



COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IN DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract:

This research examines the communication strategies and techniques employed by kindergarten and primary school principals in Greece, focusing on the needs and challenges in different educational settings. Its aim is to analyze how communication and coordination impact teacher collaboration, considering the size and organizational structure of the school units. The study uses a combined methodology, including qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis through questionnaires and observations, to assess communication skills and collaboration strategies. The results show that in larger schools, principals face challenges in communication and coordination due to the high number of teachers and the complexity of activities. In smaller schools, despite direct communication and flexibility, limited resources and teacher overload with multiple obligations negatively affect collaboration among educators. The use of tools such as email, Viber, and Webex enhances both direct and asynchronous communication, facilitating coordination and teacher participation. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development for principals in technological and communication skills, as well as the need for tailored communication strategies that reflect the specific needs of each school environment.

Keywords: communication skills, educational administration, school size

1. Introduction

The successful administration of a school unit depends not only on the principal's scientific knowledge and organizational skills but also on effective communication with

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all members of the school community. The ability to manage human relationships with sensitivity and respect directly influences the school climate and overall organizational performance (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). In an increasingly complex and demanding environment, communication becomes a crucial factor in successful school administration (Pramahsar & Triatna, 2021).

Modern educational administration must adapt to the demands of the digital age, where the speed of information and interactivity are essential components of communication (Sheninger, 2014). The principal's role as a leader is no longer limited to decision-making and guidance but now includes fostering an open, collaborative communication environment that encourages the active participation of all involved members (Alajmi, 2024).

This raises the question of whether principals' communication strategies are equally effective across different educational environments or need to be adapted based on the specific characteristics of each level. Examining these strategies can provide valuable knowledge for enhancing administrative efficiency and improving the quality of education (Creswell, 2011 & Athanasoulas-Reppas, 2008). Additionally, it can support the development of targeted educational programs and strategies that foster collaboration, teamwork, and collective decision-making, key elements of a positive and effective school environment (Alajmi, 2024).

This article will briefly present the following sections: (a) the importance of communication in school administration, along with modern communication trends, (b) the communication skills of principals and their role, and (c) administration and communication in kindergartens and primary schools, with an emphasis on similarities and differences. The article then outlines the research's methodological framework, presents its findings, and concludes with a discussion of the results.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Importance of Communication in the School Unit and Modern Communication Trends

Communication is a fundamental tool for school administration, as it contributes to effective organization, conflict management and the formation of a positive school climate (Bakas, 2014). According to Gkoutzourela (2021) and Hoy & Miskel (2013), communication allows the transmission of information and interaction between members of the school community, ensuring cohesion and cooperation.

Effective communication is crucial for creating a positive school climate, as it contributes to the development of trusting relationships between the administration and teachers (Katsaros, 2007; Çaybaş & Ordu, 2022). Mutual understanding and respect among members of the school community strengthen teamwork and enhance the collective effort to achieve educational goals (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Venetouli, 2017).

Nowadays, technological advancements have brought about significant changes in communication methods. Digital platforms, social networks, and online collaboration

tools have made communication more direct and interactive (Cox & McLeod, 2014). The principal is called upon to utilize Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improve administrative functions and foster collaboration among teachers (Norman & Hashim, 2016). According to Sheninger (2014), digital leadership is crucial for adapting to the modern demands of educational administration.

At the same time, hybrid communication strategies - combining traditional and digital methods - facilitate teachers' collaboration and participation (Zhong, 2016). The use of social media promotes transparency and interactivity, strengthening relationships within the school community (Cox & McLeod, 2014). However, fully utilizing digital tools requires adequate technological infrastructure and ongoing training for both principals and teachers (Saitis & Saitis, 2012).

The literature review is also supported by the research findings of Riley (2020), Ainscow (2021), and López-Sánchez & Murillo (2022), who emphasize the critical role of trust and collaborative leadership in schools – particularly in the post-COVID-19 era – as well as the growing need to enhance digital communication and the adaptability of school principals.

2.2 Principals' Communication Skills and Their Role

The principal's communication skills are essential for managing human relationships and achieving the goals of the school unit (Katsaros, 2007; Pramahsar & Triatna, 2021). The modern principal must possess active listening skills, emotional intelligence, and empathy to create a positive and collaborative work environment (Goleman, 2011; Tsiamaki, 2021; Ananda, Bahrún, Usman & Murniati, 2025).

Active listening enables the principal to understand the needs and concerns of teachers, promoting open communication and transparency in decision-making (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018; Kanidou, 2020; Yavuz, 2010). Emotional intelligence, on the other hand, helps principals manage their own emotions while understanding those of others, thereby strengthening interpersonal relationships and reducing conflict (Bourantas, 2001; Christoforidou & Platsidou, 2020).

Empathy, as the ability to understand the perspective of others, helps build trust and cooperation between the principal and teachers (Goleman, 2000; Ananda, Bahrún, Usman & Murniati, 2025). Additionally, clear and precise communication ensures that the expectations and goals of the school unit are understood, enhancing teachers' responsibility and commitment (Tsompanaki, 2017, Koutis, 2018).

Conflict management skills are also essential for resolving disputes and promoting cooperation. The principal must be able to identify the causes of conflicts and use dialogue and negotiation strategies to address them (Rahim, 2001). By combining these communication skills, principals can effectively guide their teams, fostering collective learning and innovation within the school unit.

It is therefore clear that the establishment of successful communication systems largely depends on the principal's communication skills, which must be consciously developed, as they significantly influence the smooth operation of the school. Thus,

communication skills are an integral element both for the success of the managerial work and for effective leadership behavior (Botsari, 2020).

2.3 Administration and Communication in Kindergartens and Primary Schools: Similarities and Differences

Administration and communication in kindergartens and primary schools share both similarities and differences that impact the educational environment, team dynamics, and collaboration among teachers. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective leadership practices that foster collegiality and contribute to school success.

In kindergartens, communication tends to be more direct and personal due to the smaller number of teachers and the emphasis on children's emotional development (Tok, 2002). The kindergarten principal engages in more direct forms of communication, such as face-to-face meetings and informal discussions, which promote collaboration and teamwork (Şengüli & Özkanii, 2021). Personal contact allows for a better understanding of the needs of both teachers and parents, while also facilitating immediate problem-solving.

The emphasis on the emotional development of young children requires the principal to demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence and empathy. Creating a positive climate and enhancing a sense of security and trust are crucial for the functioning of the kindergarten. Smaller teacher groups facilitate more direct communication and collective problem-solving, strengthening the sense of “belonging” (Tok, 2002 & Alajmi, 2024).

In contrast, in elementary schools, communication is more structured and formal, as more complex organizational tasks, such as scheduling, distribution of teaching hours, and academic requirements, must be managed (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Elementary school principals often rely on written forms of communication, such as emails and official announcements, to ensure clarity and consistency of information (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). This formality requires the development of strong written communication skills and proficiency in digital tools.

Furthermore, in primary schools, principals must manage larger and more diverse groups of teachers, which increases the complexity of communication. The use of digital tools, such as electronic collaboration platforms and social networks, promotes transparency and interactivity in communication (Cox & McLeod, 2014). However, fully utilizing these tools requires both technological training for principals and the availability of appropriate infrastructure (Saitis & Saitis, 2012).

Despite the differences, effective communication is essential at both levels of education for creating a positive school climate and enhancing collaboration. Principals are called upon to adapt their communication strategies to meet the needs of teachers and students, demonstrating flexibility and empathy (Cohen, 2013; Supriadi & Mutrofin, 2017). Understanding these similarities and differences contributes to more effective leadership and the creation of an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

3. Purpose, Objectives and Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to investigate and compare the communication skills, techniques, and challenges faced by kindergarten and primary school principals, with a focus on the differences arising from the size of the teaching staff.

A sub-research objective is to examine how structural differences and the size of school units influence the communication approaches of principals, affecting their ability to effectively manage the school community and foster collaboration and cohesion through the use of appropriate skills and practices. Additionally, the role of technology as a tool to support communication and collaboration in school administration will be explored.

The research questions guiding the study emerged following a thorough literature review (Gutzourela, 2021; Berkovich & Eyal, 2018; Cox & McLeod, 2014; Çaybaş, & Ordu, 2022; Pramahsar & Triatna, 2021) and were structured to align with the aims of the mixed-methods research approach. Specifically, the questions are formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the main communication challenges faced by kindergarten principals compared to primary school principals?
- 2) How do the structure and size of school units (kindergartens vs. primary schools) affect the communication strategies adopted by principals?
- 3) What communication techniques do kindergarten and primary school principals use to enhance collaboration, with an emphasis on how the size of the teaching staff impacts the effectiveness of these techniques?
- 4) How does the integration of digital tools influence the communication strategies of school principals and collaboration among teachers in primary education?

4. Research Process

4.1 Methodological Approach

This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The quantitative component involved the use of a custom-designed, closed-ended questionnaire, developed on the basis of existing evaluation scales and adapted to the Greek educational context. Data were collected using a Likert scale, and statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software (version 23). The qualitative component consisted of semi-structured interviews, each lasting 15–20 minutes, offering in-depth insights into the participants' perceptions and experiences.

To minimize potential researcher bias, several safeguards were implemented, including the anonymity of participants, the use of neutral language in the formulation of questions, and the triangulation of data from multiple sources (questionnaires, interviews, and observations). In particular, for the validity of the research, a thorough review of the Greek and foreign literature on the communication skills of principals in

kindergartens and primary schools was initially conducted, and a representative sample was collected for the research purpose.

Subsequently, the validity and reliability of the findings collected are the prolonged engagement, persistent observation, the tripartite cross-methods, which results from the combination of data collection tools through questionnaires, observation and interviews, as well as the method of triangulation (methodological triangulation), which can be ensured through the cross-section of various data (Maycut and Morehouse 1994, as cited in Papadimitriou 2014). With the strategy of triangulation, the issue under consideration is compared through different descriptions of the same situation, in order to avoid misinterpretations related to personal biases by limiting the disadvantages associated with different methodologies. It is argued that data obtained from different sources lend credibility to research data (Maycut and Morehouse 1994, as cited in Papadimitriou, 2014).

4.2 Sampling Strategy

The sample was formed using purposive sampling (Cohen, L. & Manion, L., 2008) with a maximal variation sampling strategy, aimed at investigating the views of teachers and principals in depth.

As expected, the selection of the sample was not random, as principals needed to exhibit diverse characteristics. These include differences in their educational environments, ages, qualifications, gender, and years of experience (Creswell, 2011).

However, it is worth noting that the strategy does not allow for generalisability, requires knowledge of the population and makes it difficult to compare data due to the heterogeneity of the sample.

4.3 Timeline and Scope

The survey was conducted over one month (November 2024) and targeted principals of kindergartens and primary schools across the Peloponnese region, covering a wide range of geographical areas (urban and rural). This approach ensured representation from both kindergarten and primary school settings.

The quantitative survey included 103 participants (28 men and 75 women) aged between 30 and 60 years. The majority were married (72 individuals) and belonged to the PE60 (58 individuals) and PE70 (45 individuals) specialties. Their teaching experience ranged from 0 to over 31 years, with 55 participants having 1-5 years of administrative experience. The sample consisted of 95 permanent and 8 substitute teachers, working in single-, two-, and three-teacher schools. Most were employed in small schools (with 1-5 teachers) located in urban (33), semi-urban (37), and rural (33) areas. Additionally, 60.2% of the participants held a postgraduate degree, while 17.5% had an ICT certification.

The qualitative research involved 11 teachers in positions of responsibility (9 women and 2 men) aged 40 to over 60 years. All had extensive teaching experience (16 to over 31 years) and administrative experience (1 to over 16 years). The kindergarten teachers worked in small schools (with 1-4 teachers) in urban and semi-urban areas, while

the primary school teachers were employed in larger schools located in urban centers. Most participants held a master’s degree (9 individuals), while one male participant had a doctorate and a second degree. Additionally, all had attended training courses and held certifications such as Moodle and ECDL.

4.4 Quantitative Data Analysis

The self-designed questionnaire used was tested for internal consistency with a Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.7, which is considered marginally acceptable, which may be related to the heterogeneity of the sample and the range of topics examined. However, this value is considered adequate for research fields in the social and educational sciences (Cohen, 2013; Creswell, 2011).

In particular, the analysis of the mean values and standard deviations for questions A1 to A14 reveals a positive assessment by kindergarten and primary school principals regarding their communication and administrative skills. Participants particularly valued collaboration, active listening, clarity in communication, and the encouragement of free expression, with minimal variations in responses. However, differences emerged in opinions on conflict management, the use of digital tools, and communication within schools of different sizes, with digital platforms being the least widely adopted practice.

Table 1: Mean Values

Questions	Mean Value (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Number of Participants (N)
A1. I actively promote cooperation among members of the teaching staff	4,60	0,662	103
A2. I use active listening skills when communicating with teachers	4,53	0,802	103
A3. I always provide clear and understandable instructions and directions	4,50	0,670	103
A4. I have the ability to explain complex topics in a simple and understandable way	4,30	0,752	103
A5. I encourage the free expression of ideas and opinions at teaching staff meetings	4,66	0,552	103
A6. I understand the needs and difficulties of teachers	4,48	0,815	103
A7. I am capable of effectively managing conflicts between members of the teaching staff	4,09	0,961	103
A8. In kindergartens, the small group of teachers facilitates direct communication, but can limit different opinions	3,75	1,194	103
A9. In elementary schools, the larger group of teachers requires more time and effort for effective communication and coordination	4,42	0,665	103
A10. I adapt my communication strategies according to the needs of the teaching staff	4,40	0,732	103

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A11. Communication strategies vary significantly depending on the size of the teaching staff	4,08	0,977	103
A12. I use digital tools (e-mail, Viber) and platforms (Webex) to enhance communication and collaboration at school	4,22	1,066	103
A13. I use platforms (Webex, Zoom) during a teachers' staff meeting to allow absent teachers to participate	2,49	1,371	103
A14. The communication challenges I face in my school are different compared to those of principals in schools of different sizes	3,87	1,202	103

The frequency analysis shows that the small group of teachers in kindergartens facilitates communication, whereas in primary schools, more coordination is required. Principals adapt their strategies based on the size of the teaching staff, which influences the communication challenges they face. Although the use of digital tools is generally accepted, the use of platforms for involving absent teachers remains limited.

Table 2: Perception of How a Small Group of Teachers Impacts Communication

Answer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Disagree	8	7,8	7,8
Probably Disagree	6	5,8	13,6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23	22,3	35,9
Probably Agree	33	32,0	68,0
Agree	33	32,0	100,0
Total	103	100,0	

Table 3: Perception of How a Larger Group of Teachers Impacts Communication

Answer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Disagree	0	0,0	0,0
Probably Disagree	1	1,0	1,0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7	6,8	7,8
Probably Agree	43	41,7	49,5
Agree	52	50,5	100,0
Total	103	100,0	

Table 4: Adapting Communication Strategies According to the Needs of the Teaching Staff

Answer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Disagree	1	1,0	1,0
Probably Disagree	1	1,0	1,9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6	5,8	7,8
Probably Agree	43	41,7	49,5
Agree	52	50,5	100,0
Total	103	100,0	

Table 5: Differences in Communication Strategies Based on the Size of the Teaching Staff

Answer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Disagree	3	2,9	2,9
Probably Disagree	5	4,9	7,8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12	11,7	19,4
Probably Agree	44	42,7	62,1
Agree	39	37,9	100,0
Total	103	100,0	

Table 6: Using Digital Tools for Communication and Collaboration

Answer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Disagree	4	3,9	3,9
Probably Disagree	4	3,9	7,8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	12,6	20,4
Probably Agree	26	25,2	45,6
Agree	56	54,4	100,0
Total	103	100,0	

Table 7: Using Platforms to Enable Participation of Absent Teachers

Answer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Disagree	34	33,0	33,0
Probably Disagree	22	21,4	54,4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22	21,4	75,7
Probably Agree	13	12,6	88,3
Agree	12	11,7	100,0
Total	103	100,0	

Table 8: Communication Challenges in Schools of Different Sizes

Answer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Disagree	8	7,8	7,8
Probably Disagree	6	5,8	13,6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15	14,6	28,2
Probably Agree	36	35,0	63,1
Agree	38	36,9	100,0
Total	103	100,0	

Means of communication skills differ depending on the size of the teaching staff. Single-class kindergartens ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.25$) and two-class kindergartens ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.41$) show high means, while single-class primary schools show a lower value ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.64$). The highest mean is noted in the three-class kindergarten ($M = 4.86$); however, the sample size is only one person and cannot be generalized.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed a statistically significant difference in communication skills between the different sizes of the teaching staff ($F(7, 95) = 9.013$, $p < .001$). This indicates that the size of the teaching staff significantly affects communication skills.

Table 9: Means, Standard Deviations and Confidence Intervals for Communication Skills by Teacher Association Size

Teachers' Association Size	N	M	SD	SE	95% CI (Down)	95% CI (Up)	Minimum	Maximum
Single-seat Kindergarten	9	4,73	0,25	0,08	4,54	4,92	4,29	5,00
Two-seat Kindergarten	42	4,70	0,41	0,06	4,57	4,82	3,43	5,00
Three-seat Kindergarten	1	4,86	-	-	-	-	4,86	4,86
Four-seat Kindergarten	7	4,33	0,69	0,26	3,69	4,96	3,00	4,86
Single-seat - Three-seat Primary School	13	3,55	0,64	0,18	3,16	3,94	2,57	4,86
Four-seat - Five-seat Primary School	2	3,86	0,20	0,14	2,04	5,67	3,71	4,00
Six-seat - Nine-seat Primary School	18	4,49	0,54	0,13	4,22	4,76	3,43	5,00
Ten-seat and More Primary School	11	4,44	0,47	0,14	4,12	4,76	3,71	5,00
Total	103	4,45	0,60	0,06	4,33	4,57	2,57	5,00

Table 10: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Communication Skills in Relation to the Size of the Teaching Staff

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	14,825	7	2,118	9,013	.000
Within Groups	22,322	95	0,235		
Total	37,147	102			

The independent samples t-test analysis revealed that women ($M = 4.59$) exhibit higher communication skills than men ($M = 4.08$), with the difference being statistically significant ($p < .001$). Additionally, kindergarten teachers (PE60, $M = 4.68$) outperform primary school teachers (PE70, $M = 4.16$) in communication skills, with the difference also statistically significant ($p < .001$). Married teachers ($M = 4.54$) demonstrated higher communication skills than single teachers ($M = 4.24$), with this difference being statistically significant as well ($p = .021$). In contrast, no significant difference was found between permanent and substitute teachers ($p = .506$).

Table 11: T-test Analysis with 2-values

Comparison	Mean Value (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	τ (df)	P	dM	95% DE [Lower – Upper]
Gender						
Men	4.08	0.67	-4.09 (101)	< .001	-	0.51
Women	4.59	0.52				
Employment						
Permanent	4.44	0.61	-0.67 (101)	.506	-	0.15
Substitute	4.59	0,56				
Specialty						
PE60	4.68	0.42	4.79 (101)	< .001	0.52	[0.31, 0.74]
PE70	4.16	0.68				
Family Status						
Married	4.54	0.50	2.34 (101)	.021	0.30	[0.05, 0.55]
Single	4.24	0.76				

The ANOVA analysis revealed statistically significant differences in communication skills based on age ($p = 0.003$) and experience ($p = 0.007$), with the highest mean values found in the 60+ age group and the group with over 31 years of experience, respectively. Administrative experience did not show significant differences ($p = 0.052$). The type of school significantly affected communication skills ($p < 0.001$), with kindergartens having the highest mean value, particularly those with only one teacher. Geographical region did not show significant differentiation ($p = 0.129$); however, differences were observed between prefectures ($p = 0.001$), with Messinia presenting the highest mean value ($M = 4.68$) and Argolida the lowest ($M = 3.90$).

Table 12: ANOVA Analysis with More than 2 Values

Features	Teams	Df	F	P	Observations
Age	5	4, 98	4.314	.003	Significant differences, with the 60+ age group showing the highest mean values
Previous experience	7	6, 96	3.156	.007	Significant differences, with the 31+ years of experience group showing the highest mean values
Administrative experience	4	3, 99	2.668	.052	Non-significant differences
School	8	7, 95	9.013	< .001	Significant differences were observed, with kindergartens showing the highest mean values
Region	3	2, 100	2.088	.129	Non-significant differences
Prefecture	6	5, 97	4.700	.001	Significant differences, with Messinia showing the highest mean values

4.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews were based on a question guide prepared according to the principles of thematic coding, in order to explore in depth the experiences and attitudes of principals towards communication in school.

4.5.1 Communication Skills and Approaches: Organizing, Participating and Managing Difficulties in Meetings

To ensure clarity and efficiency in meetings with the teachers' association, school principals adopt a structured and strategic approach to organizing the agenda and guiding discussions. They prepare a clear agenda with specific topics and objectives for each meeting, communicating it to participants in a timely manner. Topics are prioritized, starting with the simplest, while discussions remain focused on key points, emphasizing majority decision-making. The principals' neutral stance, encouragement of teamwork, and systematic recording of actions contribute to effective collaboration and problem-solving.

In addition, to encourage the participation of all members, especially the more reserved teachers, principals employ various techniques. These include targeted questions, the "round table" method, and anonymous written contributions, allowing even hesitant members to share their opinions. Personal invitations to more hesitant teachers further enhance participation, while fostering a climate of encouragement and active listening ensures that every voice is valued. Some principals opt for open discussion without specific techniques, believing it naturally promotes engagement, always striving to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves.

Despite efforts to ensure organization and participation, meetings with the teachers' association are not without challenges, especially when disagreements or conflicts arise. Principals often struggle with differing educational philosophies, strong disagreements, and difficulties in reaching collective decisions. To manage these situations, they seek common ground, maintain a neutral stance, and promote mutual respect. Additionally, effective time management and ensuring equal participation pose additional challenges. In cases of intense disputes, principals may postpone decisions or adjust proposals to achieve consensus. In remote areas, scheduling meetings at suitable times presents an additional obstacle to the smooth functioning of the teachers' association.

Overall, principals with strong communication skills and effective approaches strive to create an environment of open and constructive dialogue, successfully addressing challenges related to both organization and group dynamics in school meetings. Specifically, participants reported:

D4: *"I set predetermined goals. (.) I encourage active participation, ensuring clear decisions".*

D2: *"(...) The first and most essential step is to create a clear agenda and communicate it to everyone in a timely manner (.) Then, it is important to prioritize the topics. (...) During the meeting, the presentation of the topics must be concise and clear. Our role is to guide the discussion in a neutral but supportive way, so that everyone feels comfortable participating.*

D10: *"(.) I follow active listening to a great extent to hear the needs and desires of the teachers. = If there is a teacher who does not take the floor, I address him personally so that he has the opportunity to express his position".*

D3: *"Through active listening and encouragement, every point of view is expressed".*

D9: *"The biggest challenge is dealing with teachers who exhibit inappropriate behavior due to stereotypes, narcissism and manipulative attitudes".*

D1: *"Teachers often have different educational philosophies and approaches to teaching. This can lead to disagreements about methods, programs or discipline in the classroom. (.) Combining different points of view requires flexibility to find common solutions that satisfy all members. (...) When confrontations become intense, it is difficult to reach consensus, which can delay decision-making".*

D6: *"Intervening to smooth out the conflict, but without taking sides. = In essence, keeping equal distances".*

4.5.2 Modern Communication Trends

Regarding the use of technological tools to organize and prepare for teachers' association meetings, it appears that principals frequently use platforms such as email, Viber, and Webex. These tools facilitate communication, information, and task sharing. Webex, in particular, is primarily used for online meetings, enabling the participation of members who cannot attend in person. In smaller schools, where direct communication is easier, the use of technology is less frequent, but its value in enhancing collaboration is recognized.

Regarding the extent to which these tools improve the communication and organizational process, principals agree that they contribute significantly to the effectiveness of communication. They enable both immediate and asynchronous communication, facilitating the distribution of materials, updates, and information sharing. Additionally, features such as easy message retrieval and reduced delays help prevent misunderstandings. However, to fully leverage the benefits of digital tools in school administration, it is essential to follow best practices and adhere to legislative guidelines.

In particular, the Directors replied:

D11: *"The use of technological tools is very frequent and greatly facilitates our work. = E-mail, Webex and Viber are the most commonly used".*

D8: *"Not very often, as I work in a small school where communication between members is direct and occurs daily. (.) However, when I do use these tools, the response is immediate".*

D7: "Yes, I believe that the use of these tools can improve organization and help greatly in communication between members as they can share their opinions, discuss and implement their ideas much faster without having to spend time in person".

4.5.3 School Comparison: Challenges, Communication Requirements, and Meeting Dynamics

School principals encounter various challenges when coordinating teacher teams, influenced by both the size and type of the school (kindergarten or primary school). In larger schools, the primary difficulties involve managing communication among a greater number of teachers, coordinating different groups, and achieving consensus in meetings. These factors can lead to delays, tensions, and challenges in decision-making. In smaller schools, while communication tends to be more direct, collaboration is affected by limited resources and the multiple roles teachers must undertake. The use of technological tools, such as Viber, has proven beneficial in improving coordination and communication efficiency.

The size of the teachers' association significantly influences the dynamics of meetings. In larger associations, communication can be more challenging due to the high number of participants, increasing the risk of dominant voices overshadowing others and the formation of small groups with differing interests. However, these associations also offer a wider range of perspectives and greater opportunities for initiatives and collective actions. Conversely, smaller associations benefit from more direct and flexible communication, allowing for quicker decision-making. However, the limited diversity of viewpoints can limit creativity and innovation.

Communication requirements also differ between kindergartens and primary schools. In kindergarten, communication is characterized by an emotional approach and direct contact, as teachers manage young children at an early stage of development. Cooperation between kindergarten teachers is close, and communication with parents is frequent and personal, focusing on the psycho-emotional development of children. In primary school, communication is more structured and analytical, with an emphasis on academic progress and the development of students' critical thinking. Meetings are more organized, and communication with parents mainly concerns the learning process of children.

Overall, successful school administration and effective communication within teachers' associations depend on the ability to adapt communication strategies to both the size of the school and the specific requirements of each educational level.

Specifically, participants answered:

D1: "Challenges in Large Schools: (.) Difficulty in communication and collaboration. Complexity in coordinating different groups". D2: "The collaboration of the teaching team can be affected by the size of the school. In smaller schools, relationships are usually more direct and personal, (.) while in larger ones, more coordination and organized communication channels are required".

D5: *“(.) The number of members affects it, because there is friction”.*

D11: *“I believe that the size of the teachers’ association negatively affects the dynamics of the meetings, as most of the time, the larger the association, the more difficult the association’s decisions become. = In smaller associations, all opinions are heard more easily and the best decision for the school unit is usually found faster”.*

4.5.4 Observation

From the observations made during the interviews, it was found that there were various reactions of the principals towards the proposed changes and the improvement of cooperation in the Teachers' Associations. Most showed a positive attitude, with open body language (such as interviewee 3's strong gestures) and expressions of enthusiasm, especially when technological tools and organisational improvements were discussed. For example, interviewee 6 responded immediately and in a firm tone when referring to the need for continuous feedback and collaborative functioning. However, there were also signs of reticence, with defensive postures (such as crossing his arms or withdrawing his body) and serious or thoughtful facial expressions, particularly when issues of bureaucracy or time management were raised. Despite the concerns, managers acknowledged the need to strengthen trust and cooperation, expressing their intention to actively engage in more flexible and meaningful processes. Overall, their attitude shows that implementing change takes time, support and adaptability.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

This research highlighted the importance of the communication skills and practices of school principals through the combined analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Overall, the results show that principals seek to promote a climate of collaboration and open communication, incorporating both technological tools and practices of active listening and democratic dialogue. These results align with the perspectives of Goleman (2011), Tsompanaki (2017) and Ananda, Bahrin, Usman & Murniati (2025).

Principals exhibit a high level of collaboration and supportive communication, as reflected in both the high scores on quantitative scales and qualitative evidence confirming the democratic nature of their processes. However, conflict management remains a significant challenge, with all members emphasizing the need for flexibility and transparency.

An important finding of the research concerns the similarities and differences between kindergartens (PE60) and primary schools (PE70). At both educational levels, principals recognize the importance of collaboration and adapt their communication strategies according to the needs of their respective institutions. However, kindergarten teachers tend to rate their communication skills higher than primary school teachers, likely due to the nature of their work, which requires closer and more personal interactions.

Additionally, the dynamics of the teaching staff size differ significantly. Primary school principals must manage larger groups of teachers, increasing the complexity of communication processes and requiring more structured and systematic approaches. In contrast, kindergartens, with their smaller teaching teams, allow for more direct and personal communication. However, this also presents challenges in managing diverse opinions. These findings align with the conclusions of Tok (2002), Şengüli & Özkanii (2021) and Çaybaş & Ordu (2022).

Additionally, the findings of this study revealed that the size of the teachers' association significantly influences the level of communication skills. Specifically, it was found that principals in smaller school units, such as single- and two-seat kindergartens, demonstrated higher communication skills compared to those in larger units. In contrast, lower communication skill levels were recorded in single- to three-seat primary schools, likely due to the increased complexity involved in managing larger associations. These results indicate that the dynamics of the school unit's size shape both the communication needs and the strategies employed.

Also, the dynamics of the size of the teaching staff association differ significantly. Primary school principals are required to manage larger groups of teachers, which increases the complexity of communication and requires more structured and systematic approaches. In contrast, kindergartens, due to their smaller scale, favor more direct and personal communication. However, this can also present challenges in managing the diversity of opinions within a close-knit team.

The use of technological tools, such as Viber and Webex, is recognized at both educational levels as a valuable practice for enhancing communication. However, their implementation is influenced by user familiarity and local specificities. In primary schools, where larger teaching teams require more structured coordination, the need for systematic organization is even greater. These findings align with the arguments of Cox & McLeod (2014).

Overall, the research highlights the need for principals to adapt their communication strategies to the circumstances of each school unit. The differences between kindergartens and primary schools emphasize the need for distinct approaches to effectively manage communication and foster a collaborative environment. The findings reinforce the idea that balancing administrative skills with a human-centered approach is essential for successful educational leadership.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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