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Effects of Communication Strategies on the Performance of Public Organisations in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Importantly, the relevance of communication keeps advancing as the world becomes a Global village. The need to become visible to the world has made many organisations to embrace new technology that would increase organizational performance. There are also many issues affecting communication ranging from difference in sex, role of silence, inference of government and cross-cultural inference. The problem that led to the study is the disputes and delays in the access to information that would increase performance of staff. In lieu of the above problem the study examines the impact of effective communication strategies on the performance of public organization. The survey research method was adopted for the study and the study relied much on secondary and primary data. The population of this research work was 1573 employees drawn for the six (6) broad categories, based on mandate and the following core functions: financial; Marketing; regulatory; training and research, human resource and customer service. The sample size of 319 was determined using Taro Yamane technique and stratified sampling. Multiple regression analysis was used to test and analyze the hypotheses. The results from the study reveal that effective communication strategies have a significant impact on the performance of organisations in Nigeria particularly Nigerian communications commission. The study conclude that effective communication is the remedy to effective and efficient management performance of employees in an organization and recommends among others that management of Nigerian communications commission should introduce training programmes in the organization whereby junior workers would be taught how to communicate effectively. This is necessary because poor academic background of these workers constitute problems to effective communication in the organization.

Keywords: Communication, strategy, performance, organisation

1. Introduction

Communication is a many-sided phenomenon that means different things to different people. It is a process of a means of access to the mind or thought of another. According to Kramer (1999), communication can also be seen as a reduction of uncertainty, thus, communication is an exchange of meanings Accordingly, for organizations and humans as a social being, communication has a vital importance, whether pros or cons are an inseparable piece of life and also it has an important role on all activities aimed at gaining organizational objectives.

Today, however, more and more workers find out that an important aspect of their work is communication which is the mutual exchange of understanding, originating with the receiver that leads to effective and efficient work performance in an organization because it's the essence of management. Effective Communication is significant for managers in the organizations so as to perform the basic functions of management, i.e., Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling. Communication helps managers to perform their jobs and responsibilities. Communication serves as a foundation for planning. All the essential information must be communicated to the managers who in-turn must communicate the plans so as to implement them. Organizing also requires effective communication with others about their job task. Similarly, leaders as managers must communicate effectively with their subordinates so as to achieve the team goals.

Controlling is not possible without written and oral communication. Managers devote a great part of their time in communication. They generally devote approximately 6 hours per day in communicating. They spend great time on face to face or telephonic communication with their superiors, subordinates, colleagues, customers or suppliers. Managers also use Written Communication in form of letters, reports or memos wherever oral communication is not feasible. Organization managers use effective communication strategies to develop a supportive work environment that fosters organizational success and performance (Keyton 2013). Managers spend more than 75% of their work time actively communicating with employees (Farahbod, Salimi, & Dorostkar, 2013).

According to Bass (1985), employees choose to perform tasks out of identification with the managers or with the organization's goals and objectives. This relationship results in the employee's basic agreement with the norms to which they are required to perform. Thus, the flow of communication can create identification with workers internalizing desirable values, as regarding an organizations goals and objective. However, better performance can be achieved only when there is a reasonable level of expectation-fit and when the social exchange between managers and employees is fair

and equal (Wang 2005). Within the perspective of human resource management, it has often been theorized that employees' knowledge, abilities and skills will enable them to be good performers when they are hired. Thus, the management must gear its policies and objectives in such a manner that employees perform their work and do their assigned task.

To develop a communication strategy, employers should begin with linking communication to the strategic plan, including the organization's mission, vision and values; its strategic goals and objectives; and its employment brand. HR professionals may initially think of communication mainly in the context of delivering messages to employees about business issues, policies and procedures, but two-way communication plays an essential role in a comprehensive communication strategy. Listening to employee issues and concerns builds loyalty and improved productivity. Organizational leaders can learn through listening about issues or concerns *before* they become formal grievances or lawsuits. They can also discover potential employee relations issues and learn about attitudes toward terms and conditions of employment

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In an organization, the manager has to read, speak, write, listen, observe and supervise, and these are all strategies of communication. He uses letters, and memos for written communication. Hence any act by which one person gives to or receives from person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or effective state is regarded as communication. However, the effectiveness of communication differs from one firm to another.

Organization managers use effective communication strategies to develop a supportive work environment that fosters organizational success and performance (Keyton 2013). Managers spend more than 75% of their work time actively communicating with employees (Farahbod, Salimi, & Dorostkar, 2013). Managers who use communication effectively have a better understanding of how their communication strategies motivate organizations performance (Bisel & Messer smith, 2012). Ineffective communication may increase misunderstandings, damage relationships, break trust, and increase anger and hostility. Ineffective communication may stem from poorly aligned strategy, a failure to execute the strategy, the use of the wrong communication vehicle, bad timing and even nuances such as word choice or tone of voice. The specific problem is that some organizations lack effective communication strategies to motivate employees into higher performance for the organization.

Therefore, it may be stated that organizational communication strategies may be beneficial for some businesses, while it may not be for others as a result of variations in the environment, practices, noise, contexts and cultures amongst others influencing factors. Based on the above perception, this research is using a contextualized and literature-based research instrument to measure the application of the investigated constructs for an understanding of the impact of effective communication strategies on the performance of public organisations in Nigeria using Nigerian Communications Commission as a focus of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of effective communication strategies on the performance of public organizations in Nigeria with particular reference to Nigeria Communications Commission, Abuja.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study will be to examine the impact of effective communication strategies on the performance of public organisations in Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:

- Determine the impact of audio/telephone communication strategy on the performance of an organization
- Determine the effects of face-to-face meeting communication strategy on the performance of an organization

1.3. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses was formulated in the null form and tested with the aid of proper statistical tools and well-structured questionnaires that were effectively administered so as to achieve stated research objectives. The hypotheses are as follows:

- H₁: There is no significant relationship between audio/telephone communication strategy and organization performance
- H₂: There is no significant relationship between face-to-face meeting communication strategy and organization performance

1.4. Research Method

The study was carried out by primarily through the survey method and interview of employees in to Nigeria Communications Commission, Abuja. Secondary data were obtained through books, journals, and internet. Empirical works of other scholars were consulted. A simple size of 319 was obtained from the population of 1573 at 5% error tolerance and 95% degree of freedom using Yamane's statistical formula $319(100\%)$ of the questionnaires distributed were returned. The questionnaire was designed in Likert scale format. The researchers conducted a pre-test on the questionnaire to ensure the validity of the instrument. Pearson moment product co-efficients and regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Organizational Communication

Communication in general takes place inside and between three main subject categories: human beings, living organisms in general and communication-enabled devices (for example sensor networks and control systems). Communication in the category of living organisms (studied in the field of bio semiotics) usually occurs through visual, auditory, or biochemical means. Human communication is unique for its extensive use of language.

Communication involves the exchange of information between individuals through a system of symbols, signs, or behaviours. Communicating may be non-verbal or verbal. Non-verbal communication is important to successful relationships in the workplace and may include body movements, facial expression, posture, and interpersonal distance. Non-verbal communication is also associated with social behaviour and can be viewed as a conveyor of emotion. Sixty-five to seventy-five percent of most communication is nonverbal and includes cues about what we sense, feel, and think about others (Schwartz, 2012). Verbal communication refers to the transmission of language and messages from a sender to a receiver. In conjunction with non-verbal communication, these modes are two types of communication traditionally found within organizations. Formal communication has set regulations and channels from which it flows through the hierarchy of an organization.

Communication has been widely accepted by scholars and academics as the life blood of an organization because communication is needed for exchanging information, exchanging opinions, making plans and proposals, reaching agreement, executing decisions, sending and fulfilling orders and conducting sales. When communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist, and individual uncoordinated activities return in an organization. So, effective communication strategies in an organization are a virtual as the blood of life.

Blalock, (2005) defines communication as “the transmission and reception of ideas, feelings and attitudes verbally or non-verbally to produce a favourable response. Draft (2000) defines communication as “the process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more people usually with the intention to motivate or influence behavior. Communication refers to the exchange of information between a sender (source) and a receiver (destination) so that it is received, understood and leads to action.

Ugbojah (2001) defines communication as “the process which involves all acts of transmitting messages to channels which link people to the languages and symbolic which are used to transmit such messages. It is also the means by which such messages are received and stored. It includes the rules, customs and conventions which define and regulate human relationship and events”. In its simplest form, however, communication is the transmission of a message from a source to receive or the process of creating shared meaning. It has been shown that there exist various definitions for communication, as there are different disciplines. While some definitions are human centred, others are not. For example, communication system may incorporate computers, as well as less sophisticated reproducing devices such as photocopiers. A photocopier may see communication as meaning a different thing from the way a marketer preconceives it. Similarly, a gospel preacher may think communication is something, which is of course different from what a journalist thinks it is. Therefore, there is no single definition of communication agreed upon by scholars.

Performance is referred to as being about doing the work, as well as being about the results achieved. It can be defined as the outcomes of work because they provide the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of an organization, customer satisfaction and economic contributions. Performance is an act or process of carrying out actions and activities to accomplish an intended outcome. We live in a performance-based culture whether in our personal or professional lives. To achieve improvement in any given performance however, one must first know what defines a quality performance. It is therefore important to understand the factors that play a relevant role in any performance. Performance measurement is the process of collecting, analyzing, and/or reporting information on the performance of an individual, group, organization, system, or component (Upadhyya, Munir, & Blount, 2014). It can involve a review of processes, strategies, approaches, and parameters to track performance against intended targets.

2.2. Effective Organization Communication Strategies

Fletcher and Major (2006) contend that the world is growing smaller as technology advances and the creation of more advanced technology introduces organisations to different strategies of communication, spanning both time and geographical distance. Fletcher and Major (2006) suggest four basic strategies are used in workplace communication (1) face-to-face meetings, (2) audio or telephone exchanges, (3) video mediated conferences, and (4) computer-mediated text transfers. In addition to those four, Charles (2005) notes organisational publications, such as the company newsletter, are also a strategy for information.

Recent literature on communication strategies almost exclusively focuses on media richness theory. Salmon and Joiner, (2005) defines media richness theory as a “prescriptive model in which achieving a match between information processing requirements (e.g., uncertainty and equivocality reduction) and communication strategies (e.g., face-to-face interactions and written memos) was posited as essential for organizational effectiveness. Essentially the premise is that lean media is used by managers for simple topics and rich media is for more complex topics (Sheer & Chen, 2004) so the focus of media richness theory is on the choices made by the managers, not necessarily the employees.

According to this perspective there are four factors that influence media richness: “the ability of the medium to transmit multiple cues (e.g., vocal inflection, gestures), immediacy of feedback, language variety, and the personal focus of the medium. Media richness theory typically places strategies on a continuum from rich to lean media with face-to-face

communication considered the richest followed by telephone, email and written documents (Salmon & Joiner, 2005). The media richness continuum places written documents as the leanest strategy of communication. Sheer and Chen (2004) state that there are three separate categories of written documents within media richness theory: personal written text (letters, notes, memos); formal written text (documents, bulletins) and formal numeric text (computer output, statistical reports).

2.3. Audio/Telephone Communication Strategy and Organization Performance

According to media richness theory, the telephone is the second richest strategy after face-to-face communication; however, Salmon and Joiner (2005) state that recent research suggests the telephone “as a mode of transmitting and receiving management information, has been superseded by the use of email, because of the superior functionality and usability features of email. In agreement, Salmon and Joiner, (2005) also notes that the telephone is not a good choice for equivocal communication with “refuses to answer the phone.

Telephone communication is one of the most important forms of communication within the company. Although today its use is being replaced by other forms of communication (such as email), phone use is one of the most common means by which to materialize both internal and external communications. It is very important in business because it is the medium through which the first contact with, or from the company is made. So, before any personal contact, the usual thing is to make a phone call to arrange an interview or to specify any matter or topic. The interlocutor at the other end of the line will form an idea about the company depending on the impression after this first telephone contact. In any case, beyond the business sector, it is also crucial to follow a proper technique when having telephone conversations, as it is an essential tool to achieve our goals in a phone call, either as its senders or its recipients. From the standpoint of business communication, telephone use has an enormous advantage: interlocutors don't see each other, and this may work for solving tricky or unfavourable situations. As interlocutors don't see each other, the arguments provided in a telephone conversation may be more solid and credible if we apply the proper techniques and procedures. Another advantage of this type of communication is that we can do other things as we speak, such as taking notes, search for something on the computer, ask something to a work mate (always with discretion), and so on. Thus, we may say that applying the appropriate telephone techniques is essential to get the most out of this communication tool in business. Thanks to advances in technology, telephone communication devices have evolved generating new services and expanding its capabilities

2.4. Face-To-Face Meeting Communication Strategy and Organization Performance

Face-to-face communication is considered the richest strategy primarily due to the ability to give immediate feedback as well as the amount of information shared during the interaction in the form of verbal cues (tone of voice, pitch, and volume) as well as non-verbal. Non-verbal communication is defined in its broadest sense as “communication that transcends the bare elements of the written or spoken word. According to Gabbott and Hogg (2001) there are four key strategies of non-verbal communication including “proxemics (the use of personal space and distance); kinesics (body postures and movement); oculosics (the communicative aspects of eye behaviour such as gaze and movement) and vocalic (paralanguage such as vocal tone and intonation).

In addition, Gabbott and Hogg (2001) emphasize that non-verbal communication takes place in every interaction, whether intentional or not, and can be impacted by three specific variables: gender, culture and personal traits. These factors can affect the interpretation of the non-verbal cues and often creating misunderstandings. Each of these four key strategies of non-verbal communication are particularly important in the context of media richness theory, as the media richness varies depending on the strength and presence of nonverbal and verbal cues (Sheer & Chen, 2004).

The proponents of face-to-face communication suggest that it is the most preferred method of communication by employees with interactions between managers and staff widely commended as beneficial (Ko & Yeh, 2013) and more effective than information from a central communication department. Face-to-face team briefings are considered a vehicle for sharing the philosophy and values of the organisation, the strategy and “give people the opportunity to ask questions, offer opinions, and give and receive feedback – unique advantages over even the best print publications, video programs and e-mail messages. Additionally, rich media can create a closer relationship between a manager and subordinate as well as a more personal focus.

2.5. The Role of Organizational Communication in Organizational Performance

Effective Communication is significant for managers in the organizations so as to perform the basic functions of management, i.e., Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling.

Communication helps managers to perform their jobs and responsibilities. Communication serves as a foundation for planning. All the essential information must be communicated to the managers who in-turn must communicate the plans so as to implement them. Organizing also requires effective communication with others about their job task. Similarly, leaders as managers must communicate effectively with their subordinates so as to achieve the team goals. Controlling is not possible without written and oral communication.

Managers devote a great part of their time in communication. They generally devote approximately 6 hours per day in communicating. They spend great time on face to face or telephonic communication with their superiors, subordinates, colleagues, customers or suppliers. Managers also use Written Communication in form of letters, reports or memos wherever oral communication is not feasible.

Thus, we can say that “effective communication is a building block of successful organizations”. In other words, communication acts as organizational blood.

The importance of communication in an organization can be summarized as follows:

- Communication promotes motivation by informing and clarifying the employees about the task to be done, the manner they are performing the task, and how to improve their performance if it is not up to the mark.
- Communication is a source of information to the organizational members for decision-making process as it helps identifying and assessing alternative course of actions.
- Communication also plays a crucial role in altering individual's attitudes, i.e., a well-informed individual will have better attitude than a less-informed individual. Organizational magazines, journals, meetings and various other forms of oral and written communication help in molding employee's attitudes.
- Communication also helps in socializing. In today's life the only presence of another individual fosters communication. It is also said that one cannot survive without communication.
- As discussed earlier, communication also assists in controlling process. It helps controlling organizational member's behaviour in various ways. There are various levels of hierarchy and certain principles and guidelines that employees must follow in an organization. They must comply with organizational policies, perform their job role efficiently and communicate any work problem and grievance to their superiors. Thus, communication helps in controlling function of management.

2.6. Test of Hypotheses

- H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between audio/telephone communication strategy and organization performance

	Audio/Telephone Communication	Organization Performance
Pearson Correlation	1	.536 **
Audio/telephone Sig. (2-tailed)	200	.000
N		319
Pearson Correlation	.536 **	1
Organization performance Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	200
N	319	

Table 1: Table of Correlation between Audio/Telephone Communication and Organization Performance Correlations
 **. Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

According to above calculations it is observed that amount of correlation coefficient between organization performance and audio/telephone communication strategy is equal to 53.6 per cent and considering that a significant level is less than 5%. Then we can say that there is a positive relationship between organization performance and audio/telephone communication strategy. This implies that one percent increase in audio/telephone communication strategy in Nigerian Communications Commission will lead to 53.6% increase in organization performance.

2.6.1. Regression analysis test of organization performance and audio/telephone communication strategy

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.965 ^a	.716	.586	3.79952

Table 2

a. Predictors: (Constant), Audio/Telephone Communication

Regression coefficient of $R = .965$ or 96.5% indicate that relationship exist between independent variables and dependent variable. The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.716$ which show that 71.6% of variation in organization performance is explained by audio/telephone communication strategy. The adjusted R-square in the table shows that the dependent variable, (organization performance) is affected by 58.6% by independent variable (audio/telephone communication strategy). It shows that audio/telephone communication strategy is responsible for effective performance of Nigerian Communications Commission.

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant) audio/telephone communication strategy	12.310	.901		13.656	.002
	1.056	.085	.536	12.426	.000

Table 3

a. Dependent Variable: Organization Performance

The coefficient of determination for audio/telephone communication strategy (ATCOMM) in Nigerian Communications Commission is positive (1.056) and is highly significant (0.001) in ensuring organization performance. The p-value of 0.000 is less than the t-statistic value of 12.426 and the standard error value of 0.085. This implies that a unit increase in ATCOMM will lead to 1.056 increases in organization performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted that there is a significant relationship between audio/telephone communication strategy and organization performance.

- H_{04} : There is no significant relationship between face-to-face meeting communication strategy and organization performance

Correlations		
	organization performance	face-to-face meeting
Pearson Correlation	1	.697**
organization performance Sig. (2-tailed)	200	.000
N		319
Pearson Correlation	.697**	1
face-to-face meeting Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	200
N	319	

Table 4: Table of Correlation between Face-to-Face Meeting and Organization Performance

** Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

According to above calculations is observed that amount of correlation coefficient between face-to-face meeting communication strategy and organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission is equal to 69.7 per cent and considering that a significant level is less than 5%. Then can say that there is a positive relationship between organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission and face-to-face meeting communication strategy. This implies that one percent increase in face-to-face meeting communication strategy will lead to 69.7% increase in organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission.

2.6.2. Regression Analysis Test of Face-to-Face Meeting and Organization Performance

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.997 ^a	.986	.985	3.22600

Table 5

a. Predictors: (Constant), Face-to-Face Meeting

Regression coefficient of $R = .997$ or 99.7% indicate that relationship exist between independent variables and dependent variable. The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.986$ which show that 98.6% of variation in organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission is explained by face-to-face meeting communication strategy of Nigerian Communications Commission. The adjusted R-square in the table shows that the dependent variable, (organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission) is affected by 98.5% by independent variable (face-

to-face meeting communication strategy). It shows that face-to-face meeting communication strategy of Nigerian Communications Commission is responsible for organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission.

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	11.526	.637		18.083	.000
face-to-face meeting	3.254	.171	.697	19.038	.000

Table 6
Dependent Variable: Organization Performance

The coefficient of determination for face-to-face meeting communication strategy (FTFC) in Nigerian Communications Commission is positive (3.254) and is highly significant (0.000) in ensuring organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission. The p-value of 0.000 is less than the t-statistic value of 19.038 and the standard error value of 0.171. This implies that a unit increase in FTFC will lead to 3.254 increases in organization performance of Nigerian Communications Commission. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between face-to-face meeting communication strategy and organization performance.

3. Conclusion

It is clear evident from the findings of this study that effective communication strategy is an important tool for organization performance. Effective communication leads to organizational performance. This is reasonable evidence that if an organization is effective in its communication, it will be effective overall. Any organization without a well-established communication system no matter its personnel policies may be bound to operate in uncertainties and risk. Communication is not an independent activity of management but an essential part of what every worker in Nigerian Communications Commission, the situation showed that there is a proper and effective communication system in the organisation. The workers are happily working co-operatively and that helped in enhancing their productivity. The organisation operates both upward and downward communication channel as opened by the personnel manager. The study concludes that effective communication strategies such as audio/telephone, video-mediated conferencing, internal memos, face-to-face meeting and computer-mediated text transfers has a significant impact on the performance of organizations in Nigerian particularly Nigerian Communications Commission.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study on the effects of effective communication strategies on the performance of public organization in Nigeria and in light of data collected by personal observation and though the questionnaire conducted in the organization; it is necessary to offer the following recommendations.

- Management of Nigerian Communications Commission should introduce training, programmes in the organization whereby junior workers would be taught how to communicate effectively. This is necessary because poor academic background of these workers constitute problems to effective communication in the organization.
- Management of Nigerian Communications Commission should continue to keep in touch with the workers on new development in the organisation. This would enable workers to know what is going on in the organization and this sustains their interest in working assiduously.
- Management of Nigerian Communications Commission should not relent in encouraging free flow of information in the organization, as this would motivate workers and encourage them to achieve the goals of the organization.
- Workers of Nigerian Communications Commission should always seek for clarity in matter which is not clear to them from the management.

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