

Social Media: A Modern Tool to Enhance Communication Skills of the Secondary School Principals in Ekiti State

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the effectiveness of Ekiti State secondary school principals in disseminating information; investigated the types of social media that are mostly used by principals to disseminate information; examined how frequently the principals used social media to disseminate information; and examined the relationship between the use of social media and the communication skills of the principals. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all 187 principals and 7323 teachers in Ekiti State secondary schools. The sample of 54 principals and 378 teachers was randomly selected. Two self-designed questionnaires were used. The data were analysed descriptively and inferentially. The findings showed that principals in Ekiti State secondary schools were highly effective in disseminating information (59.8%), and they were using social media such as WhatsApp (38.1%), Facebook (28.6%), Twitter (21.4%), and YouTube (11.9%) respectively, in disseminating information. The study further showed that the principals of secondary schools in Ekiti State were always using social media to disseminate information (42.2%). Further, there was a significant relationship between the use of social media and the communication skills of the principals ($r = 0.631$, $df = 418$ & $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that the use of social media by the principals had positive outcomes and enhanced their communication skills in the secondary schools of Ekiti State.

Keywords: *Principals; social media; communication skills; information; secondary schools*

INTRODUCTION

Information is indispensable to the management of any organization and cannot be overemphasized. That is why it is crucial for heads of organizations to ensure that information is properly circulated to the staff. Members of staff need to be well informed before they can perform their tasks successfully. The process of transferring and receiving information is called communication. It is the process of passing information from one person to another. It can also be defined as the process of exchanging information between two or more people. Most of the time, organizational heads are expected to spend much of their time communicating. This makes it necessary that such heads should possess skills that would allow for proper dissemination of information. In other words, communication is the coordinating vehicle for the activities of the organization. The study purposely focused on secondary schools. The principals of the secondary schools are entrusted with the responsibility of accomplishing the school's goals, therefore they need communication skills to reach out to those people who would assist in accomplishing such goals. Hoyle, English and Steffy (1998) affirmed that the most crucial skills of principals of secondary schools are to communicate with the stakeholders. Sogomo (2000) concurred that communication skills are very crucial for the changing role of principals which would normally include convening and conducting regular meetings among teachers. The findings of Al-Abbas (2010) disclosed that it is the responsibility of the person in the leadership position to be able to communicate effectively with the teachers orally or in writing.

Olowo (2017) regarded communication skills as the ability of the principals to transmit or pass information to the teachers in their schools effectively. Communication skills also mean the ability of the principal to pass information or exchange information with all stakeholders who are involved. These communication skills would enable the school principal to influence his/her staff to improve their productivity in the classroom; it would enable the principals to control and influence the students' behavior; it would equally enable the principals to attend to the visitors and also reach the parents of the students; and it would enable the principal to give feedback to the government through the Ministry of Education. Carr (2006) opined that the leaders in public secondary schools need to create and keep cordial relationships with the relevant stakeholders that matter most, such as teachers, students, parents and community members. Such relationships can be built where effective communication is allowed. Muraina (2014) noted that a good principal must ensure the free flow of information among the personnel in the school (teachers and students). Fashiku (2016) citing Huse and Bowditch (1993) remarked that a unique communication can take place when the message is directly sent to and appropriately received by the recipient without any problem. When information is received without any problem during the process, it is an indication that effective communication has properly taken place. However, it has been observed that information is not properly disseminated in secondary schools nowadays as the number of teachers, students, parents continue to increase, and therefore the effectiveness of information dissemination by secondary school principals in Ekiti State needs to be determined.

Today, social media platforms are applicable to many areas of life. Boyd (2006) regarded social media as one of the most important online tools as a means of communication that appropriately links people together world-wide. This addiction to online communication is already affecting human life. Looking at the growing number of people that are using social media as a means of work and play, studies have inferred that the foundation of social-media sites is for interpersonal communication and to connect people to one another (Burnett, Lamm, Lucas, & Waters, 2009). According to Jue, Marr, and Kassotakis (2010), the term social media is typically regarded by many as a relatively inexpensive tool that is widely accessible electronically and which enables individuals to access and publish information, build relationships and collaborate together. Boyd and Ellison (2007) regarded social network sites as public web-based services which allow all of its users to develop their personal profile, identify other users with whom they have a connection; send and receive messages either privately or publicly; and read and react to postings made by other users on the site. From the definition above, social media may be simply described as any form of online Internet access that allows interactive communication between and among two or more people. Examples of social media are purposely limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and What'sApp in this research.

Schaffer (2013) disclosed that social media is all about transfer of information through proper communication. Wylie (2014) opined that the use of social media is transforming and enhancing the way people communicate with others at a great pace. This means that the goal of social media is to create and enhance new ways to communicate with each other. It also provides and creates equal information opportunities among all members. Researchers have shown that school principals who allowed strong social media communication earned the trust of their school communities, benefitted from more positive and frequent feedback from stakeholders and also benefitted from a lively exchange of ideas with their off-site and extended community (Kellough & Hill, 2014; Larkin, 2013). Cox and McLeod (2012) and Clark (2012) in their different studies reported that the arrival of new forms of social media has given secondary school principals new opportunities to engage in rich interactions with stakeholders. According to Larkin (2013), principals of secondary schools can disseminate positive school information on a daily basis by means of social media platforms rather than relying on old traditional media outlets to disseminate information. From the above statement one may infer that principals who use social media would be more effective in dissemination of prompt information to the stakeholders who are involved.

Lepi (2012) reported that principals in many schools around the world were using social media as a means of disseminating information in the schools. But it is doubtful if the principals in Nigeria, especially in the secondary schools of Ekiti State, have adopted the use of social media, as it has been observed that most of the principals are still practicing traditional methods as a means of communication in their schools. This prompted the researchers to investigate the use of social media and its correlation to communication skills of the principals in secondary schools of Ekiti State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Selwyn (2012) regarded social media as an application tool that allowed users to exchange and interact with one another; provided a means to create, edit and share new forms of visual, textual, and audio content; and a platform to categorize, label and recommend existing forms of content. Kern (2010) defined social media as a platform of modern and electronic communication and a means through which users open online communities to share ideas, information, personal messages, and other related content messages. This indicates that social media are online technology platforms that help to connect people that are both far and near. With the online connection, the users can communicate with each other, even on different continents, read books, listen to music, save and check relevant photos and much more. Adaja and Ayodele (2013), in their study, described social media as web-based and mobile tools which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue between communities, organizations, and individuals. For the purpose of this study, social media is defined as an online platform where the users can disseminate information, receive information and interact with many people. The social media platform allows the users to have access to different kinds of information that is relevant for a specific purpose. Social media has made available such tools used for information sharing and interactions among different people. When social media platforms allow the users to have access to information and to interact with each other, it means that the communication process is really involved. Boyd (2006) noted that social media is the most significant and important online platform for communication that easily links many people together world-wide. The most recognized ones in Nigeria were Blackberry messenger, What'sApp, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter Skype, 2go, Friendster, and so on (Embi, 2012). But, as has already been stated, for the purpose of this study, social media is limited to Facebook, What'sApp, Twitter and YouTube. Social media has no membership restriction, and it can be used and operated through mobile phones and computer devices. Cohen (2007) pointed out that these social media platforms can be purposely used in the education sector. Many secondary school principals have found the affordances of social media platforms to be an important element in their school leadership practice through proper dissemination of information. Dembo (2015) affirmed that social media can assist the efforts of the principals to create a positive school culture and drive their plans forward. The study focused on the above-mentioned social media and their use by the school principals in order to ensure effective communication toward the attainment of secondary school goals.

FACEBOOK

According to Paxson (2010), Facebook is seen as one of the social networks which provide users with the mix of mass and interpersonal communication capabilities, and which places emphasis on mobility and interactivity. Looking at the history, Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and has become a worldwide phenomenon revolutionizing the face of social networking. Paxson (2010) further noted that social media became known worldwide when Facebook was launched in 2004. Since 2004, Facebook has become a most dominant force in the Internet world and is now recognized as the potential rival to the Internet giant Google. Facebook continues to be among the world's most popular social networking site with more than a billion users. An average of 618 million people use Facebook each day (Facebook, 2018). The innovative and personal nature of Facebook with its combination of easy to navigate interface has allowed it

to retain its popularity among many, despite the failure of other social networking sites. Facebook's functions include messages, news feeds, timelines, groups, photos, pages, subscriptions and video calling. The Facebook timeline allows users to customize their Facebook page. The news feed depicts pictures, status updates, links, wall posts, and more, based on what the people in one's network are posting. Facebook members are able and free to post pictures, messages, links, blogs and videos on the walls and timelines of those in their network.

Looking at the secondary schools, the use of Facebook is appropriate and proper as a means of communication by the school principals. Once, a principal creates a Facebook account, it allows for the possibility of adding all the teachers and parents of the students on it. This gives the principals the opportunity to disseminate vital school information to the teachers, such as urgent staff meetings, and other information relevant to the teachers. The platform also allows the principals to disseminate information to the parents of the students such as invitations to PTA meetings, and other relevant information that concerns their students. The platform creates an avenue to disseminate relevant information to all stakeholders. The principal of the school can also create a Facebook account in the name of the school.

WHAT'SAPP

According to Fawzi, (2015), WhatsApp is a mobile application that is purposely used for instant messaging and easily replaces the normal phone short messages (SMS) as a result of its capacity to disseminate a large volume of messages and media files unlike the phone SMS. WhatsApp can be regarded as messenger, cross platform instant messaging subscription for smartphones and selected feature phones that use the Internet for communication. Individuals who use WhatsApp can easily send audio, images video media messaging and their location using the integrated mapping feature. Historically, WhatsApp was founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum who formerly worked with Yahoo. WhatsApp is easy to install through the Google play store or an Apple store, into smart, android or windows phones. It can also be accessed directly from the web using a PC or laptop. Once the WhatsApp application is installed, users can then create their personal account which will be visible to other WhatsApp users in their phone contact lists upon synchronization. Users can start communication with people in their lists or invite new users to WhatsApp. WhatsApp enables two people to chat and make video or voice calls. It also allows groups of people to engage in group chats using Internet/Wi-Fi connection or data charges.

The principals can use any android or Windows phones to create their WhatsApp account. All numbers saved on the phone would be automatically displayed. WhatsApp enables the principals to write relevant messages to the teachers and parents concerning vital information about the school. It equally allows for sending pictures and videos to those concerned. The school principals can also create different WhatsApp groups for teachers, parents, students and others. This will enable them to give timely information.

TWITTER

Twitter is known as an online micro blogging and social networking service that enables users to read and send "tweets" that contain text messages limited to 140 characters. Registered users can post and read tweets, but those users that have not registered can only read messages. Users access Twitter through the text messages sent directly to/from a cell phone or mobile device app as well as through a website interface. Twitter was developed in 2006 by Obvious Corporation and was quickly adopted as the newest social networking and messaging site. Twitter provides an avenue for users to interact and communicate freely with each other. Twitter users are able to follow other users and the tweets serve as a source for the dissemination of information. Schachter (2011) noted that Twitter has played significant roles in schools and districts because it provides principals with an additional communication medium for their schools. This could be beneficial in larger school districts in which information must be disseminated to a large number of people.

Principals can keep students and parents informed by disseminating relevant information via Twitter. Davis (2010) disclosed that the Twitter mobile applications allow for messages to be sent as a text message, which provides a convenient way for principals to be in contact with both students and parents alike. According to Larkin (2011), the principal of Burlington High School in Massachusetts said that the Twitter platform allowed for instant feedback from educators from all over the world on educational issues and initiatives that affect his school. This is an indication that Twitter enables and allows school principals to provide information to all educational stakeholders who are involved. Twitter provides an avenue for teachers, parents, students and others to follow and have much information from the school principals with regard to the schools.

YOU TUBE

According to Lange (2007), YouTube is a video-sharing website which allows users to view and post videos while developing social relationships with other users. YouTube contains an extensive array of video content such as television clips, movie clips, music videos and educational videos. YouTube was founded in 2005 as the world's most popular online video community, where millions of people could share, discover and watch originally created videos. According to comScore (2012), a leading measurer of digital technology, YouTube ranked at the top of video Internet viewing sites. Over 800 million users watch videos on YouTube each month, with over 4 billion hours of video being viewed (YouTube, 2018). The registered users can create and upload their own videos while unregistered users can only view most of its videos and content. In addition, registered YouTube users can create their own channel, or YouTube page, that includes a short personal description along with videos. YouTube users can subscribe to other users' channels, which connect the users into a social network. YouTube can be used to analyse, innovate creativity and foster course dialogue. Duffy (2008) disclosed that YouTube can also be incorporated into the educational process by creating a learning community where everyone has a voice. By incorporating YouTube into the educational process, principals would be able to provide avenues whereby the educational stakeholder can have access to videos that could be informative and educational. This can be done when principals share the video with the stakeholders. For instance, principals can send educational videos that can enlighten the teachers about modern ways to teach students in the classroom. Equally, the principals can also send video coverage of their schools' events and achievements through this platform to parents and others.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to:

- a) Examine the effectiveness of Ekiti State secondary schools principals in disseminating information
- b) Investigate the types of social media that are mostly used by principals to disseminate information at Ekiti state secondary schools
- c) Examine how frequently the principal uses the social media to disseminate information
- d) Examine the relationship between use of social media and principals' communication skills in Ekiti State secondary schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions guided the study:

1. How effective are the principals in disseminating information in Ekiti state secondary schools?
2. What are the types of social media that mostly used by principals to disseminate information in Ekiti state secondary schools?
3. How frequently are the principals using social media to disseminate information?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between use of social media and principals' communication skills in Ekiti State secondary schools

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all 187 principals and 7323 teachers in Ekiti State secondary schools. The sample for the study comprised 54 principals, representing 22.5% of all principals and 378 teachers using Taro Yamane's formula to determine the sample size. The Taro Yamane's formula is $n = N / [1 + (Ne^2)]$ (where, n =Sample size N =Total population, $e=0.05$ (constant)) (Yamane, 1967). A multistage sampling procedure was adopted to select the samples. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two Local Government Areas (L.G.As) from each of the three senatorial districts. From each LGA, seven secondary schools were selected. From each secondary school, the simple random sampling technique was used to select 9 teachers with their principals.

The researchers made use of two self-designed questionnaires to collect information from the respondents. The first questionnaire titled "Principals' Use of Social Media Questionnaire (PUSMQ)" was used to gather relevant information from the principals. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A gathered information on respondent's profiles. Section B contained four items that collected information on the types of social media that were commonly used by principals to disseminate information, while section C contained twelve items that gathered information on frequency of use of social media by principals to disseminate information. The second questionnaire titled "Principals' Communication Skills Questionnaire (PCSQ)" was used to gather relevant information from the teachers about their principals' communication skills. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A gathered information on respondent's profiles. Section B contained twelve items that collected information on the communication skills of the secondary school principals.

Face and content validity of the instrument was established by means of experts' review, and the test re-test method was adopted to achieve the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.81 for PUSMQ and 0.87 for PCSQ. These results indicated a very high positive relationship among the respondents. The data collected was analysed descriptively, using frequency counts, percentage scores and charts to answer the research questions and inferentially, using correlation statistics to test the hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

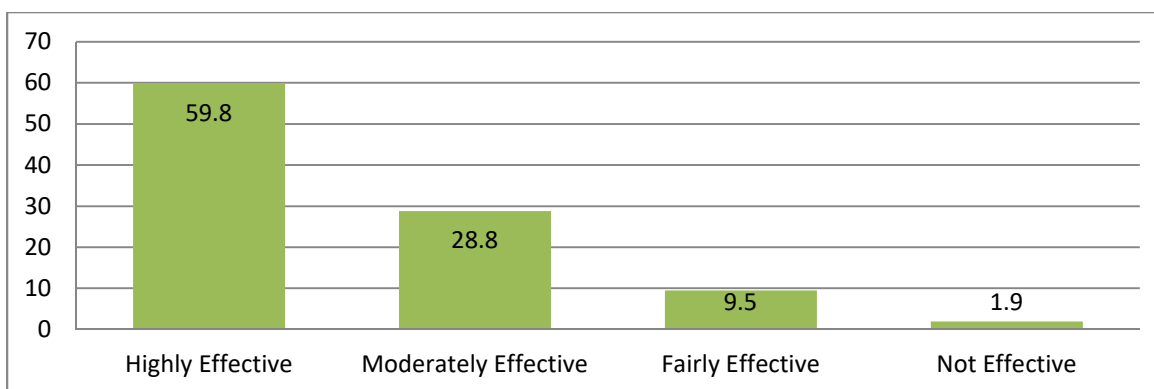
Research Question 1: How effective are the principals of secondary schools of Ekiti State in disseminating information?

According to the data in Table 1 below, 226 (59.8%) of the respondents indicated that the principals were highly effective in disseminating information. The study also showed that 109(28.8%) of the respondents supported the view that the principals were moderately effective in disseminating information. It also shows that 36(9.5%) of the respondents concurred that the principals were fairly effective in disseminating information. Only 7(1.9%) of the respondents indicated that the principals were not effective in disseminating information.

Table 1: Teachers' Responses re the Effective Dissemination of Information by their Principals.

Effective Dissemination of Information	Frequency	Percentages
Highly Effective	226	59.8
Moderately Effective	109	28.8
Fairly Effective	36	9.5
Not Effective	7	1.9
Total	378	100

Field work, 2019

**Figure 1:** Bar Chart Showing Effective Dissemination of Information

Based on highest rating percentage shown in Table 1 and represented in Figure 1 above, it can be concluded that the principals in Ekiti State secondary schools were highly effective in disseminating information.

Research Question 2: What are the types of social media mostly used by principals to disseminate information at Ekiti State secondary schools?

According to the data in Table 2 below, the principals at Ekiti State secondary schools used social media such as WhatsApp (38.1%), Facebook (28.6%), Twitter (21.4%), and YouTube (11.9%) respectively, in disseminating information. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 below, among the types of media that were used, WhatsApp was the most common social media used by the principals at Ekiti State secondary schools to disseminate information.

Table 2: Principals' Responses re the Use of Social Media to Disseminate Information.

Types of Social Media used to Disseminate Information	Freq	Percentages
WhatsApp	16	38.1
Facebook	12	28.6
Twitter	9	21.4
YouTube	5	11.9
Total	42	100

Field work, 2019

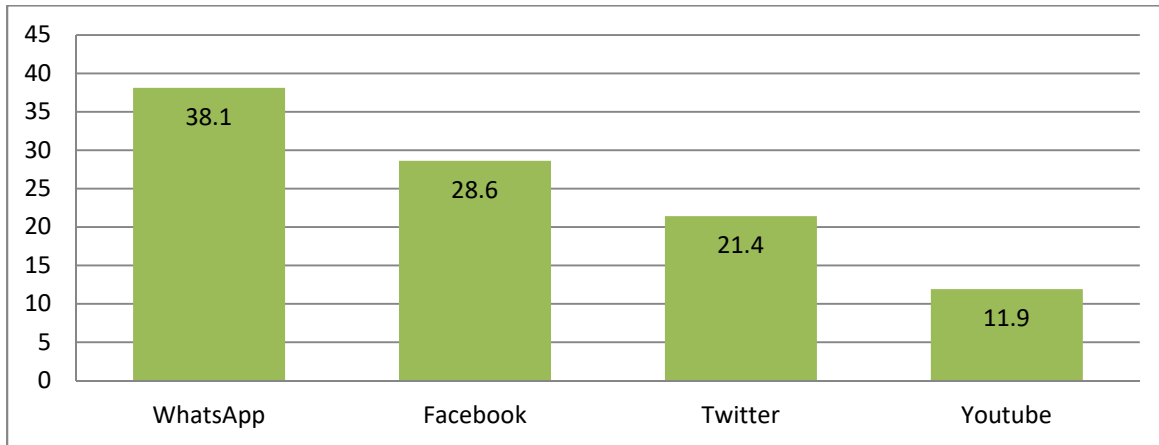


Figure 2: Bar Chart Showing Types of Social Media used to Disseminate Information

Research Question 3: How frequently are the principals using social media to disseminate information?

According to the data in Table 3 below, 19 (45.2%) of the principals always use social media to disseminate information. The data also showed that 16 (38.1%) of the principals sometimes used social media to disseminate information, while 5 (11.9%) of the principals rarely used social media to disseminate information, while only 2 (4.8%) were not using a social media tool.

Table 3: Principals’ Responses on the frequency of Use of Social Media to Disseminate Information.

Frequent Use of Social Media to Disseminate Information.	F	Percentages
Always	19	45.2
Sometimes	16	38.1
Rarely	5	11.9
Never	2	4.8
Total	42	100

Field work, 2019

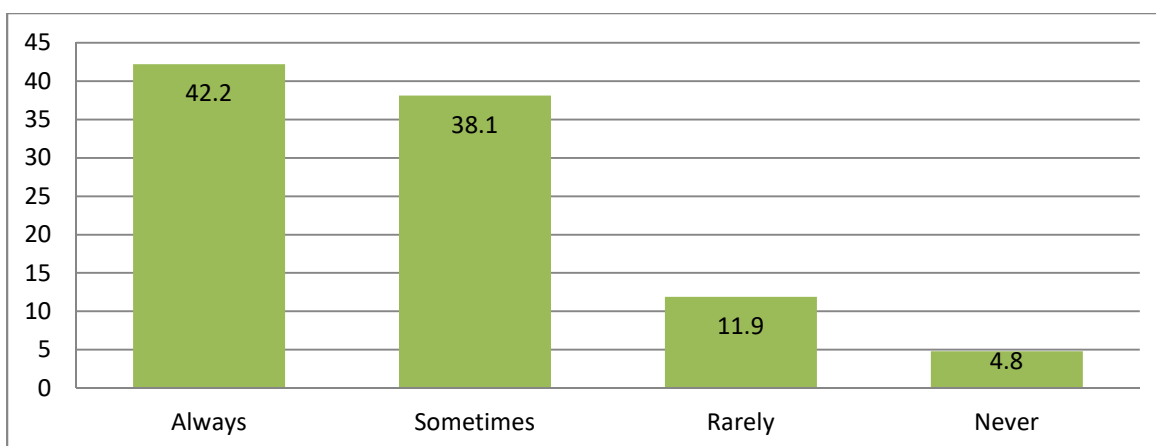


Figure 3: Bar Chart Showing Frequent Use of Social Media to Disseminate Information

Based on highest rating percentage shown in Table 3 and represented in Figure 3 above, it can be concluded that a large proportion of the principals in Ekiti State secondary always used social media to disseminate information or use social media sometimes.

HYPOTHESIS TEST

Hypotheses: There is no significant relationship between use of social media and principals' communication skills in Ekiti State secondary schools

The statistical evidence from the data in Table 4 below, indicate that the P-value was less than the alpha value ($r = 0.631$, $df = 418$ & $p < 0.05$). This indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between use of social media and principals' communication skills in Ekiti State secondary schools and the use of social media by the principals contributed significantly to their communication skills in Ekiti State secondary schools

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis for Relationship between Use of social Media and Principals Communication Skills in Ekiti State Secondary Schools

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r	P	Remark
Use of Social Media	42	15.23	4.97	418	0.631	$p < 0.05$	H ₀ Rejected
Principals' Communication Skills	378	16.78	5.011				

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study showed that the principals in Ekiti State secondary schools were highly effective in disseminating information. In this regard, the principals in Ekiti State were timely in their dissemination of information to the teachers, students, parents and education officers. This finding concurred with the findings of Muraina (2014) who found that a good school principal must allow and ensure free flow of information among the teachers and students in the school. The findings of the study are also in line with those of Al-Abbas (2010) who revealed that candidates desirous of holding principal positions must be capable of communicating effectively with others both orally and in writing. The findings corroborated those of Sogomo (2000) who indicated that communication

abilities are essential for the principals as one of the roles of that position is to disseminate appropriate information regularly to staff.

The findings of the study also showed that the principals in Ekiti State secondary schools used social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube respectively in disseminating information, but WhatsApp was regarded as the one most commonly used. The findings concurred with those of Embi (2012) who reported that Youtube, Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter were the most recognized social media in Nigeria. The findings also corroborated those of Dembo (2015) who disclosed that social media can support secondary school principals' efforts to create a positive school culture which could be used to drive their agendas forward.

The study further showed that there was a significant relationship between use of social media and principals' communication skills in Ekiti State secondary schools. This indicates that use of social media by the principals significantly contributed to and enhanced communication skills at Ekiti State secondary schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of social media as a means of disseminating information by secondary school principals cannot be over-emphasized. Social media platforms have been globally seen as a modern tool that can facilitate the attainment of the educational objective. That is why it is imperative for every principal of secondary schools to see social media as a modern means of disseminating crucial and urgent pieces of information which would make them more efficient and effective in the management of their schools. Therefore, principals of Ekiti State secondary schools as well as other schools in Nigeria are expected to know that school administration is their responsibility, therefore, they need to learn about and make use of social media that would assist them in disseminating information promptly and in a timely manner. The findings suggest that the principals in Nigeria should acquire and utilize the social media platform as a means of disseminating information as this could enable them to compete in the international arena.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made: school principals should use social media as a means of disseminating relevant information in the schools; the principals who could not navigate the social media platform should endeavor to learn how, since it is a more modern means of interaction with the teachers, students and others; school principals should also encourage the students and teachers to use social media for their teaching-learning activities; and principals should create different group platforms of social media with parents, students, and teachers for the purpose of dissemination of relevant information.

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