educational goals.

Strategic Communication with Teachers

Ahmed (2026) reported that effective communication between principals and teachers improves teachers' job performance by promoting role clarity, motivation, coordination, and professional commitment. Similarly, Sani et al. (2025) found that principals' communication competencies positively influence teachers' effectiveness and students' academic achievement. Canatan et al. (2023) further explained that communication is a fundamental responsibility of school leaders because it facilitates information sharing, clarifies expectations, and strengthens understanding among members of the school community. Supporting this view, Simatupang et al. (2024) stated that principals' communication strategies contribute to effective school management by ensuring that school objectives, policies, and programmes are clearly communicated and understood.

Collectively, these studies suggest that effective communication with teachers is central to successful school leadership. When principals communicate openly, listen actively, provide timely feedback, and involve teachers in decision-making, they create a supportive professional environment that enhances motivation, collaboration, accountability, and instructional effectiveness. In my view, teachers are more likely to support and implement school policies, contribute innovative ideas, and remain committed to achieving shared educational goals when they feel respected, informed, and genuinely involved in the leadership process. Such collaborative relationships strengthen instructional quality and contribute significantly to the effective and sustainable management of secondary schools.

Beyond facilitating information sharing, strategic communication enables principals to build positive professional relationships with teachers by providing clear direction, encouragement, and constructive feedback. A principal who communicates openly and supportively creates a conducive working environment that encourages innovation, professional growth, and continuous improvement. Furthermore, an open, supportive, and collaborative communication style encourages teachers to express ideas and explore innovative teaching methods. Rusdiyani (2023) noted that when teachers feel heard, respected, and appreciated, they are more willing to adopt creative approaches to teaching. Similarly, effective communication provides moral support, constructive feedback, and recognition that motivate teachers to improve their professional practice.



Creating an inclusive work environment also strengthens teacher creativity and collaboration. Musa et al. (2022) explained that principals who encourage dialogue, collaborative meetings, and the free exchange of ideas create a safe environment where teachers are motivated to contribute innovative solutions to instructional challenges. In addition, supportive communication strengthens teachers' self-confidence. Ismail and Sulaiman (2023) argued that teachers who receive guidance, encouragement, and appreciation from their principals become more confident in experimenting with creative and engaging instructional strategies.

Collectively, these studies suggest that strategic communication with teachers extends beyond the exchange of information. It is a leadership practice that builds trust, strengthens professional relationships, encourages creativity, and supports continuous professional growth. In my view, teachers who feel respected, listened to, and supported are more willing to embrace innovation, collaborate with colleagues, and remain committed to achieving the school's vision and goals. Such a positive professional culture enhances instructional quality and contributes significantly to the effective and sustainable management of secondary schools.

Strategic Communication with Students

Students are central stakeholders in every secondary school; therefore, principals should maintain open, consistent, and purposeful communication with them. Egbeji (2026) stated that effective leadership communication creates opportunities for students to express their views through school assemblies, student leadership meetings, counselling sessions, suggestion boxes, and digital communication platforms. According to the author, such communication enhances students' understanding of school rules, academic expectations, institutional values, and behavioural standards. Similarly, Sani et al. (2025) found that principals' communication competencies positively influence students' academic achievement by creating a supportive learning environment that promotes discipline, motivation, and active participation. The researchers concluded that students who experience open communication with school leaders are more likely to demonstrate positive behaviour, stronger commitment to learning, and greater respect for school policies.

Collectively, these studies indicate that effective communication gives students a sense of belonging and encourages them to become active participants in school life. When principals communicate openly, listen to students' concerns, and explain school expectations clearly, they build mutual respect and strengthen students' commitment to learning and positive behaviour. In my view, students who feel heard, valued, and included are more likely to support school policies, participate actively in learning, and contribute to a peaceful, disciplined, and productive school environment. These outcomes strengthen the effective and sustainable management of secondary schools.

Strategic Communication with Parents

Parents are indispensable partners in the effective management of secondary schools. Kuteli, Waweru, and Okech (2025) reported that principals who communicate strategically with parents promote greater parental involvement in academic programmes and school development activities. The authors further explained that regular and purposeful communication through parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, telephone calls, SMS, WhatsApp platforms, and academic conferences strengthens parents' confidence in the school, enhances home-school collaboration, and improves students' academic performance.



Similarly, Fox (2021) argued that effective communication with parents builds trust in school leadership and establishes sustainable partnerships. The author emphasized that communication should be interactive rather than one-directional, allowing parents to express concerns, provide feedback, and participate in school improvement initiatives.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that strategic communication creates stronger partnerships between schools and families by promoting trust, transparency, and shared responsibility. When principals maintain regular, respectful, and interactive communication with parents, they encourage meaningful parental involvement in students' learning and school development. In my view, parents who feel informed, valued, and genuinely involved become active partners in achieving the school's educational goals. Such collaboration strengthens home-school relationships and contributes significantly to the effective and sustainable management of secondary schools.

Strategic Communication with Stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement is a strategic communication process through which principals deliberately involve individuals and groups who have an interest in the school in planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of school programmes. These stakeholders include teachers, parents, students, community leaders, alumni, school governing boards, religious organisations, government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and development partners. Effective stakeholder engagement strengthens collaboration, builds trust, enhances transparency, and promotes collective responsibility towards achieving school goals (Kawinzi et al., 2024).

According to Kawinzi et al. (2024), stakeholder engagement is an important leadership strategy that enables principals to successfully implement school strategic plans. The authors explained that when principals maintain regular communication with stakeholders through meetings, consultations, feedback sessions, and collaborative decision-making, stakeholders develop a sense of ownership and commitment towards school programmes. Similarly, Fox (2021) argued that principals who engage stakeholders through both face-to-face interactions and digital communication platforms establish stronger relationships with parents and community members. Egbeji (2026) further maintained that leadership communication should extend beyond internal school interactions to include external stakeholders, while Kuteli, Waweru, and Okech (2025) revealed that active stakeholder engagement increases parental participation in academic programmes and strengthens home-school partnerships.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that stakeholder engagement extends beyond the mere exchange of information; it is a relationship-building process that promotes participation, trust, and shared responsibility. In my view, when principals create opportunities for stakeholders to contribute ideas and participate in school development, they foster a sense of belonging, ownership, and commitment that strengthens school improvement efforts.

To maximise stakeholder participation, principals should establish regular engagement forums and adopt both traditional and digital communication channels. Face-to-face meetings encourage meaningful interpersonal relationships and deeper understanding, while digital platforms facilitate timely communication and wider participation. By involving parents, alumni, NGOs, community organisations, and other development partners in school planning and development activities, principals promote transparency, strengthen collaboration, and encourage collective ownership of educational goals.



Therefore, principals' communication strategies with stakeholders serve as a catalyst for effective secondary school management by fostering partnership, accountability, and shared commitment.

Strategic Communication with Non-Teaching Staff

Opatunde and Oredein (2023) found that effective communication enhances administrative coordination, reduces misunderstandings, improves task performance, and strengthens organisational efficiency. Principals' communication strategies enable them to clearly communicate the school's mission, vision, policies, expectations, and responsibilities to non-teaching staff. When non-teaching staff understand their roles and feel recognised as valued members of the school community, they are more likely to perform their duties effectively and contribute positively to school development. Beyond information sharing, effective leadership communication promotes commitment and a shared sense of responsibility among non-teaching staff by ensuring that they are informed, respected, and included in the life of the school. In my view, recognising non-teaching staff as important members of the school community encourages teamwork, strengthens workplace relationships, and enhances their commitment to supporting school goals. Thus, effective communication serves as a leadership resource that improves administrative effectiveness and contributes to the smooth functioning of secondary schools.

Strategic Communication with the Community

Fox (2021) explained that continuous communication with community members creates strong partnerships that support infrastructure development, school security, and student welfare. Similarly, Egbeji (2026) maintained that communication with external stakeholders promotes transparency and public trust. Principals' communication strategies enable them to build meaningful relationships with the community by promoting trust, openness, and shared responsibility. Through honest, respectful, and inclusive communication with parents, community leaders, alumni, religious organisations, and other stakeholders, principals encourage active participation in school development. When community members feel valued, respected, and listened to, they are more willing to support school programmes and collaborate in improving students' learning experiences and overall well-being. Unlike routine communication, which primarily focuses on transmitting information, strategic communication seeks to influence positive behaviour, strengthen relationships, encourage collaboration, facilitate shared decision-making, and improve organisational performance (Egbeji, 2026).

By communicating intentionally, principals build trust, promote mutual understanding, encourage stakeholder participation, and align the efforts of all members of the school community with the school's vision and priorities. This people-centred approach creates an inclusive school environment where individuals feel respected, informed, valued, and empowered to contribute to the achievement of shared educational goals. Consequently, strategic communication should be viewed not only as an administrative responsibility but also as a vital leadership practice that promotes effective school management and sustainable school improvement. In my view, strong relationships between schools and their communities create a supportive environment where educational goals become a shared responsibility rather than the responsibility of the school alone. Consequently, effective communication strengthens school-community partnerships, promotes sustainable school improvement, and enhances organisational effectiveness within secondary schools.



Challenges to Effective Principals' Strategic Communication in Secondary Schools

Although strategic communication has become an essential leadership tool for the effective management of secondary schools, its successful implementation is often affected by institutional, technological, human, and environmental challenges. In the context of secondary schools, where principals coordinate diverse groups with different expectations, responsibilities, and experiences, these communication challenges can significantly influence the achievement of school goals and the overall quality of school management. In my view, effective principals' strategic communication depends not only on their ability to communicate but also on the existence of a supportive school environment where teachers, students, parents, non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders feel encouraged to interact, participate, and contribute meaningfully to school development.

- 1) **Inadequate Communication Competence:** One major challenge affecting principals' strategic communication is inadequate communication competence among some school leaders. Ahmed (2026) argued that principals' communication competence significantly influences teachers' job performance because effective communication promotes clarity, trust, motivation, and professional commitment. Principals who lack strategic communication skills may experience difficulties in building positive relationships, resolving conflicts, providing clear direction, and coordinating school activities effectively. Consequently, limited communication competence can weaken collaboration, reduce mutual understanding, and negatively affect the overall effectiveness of school management.
- 2) **Poor Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure:** Another significant challenge is inadequate ICT infrastructure. Egbeji (2026) maintained that digital communication has become central to effective educational leadership because it facilitates timely information sharing, collaboration, and administrative coordination. However, poor internet connectivity, inadequate digital facilities, limited access to communication technologies, and insufficient digital skills among school personnel can restrict effective communication through online platforms. These limitations may reduce opportunities for timely feedback, stakeholder engagement, and efficient school administration.
- 3) **Resistance to Organisational Change:** Resistance to change among teachers, parents, and other stakeholders may also limit the effectiveness of strategic communication. Kawinzi, Kiilu, and Mulwa (2024) emphasised that strategic communication is most effective when stakeholders actively participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of school programmes. When members of the school community are not adequately informed, involved, or prepared for change, they may develop negative perceptions that affect cooperation and the successful implementation of school initiatives.
- 4) **Inadequate Stakeholder Participation:** Limited stakeholder participation is another challenge that can affect effective strategic communication. Fox (2021) argued that continuous communication with parents and community members strengthens school-community relationships and promotes greater involvement in school development. However, when stakeholders are not given meaningful opportunities to express their views, contribute ideas, or participate in decision-making, schools may experience reduced collaboration, limited support, and weaker partnerships.
- 5) **Lack of Trust and Openness among Stakeholders:** Lack of trust and openness among members of the school community can also hinder effective strategic communication. When teachers, parents, students, or community members feel that their opinions are ignored or that their contributions are not valued, they may become less willing to participate actively in school activities. Since effective



communication is built on dialogue, openness, and mutual respect, principals need to create an environment where stakeholders feel heard, respected, and included in achieving school goals.

- 6) **Weak Collaboration and Weak Teamwork among Members of the School Community:** Weak collaboration and limited teamwork among teachers, non-teaching staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders can also affect the effectiveness of strategic communication. Strategic communication thrives when members of the school community share information, cooperate, and work towards common goals. However, when individuals operate separately, fail to exchange ideas, or show limited commitment to collective decision-making, communication becomes less effective and school objectives may become difficult to achieve. In such situations, principals may encounter challenges in coordinating school activities, implementing policies, resolving problems, and building a unified school culture. In my view, effective school management requires a collaborative environment where every member of the school community feels valued and contributes meaningfully to achieving educational goals. Therefore, principals should encourage teamwork, open dialogue, and positive working relationships that promote collective responsibility for school improvement.
- 7) **Information Overload and Weak Feedback Mechanisms:** Information overload and ineffective feedback systems can also hinder strategic communication. Opatunde and Oredein (2023) emphasised that communication should be interactive and should promote coordination, dialogue, and stakeholder participation rather than simply involve the transmission of information. When principals provide information without creating effective channels for feedback, teachers, students, and other stakeholders may experience confusion, reduced engagement, or difficulty identifying important messages.
- 8) **Limited Interaction and Lack of Clarity and Purpose in Communication:** Limited interaction between principals and members of the school community can further weaken strategic communication. When principals do not regularly engage with teachers, students, parents, non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders, they may become less aware of their concerns, expectations, and challenges. This communication gap can weaken relationships and reduce the sense of connection between school leadership and the people they are expected to support. Furthermore, communication that lacks clarity and purpose may affect effective school management. When policies, decisions, expectations, and responsibilities are not communicated clearly, stakeholders may misunderstand their roles, resulting in poor coordination and reduced commitment. In my view, effective principals' communication should be intentional, clear, timely, and responsive. Principals who communicate with clarity and purpose create understanding, encourage cooperation, and enable members of the school community to work together towards achieving the school's vision and goals.
- 9) **Financial Constraints, Inadequate Communication Policies, and Cultural or Language Barriers:** Limited financial resources, the absence of clear communication policies, and cultural or language differences can further restrict effective strategic communication in secondary schools. Financial constraints may limit access to communication technologies and training opportunities, while unclear communication policies may create inconsistencies in information sharing. Similarly, cultural and language differences may affect understanding, participation, and the ability of stakeholders to engage fully in school activities.



In the researchers' opinion, overcoming these challenges requires principals to view strategic communication not merely as a means of transmitting information but as a human-centred daily leadership practice that promotes trust, inclusion, dialogue, and collaboration. When principals strengthen their communication competence, improve digital capacity, encourage stakeholder participation, and create supportive communication environments, they are better positioned to unite teachers, students, parents, non-teaching staff, and the wider community towards achieving educational goals. Therefore, addressing these challenges is essential for strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of secondary school management.

Suggestions/ Strategies for Improvement

The following strategies and recommendations can strengthen principals' strategic communication practices and improve the effective management of secondary schools:

1. **Continuous Professional Development for Principals:** Principals should participate in regular workshops, seminars, and leadership training programmes to improve their communication competence, conflict management skills, stakeholder engagement abilities, and digital communication skills. This will enable them to communicate effectively and build stronger relationships within the school community (Ahmed, 2026).
2. **Integration of ICT into school communication:** Schools should adopt appropriate digital platforms such as emails, WhatsApp, school websites, SMS, learning management systems, and video conferencing tools to support timely, accessible, and interactive communication. However, digital communication should complement meaningful human interaction among members of the school community (Egbeji, 2026; Fox, 2021).
3. **Promotion of Clear, Purposeful, and Two-way Communication:** Principals should communicate with clarity and purpose, ensuring that messages are understood rather than merely transmitted. They should encourage dialogue, feedback, and consultation so that teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders feel valued and included in decision-making processes (Kawinzi et al., 2024).
4. **Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration:** Principals should involve teachers, students, parents, alumni, community leaders, NGOs, and government agencies in planning, implementation, and evaluation of school programmes. Such participation promotes trust, ownership, teamwork, and shared responsibility for achieving educational goals (Kuteli et al., 2025).
5. **Establishing Effective Communication Policies and Feedback Mechanisms:** Schools should develop clear communication policies that define appropriate channels, responsibilities, and procedures for information sharing. Feedback mechanisms such as surveys, suggestion boxes, meetings, and digital platforms should also be established to help principals understand concerns and improve decision-making (Opatunde & Oredein, 2023).
6. **Promoting Transparency, Ethical Communication, and Accountability:** Principals should communicate openly about school goals, policies, development initiatives, and other important matters. Communication should be accurate, respectful, timely, and confidential to strengthen trust and professionalism within the school community (Egbeji, 2026).
7. **Improving Communication Infrastructure and Crisis preparedness:** Schools should provide reliable internet connectivity, electricity, computers, and other ICT facilities to support effective



communication. Principals should also develop clear crisis communication plans to ensure timely and accurate information sharing during emergencies.

- 8. Managing Information Effectively:** Principals should distinguish between routine information and urgent messages that require immediate attention. Routine announcements can be communicated through newsletters, notice boards, staff bulletins, or digital platforms, while urgent information should be shared through direct channels such as official emails, messaging platforms, or emergency meetings. Appropriate selection of communication channels reduces information overload and ensures that important messages receive the necessary attention.
- 9. Continuous Monitoring and Practices Improvement:** Principals should regularly evaluate their communication strategies through stakeholder feedback and reflection. Continuous assessment helps identify areas for improvement and ensures that communication remains responsive to the changing needs of the school community.

Conclusion

The effective management of secondary schools depends not only on policies, resources, and administrative authority but also on the quality of communication that connects members of the school community towards a shared vision. Strategic communication enables principals to create understanding, build trust, encourage collaboration, and promote shared responsibility among teachers, students, parents, non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders. Principals should communicate with clarity, purpose, and sensitivity, recognising that communication is not merely the transmission of information but a process of creating understanding and meaningful engagement. When principals communicate strategically, members of the school community are better able to understand their roles, work collaboratively, address challenges, and contribute to achieving educational goals. Therefore, strategic communication should be regarded as an essential leadership tool for effective management of secondary schools because it strengthens relationships, supports inclusive decision-making, and unites stakeholders towards the achievement of school goals.

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