The Relationship between Organizational Communication and Job Performance of Employees of Selected Nigerian Brewing Industries

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Abstract

It is often said the employees are the greatest asset of any organization. In the light of this, the communication of these employees among themselves and with their immediate bosses and supervisors is considered as it relates to their job performance. This study therefore focused on the relationship between organizational communication and the job performance of employees of selected Nigerian brewing industries. The study made use of two brewing industries in Oyo and Osun States of Nigeria. A sample of 200 employees was selected from the two industries. Two research instruments, the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) and the Role-Based Performance Scale (RBPS) were used in generating data. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational communication and job performance. The study recommended that managers need to ensure that the transfer of information within the organization is well-organized and provide feedbacks for the employees on the quality of the performance they put into their jobs.

Introduction
Communication

Communication is a basic process of organization. When one conceives the organization as an ever-changing system of interactions (White, 1992), one notes that communication aids in the development and maintenance of organizational purposes as its members, motivate, inform and inspire each other. Structures are differentiated within the organization among different sub-units, each specializing in its own activities. All these sub-units use internal and external communication to coordinate their efforts. Moreover, the employment of hierarchies within organizations for the exercise of control and monitoring, so that purposes may be achieved with some success, is mainly based on communication. Such exercise of influence may be informal as in persuasion or more formal as in authority; however, communicational efforts are a precondition either way.

In addition to serving as the matrix which links members together in organizations in all these varieties of ways, the communication system serves as a vehicle by which organizations are embedded in their environments: the inputs and outputs of organizations are mediated through communication. As Barnard (1938) put it: "In an exhaustive theory of organization, communication would occupy a central place because the structure, extensiveness, and scope of the organization are almost entirely determined by communication techniques". In other words, communication is the 'nervous system' that makes organizations and organizational units cohere and permit their members to coordinate all work efforts. Research led Bavelas (1950) to conclude that "communication is not a secondary or derived aspect of organization – a 'helper' of the other and more basic functions. Rather, it is the essence of organized activity and is the basic process out of which all other functions derive". Moreover, communication has been described as the heart of group interaction and the essence of social systems.

As research on organization efforts has shown the structure of communication is of paramount importance due to three reasons: Organization efforts can hardly be organized in a formal fashion because the individual duties cannot be precisely defined beforehand. Second, organization activities are denoted by a continuous maintenance of personnel, which inherently structures the skeleton of communication throughout time. And third, organization activities are mostly executed in teams and the most elementary component of teamwork quality is the communication within the team (Pinto, Pinto, Prescott, 1990). Also of concern is the communication among the individuals that make up the team and ultimately the organization as a whole. Accordingly, investigating the structure of communication within the organization's units will bring about essential knowledge to such organization as a complete self-sustaining entity.

Communication can be defined as the process by which a person, group, or organization transmits some type of information to another person, group, or organization (Greenberg and Baron, 2003). Communication serves four major functions within a group or organization: control, motivation, emotional expression, and information.

Communication acts to control member behaviour in several ways. Organizations have authority hierarchies and formal guidelines that employees are required to follow. When employees, for instance, are required to first communicate any job-related grievances to their immediate boss, to follow their job description, or to comply with company policies, communication is performing a control function. Communication fosters motivation by clarifying what is to be done, how well they are doing and what can be done to improve

performance if it's subpar. The formation of specific goals, feedback on progress towards goals, and the reinforcement of desired behaviour all stimulate motivation and require communication.

For many employees, their work group is a primary source for social interaction. The communication that takes place within the group is a fundamental mechanism by which members show their frustrations and feelings of satisfaction. Communication, therefore, provides a release for the emotional expression of feelings and for the fulfilment of social needs. The final function that communication performs relates to its role in facilitating decision-making. It provides the information that individuals and groups need to make decisions by transmitting the data to identify and evaluate alternative choices (Robbins, 2003).

For any communication to take place in the organization, it would take a process. The process is that the senders encode the messages and transmit them via one or more communication channels to the receiver who then decode them. The process continues as the original receiver sends feedback to the original sender.

Directions of Organizational Communication

The major methods of communication in the organization are oral (face-to-face or telephone conversation), written (memos, letters, e-mail, reports, etc) and nonverbal (facial expressions, gestures, body language, etc). As might be imagined, the nature and form of communication vary greatly as a function of people's relative positions within an organization. An organizational chart shows the formally prescribed patterns of communication in an organization. Different types of messages flow upward, downward, and horizontally throughout the organization.

- **Downward Communication:** This is the communication that flows from one level of a group or organization to the next level below. When managers, supervisors, and team leaders communicate with the employees that are directly under them, downward communication is used. It is used to assign goals, provide job instructions, inform employees of policies and procedures, point out problems that need attention, and offer feedback about performance. Downward communication doesn't have to be oral or face-to-face contact alone. When management sends letters to employees to intimate them with the organization's new sick leave policy for instance or an e-mail from a team leader to the members, reminding them of an upcoming deadline, are examples of the downward flow.
- **Upward Communication:** This flows to a higher level in the group or organization from lower levels. It is used to provide feedback to higher-ups, inform them of progress toward goals, and relay current problems, and suggestions for improvement and new ideas. Some organizational examples of upward communication are performance reports prepared by employees in lower management for review by middle and top management, suggestion boxes, employee attitude surveys, grievance procedures, superior-subordinate discussions, and informal "gripe" sessions in which employees have the opportunity to identify and discuss problems with their boss or representatives of higher management.
- **Lateral communication:** This type takes place among members of the same work group, among members of work groups at the same level, among members at the same level, or among any horizontally equivalent personnel. This communication is effective and necessary to save time and facilitate coordination. More often, they are informally created to short-circuit the vertical hierarchy and expedite action. Lateral communication between departments also allows the sharing of news and information and helps in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships on the job (Greenberg and Baron, 2003; McShane and Von Glinow, 2003).

Job Performance

Organizations need highly performing individuals in order to meet their goals, to deliver the products and services they specialize in, and finally to achieve competitive advantage. Performance is also important for the individual employee. Accomplishing tasks and performing at a high level can be a source of satisfaction, with feelings of mastery and pride. Low performance and not achieving the goals might be experienced as dissatisfying or even as a personal failure. Moreover, performance—if it is recognized by others within the organization—is often rewarded by financial and other benefits. Performance is a major—although not the only—prerequisite for future career development and success in the labour market. Although there might be exceptions, high performers get promoted more easily within an organization and generally have better career opportunities than low performers (Van Scotter, Motowidlo, & Cross, 2000).

Job performance consists of the observable behaviour that people do in their jobs that are relevant to the goals of the organization and that can be scaled (measured) in terms of each individual's proficiency (that is, level of contribution) (Campbell, 1993). Job performance is of interest to organizations because of the importance of high productivity in the workplace. Campbell (1990) explains that performance is not the consequence of behaviour, but rather the behaviour themselves. In other words, performance consists of the behaviour that employees actually engage in which can be observed.

In the context of work settings, the performance of all individuals that make up the organization are targeted towards the achievement of the goals of the organization. The overall productivity of the organization is hinged on the performance of each individual within the organization. Contemporary organizations in today's context are characterized by such constantly changing dynamics as complexity of customization and competitiveness, importance of people rather than strategies; reliance on technology and the rise of knowledge economy both for the individual employees and the organization as a whole among many other organizational issues.

Literature Review

The assumption that effective internal communication is essential to the effective functioning of any organization is supported by a voluminous body of theoretical and empirical literature. Hall (2002) proposes that effective communication should consist of "accurate information with the appropriate emotional overtones to all members who need the communication content. This assumes neither too much nor too little information is in the system and that it is clear from the outset who can utilize what is available".

It is broadly recognized that effective communication also results in a number of positive outcomes for managers. These include increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and greater commitment to organizational goals (Clampitt and Downs, 1993; Pincus, 1986). In turn, communication practices that succeed in maintaining an informed and empowered workforce offer many benefits to staff such as improved morale and better working relationships (Brooks, Callicoat & Siegerdt, 1979). Likert (1967) described communication satisfaction as an "intervening variable" of job satisfaction, influenced by "causal variables" such as leadership strategies, organizational structure and climate. Subsequent studies have also reported that communication satisfaction plays an important role in overall job satisfaction (Carriere & Bourque, 2009).

Although scholars recognize the importance of good communication in organizations, in practice the efficiency, or rather inefficiency, of communication systems and structures is often overlooked. Greenbaum and White (1976) noted that "communication problems will always exist in complex organizations. The challenge for management is to minimize the level of dysfunctional operation". However, identifying the causes of poor communication is a complex task. As Buchanan & Huczynski (2004) assert that the factors affecting communication are wide---ranging and often depend on multiple variables; "organizations systematically inhibit communication through hierarchical structures, power and status differences, the design and gendered differentiation of jobs, the nature of employment contracts, physical layouts, and rules".

One of the most important features of the communication flows that operate in organizations are those that regulate interaction between supervisors and subordinates (Eisenberg, Monge, & Farace, 1984). It has often been observed that managers or team leaders spend most of their time in informal interaction (e.g. Burns, 1954; Mintzberg, 1973; Van de Bunt, 1998). Superiors are expected to provide direction and resources to help subordinates complete their tasks and contribute to the organization, but this interaction does not often match the ideal. On the one hand, researchers propose that the power difference between superiors and subordinates impedes the process of work (Walton, 1969), whereas others argue that power differences themselves are not troublesome and that superiors should have considerable power and high power needs (Kanter, 1977; McClelland, 1975). Research has been characterized by these contradicting views up to now. Centralization reflects the distributing of power and authority within a group. The more centralized a network, the more stringently it employs the coordination mechanism of direct supervision.

Communication is affected by the organizational structure, communication strategies and systems, employee-management relationships and by management and leadership styles and skills. Dependent upon how each of these factors are managed and employed in the workplace they can both promote good communication and constrain it. A lack or failure in anyone of them can contribute to poor communication, conflicts, lack of or reduced employee performance, employee disengagement and will be reflected in the capacity of the organization to meet its goals. Leadership styles and communication skills, along with the use of power and control and reactionary communication behaviours are all constraining factors in achieving communication competence (D'Aprix, 1996). Leaders need to have a high level of emotional intelligence if they are to develop good relationships with their employees. The attributes assigned to emotional intelligence include self awareness, impulse control, persistence, confidence, self-motivation, empathy, social deftness, trust-worthiness, adaptability, and the ability to work collaboratively (Cook and Hunsaker, 2001).

Research Hypotheses

Arising from the background of the study and the subsequent review of literature, the following hypotheses were generated for testing:-

- There is a significant relationship between organizational communication and job performance.
- There is a significant difference in the level of communication received on the job.

Methodology

Research Design

This study made use of descriptive survey design. It used questionnaire to collect data on the variables under investigation. The method was expected to show the relationship of organizational communication and job performance.

Population and Sample

The study population was employees from the selected brewing industries which are Seven-Up Bottling Company, Ibadan Depot, Ibadan and International Breweries Plc, Ilesa. The Brewing Companies were selected because they serve the South-West region of Nigeria and beyond and they are relatively autonomous in terms of operation and activities. The industries pull a combined total of above 400 employees from which the sample can be effectively drawn. The sample was drawn purposively from the various departments of the selected organizations which is the universe of this study. The study sample consisted of 50% of the entire workforce of each of the Brewing Companies. Selection cut across the junior, intermediate and senior levels of the organization using a ratio of 10:7:3 in a stratified manner. The ratio interprets that more junior employees who work on the factory lines were selected followed by employees who are the direct heads of the junior workers which constitute the intermediate level and the few senior workers who are in the top management of the industries. That is, 100 respondents were selected from the junior cadre, 70 respondents from the middle cadre, and 30 respondents from the senior cadre.

Procedure

Pre-survey visits were made to the selected organizations to collect information concerning the organizations' operation and activities. The visits were used to source for information about the employees' job schedules and to book appointments for the conduct of the data generation exercise. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents at their various departments. The questionnaire was handed down personally to the heads of the respondents' departments by the researcher. For ease of filling their responses, the respondents were given five working days to complete the questionnaire after which it was retrieved from them for further analysis.

Data Analysis

The table below describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study.

Table 1 – Distribution of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

VARIABLE	GROUP	SUBC	IBPLC	FREQ	%
GENDER	Male	72	65	137	68.5
	Female	33	30	63	31.5
	Total	**105**	**95**	**200**	**100**
AGE	19-30 years	58	48	106	53.0
	31-40 years	31	34	65	32.5
	41-50 years	15	9	24	12.0
	51-55 years	1	4	5	2.5
	Total	**105**	**95**	**200**	**100**
MARITAL STATUS	Single	44	44	88	44.0
	Married	59	48	107	53.5
	Divorced	2	2	4	2.0
	Separated	0	1	1	0.5
	Total	**105**	**95**	**200**	**100**
LEVEL IN ORG.	Junior	54	45	99	49.5
	Intermediate	34	37	71	35.5
	Senior	17	13	30	15.0
	Total	**105**	**95**	**200**	**100**
EDUCATION LEVEL	Primary	1	4	5	2.5
	Secondary	21	25	46	23.0
	OND	41	33	74	37.0
	HND	19	18	37	18.5
	University Degree	18	12	30	15.0
	Masters/Ph.D	5	3	8	4.0
	Total	**105**	**95**	**200**	**100**

There were 137 male respondents which indicate a 68.5% and females were 63 respondents constitute 31.5% of the sample size. 106 respondents (53%) fell in the category of age 19-30. The age category of 31-40 had 65 respondents (32.5%). There were 24 respondents (12%) in the age category of 41-50 while the age category of 51-55 had 5 respondents (2.5%). Respondents who are single constitute 44% i.e. 88 respondents. Married respondents have the highest percentage with 53.5% (107 respondents). Respondents who are divorced represent 2% of the sample size (4 respondents) while 0.5% i.e. 1 respondent is separated.

The three categories of levels in the two organizations are the Junior, Intermediate and Senior levels. Respondents in the Junior level were 99 (49.5%). The Intermediate level had 71 respondents (35.5%) while Senior level respondents in the study were 30 (15%). In the overall, the respondents with Primary education were 5 (2.5%) while respondents with Secondary education were 46 (23.0%). OND holders in the study consist of 74 respondents (37%) while HND holders were 37 (18.5%). Those who possess University degrees were 30 (15%) with those of Masters/Ph.D as 8 (4%).

Fourteen departments were identified in Seven-Up Bottling Company, Ibadan Depot. The departments are Security, Engineering, Administration, Accounts, Quality Control, Warehouse, Merchandizing, Cooperative, Marketing, Sales, Production, Electrical, and Transport. Security, Accounts, Merchandizing, Electrical, and Transport departments all had 4 respondents. Quality control department has the highest number of respondents from Seven-Up Bottling Company with 15 respondents closely followed by the Sales department with 14 respondents. Fourteen departments were also identified in International Breweries Plc, Ilesa and the numbers of the respondents from each department are presented in the diagram below. The departments are Security, Bottling, Administration, Accounts, Audit, Quality Control, Store, Finance, Marketing, Sales, Electrical, Personnel, Commercial, and Technical.

Results

H1: There is a significant relationship between organizational communication and job performance.
The hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between organizational communication and employees' job performance was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the result is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 2 – Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between organizational communication and job performance.

		communication	jobperf
Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	200	200
Job performance	Pearson Correlation	.480**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between organizational communication and job performance and it can be observed that there is a significant relationship between organizational communication and employees' job performance. [r (2, 198) = 0.480, p<0.05]. This value is significant at 0.05 level and it can be said that organizational communication is significantly related to job performance. Therefore the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between organizational communication and job performance is accepted.

H2: There is a significant difference in the level of communication received on the job.
An analysis of the level of communication employees receive on their job was tested in hypothesis two and the result is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 3 – Differences in level of communication

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Downward com	200	85.5950	11.90291
Upward com	200	46.7950	5.39430
Lateral com	200	70.8500	6.97861
Valid N (listwise)	200		

The table above shows the differences in the level of communication received by employees on their jobs. Downward communication in which information is passed from managers, leaders, and supervisors to their subordinates to undertake specific tasks and carry out the duties and responsibilities (Mean = 85.59) is the more prevalent of the level of communication within these industries. This is closely followed by Lateral communication which is the communication shared among employees who are on the same level, in the same work group or department, and who share similar tasks and duties (Mean = 70.85). The last is the Upward communication which involves the transmission of information from a lower level to a higher level i.e. from subordinates to superiors. This is used when there are reports, feedbacks, and suggestions to be given to superiors (Mean = 46.79).

Discussion

The first hypothesis in the study posits that there is a significant relationship between organizational communication and employees' job performance. Communication within the organizations was found to be significantly related to the job performance of employees within both brewing industries. The communication within an organization improves efficiency and ultimately the job performance of employees. When employers, directors and managers are able to regularly provide effective communication this in turn will lead to an increase in efficiency within the workplace. If employees are clear about the company's goals and how they have an important part to play in achieving these goals then there is likely to be greater productivity, in addition to a sense of being part of a team and of ownership.

This result is supported by the works of Pincus (1986) who in a field study of 327 hospital nurses, found a positive relationship between communication and job performance; but the communication-satisfaction link was stronger, particularly in supervisor communication, climate, and personal feedback. The study confirmed "the vital importance of employee-immediate supervisor communication on employee job satisfaction" (Pincus, 1986). On the other hand, the influence of communication upon an employee's job performance (usually measured by perceived quality and quantity of output) is clear.

The second hypothesis posits that there is a significant difference in the level of communication received. The results showed that all the three directions of communication were present in both organizations and that the more prevalent one was the downward communication in which instructions, tasks and responsibilities concerning job performance are passed to the employees by the managers. This is closely followed by the lateral communication which is the flow of information between people who are on the same level or in the same department within the organization which helps to maintain interpersonal relationships among workers. The last is the upward communication which is used by employees who have to give reports, feedbacks, complaints, and suggestions to their superiors. Downward communication is therefore said to produce better job performance for the selected brewing industries as this direction of communication ensures that employees are given the instructions, directions, and guidelines to perform their activities thereby resulting in improved communication and by extension their job performance.

Recommendations

The communication within an organization operates in a way to ensure that organizational goals are met. Therefore managers should ensure that employees receive instructions, directions, and guidelines to do their work in a simpler and more effective mode and that such instructions are easy to follow. They also need to create a platform whereby information concerning job description, specification, and requirements are well spelt out and as such stimulate an enthusiasm for the workers to give their best to the organization. Managers need to ensure that the transfer of information within the organization is well-organized and provide feedbacks for the employees on the quality of the performance they put into their jobs.

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