

ممارسة المشرفين التربويين للممارسات السبع للتواصل الفعال في مدارس مكة المكرمة

راجح الشهري

قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس

كلية التربية جامعة أم القرى

Educational Supervisors' practice of the seven C's of effective communication In Makkah Schools

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Abstract

This descriptive study investigated the effectiveness of communication between supervisors and teachers in five schools in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. It used the seven C's model, which requires seven characteristics for communication to be effective: clarity, courtesy, correctness, conciseness, completeness, consideration, and concreteness. Participants consisted of 394 teachers, who responded to a questionnaire about their supervisors' use of these characteristics. Supervisors reportedly showed a moderate application of the seven C's in their communication with teachers. To some extent, teachers believed supervisors communicated effectively with them. The study recommends using communication skills as another criterion for certifying teachers as educational supervisors, which can be measured through interviews and standardized exams. In addition, communication training courses should be a bigger priority, as strong communication is critical for successful supervision.

Keywords: communication skills, education, educational supervisor, effective,ommunication, seven C's, supervision, supervisor, teacher.

الملخص

استقصت هذه الدراسة الوصفية فعالية الاتصال بين المشرفين والمعلمين في خمس مدارس في مكة المكرمة بالمملكة العربية السعودية. استخدم نموذج C السبعة ، والذي يتطلب سبع خصائص للاتصال ليكون فعالاً: الوضوح ، واللياقة ، والصحة ، والإيجاز ، والاكتمال ، والمراعاة ، والملموسة. يتألف المشاركون من 394 معلمًا ، والذين أجابوا على استبيان حول استخدام المشرفين لهذه الخصائص. وبحسب ما ورد أظهر المشرفون تطبيقاً معتدلاً للسبع ج في تواصلهم مع المعلمين. إلى حد ما ، يعتقد المعلمون أن المشرفين يتواصلون معهم بشكل فعال. توصي الدراسة باستخدام مهارات الاتصال كمعيار آخر لاعتماد المعلمين كمشرفين تربويين ، والتي يمكن قياسها من خلال المقابلات والامتحانات الموحدة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، يجب أن تكون الدورات التدريبية على الاتصال أولوية أكبر ، حيث أن الاتصال القوي أمر بالغ الأهمية للإشراف الناجح.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهارات اتصال ، تعليم ، مشرف تربوي ، فعال ، تواصل ، سبع ج ، إشراف ، مشرف ، مدرس.

Introduction

In today's dynamic, globalized environment, scholars have recognized communication as a vital factor in the effectiveness and efficiency of any organization (Lewis, 2011; Mircea & Nicolae, 2012). Considering its critical influence on behaviour and attitudes, institutions are extending their footprint in the communication industry to fulfil customer needs and demands. In the education sector, communication is especially crucial, and educational institutions have to reflect on their communication strategies as part of their work (Ärlestig, 2007; Mircea & Nicolae, 2012).

Communication could be defined as "the ability of one person to make contact with another and to make himself or herself understood" (Adair, 2011:22). Unfortunately, social psychologists estimate that in the transmission of messages from sender to receiver, there is usually a 40-60% loss of meaning (Derrington & Goddard, 2007). In education, communication is a process of connecting and communicating. It takes place in many situations, such as between teachers and students, supervisors and teachers, and principals and teachers. The ultimate goal of supervision is ensuring educational standards are met by supporting teachers (Zepeda, 2013). Based on this premise, verbal and written communication between teachers and supervisors has an enormous impact on teacher performance. To improve communication in a school, there has to be an evaluation of recent communication practices (Hoy & Miskel, 1999, as cited in Abdulkareem, 2012:128).

This research sought to determine the quality of communication between teachers and supervisors in an educational setting. A good relationship between a supervisor (or principal) and a teacher is vital for successful supervision, proper support, and teachers' satisfaction and commitment to their job (Price, 2012). Many teachers believe building a good relationship is the supervisor's role. Therefore, this study investigated teachers' perceptions of their supervisors' application of the seven C's in teacher-supervisor communication. The seven C's stand for the seven principles that oral and written messages should meet to be effective. This concept was first presented by Cutlip and Center in 1952 and has been used to describe how to build effective communication in business (Broom, Cutlip, & Center, 2009).

Studies suggest that 70% of administrative time inside schools is spent communicating (Rai Technology University, 2004), but in Saudi Arabia, this subject has been given little attention. Instead, the focus is on administrative processes and assessing teacher and school performance, with no key performance indicators to measure the communication skills of those responsible for supervising and evaluating teachers. The resulting lack of communication skills is a major roadblock to effective communication and supervision.

Teachers engage in many daily interactions, such as teacher-supervisor meetings, teacher meetings, curriculum committees, supervisory conferences, and research symposiums. The focus of this study was to assess the quality of verbal and written communication between supervisors and teachers in Makkah schools.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Verbal and written communication is paramount in education. During the day, most teachers spend time talking with their students, supervisors, and co-workers. Planning and organizing thoughts is a critical task of verbal communication (Gallois & Giles, 2015), and written communication is equally important in delivering an appropriate message. Since the sender and receiver are not in front of each other, a written message should be designed to be understood according to the sender's intentions. In addition, the supervisor needs to be more concise in written communication to encourage understanding and reduce the need for follow-up. After receiving a message, a teacher will probably reply only once to ask questions or thank the supervisor for the

feedback and advice. Communication is effective when the receiver perceives the same message the sender is trying to give (Zepeda, 2013). Therefore, effective communication is “not just what you say, it’s how you say it” (Paul, Thomas, & Cadle, 2012:14).

Researchers have identified that the quality of communication makes it successful, which can be understood by investigating related factors, such as clarity, conciseness, completeness, and courtesy (Broom et al., 2009). Regarding the relationship between concise and clear communication, “Providing more information does not always solve ambiguity and misunderstanding; rather, a need exists for higher quality and other forms of communication” (Weick, 1995, as cited in Ärlestig, 2007:11). Some theories are more concerned with factors of good communication, such as feedback being concise, complete, and relevant while focusing on an objective or particular outlook (Tuytens & Devos, 2014).

A teacher-supervisor relationship is based on strong communication, which requires both parties to collaborate and take the initiative. Hence, in an educational setting, mode and quality of communication are the unique selling point that makes the business models of these institutions successful.

The communication between supervisor or principal and teacher should be beneficial and relevant to their daily work to be effective. Lawley, Moore, and Smajic (2014) studied the communication between preservice and cooperating teachers. Poor communication between the two could cause barriers to planning lessons, feedback, and positive teaching experiences. In addition, vocabulary had a significant impact on the quality of communication. They recommended that teacher training programs should be designed to provide preservice and cooperating teachers chances to practise explicit communication strategies to promote successful communication prior to the internship semester.

Perron et al. (2013) pointed out the deficiency of assessing and teaching communication skills in a clinical context and sought to analyse and improve “a training program for clinical supervisors on how to give feedback on residents’ communication skills in clinical practice.” The training program was successful in improving clinical supervisors’ feedback skills and in helping them shift to a more learner-centred approach.

Aita (2011) studied the reality of educational communication of the educational supervisors in Gaza’s schools from the science teachers’ view of point. He used the descriptive method and had collected 108 questionnaires from science teachers who were willing to participate in the study. The results showed that the supervisors’ practice of the educational communicating is at the level of average, and that there are no statistically significance differences of the responses due to the participants’ sex , type of school or years in service. The results showed that the mean of the supervisors’ practice was high in term of being polite, flexible, considerate of the teachers’ feeling, and cooperative.

Alasmar (2000) had investigated the principals’ possess of effective communication skills in Irbid governorate in Jordan. He used the questionnaire to collect data form the teachers about the effective communication skills of the principals in all four field (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). He found that there is high level of practice of the effective communication skills between principals and teachers.

Abd Aljawad & Qandeel (2013) studied the level of education supervisors’ practices of educational communication skills and the educational communication obstacles that educational supervisors experience in their communication with student teachers during their practicum semester. They participants were 297 student teachers who received the questionnaire and 52 who participate in the

interview survey. The results indicated that the supervisors' practice of verbal communication was %78 , and %72 of the written communication. The questionnaire contains items measure the supervisors' practice of the clarity, conciseness, and the courteousness in their communication with the student teachers. %88 of the participants agree that supervisors message are always clear and easy to understand.

These studies and others have studied the communication in education from different aspects. However, this study has predominantly dealt with verbal and written communication to determine the effectiveness of the supervisor-teacher relationship. It was guided by the following research question: To what extent do supervisors apply the seven C's of effective communication in their communication with teachers?

To determine the effectiveness of supervisor-teacher communication, a seven-C's communication checklist was evaluated (see Table 1, adapted from Broom et al., 2009:260). The primary objective of this checklist is to ensure the clarity of a message while avoiding any misconceptions through timely feedback. Communication between teacher and supervisor is considered complete when all seven parameters are met.

Table 1: Seven C's Checklist

Seven C's	Explanation
Complete	Contains all the information to get your desired response
Compact-concise	Short and sweet message. Only has relevant information.
Considerate	"You" attitude. Put yourself in the place of the receiver.
Concrete	Definite facts and specifics rather than vague and general.
Clear	Use of simple language and easy sentence structure.
Courteous	Polite and correct tone of language. Convert orders into requests.
Correct	Correct spellings, grammar and language. Spell check.

The first C in the list, complete communication, means the audience or receiver receives the information intended by the speaker with no question in the mind of the receiver left unanswered. Complete communication saves time and helps people make the best decisions possible (Sharma, 2018). In supervision, the supervisor should consider the teacher's mindset and provide all desired information. The second quality is being concise, which means the message is brief, specific, and avoids repetition. The third quality, being considerate, is when the sender (in this case, the supervisor) considers the receiver's background, mindset, needs, emotions, level of education, and other factors that could affect the receiver's reaction (Broom et al., 2009). A supervisor should thus alter the message to suit the needs of the audience. Fourth, concreteness involves specific, clear information that avoids confusion. A supervisor should not use words that can be misinterpreted. The confidence between teacher and supervisor should be stronger when the supervisor uses facts and clear words. Fifth, clarity means the supervisor should focus on one precise message or idea and not try to accomplish too many things at once. Sixth, courtesy involves respecting the receiver's feelings and dignity but should not be confused with offering a biased viewpoint. To ease teacher engagement, supervisors should thus be polite, eager to help, and mention positive aspects of a teacher's performance. The seventh quality of effective communication is correctness, meaning the message of the sender (supervisor) is accurate in language use, facts, and figures. Giving correct information increases receiver confidence and has a greater impact on opinion and behaviour.

This framework was chosen based on the study's aim to determine the quality of effective verbal and written communication between teachers and supervisors. Communication with positive qualities or factors becomes more effective and results-oriented. This effectiveness in turn is connected to higher teacher-supervisor performance.

Research Question

To what extent do supervisors apply the seven C's of effective communication in their communication with teachers?

Objective of the study

To assess the supervisors' practice of the seven C's in their communication with teachers.

The significance of the study

This study shed light on the importance of the communication on the field of educational supervision. It also helps supervisors to know the area of training needs in their communication skills. In addition, it provides the educational departments some data which could help them in designing the training programs for the supervisors and teachers. To have a successful supervisory practice, there is a need to continuous evaluation of it, and this study is an assessment of the current communication skills of supervisors as a first step of the evaluation process.

Methodology

The main objective of the study was to determine to what extent supervisors applied the seven C's in their communication with teachers. For this purpose, it measured the quality of communication between supervisor and teacher and provides a look at teacher-supervisor performance through their communication status.

The researcher employed cluster sampling by identifying five schools from each of the five school districts in Makkah. The participants were teachers at those schools. The link to the questionnaire was sent to the principals of each school, who was asked to distributed it to teachers. According to the principals, 480 teachers received the link. The response rate was 82.08%, as 394 teachers (256 male, 138 female) filled out the questionnaire.

The study used a descriptive design. The 22-item questionnaire used to collect the data was validated by experts from the College of Education at Umm Al-Qura University. Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often). Each of the seven C's were represented by 2-5 items. Reliability was measured through a pilot sample, which measured the internal consistency between the domains of the questionnaire. A high Cronbach's alpha of .936 indicated the questionnaire was reliable. Privacy and confidentiality were guaranteed since no question asked for any personal information, and all responses were voluntary.

Limitations of the study

The study was limited to measuring the perceived level of use of the seven C's in oral and written communication. The sample was limited to five Makkah schools, which could reduce the generalizability of the results. In addition, the researcher did not measure the effects of variables such as age or years of teaching experience on communication. A qualitative investigation is thus needed to examine communication skills in greater depth.

Results and discussion

This study sought to determine to what extent supervisors applied the seven C's when communicating with teachers on a 4-point Likert scale. The intervals, frequencies, means, and standard deviations related to each of the seven C's are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Likert-Scale Items

Likert Scale	Interval	Value
1	1–1.74	Never
2	1.75–2.49	Rarely
3	2.50–3.24	Sometimes
4	3.25–4	Often

Table 3: Domains

Domain	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Clear	2.78	.51
Concise	2.96	.71
Concrete	2.82	.84
Correct	2.98	.74
Considerate	2.68	.74
Complete	2.82	.83
Courteous	3.11	.73

Table 4 represents the teachers' responses about clarity in their communication with supervisors. The overall mean of the domain was 2.78, falling into the "sometimes" category. Hence, the clarity level in supervisors' communication was reported as moderate. This result aligns with the study of Abd Aljawad & Qandeel (2013) which indicate that the supervisors' practice were at good level with %74.4 in terms of the focus on one idea in each message. Increasing clarity should improve communication. Abdel Mawla (2013) has mentioned that one of the most difficulty that prevents an effective communication in school is the ambiguity of the message due to its shorten or difficulty of the words being used, or not identifying the meeting's objective clearly.

Table 4: Clear

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
The supervisor explains the subject clearly.	34 8.6%	68 17.3%	167 42.4%	125 31.7%	2.97	0.91	sometimes
The supervisor uses complex words and sentences that are difficult to understand.	88 22.3%	125 31.7%	146 37.1%	35 8.9%	2.32	0.92	rarely
The supervisor focuses on one idea in each message.	34 8.6%	81 20.6%	203 51.5%	76 19.3%	2.81	0.84	sometimes
The supervisor's message and directions are in sequence and easily understood.	22 5.6%	86 21.8%	144 36.5%	142 36.0%	3.03	0.90	sometimes
Total					2.78		

To measure conciseness, five questions were asked (see Table 5). The mean of this domain was 2.96 (sometimes), and all statements in this domain were reported as "sometimes." The fact that supervisors' messages were sometimes viewed as general, vague, or redundant decreases the quality and effectiveness of their feedback. Supervisors should always be precise and accurate in all feedback to teachers. This would help

teachers know what areas need improvement and be serious about professional development. This results support the result of Abdel Mawla (2013) which showed moderate level of principals' practice of speaking skills such as using easy words, being clear, and focusing on one idea at a time when they communicate with teachers.

Table 6 shows how concrete participants considered their communication with supervisors to be. The mean of statements in the domain was 2.82, meaning the majority felt their supervisors sometimes—but not often—offered precise, concrete information during a conversation or meeting. To increase the confidence of teachers, supervisors should use facts and clear language while avoiding words that can be misinterpreted. However, the study of Abdel Mawla (2013) showed high level of supervisors' practice of using figures and official reports and data when communicating with teachers.

Three questions measured teachers' opinions about correctness in terms of academic language and error-free spoken and written language (see Table 7). The means of all statements were at the level of "sometimes," which was the overall level of the domain. It is vital for supervisors to use correct language when speaking or writing to teachers, but participants did not think supervisors often used correct language. In Abdel Mawla (2013) study, the results showed that principals always uses language that is free of writing errors when communicating with teachers.

Table 5: Concise

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
The supervisor focuses directly on the point that he wants to discuss.	34 8.6%	68 17.3%	167 42.4%	125 31.7%	2.97	0.91	sometimes
The supervisor avoids redundant words during the meeting.	35 8.9%	80 20.3%	147 37.3%	132 33.5%	2.95	0.95	sometimes
The supervisor avoids repeating phrases and sentences.	22 5.6%	83 21.1%	176 44.7%	113 28.7%	2.96	0.85	sometimes
The message of the supervisor is always specific and not general or vague.	31 7.9%	76 19.3%	153 38.8%	134 34.0%	2.99	0.92	sometimes
The data that the supervisor uses is always accurate.	26 6.6%	84 21.3%	169 42.9%	115 29.2%	2.95	0.88	sometimes
Total					2.96		

Table 6: Concrete

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
The supervisor uses phrases containing facts, numbers, tables, or scientific data to support his claim or advice to the teacher.	63 16%	101 25.6%	142 36%	88 22.3%	2.65	1.00	sometimes
The supervisor's message and instructions are applicable.	27 6.9%	90 22.8%	170 43.1%	107 27.2%	2.91	0.88	sometimes
The supervisor's message and instructions are logical.	25 6.3%	90 22.8%	176 44.7%	103 26.1%	2.91	0.86	sometimes
Total					2.82		

Table 7: Correct

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
The supervisor uses academic language.	39 9.9%	97 24.6%	176 44.7%	82 20.8%	2.76	0.89	sometimes
The supervisor speaks free of language errors.	23 5.8%	79 20.1%	184 46.7%	108 27.4%	2.96	0.84	sometimes
The supervisor uses language that is free of writing errors.	10 2.5%	45 11.4%	188 47.7%	151 38.3%	3.22	0.74	sometimes
Total					2.98		

To measure consideration, only two questions were used based on teacher background and needs (see Table 8). In rating how often supervisors took teachers' background and feelings into consideration, 146 picked "sometimes" and 111 "often." In terms of how often supervisors considered the teachers they supervised, 138 picked "often" and 98 "rarely." The overall mean was 2.68 (sometimes). This results could be explained by the fact that the relationship between supervisor and teacher has been improved since the evaluation become in hand with the principals not the supervisor. This gave more space for respect, understanding, and collaboration between teacher and supervisor. This results match up to the results of Aita (2011).

Table 8: Considerate

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
The supervisor takes into consideration the teacher's background and feelings.	52 13.2%	85 21.6%	146 37.1%	111 28.2%	2.80	0.99	sometimes
The supervisor focuses on the teacher's needs.	79 20.1%	98 24.9%	138 35%	79 20.1%	2.55	1.03	sometimes
Total					2.66		

Three questions measured the completeness and practicality of supervisors' verbal and written communication (see Table 9). Participants most often ($N = 165$) reported that supervisors "sometimes" gave complete verbal and writing messages, 174 thought those messages were practical, and 170 claimed supervisors "sometimes" discussed all the questions teachers had. The mean of the domain was 2.89, suggesting supervisors' communication with teachers was generally complete.

Table 9: Complete

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
The supervisor's message is complete and not missing any information.	23 5.8%	101 25.6%	165 41.9%	105 26.6%	2.89	0.86	sometimes
The supervisor's message contains practical procedural steps, not just theoretical messages.	38 9.6%	103 26.1%	174 44.2%	79 20.1%	2.75	0.89	sometimes
The supervisor's message covers all the questions on my mind.	28 7.1%	105 26.6%	170 43.1%	91 23.1%	2.82	0.87	sometimes
Total					2.89		

Table 10: Courteous

Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
In communication with the teacher, the supervisor respects the teacher's feelings and dignity.	14 3.6%	32 8.1%	125 31.7%	223 56.6%	3.41	0.79	often
The supervisor uses phrases that contain kindness and humor	28 7.1%	62 15.7%	160 40.6%	144 36.5%	3.07	0.90	sometimes
The supervisor uses "we" a lot.	25 6.3%	90 22.8%	197 50%	82 20.8%	2.85	0.82	sometimes
Total					3.11		

The responses about courteousness involved respecting teachers' feelings, being kind, and using humour (see Table 10). The majority of teachers ($N=223$) agreed that their supervisors "often" respected their feelings. In terms of supervisors using kind phrases, 160 participants selected "sometimes" and 144 "often". In addition, sometimes supervisors reportedly used "we" in their communication with teachers, which was viewed as reflecting humbleness and an endeavour to ease their relationships with teachers, increase trust, and foster a collaborative atmosphere. The majority of responses agreed that supervisors were supportive and respectful of teachers. This could indicate the positive impact of the changing the roll of supervisor from assessing teachers and searching for their mistakes to be collaborative and willing to work with them for their professional development. This result align with the results of Aita (2011) which indicated supervisors' practice was positive in term of being polite, flexible, considerate of the teachers' feeling, and cooperative. Also, the study of Abd Aljawad & Qandeel (2013) showed that supervisors show respect for the teachers in their meeting dialogue or written notes. However, that supervisors' practice of humor, gesture, and facial expressions was rare.

Overall, teachers in Makkah schools reported their supervisors sometimes practised the seven C's of communication. Although supervisors were reportedly doing a fairly good job in transmitting messages to teachers, the supervisors could benefit from more training in communication skills. Knowing how to communicate orally and in writing is a key success factor in education. In all forms of communication, a great deal of care must be taken to ensure receiver understanding and thereby improve the relationship between, in this case, teachers and their supervisors. The seven C's checklist could be used as criteria for effective verbal and written communication and encourage best practices between supervisor and teacher. All of the teachers' responses agreed that supervisors to some extent were implementing these factors. However, the practices should be at a higher level since communication is the most important skill in supervision as all supervisory work relies on it. Therefore, the communication skills of anyone supervising teachers should be examined like other criteria for becoming an educational supervisor.

Conclusion

Based on the results, the study recommends that the Saudi Ministry of Education offer more training, workshops, and courses to improve the communication skills of supervisors and teachers. This will help supervisors use clearer, more concise language and increase the effectiveness of their supervisory work with teachers. More qualitative research is needed to examine the quality and effectiveness of communication. future

studies could measure the effect of gender and years of teaching experience on communication quality between teachers and supervisors. Also, future research could be design and propose training programs about communication between supervisor and teachers and examine its effectiveness.

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