



**Effective Communication and Organisational Performance: Staff Perspective of
Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State**

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the role of effective communication on the performance of the staff of the ministry of basic and secondary education, Delta State. The methodology used was survey method, while the questionnaire serve as the research instrument. Findings revealed that effective communication within the ministry has an influence on staff job performance. This frequent communication has no doubt increases productivity and boosted the motivation and commitment of the staff towards their career projection and departmental growth. The study also revealed that though there are many ways in which the top cadre and middle cadre management staff who are heads of various departments in the ministry pass on information to their subordinates, the internal memo is the most commonly used method for downward communication. It was recommended among others that since effective communication is determined by both parties (encoder and decoder); it therefore becomes necessary that they must pursue the same objective, which is high performance rate in all departments of the ministry.

Keywords: Organisational, Strategies, Staff, Performance Measurement

1. Introduction

Communication is central to staff and organisational performance. Without communication, no organisation can function properly in its daily activities. This is the justification for requiring a minimum level of communicative skills and education in nearly all fields of human endeavour. Communication technologies are useful to an organisation because they aid service delivery. Chukwu and Agwu (2012) cited in Ale, V., and Omeneke, O. A. (2017) agree that the increasing use of information technology in all aspects of human lives makes effective use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) an indispensable skill for life. More so, Meryers & Allen (1997) cited in Edewor (2017) argued that effective communication involves an active relationship with the organisation in which the individual is willing to give something back to the organisation in order to assist the organisation to succeed and perform. Hence Aminu, Muhammad, Aliyu, Mukhar & Najib, (2019) defined an organisation as a collection of individuals coming together to pursue a common objective. Organisations are established and operated by individuals: and performance of these individuals either at individual levels or group translates to the performance of the organisation at large. The implication of this is that for effective and ideal communication to take place, it should be participatory, interactive and generate reactions in a certain but desired manner. Mckinney, Barker, Smith & Davis (2004) bear credence to the fact that communication is essential to



effective team performance and communications is like blood flow in human body. Therefore, any organisation that understands the importance of communication uses it in their organisational environment. Globally, all organisations, both private and public entities, rely on some form of communication to send their message across to their target audience. Neves et al (2012) argued that employees mostly hypes performance at workplace when effective communication is at its ultimate for instance, when the information about an organisation's policies and procedures are at its optimum level with openness and accuracy; and also, when the information provided is adequate, factual and has good feedback.

Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State is one of the largest ministries in Delta State Civil Service with the core mandate and onerous responsibility of formulating, implementing and regulating educational policies and programmes for the state, including overseeing the general administration of the Basic and Secondary school system in accordance with the goals and needs of Delta State government and in consonance with the National Policy on Education (NPE) and other relevant policies/programmes such as the Education For All (EFA), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2020 (now 2030) goals as well as the SMART Agenda of the state government. The ministry is structured under five divisions of basic education, secondary education, model education, special education and language project; field offices manned by Directors; 25 local government area offices headed by Chief Inspectors of Education (C.I.E.). In a nutshell, it is the responsibility of the Ministry to provide Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary/Technical Education for the young ones as well as provide basic literacy and life skill education for adult learners who had earlier in life missed the opportunity of getting such education while they were children. The essence of communication in the workplace is to enhance organisational performance through employee routine schedules. However, criticisms have been expressed in some quarters as to the effectiveness of the various techniques of communication commonly used in an organisational setting. Since the advocacy for effective communication towards organisational performance, the level of the effectiveness of communication seems not to have been assessed. Given the relevance of communication's effect on the performance of employees in their workplace, it becomes imperative to find out the best forms of communication and their effect on the staff of the ministry of basic and secondary education in Delta State as it affect the ministry performance. This forms the trust of this study. However the general aim of this study is to examine the relationship between effective communication and organisational staff performance in ministry of basic and secondary education in Delta State. Therefore, the specific objectives of this study are to determine the rate at which the management of Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education communicates with the staff, find out the method of communication commonly used for downward communication in the Ministry and ascertain the effectiveness of communication on the performance of staff of the Ministry.



2. Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Communication is one of the concepts defined in many ways in the literature. For example, Hoben et al. (2007) consider communication as a whole concept comprising of speech and verbal symbols thereby constituting an exchange process, while according to Castells (2014) communication denotes the process of sharing meaning in the basis of information transfer. According to Sambe cited in NOUN Module (2012), communication serves as an instrument of social interaction. It helps us to understand ourselves, keep in touch with other people, understand them and be able to predict their response to situations. He added that communication process involves action, reaction and interaction. Gupta, & Kumar (2010) argued that communication is the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organisation to its members and among members of the organisation. Also, Ayatse (2005) observed that communication is needed to established and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. Multidimensional aspect of the notion of communication is needed to review, conceptualise and direct interaction in an organisation.

It is believe by a lot of experts that communication could consciously or unconsciously take place by writing, reading, talking, listening or moving and any part of the body. All these things mean something to some person, or group. It has to be stressed that communication in an organisation can take place in any of these means. Communication is a process of effecting change to a system. As long as an organisation reforms and globalisation is evident, new communication techniques should be developed to withstand the change. Therefore, it becomes important for positive attitudes to change to lead a vital successful change programmes, as resistance to change is one of the biggest barriers to overcome. Elving & Hansma (2008) carried out an interview research between management and employees during organisational change. The findings revealed that the most important conclusion drawn was that the success of the dissemination and adaption of organisational change significantly depend upon communicative and informative skills of managers at all levels. Also, Bennebroek-Gravenhorst, et al. (2006) found that along with the role of management on the contribution of the workplace to the impending change, distribution of information and actual communication regarding the need for the change and the objectives of the modification in business organisation are also critical.

More recently, Castells (2014) assert that communication is the process of sharing meaning in the basis of information transfer. The study argued that there are two broad categories of human communication namely: verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication is done through the use of words and it takes place in an oral form or written form while non-verbal communication on the other hand is carried out without speech. Experts identified other forms of communication such as intrapersonal communication (Soola, 1998), interpersonal communication (Akalugo, 2003), group communication (Sybil, etal, 1990) and mass communication (Baran, 2012). Barnlund (2008) explains that communication is the exchange process in which the parties send and receive messages simultaneously.



Despite these different opinions shared by communication experts, the main point of emphasis lies within sharing. Communication is the process of sharing emotions, thoughts and information between two or more parties and thus, uncovering common meanings (Karakutuk, 2011). Communication, therefore, is a means through which the task and the resources needed to carry out an assignment, roles and duties and the expected results are made known to the subordinates. Thus, effective communication is therefore the transfer of message, followed by feedback, from the receiver to the sender, indicating an understanding of the message. This brings in a new dimension of looking at communication from the business or organisation perspective. Scholars like Gupta & Kumar (2010) observed that communication is the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organisation to its members and among members of the organisation. Gupta, et al (2010) emphasised the fact that communication is needed to established and disseminate the goals of the enterprise.

The ministry of basic and secondary education, being a social structure, needs a life-blood of the organisation (communication) which is a common language that social structures such as human groups, working groups and teams have developed in order to interact with each other effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, knowing fully that poor communication rank as the single most important reason that people do not advance in their career, it becomes necessary to determine the best “channel” in transmitting “messages” to employees for effective and positive feedback. There are many barriers to communication; filtering, selective perception, information overlord, personal bias, language and communication apprehension.

The Communication Process

According to Shannon & Weaver (1949), a communication process consists of seven steps namely: message, encoding, transmitting, receiving, decoding, understanding and feedback. The process of communication is not an easy task, however, attempt have been made here to simplify it through the illustration below:

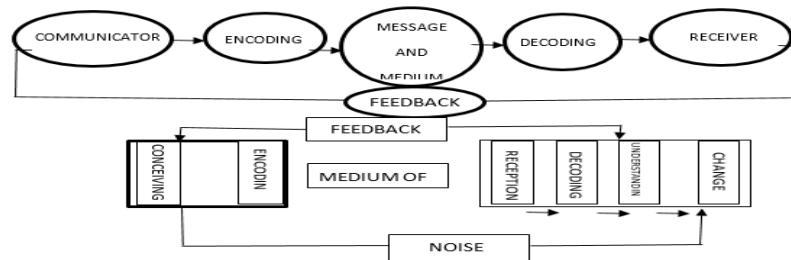


Figure 1: Communication Process Model
Source: Barrelas, A. (2010), an experimental approach to organisation communication

Organisational Communication

Recent empirical studies on organisational communication and its effects on staff job performance in Nigeria have produced useful insights into the subject-matter of this study.



Lindlof & Taylor (2011) note that 'organisational communication broadly studies corporate life as constituted through discursive processes such as conflict, teamwork and leadership'. Internal organisational communication facilitates the flow of information among members of the organisation. This effective flow of information within an organisation is facilitated by a vibrant internal communication system, which could be upward, downward, vertical or horizontal which is based on the structure of command within an organisation.

Downward communication provides information from higher levels to lower levels. Being superior-subordinate communication, it follows the chain of command through the line of authority. By way of opinion, Katz & Katz (1966) categorise downward communication into four: communication designed to provide job rationale to produce understanding of the task and its relation to other organisational tasks; communication about organisational procedures and practices; feedback to the subordinate about his or her performance; and communication to foster inculcation of organisational goals. Horizontal, also called lateral, communication aims at linking related tasks, work units and divisions in the organisation. The importance of horizontal communication increases with task specialisation and diversity in organisation structure. The need for horizontal or lateral communication was first stressed by Fayol (1949), when he suggested a 'gang plank' between similar hierarchical positions. Upward communication serves as a control system for the organisation.

Apparently, organisational communication tends to exhibit what an organisation stands for, the purpose of its existence, who the various clients are, the manner in which their workloads are accomplished and the chain of reporting among members. Hence, Akam (2011) explained that effective communication is a transaction of ideas, directory command or guide into oral or written words, or actions on the path of the communicator in such a way that the receiver gets the same message and reacts in manner envisaged by the communicator.

Organisational communication is always geared towards achieving specific objectives (Trahant, 2008; Shonubi & Akintaro, 2016). These objectives, albeit peculiar to every organisation, boil down to two components: (a) informing the workforce about their tasks, policies and programmes of the organisation and (b) building a community within an organisation.

According to Guney, et al, (2012) and Ezeji, (2015), Organisational communication is invariably the key to the growth of an organisation. This is because no organisation can thrive or survive without regular and effective communication. Where there is a lacuna in communication either among staff or between the management and other staff, then organisational goals would, at best, not be achieved. It would not end there. Organisational growth would practically be stunted while there would be a rapid and constant decline in organisational output. The aforementioned is the reason Udegbe et. al (2012) submitted that organisational communication is a critical factor in directing and mobilising the workforce towards the accomplishment of organisational goals and objectives. In a study carried out by Guney et al (2012) to ascertain how organisational communication affects the



performance and commitment of employees in a public agency in Ankara, Turkey, their findings revealed that organisational communication leads to effective staff performance. The findings were corroborated by those of Otoo (2015) whose study on the effect of organisational communication on the performance of employees of Ghana Revenue Authority, Kumasi revealed that organisational communication has a great effect on the employees' job performance. Similarly, Ezeji (2015) conducted a study to determine the effect of leadership communication on the performance of staff of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Port Harcourt Network Centre. At the end of the study, it was found that organisational communication has a tremendous effect on the job performance of the staff of the station.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on the systems theory, which was first introduced by Van Bertalanffy in 1950 and was introduced into the organizational setting by Katanz and Khan in 1966. The system theory is an interdisciplinary theory about every system in nature, in society and in many scientific domains as well as a framework with which we can investigate phenomena from a holistic approach (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2017). Scholars, like Asemah, Nwammuo and Uwaoma (2017) and Dike and Akintaro (2017) have likened an organization to an organism with interdependent parts, each with its own specific functions and responsibilities. Specifically, Asemah, et al (2017) postulated that the system in question may be the whole organization, a division, a department or a team; whichever the case, it is important for the organizational practitioner to understand how the system operates and the relationship the parts of the organization have.

According to Asemah, et al and Dike, et al (2017), the system theory predominantly stands on two assumptions namely: (1) an organization is a system which interacts with the environment and is continually adapting and improving; (2) all parts of an organization are interconnected and interdependent. Consequently, this theory is pertinent to this study because the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State is a small system that operates within a larger system known as the Delta State Civil Service. As stated ab-initio, communication is the antidote that binds all parts of this small system-the Delta State civil service and civil servants-together.

From the above perspective, communication helps to create interconnectedness and interdependence within this system. Thus, the system theory of Van Bertalanffy, introduced by Katanz and Khan into the organizational settings, helps examine the effects this organizational communication has on the job performance of the staff of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in the Delta State civil service.

3. Methodology

The survey research method was used for the study to determine the role of effective communication on the performance of staff of the ministry of basic and secondary education, Delta State. It is a type of research design "which studies a group of people or items by collecting and studying data from a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group" (Eluwa, 2006). The justification for this rests on the fact



that through this design the perspectives of civil servants in the ministry of basic and secondary education Delta State, as borders on effective communication and organisational performance, were elicited.

The population of the study constituted the civil servants working in the ministry of basic and secondary education, which is one of the largest ministries in the Delta State civil service that has the core mandate and onerous responsibility of formulating, implementing and regulating educational policies and programmes for the state, including overseeing the general administration of the basic and secondary school system in accordance with the goals and needs of Delta State government and in consonance with the National Policy on Education (NPE) and other relevant policies/programmes such as the Education For All (EFA), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2020 (now 2030) goals as well as the SMART Agenda of the state government. The Ministry is structured under five divisions of basic education, secondary education, model education, special education and language project; field offices manned by Directors; 25 local government area offices headed by Chief Inspectors of Education (C.I.E.). The Ministry being a social structure needs a life-blood of the organisation (communication) which is a common language that social structures such as human groups, working groups and teams have developed in order to interact with each other effectively and efficiently.

The simple random method is used for this study to avoid bias and ensures equal representation in response to questionnaire administered. The number of questionnaire administered was 250 but 242 were returned usable. The first section of the questionnaire captures the bio-data information of the respondents while the second section bothers on the subject matter of the research. The data gathered would be analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 for easy analysis.

4. Results

This section discusses and interprets the data collected. It comprises the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	178	73.6
Female	64	26.4
<i>Age Distributions</i>		
18-25 years	70	28.9
26-31 years	120	49.6
32 and above	52	21.5
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
PRI/SSCE/GCE	12	5.0
OND/NCE	42	17.4
HND/BA/BSc	170	70.2
MA/MSc/PhD	18	7.4



Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	68	28.1
Married	160	66.1
Divorced	14	5.8
Total	242	100
<i>Rank/Designation</i>		
Top Cadre Staff	12	5.0
Middle Cadre Staff	148	61.1
Junior Cadre Staff	82	33.9
Total	242	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

The above findings revealed that male respondents constitute (73.6%) while female represent (26.4%). Male respondents have the highest response in the study. The age distribution 26 - 31 years represent (49.6%) with highest response in the study. The educational qualification of the respondents was made known. HND/BA/BSc was the educational group that recorded the highest number of the respondents which is 148 which represents 61.1%. PRI/SSCE/GCE has 12 respondents with 5.0%, OND/NCE has 42 respondents with 17.4%, 18 of the respondents either holds masters or a PhD degree which represents 7.4%. The marital status (28.1%) represent single, (66.1%) represent married with highest response and (5.8%) represent divorced. For ranking/designation, the study sprang across top cadre staff (5.0%), middle cadre staff (61.1%) and junior cadre staff (33.9%).

Table 2: Rate at which the management of Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State communicates with the staff

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very frequently	134	55.4
Frequently	100	41.3
Occasionally	6	2.5
Infrequently	2	0.8
Very Infrequently	0	0
Total	242	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The finding in Table 2 revealed that the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State civil service communicates with its staff frequently. This was the opinion of majority of the respondents (96.7%) who attested to the fact that their daily routine is driven by communication.



Table 3: Most Commonly used Method for Downward Communication in the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Letter	18	7.4
Internal Memo	148	61.2
Text messages	2	0.8
Emergence meetings	8	3.3
Circulars	38	15.7
Queries	12	5.0
Interviews	16	6.6
All of the above	0	0
Total	242	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The finding revealed that all the respondents are conversant with the internal memo method that facilitates the flow of information among staff of the ministry. This is because majority of the respondents (60%) indicated that internal memo is the most commonly used method for downward communication in the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State.

Table 4: Whether Effectiveness of Organisational Communication within the Ministry has an Influence on Staff Job Performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	242	100
No	0	0
Total	242	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 above was designed to determine whether effective communication within the staff of the Ministry has an influence on their routine job performance. From the data collated, it can be deduced strongly that effective communication has overwhelming influence on the performance of staff as was attested to by all the cadres of staff (100%) that make up the ministry work force.

Table 5: Effectiveness of Organisational Communication on Staff Job Performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
It provides room for team work	60	24.8
It increases productivity	82	33.9
It boost motivation and commitment	40	16.5
It promotes knowledge and understanding	20	8.3
It encourages result-oriented and excellence	22	9.1
All of the above	18	7.4
Total	242	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023



The finding in Table 5 above revealed the effect organizational communication has on the performance of the staff of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Asaba, Delta State. The finding revealed that the enhanced productivity (33.9%) recorded by the ministry is as a result of the team work which boosted the motivation and commitment among the staff..

In terms of the rate at which the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State communicates with the staff, the data clearly demonstrate that ministry frequently communicates with the staff of the ministry. This frequent communication has no doubt increases productivity and boosted the motivation and commitment of the staff towards their career projection and departmental growth. This finding is in tandem with the studies carried out by Guney et al (2012), Otoo (2015) and Ezeji (2015) which states that, regular communication in an organisation certainly affects the performance and commitment of staff which in turn would enhance productivity. Likewise, it was observed that regular communication between the top staff cadre, middle staff cadre and junior staff of the ministry has created the spirit of team work, dignity and passion among staff leading to excellence performance in job schedules and optimal functioning of the ministry. The above findings corroborate with one of the key assumptions of the systems theory that all parts of an organization are interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, frequent communication in the ministry is what connects the staff together and make them dependent on one another in the discharge of daily schedules and assignments.

The study also revealed that though there are many ways in which the top cadre staff and middle cadre staff of the ministry pass information to their subordinates, the internal memo is the most commonly used method for downward communication. Their response is predicated upon the fact that internal memo operates on the principle of keep it short and simple and most importantly, it enables staff of the ministry to easily recall the messages disseminated to them via the internal memo. This finding is supported by the submission of Anyanwa (2012) and Otoo (2015) that the internal memo is one of the most effective and reliable means of dissemination of information in an organization. It therefore implies that for any organization to enhance job efficiency and increase productivity, it must make use of adequate, effective, efficient and understandable instrument or channels of communication mastered by the recipients in order to enhance their performance on their desk or job schedules.

The findings from the study also revealed that communication within the ministry has an influence on staff job performance. For instance, it is evident from the responses of majority of the respondents that breakage in communication would result in misunderstanding, lack of cooperation, wrong medium used, delayed information, information overload and personal bias which were capable of diminishing staff performance in the ministry. This also is in tandem with the systems theory philosophy that stipulated that an organization is a system which interacts with the environment and is continually adapting and improving.



5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The finding of this research has shown that effective communication within an organisation has an influence on staff performance. It has also accentuated the believe that for any organization to enhance job efficiency and increase productivity, it must make use of adequate, effective, efficient and understandable instrument or channels of communication to enhance the performance of its staff. Therefore, frequent communication among an organization's staff can foster continuous growth as staff performance would greatly be enhanced. It is in view of the above conclusion that the researchers recommend that since effective communication is determine by both parties (encoder and decoder); it therefore becomes necessary that they must pursue the same objective, which is high performance rate in all departments of the ministry. All cadres of staff, ranging from the top to the middle and to the junior, should be involved in the decision process and issues that affect their schedules and performance which would invariably lead to a positive development of the ministry. Also, an open communication environment is one in which all members of the ministry feel free to share feedback, ideas and even criticisms at every level thereby encouraging staff to freely give their opinion and views without being victimized by heads of department. Therefore, such liberty through follow up of information would no doubt enhance the ministry's performance which is one benefit of using the internal memo method of communication in an organization.

Finally, communication has evolved from being cyber world geek buzz to a massive platform for businesses, entrepreneurs, professionals and organizations that seek greater recognition and identification at a very economical price. The ministry should take advantage of this opportunity provided by digital communication to create an effective communication system capable of easing the burden of orthodox communication system often associated to ministries operations.

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