



## EFFECTIVE INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The paper focused on Effective Information Dissemination and Communication in Educational Planning in Nigeria. The theoretical frameworks were anchored on Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Theory of Planned Behavior. The paper discussed the concepts of information, disseminations, communication and educational planning; their definitions; features; types; effects and implications of effective information dissemination and communication on educational planning; channels and barriers to effective communications in educational planning and their challenges posed on educational processes. It identified information dissemination methods or strategies used to pass vital messages, ideas, knowledge and concepts through the various communication channels such as non-verbal gestures, print media, social media platforms, audio-visuals, radio and television broadcast and others. The paper identified communication as a process of transferring, transmitting, broadcasting information from one or more persons (sender) to another person or persons (receiver) through a medium with an encoding and decoding process. Educational planning processes use information dissemination and communication as tools in making education more effective and efficient in responding to societal needs. The paper concluded that for educational planning to be effective and efficient in achieving its aims and objectives in Nigeria, there should be proper channels for information dissemination and communication. Furthermore, the paper made suggestions that education planners should ensure that the barriers to effective communication are bridged through proper data collection and feedback in information dissemination amongst others so as to enhance effective information dissemination and communication in educational planning.

**Keywords:** Effective, Educational planning, Information, Dissemination, Communication

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Effective information dissemination and communication is key in educational planning in Nigeria. The entire system of education, from planning through implementation to evaluation and all through the processes of educational service delivery entails information dissemination and communication. Outcomes of educational processes are largely due to the level of information dissemination and communication. Wood (2006) said that humans are talked into humanity. Therefore, for education to play its leading role in the development of Nigeria as stipulated in the National Policy on Education, educational plans need effective information dissemination and communication after being properly planned. The success of any educational system depends greatly on effective implementation of education sector plans, and this can only be achieved if the concepts and activities are effectively communicated through proper information dissemination means. The world today is said to be in 'Information age' because of the wealth of information available; positive and negative, relevant and irrelevant, useful and useless. Filtering vital information has become a herculean task. Disseminated information can be easily adulterated and need emphasized skills and competence, hence the need for effective dissemination of information and communication.

Educational planning involves the setting of educational goals and objectives, the formulation of educational policies and the coordination of educational programmes. Effective information dissemination and communication ensure the accomplishment of the predetermined educational goals and objectives. Since planning is seen as the process of examining the future and drawing up appropriate activities for achieving specified goals and objectives (Akpan, 2010), educational planning, no matter how best it is done or carried out cannot be achieved without effective information dissemination and communication.

Information dissemination is a process of passing out information from one person to another through a communication channel. It is the distribution or broadcast of information. Information dissemination in communication therefore is the means or process by which facts or information are distributed to individuals or to the public at large scale, it might be oral or written, verbal, non-verbal or by means of audio-visual. Communication skills include reading, writing, talking, listening, non-verbal gestures and paralanguage which are all embedded in encoding and decoding. However, the 21<sup>st</sup> century communication skills are known as 4Cs - Communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking and Creative thinking.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study anchored on the two theories related to the topic; they are:

- Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)
- Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

#### **Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)**

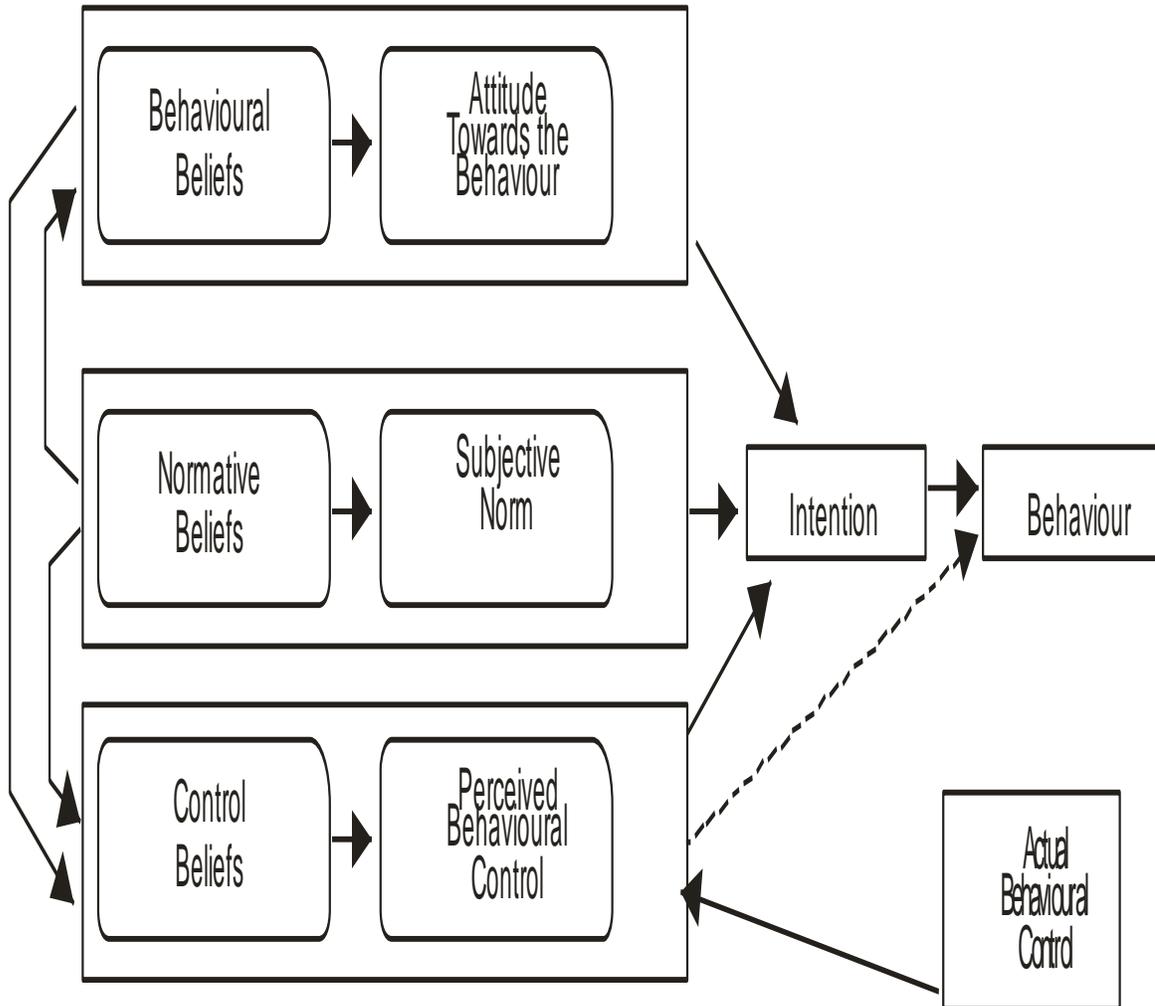
This theory was first introduced and developed by Howard Giles in 1971, a Professor of linguistics and psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). He tried to find the reason for the shifts he observed in the speech of most people as they spoke to different people and to detail the consequences of this behavior. He was interested particularly in the underlying thought processes and emotions that were involved in the uses of convergence and

divergence during conversations. This theory is also known as Speech Accommodation Theory and it stated that when humans talk to each other, they tend to change the way they talk to match the way the listener talks. The main reason which he stated is that, it is to show agreement and affinity for another. Often, this made the other person feels liked and made them like the speaker more, as well. This theory used convergence and divergence. Convergence is when you find yourself matching the vocabulary, speed and audience of the person you are talking to. While, divergence on the other hand, is when people are speaking to someone they view as belonging to a group that is inferior to their own.

**Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**

This theory was created by IcekAjzen in 2006. The theory looked at how behaviours are changed through influencing intention. The theory also looked at Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC). Perceived Behavioural Control is one’s perception of how difficult it will be to perform the behavior. IcekAjzen used a diagram to illustrate how the theory works.

Figure 1: Perceived Behavioural Control Model



Adopted from IcekAjzen (2006)

Ajzen postulated that norms and values influence behaviours and affect attitudes toward the behavior intended in issues. These norms also influence and control our beliefs and perceived behavioural control on intentions and behavior. The implication to effective information dissemination and communication in educational planning is that activities should impact on actual behavioural control of the stakeholders so as to produce desired intention and behavioural output. Concepts in plans that are related to core belief system of the stakeholders should be highlighted and related to subjectively until they produce actual behavioural control.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The four major concepts of discourse include:

- Concept of information
- Concept of dissemination
- Concept of communication and
- Concept of educational planning

## **Concept of Information**

Information according to Enock (2016) is the collection of facts gathered through various means of communication. Information can be considered as a critical tool for development. Information is necessary to carry out research processes to enhance the lives of people in many ways. Information is the processed data on which decision is taken and subsequent actions are performed thereafter. Information is the fact or element of the message that is sent from the encoder to the receiver. The value and impact of information is determined by the way and manner of dissemination. The method or device, which is the means of information dissemination, is very essential to make or mar communication.

Oluwo and Asodike (2016) defined information as a data that have a particular meaning within a specific context. Information system may also help managers and workers in the educational sector to analyze problems, visualize complex subjects, create and plan new products (Laudon & Laudon, 1991). Information is a collection of facts organized in such a way that they have additional value beyond the value of the facts themselves (Ralph & George, 2006). Information is a set of interrelated components that collects, manipulate, store and disseminate data and ideas and provide a feedback mechanism to meet set goal or objective. Oluwo and Asodike (2016) explained that four elements measure quality of information, and outside that range, information is invalid. These are timeliness, accessibility, form and validity. They posited that diminished quality within any of these elements have diminished the overall quality of information, which has decreased the effectiveness of communication.

We interact daily through information both personally and professionally. Today, countries, economic, education, health system and all works of life need information. Information itself has value and often involves the exchange of information. Information can be transferred or transmitted through our local vintages by “town carriers”, print media, symbolic impressions and expressions, electronic devices and others. Schools these days are spending and amassing huge sum of money from information management around the world electronically. To be effective and efficient, school planners in any level of education need to understand that

information is education's bedrock and one of the school's most valuable and important asset and resources.

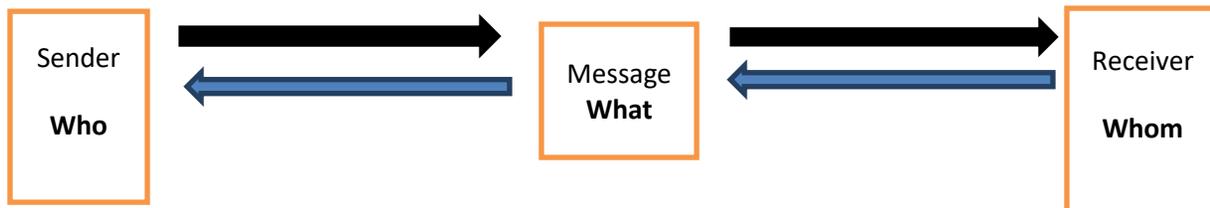
Maxwell and McCain, in Wood (2006) posited that more people around the world have greater access to information than ever before in human history. However, the wealth of information available today is a mixed blessing, while it gives us real-time coverage of events, it gives us endless bombardment steaming adverts and mixed rubbish that consume data.

Information therefore can be identified by the following features:

- Information must be less controversial with clarity of purpose
- Information must be relevant to the receiver
- Information must follow a line of action
- Information must be distinct and strategic to avoid ambiguity
- Information must be built on 'part versus whole' to avoid contradictory interpretation

Educational information sometimes come as data that need professional interpretation before being called information, such as enrolment figure, grades and scores, monitoring and evaluation records and several others. The effect of educational information on decisions can be misleading and have long lasting effects, hence the need for effective information management in education.

### Information Loop



Showing feedback track

### Information Dissemination

Information dissemination is the act of making information available to all concerned through one or more available means. Before information can be disseminated, data which is the raw form, must be processed into information through a process or set of logically related tasks to arrive at the logical result, which becomes the information. The process of defining relationship in data to create useful information; and the ways through which the information is made available to reach the supposed end in education is information dissemination. Information dissemination enables the authorities to find and evaluate problems and make decision effectively and efficiently.

### Prerequisites of Information Dissemination

For information dissemination to be useful and meaningful, information must possess the following attributes.

- **Accuracy:** To be useful, disseminated information must be accurate and specific to the purpose of dissemination. If disseminated accurately, it will provide a reliable and valid representation of desired actions;
- **Availability:** Disseminated information must be available at all levels of educational implementation to avoidable uninformed presumptions and misinterpretation;
- **Timely:** Information dissemination is valid and appreciated if it is disseminated timely (within the timeframe of action). If the information is disseminated long ahead of time, the user of that information may forget it and need reminder;
- **Completeness:** Information disseminated completely and comprehensively covers entire issues and topic of interest and gives room for prioritization of actions to avoid distorted view of reality;
- **Precise:** Apart from being accurate, timely, complete, information dissemination must also be precise, containing all the essential elements of the relevant subject areas, or things being planned for; and
- **Relevant:** Information is relevant if it can be disseminated and applied to a specific situation, problem or issue of interest.

### **Need for Information Dissemination**

Information is disseminated for compliance or for decision-making within the educational sector. The quality of the information disseminated is important in planning for education. Some of the common needs for information dissemination are:

***Information and Decision-making:*** Planning for education involves decision-making. Decision-making is the process of identifying, selecting and implementing the best possible alternative. The right information in the right form, and the right time is essential for correct decision-making in educational planning.

***Information and Communication:*** Information dissemination is vital for communication and essential for educational planning in Nigeria. Educational planners communicate and gather information through data collection and disseminate vital information to the government and other relevant stakeholders in the educational sector through information and communication.

***Information and knowledge:*** Information dissemination is vital in accumulation of knowledge. Within the educational sector, the relevance of effective use of information is its deposition of knowledge. Thus, to achieve the desired goal in educational planning which is to enhance knowledge, one must be well informed and have clarity of knowledge on the information disseminated.

***Information and Productivity:*** Information dissemination helps in enhancing the productivity of our society. Information is vital for educational concepts interpretation and application, which lead to productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in the educational sector.

Despite the various merits associated with information dissemination, wrong dissemination of information is detrimental to the education system. False and incorrect information must not be disseminated in anyway within the educational system. Wrong information dissemination

includes rumors, grapevine, gossips, hearsay and incorrect, incomplete, ambiguous and stale information.

## Communication

Communication is an important tool in educational planning. Communication is the process by which educational planners transmit their ideas. Communication abounds in every process of school life. It is the central point in educational planning. The goals of the educational sector and school become known and useful when they are communicated. Communication can be verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication is the spoken or written conveyance of a message, while, non-verbal communication describes the processes of conveying a type of information in the form of non-linguistic representatives such as sign language and cultural connotations.

Communication is a systemic process in which people interact with and through symbols to interpret meanings (Wood, 2006). The term communication is a Latin word “communicare” meaning to ‘share’ communication is the act of inducting others to interpret an idea in the manner intended by the speaker or writer. Communication is the process by which people attempt to share meaning via transmission of symbolic messages. Communication according to Abraham (2013) is any initiated behavior on the part of the sender which conveys the desired meaning to the receiver and causes desired response behaviour from the receiver. Also, it is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another. For Abah, Nwapi and Nwachukwu (2018), communication is the process of exchanging mutual and intelligible information between two persons or group of persons in a given place and at a particular time.

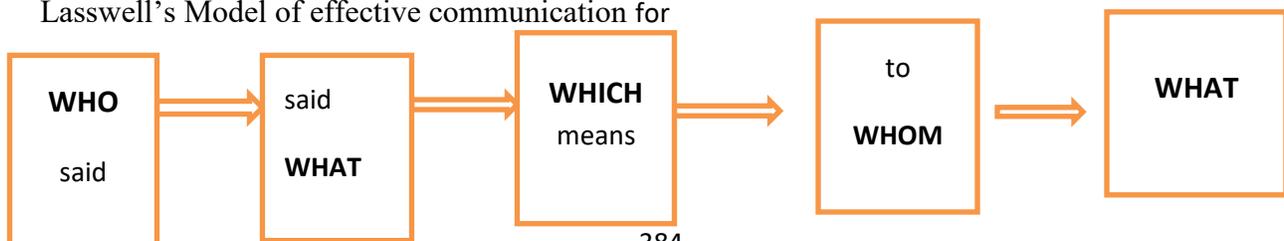
In today’s world, communication is divided into many parts and many skills within the parts. The 21<sup>st</sup> century communication skills include Communication, Collaborations, Critical thinking, and Creative thinking popularly known as the four Cs. However, regular communication skills include

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

## Effective Communication

Lasswell, cited in Enock (2016), introduced an important model of five levels of communication which was identified as the elements of which survive in more developed modern models of communication. They are the five ‘Ws’ of communication. First, Who is the source? What is the element or the message? Which through which channel or medium? Whom: the audience to whom the message is directed and What is the desired effect or the expected outcome of the message.

Lasswell’s Model of effective communication for



## **Criteria for Effective Communication**

Effective communication is a process of exchange of ideas, thoughts, knowledge and information such that the purpose or intention is fulfilled in the best possible manner. It is nothing but the presentation of views by the sender in a way best understood by the receiver. Thus, according to Abraham (2013) communication is effective if only these three criteria are achieved as below:

- The quality of the message and its presentation must be clear, timely, and consistent, of appropriate length and mutual interest.
- The message must achieve the desired results. Ultimately, this would be the planner's goals or intended actions, but other purpose is to inform, to evaluate, to instruct and to influence.
- Effectiveness of the message must be considered by compliance from time perspective such that action is taken within the stipulated time.

## **Barriers to Effective Communication**

So many things can be barriers to effective communication. Barriers are obstacles that prevent movement or access to something. Thus barriers to effective communication are those obstacles that prevent the smooth passage or transmission of ideas from one person (the speaker) to another (the listener). The barriers to effective communication include the followings:

- Physical barriers;
- Perceptual barriers;
- Emotional barriers;
- Cultural barriers;
- Language barriers;
- Gender barriers;
- Interpersonal barriers;

Therefore, education planners must develop educational plans to mitigate or breakdown these barriers in communication so as to achieve effective dissemination of information.

## **The Communication Process**

Communication process involves Sender – Message – Receiver. This model requires the three essential elements of communication. If any one of the elements is missing then effective information dissemination in communication cannot take place.

One can send a message, but if it is not heard or received by someone, then no communication has occurred. Messages are also not effective and affirmed if there is no sender. Also, every message must be transferred through a medium or media. Communication can be down-ward and upward. Downward communication channels follow the line of authority from top to the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. This is a situation where information conveys a superior's orders and directives to the subordinate below. While upward communication

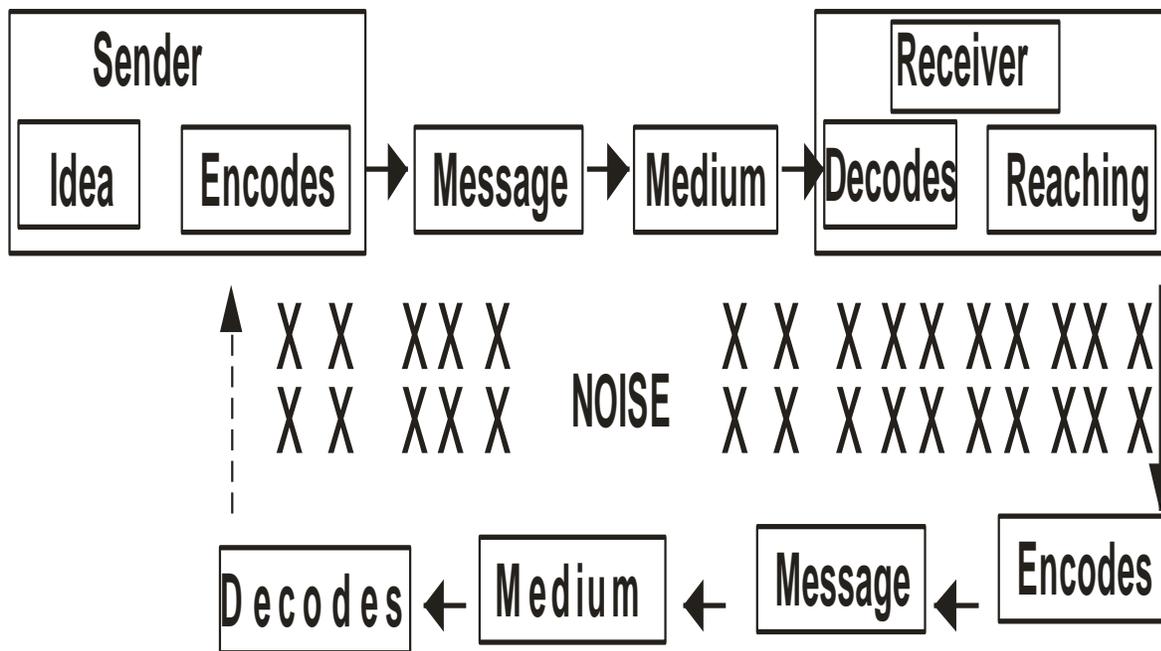
channels represent the flow of information from the lowest level in the organizational hierarchy to the highest level.

Also, communication channels can be horizontal or lateral channels where information can be exchanged between organizations' members on the same or about the same level. This could be within the same department or across departmental boundaries. Inter-personnel channels of communication are generally more efficient than formal or written channels. These channels are highly productive and readily accessible within the organizations and institutions such as speaking in classes, on the job, with friends and others.

### Models of Communication

There are very many models of communication. The most popular are linear communication model, interactive communication model and transaction communication model. Figure 2 below illustrates Peretomode's linear model of the communication process with the feedback loop.

**Fig 2. Communication Process**



**Feedback Process** Adopted from: Peretomode, V. F. (1991)

Communication is a broad field of discourse and can be affected by human perceptions such as experience, social roles, physiological status, cultural and cognitive abilities. It can also be affected by organizational constructs such as prototypes, stereotypes and interpersonal relationship. The interpretation of concepts can also affect communication. Effectiveness in communication can be determined by the value attached to the discourse such as personal values, relationship values, professional values and cultural values such as language and others.

## **Methods of Information Dissemination and Communication**

There are various methods of information dissemination and communication. These include verbal communication, print-media, audio records, visuals, audio-visuals, social media, internet virtual groups, electronic media, radio, television, non-verbal gestures and paralanguage.

## **Educational Planning**

The importance of education in the development of any nation cannot be over emphasized. In fact, education is an instrument per excellence for national development. Education aids social, economic, political and technological transformation of the nation. Education transforms national economy and the success of any educational system depends greatly on educational planning. Planning involves working out in broad outline the things to be done and the procedures for doing them to accomplish set goals. Planning is intelligent preparation for action. It is a process of deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it and who should do it. Akpan (2000), defined planning as future oriented and involves predicting the effect of future events so that hindrance of the present could be minimized or eliminated in order to meet the future with more confidence and success.

Combs, cited in Akpan (2000), defined educational planning as the application of rational systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of the students and the society. Adepaju (2000) viewed educational planning as the process of identifying educational needs and the direction education should take and how to implement decisions. Educational planning must take into considerations the population growth of children of school age in relation to educational opportunities and the demand for education. It should also take consideration the political, economic and social changes going on in the society as well as technological changes. Educational planning is therefore the blue print that gives direction for future educational development and prescribes the direction and cause of actions for the accomplishment of set-educational goals and objectives (Akpan, 2000).

Akpan (2018) mentioned the six areas educational planning should focus on to include the following:

- Identifying educational needs of the nation;
- Setting realistic educational goals and objectives;
- Formulating a set of policies and decision to guide implementation;
- Prescribing the means (action plan) to achieve the set goals and objectives;
- Providing strategies for monitoring and evaluation of progress;
- Providing appropriate channels for feedback and review.

## **Information Dissemination and Communication and Educational Planning**

The ultimate reason for planning education is to achieve positive changes in society through educational processes. These processes are organized for implementation through activities in the States' Educational Sector Plans (SESP). These activities are valued and budgeted within a time framework as projects. The process from planning to execution of projects experience a lot of

communication processes. This is the relationship between information dissemination and communication and educational planning. The ESPs are prepared following the information derived from the situation analysis of the education sector in the state. This is collected from the field in raw data which is processed to produce information. However, these education information must be properly handled to generate accurate data for proper planning. The cyclical relationship between information and planning is of vital interest on information dissemination and special effort should be put to strategize information dissemination.

### **Strategies in Information Dissemination**

The following strategies should be adopted in information dissemination;

- **Audience** – Variables on the audience should determine the way information is dissemination. They include audiences' age, educational level, professional attainment, proficiency in concept and so on.
- **Language** – the language used in the dissemination may mar the information and the desired purpose may not be achieved. Use a language that is suitable to the audience.
- **Medium** – the medium of dissemination is important to information. The medium of information dissemination may be inadequate and a wider reach may not be attained. Also some contents in the message may be forgotten after some time.
- **Duration** - the duration of a message determines where it will be disseminated and how it will be followed without further distortion. Long messages should be in series of instruction for effect dissemination and follow up.
- **Presentation** - information must be disseminated in the kind of presentation that will enhance understanding of the discourse better. Complex and complicated concepts should be presented through electronic media to enhance understanding.
- **Environment** – the environment must be taken into consideration when disseminating information, complex issues should be handled with diplomacy and tactics.

### **CONCLUSION**

The paper concluded with the relationship between effective information dissemination and communication and educational planning in Nigeria. For educational planning to be effective and efficient in achieving its aims and objectives in Nigeria, there should be a proper channel for information dissemination and communication. The educational plans and policies formulated must be communicated to education practitioners and implementers of educational plans. School and educational administrators must be informed on new laws guiding education service delivery.

Finally, educational plans, programmes and policies should be effectively disseminated and communicated to students, parents and the society who are the direct beneficiaries and stakeholders of the education sector.

### **Suggestions**

The paper suggested that:

- Government should ensure that planned educational policies and programmes are published in a medium that is handy and easy for dissemination, especially soft copies.
- Government should ensure that planned educational policies and programmes are published in an unambiguous and easy to read format.
- Periodically reviewed educational plans, policies and programmes should be properly and widely disseminated to plan implementers and school administrators.
- Concepts and ideas in the educational plans, policies and programmes should be transmitted in clear and easy terms for comprehension by the end-users of the information.
- Educational planners should ensure that plans are SMART– specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely in operation and communicated to the appropriate end-users.
- Ensure that the barriers to effective communication are bridged through proper data collection and feedback in information dissemination.
- Government should key into the use of modern technology in information and communication management appropriately
- Government and individuals should ensure human capacity building in information management and communication skills.
- Stakeholders should ensure that execution of instruction is followed up with regular feedback to ensure compliance to information.
- Since provision of information communication technology is capital intensive but very relevant, government and relevant stakeholders should budget and fund the needed technologies to ensure that gaps do not exist in information flow and dissemination.

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