

Factors Associated with Workplace Communication Deficiency Among Selected Companies in Eleme, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract

Effective communication can be impeded by the employees' profile and level of professionalism which can overall affect the wellbeing, employees' ability to perform, job satisfaction and safety at workplace. The study examined the factors associated with workplace communication deficiency among selected companies in Eleme, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study engaged fifteen organisations (companies), and a well-structured questionnaire was used for data gathering among staff (379) from the selected organisation based on Taro Yamane. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency count and percentage. The finding revealed that factors associated with workplace communication deficiency include poor feedback mechanism (40.6%), lack of competence in communication (24.0%) and poor job communication (11.9%), among others. Furthermore, it was revealed that improving the feedback mechanism (27.2%), adoption of modern communication technology (22.7%), and training (17.9%) are the means of improving communication deficiency among selected companies. Therefore, it was recommended that the organizations encourage an "open door" policy to ensure improved feedback mechanisms and encourage employee input in information gathering and sharing.

Keywords: Communication, Workplace, Occupational Hazard, Safety, Eleme, Rivers State

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Introduction

Fundamental and vital to all administrative functions, communication is a means of transmitting information and making oneself understood by another or others (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Communicating effectively is an art and must be practiced effectively at workplace for better output and achievement of goals of an organisation. Communication is a significant challenge for administrators because they are responsible for providing information, resulting in efficient and effective organisational performance (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). The study of communication is essential because every administrative function and activity involves direct or indirect communication. Administrators communicate with and through other people, whether planning, organising, leading, or monitoring. This implies that every person's communication skills affect both personal and organisational effectiveness (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). It seems reasonable to conclude that a lack of effective communication is one of the most inhibiting forces to organisational effectiveness. Good communication skills are critical to one's success as an administrator. It is, therefore, essential for administrators to endeavour to become effective communicators (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014).



Individuals and groups may engage in communicative behaviour as senders/sharers of messages that may increase the vulnerability of others by confusing or misleading them, such as sharing false information that one believes to be true (misinformation) or sharing false information on purpose (disinformation) (Jonathan & Mbogo 2016). These problems should be interpreted in the context of the recently called 'information disorder': global information pollution that includes unprecedentedly fast, cheap, and widespread creation, dissemination, amplification, and consumption of various forms of false and harmful information (Hansson et al., 2020). Intentional or unintentional false or misleading claims, malicious disinformation, rumours, pranks, and outdated information that people may be exposed to about disasters can put them or others at increased risk and complicate the work of emergency management institutions. For people (potentially) affected by a hazard, it may not be easy to assess the accuracy of each piece of information that they receive or what may have been the intentions of its creator or sender (Infante et al., 2013).

In addition to the general problems caused by the lack of effective communication, some factors influence effective communication between managers and employees. Abdulelah (2016) suggested that behavioural and psychological factors must be measured to assess effective communication and its impact on employees' attitudes and behaviour. Mwambebile (2013) investigated the factors hindering effective communication between top management and employees. The finding indicated that both top management and employees demonstrated low communication skills, thus hindering effective communication and interfering with relations among them. Yusof and Rahmat (2020) investigated how communication barriers affect communication and information flow in the workplace. The finding showed that both verbal and non-verbal communication at the workplace played significant roles in ensuring the smooth flow of the company. Similarly, studies such as Lee et al. (2021), Harsini et al. (2020), Fordjour et al. (2019), Nordlöf et al. (2017), De Nobile (2016) and Rudd and Mills (2015) have considered various factors associated with effective and ineffective communication at workplace and indicated factors such as experience, personality, level of education, self-evaluation and others. However, such studies are limited in the study area and remain a gap in knowledge to be filled. Considering this, the study examined the factors associated with workplace communication deficiency among selected companies in Eleme, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The study area was Eleme, a local government area (LGA) in Rivers State, Nigeria. Eleme is located between

latitude 4° 44'0" N and 4°50'0" N and longitude 7°6'0" E and 7°12'0" E (Figure 1) (Afolabi & Adesope, 2022). Eleme is part of the metropolitan city of Port Harcourt, and it covers an area of 138 km² and, as of the 2006 census, had a population of 190,884. Eleme is bordered on the north by Obio/Akpor and Oyigbo Local Government Areas, on the east by Tai Local Government Area, and the south by Ogu/Bolo and Okrika Local Government Areas. The Eleme people live in ten significant towns, including Akpajo, Aletto, Alesa, Alode, Agbonchia, Ogale, Ebubu, Ekporo, Eteo and Onne (Afolabi & Adesope, 2022).

Study Design and Sample Size

The survey research method was adopted to carry out the study. Survey research is a specific type of field study that involves collecting data from a sample of elements drawn from a well-defined population through a questionnaire (Visser et al., 2002). This method was adopted because it is a suitable and efficient way of studying large populations. The study's population comprised companies and their employees within the Eleme LGA, Rivers State, Nigeria. A list of registered companies operating within the LGA was sourced from the trade and commerce department of the Eleme LGA administrative office, and to get a true representative sample of the target population, the Taro Yamane (1964) formula for sample size determination was used based on 6876 staff across the selected companies (15). 401 copies of the questionnaire were randomly administered using a simple random sampling technique in respondents' selection; however, 379 questionnaires were filled correctly and subjected to further analysis.

Data Analysis

The retrieved copies of the questionnaire were coded and subjected to statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-21) for proper analysis. The study data were analysed through descriptive statistics tools such as frequency counts and percentages of responses for the analysis. Using such statistics allows the researcher to present the evidence of the study in a way that can be understandable and concludes the study variables. The research hypothesis was tested using Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) Analysis. As inferential statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis allows for exploring the statistically significant relationships between two variables. The analysis was carried out at a 95% confidence level.

Result and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Details of the Respondents

The socio-demographic details of the respondents are presented in Table 1. The finding indicated that 63.6% of the respondents were male, while 36.4% were female. The age categories showed that 24.8% of the respondents were below 30 years of age, 43.0% of the

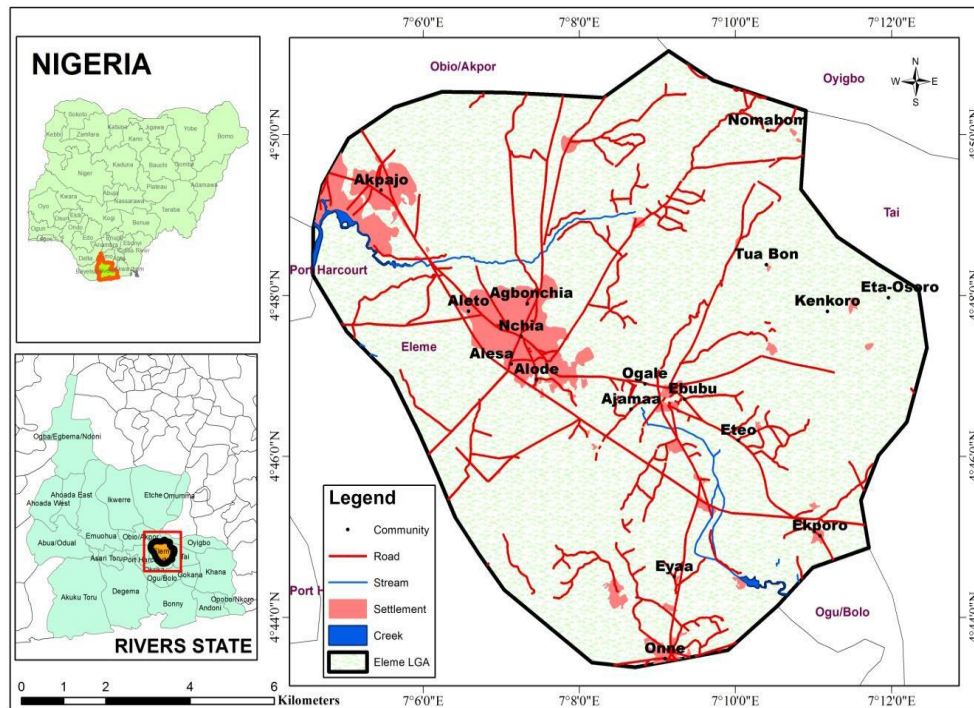


Figure 1: Overview of the Eleme LGA showing the major settlement

respondents were within the age 30-40years, 23.0% and 9.2% of the respondents were within the age range of 41-50years and 51years and above, respectively. Considering the level of education, 22.7% of the respondents indicated possessing a diploma certificate, 37.7% of the respondents possess a Bachelor's degree, 22.4% possess a master's degree, and 10.6% and 6.6% of the respondents indicated possessing a doctorate and professional certification respectively. Considering the years of experience, 29.6% of the respondents noted that they have experienced less than 5 years, 49.1% of the respondents indicated 5-10years of experience, while 12.9% and 8.4% of the respondents indicated 11-15years and 16years and above experience, respectively.

Factors Associated with Workplace Communication Deficiency

Factors associated with workplace communication deficiency were examined, and the outcome was presented in Table 2. From the outcome, it was revealed that 7.7% of the respondents indicated that change in communication technology associated with workplace communication deficiency, 24% indicated lack of competence in communication, 40.6% indicated poor feedback mechanism, 11.9% indicated poor job communication/instruction, 3.4% indicated poor organisational culture while 9.2% and 3.2% of the respondents indicated lack of commitment and other factors are associated with workplace communication deficiency among the selected organization. The outcome of the factors related to workplace

Table: Socioeconomic Attributes of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n=216)	Percentage (%)
Sex of Respondents		
Male	216	100
Female	-	-
Age (years)		
18-30 years	94	43.5
31-40 years	107	49.5
41-50 years	15	6.9
Highest Educational Qualification		
None	52	24.1
Primary	76	35.2
Secondary	70	32.4
Tertiary	18	8.3
Marital Status		
Married	120	55.6
Divorced	7	3.2
Never Married	89	41.2
Household Size		
Less than 4persons	46	21.3
5 to 6 persons	100	46.3
7 to 10 persons	58	26.9
11 persons and above	12	5.6
Average Monthly Income		
< N20,000	38	17.6
N20,000 - N39,999	85	39.4
N40,000 - N59,999	62	28.7
N60,000 and above	31	14.4

communication deficiency revealed that inadequate feedback mechanisms are the leading factor in communication deficiency. Other factors include insufficient competence in communication and poor job-specific communication/instruction.

The outcome corroborated with that of Zakiri (2020), who asserted that poor communication feedback could lead to a crisis in an organisation; therefore, an organisation must understand the importance of effective communication. The outcome shared the opinion of Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang (2014), which asserted that effective communication is transferring a message, followed by feedback, from the receiver to the sender, indicating an understanding of the message.

In improving the communication deficiency, 27.2% of the respondents suggested improving the feedback mechanism, 17.9% of the respondents indicated training, 22.7% stated adoption of modern communication technology, 11.1% showed improvement on communication policy and culture, 8.7% indicated influential organisation culture while 6.9% and 5.5% of the respondents indicated proper employment placement and conducive working environment are means of improving communication deficiency among the selected organization. Improving the feedback mechanism, adopting modern communication technology, and training employees were noted to enhance communication deficiency in the chosen organisation. The outcome was similar to that of Mwambebile (2013), which suggested training top managers and employees on effective communication.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Communication is one of the critical factors that can either increase or decrease employees' safety vulnerability, while effective communication can be impeded by the employees' profile and their level of professionalism, which can overall affect the well-being, employees' ability to perform, job satisfaction and safety at the workplace. The study examined the factors associated with workplace communication deficiency among selected companies in Eleme, Rivers State, Nigeria, and based on the outcome of the study, it was concluded that the poor feedback mechanism is a significant factor associated with workplace communication deficiency among selected companies in the study area. Therefore, it was recommended that the organizations encourage an "open door" policy to ensure improved feedback mechanisms and encourage employee input in information gathering and sharing.

Table 2: Factors associated with workplace communication deficiency

Variable	Frequency (n=379)	Percentage (%)
Factor Associated with Workplace Communication Deficiency		
Change in Communication technology	29	7.7
Lack of competence in communication	91	24.0
Poor feedback mechanism	154	40.6
Poor job-specific communication/instruction	45	11.9
Poor organisational culture	13	3.4
Lack of commitment	35	9.2
Other	12	3.2
Improving Communication Deficiency		
Improving feedback mechanism	103	27.2
Training	68	17.9
Adopt modern Communication technology	86	22.7
Improvement in Communication policy and culture	42	11.1
Effective Organizational culture	33	8.7
Proper Employment placement	26	6.9
Conducive working environment	21	5.5

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