



RESEARCH ARTICLE

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT AND THE PERFORMANCE OF TERTIARY
INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

Arop, Festus Obun, Owan, *Valentine Joseph, and Ekpang Martins Akan

Department of Educational Administration and Planning, University of Calabar, Calabar

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine effective communication management and the performance of tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a correlational design and was conducted using Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa as case study. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 30 per cent each from a total of 176 academic staff and 215 Non-academic staff in the institution. A total of 53 Academic and 66 Non Academic Staff were selected resulting in a sample of 119 participants. A questionnaire titled Effective Communication Management and Performance of Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (ECMAPOTIQ), was used as the instrument for data collection. The collected data were analysed and the hypotheses were tested using Chi Square test of independence at .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that effective communication management has a significant relationship with human relationship, work performance and organizational goal attainment. Based on these findings, it was concluded that effective communication leads to good human relationship, promotes work performance and organizational goal attainment. It was recommended among others that educational managers should make efforts to adopt good communication skills to enable them communicate effectively; workers should adopt proper communication strategies if they are to promote good relationship among co-workers and the managers.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a general saying that "there is no smoke without fire," this also means that there is no organization without communication. Every organization requires the effective utilization and management of effective communication and its related tools for the passing of important information and for improving workers' relationship with others. Communication is the process of passing information between persons and among people. In an organization, it provides a way of motivating, influencing and interaction of people. It is through this interaction that individual pulse is felt. Communication in organizations is indispensable because it is a bridge through which understanding, messages, information and ideas are relayed from one person, place or thing to another. Gervais, (2007), noted that the element of communication is an important part of the working environment.

It allows individuals to gain information and knowledge on which they can then act. Most importantly, when communicating with others the party for which the message is intended needs to receive and accept it. Due to this two-way interface, the sender and the receiver should ensure that both parties interpret and act on the message in the same way. In this way communication becomes effective. Without communication, through readings, listening (the receptive skills), speaking and writing (the productive skills) mankind would find it difficult to unravel some of the mysteries of life. Those things that we are ignorant of or have knowledge of, or that we have doubts about can be explained to us better through communication. Effective communication is therefore, needed for management to develop and sustain a competitive advantage for organizational performance and improvement (Rowe, 2001 in Asamu, 2014). Effective communication is therefore the ability of one to impart knowledge, pass a rule or an instruction, make a request, transmit or share an idea with a view to ensuring that organizational objectives are attained and individuals' interests are achieved through mutual understanding (Pavett 2003).

*Corresponding author: Owan, Valentine Joseph,
Department of Educational Administration and Planning, University
of Calabar, Calabar.
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Effective communication is a communication between two or more persons wherein the intended message is successfully delivered, received and understood. In other words, communication is said to be effective when all the parties (sender and receiver) in the communication, assign similar meanings to the message and listen carefully to all what have been said and make the sender feel heard and understood. In the business context, the communication is effective if the information shared among the company employees contributes towards the organization's commercial success (Business dictionary, 2018). Effective communication includes not just the way you use the words but also covers several other skills such as, non-verbal communication, ability to understand your own emotions as well as of the other person with whom you are communicating, engaged listening, ability to speak assertively, etc. Asamu (2015), reveal that effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helps in building genuine relationship among both parties in the organizations. Effective communication improves job satisfaction (Holtzhausen, 2002) and which in turn improves productivity (Litterst and Eyo, 1982). It can be said Effective communication skills is necessary for any educational manager, as it can serve as a tool to manage conflicts, pass vital information, make good decisions, and receive feedbacks which can help strengthen good working relationship with other employees within and outside the organization. A communicative leadership is especially important in organizations with values that are non-negotiable (Eriksen, 2001). Effective communication is inevitable to any organization because it creates mutual balance between members of the organization and serves further as a tool to relate with those even outside the organization. Effective communication management is a systematic method of unifying human and material resources to work harmoniously for the realization of set goals, through establishing proper channels of communication, creating a hierarchy of information flow and receiving appropriate feedback. On the other hand, performance of tertiary institutions refers to the extent to which tertiary educational setups are achieving the purpose for which they were established. It includes the extent to which tertiary educational institutions are attaining set goals using the available human and materials resources.

Statement of the problem: In almost all school activities, communication plays an important role. How the aims of schooling are understood and communicated, become prerequisites for what activities will be carried out in the school. The importance of communication to any organization cannot be over-emphasized as it can be used to attain stated objectives of the school. However, it is one thing to communicate, and another thing to communicate effectively and yet another to manage effective communication. Many conflicts arise in tertiary institutions due to ineffective communication management which further hampers the rate at which such organization performs. Many school administrators have been observed to lack the necessary skills to manage effective communication. This is shown in their poor attitudes towards feedback and communication follow up system. Also many tertiary institutions lack effective communication guidelines that should direct the way people communicate. Many tertiary institutions are performing very poor through the quality of graduates they produce yearly. Given the importance of managing effective communication, and the observed problems from school managers, it becomes pertinent for a

study to be conducted that will determine whether tertiary institutions' performance has anything to do with effective communication management. An attempt to address this issue of concern, necessitated the study.

Purpose of the study: The broad objective of this study is to examine the extent to which the performance of tertiary institutions in Cross River State, depends on effective communication management.

Specifically, the objectives of this study is to:

- Examine the extent to which human relationship in tertiary institutions depends on effective communication management.
- Examine the extent to which employee work performance in tertiary institutions depends on effective communication management.
- Examine the extent to which school goal attainment in tertiary institutions depends on effective communication management.

Research Hypotheses: Human relationship in tertiary institutions does not significantly depend effective communication management. Work performance in tertiary institutions does not significantly depend on effective communication management. School goal attainment in tertiary institutions does not significantly depend on effective communication management.

Literature Review: Communication covers all activities that an individual does when he wants to make a transformation in someone else's mind. Communication is an important part of the working environment. It allows individuals to gain information and knowledge on which they can then act. However, when communicating with others it is essential that the message is received and accepted by the party for which it was intended. The communication between organizations tends to be generally a two-way process (Gervais, 2007). Effective communication process involves an active process where two or people involved in information exchange, interact successfully without any difference(s) in their understanding of the information conveyed as well as proper provision of feedback where applicable. It must be noted that effective communication involves a two-way interaction. Due to this two-way interface, the sender and the receiver should ensure that they both interpret and act on the message in the same way, as noted, "the goal of effective communication is the acceptance of the sender's message by the receiver. If the receiver understands the meaning of a message that asks for action, but fails to act, the goal of effective communications is not achieved. But if the receiver does respond to the message by taking the appropriate action, the goal of the communication has been achieved, which makes it effective (Gervais, 2006)." It is fundamental in any sort of two-way communication that the end result is attained. Unfortunately, communication does not always result in a positive action (Gervais, 2007). In addition to acting on the information received it is important that the sender knows that the receiver is acting on the information, and this can be achieved only through the appropriate feedback. Feedback is the sender's way of determining the effectiveness of his/her message, measures influence and provides a method of eliminating

miscommunication. Effective communication means that a communicator sends a message in an appropriate manner and via an adequate channel of communication, selecting relevant contents and timing, with an intended recipient receiving the message in an unaltered form, at the right time and understanding its meaning correctly. Communication is effective, provided that both parties follow the rules of reality and cooperation. The first of them refers to the contents of message and helps a recipient interpret received information as meaningful and related to a real situation. Another principle requires that the message sender and recipient obey clearly defined rules so that both parties can reach a specific objective through exchange of information. These rules determine the quantity, quality, relevance and means of conveying a message (Kurcz, 2007 cited by Sylwia and Zdzisław, 2012).

Effective communication is vital in the relationship that governs the institutions managers and employees under them. It is the process through which work gets well done. Nwankwo (2014) aptly remarked that to effectively carry out the roles of social and economic development as well as the development of the individuals, educational institutions must be well managed through appropriate decisions at all times and based on timely and accurate information style. Appropriate decisions are made in any organization through effective communication since decision making cannot be complete without a person taking a decision and another who is listening, observing or against whom such decision was taken. In communication, there are many unwanted interferences that can distort a message and remain always a potential threat to effective communication, because it can interfere with the accuracy of a message being communicated (Koontz 2001). These interferences include a person's psychological state, a defect in any of the sense organs, language barriers, perceptual problems, cultural and ethnic differences etc.

Effective communication between leaders and employees is critically important for the potential success of a company. Leaders need to enact strategies to improve communication that could lead to positive work consequences (Gray and Laidlaw, 2002). Improvements in supervisor-subordinate communication will assist organizations toward the goal of managing diversity by promoting equality and integration in the workplace. Effective communication succeeds when employees support the leader and the organization if there is a belief that employees' efforts will be rewarded. Effective communication management refers to a conscious effort made by leaders and members of an organization to create and disseminate information using proper channels, and ensure that such messages gets to the intended recipient without any distortion, and providing means of receiving feedback where applicable. It is very important that school administrators manage the way information/communication flows in the organization to lead to an improvement in the organizational performance. Sylwia and Zdzisław (2012), warned that a lack of effective communication management constitutes one of the key obstacles to the productive performance of the team of people known otherwise as an enterprise. From the foregoing, it can be said that individuals relate with each other by means of communication because it is the glue that binds people together in an organization. Managers have traditionally spent the majority of their time communicating in one form or another (face-to-face discussion, memos, notice boards, mass meeting, employees hand book, public lectures, etc.). 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 is the essence of management. The basic functions of management (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing and Controlling, reporting and budgeting) cannot be performed well without effective communication. Different units exist in an organization and it is through communication that interaction takes place for the attainment of organizational goals. Therefore, educational managers as well employees must make efforts to understand how and when to communicate effectively, and provide necessary feedback to aid in the smooth running of school business activities. There is therefore, a need for effective communication to be properly managed. On the other hand, human relationship simply means the ability to work, relate and adapt to all manner of people in any given environment or condition. Employee work performance refers to the extent to which employees in an organization discharge their duties. It is regarded as how well an employee is able to dispatch his/her duties to the specified organization. Employee performance within any organization can be negative or positive. Finally, organizational goal attainment refers to the degree at which the organization achieves her stipulated objectives.

Therefore, setting and clearly communicating performance standards and expectations, observing and providing feedback, and conducting appraisals will enable managers to achieve the best results through effective human relationship and employee performance management. Several studies have shown the importance of communication in the workplace. However, none of these studies concentrated on effective communication management and its relationship to human relationship, and employee work performance. Few attempts have been made in the area of goal attainment. Therefore, there is need for a study to be conducted which will explain the relationship between effective communication and human relationship, employee work performance and school goal attainment.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive survey design. The communication pattern to be studied had already been taking place in the institutions prior to this study. The population of this study was made up of academic staff and non-academic staff of the Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa. Among the academic staff were the Deans of school, Heads of department and lecturers from the College, while the non-academic staff includes workers in provost office, ICT unit, Deputy Provost Unit, registrar's office etc. The entire population was 391 participants resulting from 176 academic staff (7 Deans, 23 HODs and 146 Lecturers) and 215 non-academic staff. A proportionate stratified random sampling was used to obtain 30 per cent of participants from each stratum. Since there are sub strata in each stratum, after determining 30 per cent representing the total of each stratum, 30 percent from each sub strata were computed to obtain a representative sample. Hence the sample size of this study comprised of 119 participants (53 Academic and 66 Non-academic staff).

Instrumentation: The instrument used for data collection was Effective Communication Management and Performance of Tertiary Institutions Questionnaire (ECMAPOTIQ). It was a

40-item questionnaire organized in five sections ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’ and ‘E’ respectively. Part A elicited information on the respondents’ demographic data excluding their names, while part B – E contained set of items on the variables of the study (Effective Communication Management, Human Relationship, Work Performance and Goal Attainment). Validity of the instrument was conducted as in Asim, Idaka, and Eni (2017). A test-retest method was used to establish reliability and the correlation coefficients 0.66 and 0.74 were obtained from the analysis of both administrations respectively. The instrument was administered personally with help of two trained research assistants. Upon completion, the questionnaires were retrieved immediately from respondents who had successfully filled it. Chi square test of independence was used to analyse the data and test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

From table 1, the results indicate that the calculated Chi Square values 41.6 were greater than the critical values 12.59 at .05 level of significance.

H₀1: Human relationship in tertiary institutions does not significantly depend effective communication management.

Table 1. Results of Chi-Square analysis to hypothesis 1

Variables	F _o	F _e	F _o – F _e	(F _o – F _e) ²	X ² _{Cal}	X ² _{Tab}	df
Human relationship	119	119	0	46.42215	41.6	12.59	6
Effective Communication Mgt.							

H₀2: Work performance in tertiary institutions does not significantly depend on effective communication management.

Table 2. Results of Chi-Square analysis to hypothesis 2

Variables	F _o	F _e	F _o – F _e	(F _o – F _e) ²	X ² _{Cal}	X ² _{Tab}	df
Employee work performance	119	114.04	4.96	202.32	22.17	12.59	6
Effective Communication Mgt.							

H₀3: School goal attainment in tertiary institutions does not significantly depend on effective communication management.

Table 3. Results of Chi-Square analysis to hypothesis 3

Variables	F _o	F _e	F _o – F _e	(F _o – F _e) ²	X ² _{Cal}	X ² _{Tab}	df
School goal attainment	119	108	11	131.65	14.51	12.59	6
Effective Communication Mgt.							

Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that human relationship in tertiary institutions significantly depends on effective communication management. From table 2, the second null hypothesis was rejected because the calculated Chi-square values 22.18 is greater than the critical values 12.59 at .05 level of significance. Implying that employee work performance in tertiary institutions significantly depends on effective communication management. Table 3 above indicate that the calculated Chi Square 14.51 is greater than the critical values 12.59 at .05 level of significance. Therefore, the third null hypothesis was also rejected implying that school goals attainment in tertiary institutions significantly depend on effective communication management.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study has been able to establish that human relationship in tertiary institutions significantly depends on effective communication management. This means that the establishment of proper communication guidelines and information flow can help in building good human relationships within the organization. This finding is consistent with the findings of Asamu (2015), who revealed that effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helps in building genuine relationship among both parties in the organizations. It can be added that the mutual cooperation now built through effective communication between the manager and workers, will increase their understanding and foster work performance. The findings of this study has also revealed that employee work performance in tertiary institutions significantly depends on effective communication management. Through effective management of communication, the school administrator and his staff, sees themselves as one thereby eliminating the Lukewarm and unwillingness to carry out assigned duties.

This is because the competencies and skills they possess will enable them to exhibit work behaviours appropriate and relevant to the performance of the job. Also, when employee needs are met through satisfying communication, employees are more likely to build effective work relationships (Gray and Laidlow 2004). Perhaps this was also the reason why Sylwia and Zdzisław (2012), warned that a lack of effective communication constitutes one of the key obstacles to the productive performance of the team of people known otherwise as an enterprise. With this finding, it can be said that every organization needs a strong communication bond where messages will be conveyed effectively for the realization of stated goals, aims and objectives.

The findings of this study has established that school goals attainment in tertiary institutions significantly depend on effective communication management. Communication is the bedrock to the survival of the tertiary school system. If school managers fail to regulate the communication attitudes of staff and other members of the organization, then such a manager should be ready for drastic consequences that will occur. This finding supports the findings of Ayatse (2005) who observed that communication is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. This finding also support the position held Gray and Laidlaw, (2002), who noted that effective communication between leaders and employees is critically important for the potential success of a company. That leaders need to enact strategies to improve communication that could lead to positive work consequences.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it has been concluded that the human relationship, employee work performance, and school goal attainment all depended on effective communication management. This means that the performance of tertiary institutions in Cross River State generally, depends on effective communication management. Effective communication management promotes good human relationship among workers in the school, it promotes employees work performance and further leads to the attainment of school goals. Thus, ineffective/poor communication management will lead to poor human relationship, ineffective employee work performance and poor attainment of school goals.

Recommendation

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings of this study:

- Managers should make efforts to provide good communication guidelines in the school system to enable the entire workers communicate effectively.
- Proper channels of communication should be provided for the utilization of every staff in the school. This will help increase their relationship with other workers.
- The school administrator and every other worker in the organization should develop good inter personal communication skills to communicate issues hindering the school or those that are necessary to enable the school reach its goals.
- Communication should be properly managed to flow in all dimensions – vertical and horizontal. This will make workers communicate their feelings to super-ordinates, to workers at the same level or to even subordinates.
- Effective communication management should be used as a tool to encourage the workforce by communicating clearly, the aims and objectives as well as the expectations from every worker.

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