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Role of Effective Communication in Employee Safety Among Organization in Industrial Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Communication is one of the critical factors that can either increase or decrease people's vulnerability to hazards. The study examined role of effective communication in employee safety among organization in industrial area in 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 person correlation. The finding revealed that the communication policy of the organisation influences effective communication on the safety of employees (50.7%), safety procedures (48.3%), adherence to the chain of command (74.9%), effective feedbacks (54.4%), active listening, and concerns (51.7%) and teamwork (49.3%). The hypothesis testing indicated no significant relationship between the effective communication and employment educational profile of workers ($p = 0.067, 0.603, 0.623, 0.293$ and 0.179), and the relationships are insignificant. The study concluded that the communication system adopted by the selected organisations ensures effective communication exchange and alleviates performance and safety.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Safety, Hazard, Eleme, Rivers State

Introduction

Being productive in the workplace is an integral part of the business in the organization. Employees should produce and deliver quality outputs at the end of the working hour (Asio, 2021). The impact of effective communication by managers has become a topic of interest in the literature because of how it impacts both the employee experience and organizations. Communication is a "basic function of all managers' jobs" (Greenberg, 2010; Abdulelah, 2016) because managers spend 80% of their daily duties

communicating with others to drive the organization's success (Lolli, 2013; Abdulelah, 2016). Voineaer et al. (2015) and Abdulelah (2016) pointed out that managerial communication is a tool for understanding information and making management decisions to achieve organizational objectives. Failures in effective communication have direct and indirect impacts on individuals and organizations (Rudd & Mills, 2015). For this reason, an appropriate communication model is critical for effective organizational behaviour due to the use of open communication in leader and member interaction to increase the level of engagement (Hsiung, 2012; Abdulelah, 2016), mainly when managers influence subordinates' expected outcomes (Lolli, 2013; Abdulelah, 2016).

Communication is one of the critical factors that can either increase or decrease people's vulnerability to hazards. For crisis and disaster managers, communication is primarily a management tool that serves various functions and purposes (Coombs, 2018; Hansson et al., 2020), such as awareness raising about risks and encouraging protective behaviour among people in preparation for hazardous events (i.e., risk communication), and giving warnings and triggering particular behavioural responses by people at risk during hazardous events (i.e., crisis communication). Communication involves meaning-making for those affected by a disaster (Hansson et al., 2020). It covers gathering information on the hazard (i.e., knowledge, facts, news) that helps to make sense of the situation and potentially take steps to minimise the impact of the risk.

Related studies regarding effective communication, such as Vinazor (2020), Zakari (2020), Yolanda et al. (2018), Bergman et al. (2016) and Mutuku and Mathooko (2014) pointed out that managers are recommended to pay close attention to the communication system of an organization to promote efficient management when working with a diverse workforce (Vasquez, 2014). To break through the barriers of managing a diverse

workforce, effective communication should be thoroughly investigated to improve employees' outcomes that positively impact organisational outcomes. Considering this, the present study examines the impact of effective communication on employee safety and vulnerability to hazards among selected companies in Eleme Local Government Area of 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 138km² and as at 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, on the south by Ogu/Bolo and Okrika Local Government Areas. The Eleme people live in ten major towns include Akpajo, Aleto, Alesa, Alode, Agbonchia, Ogale, Ebubu, Ekporo, Eteo and Onne (Afolabi & Adesope, 2022).

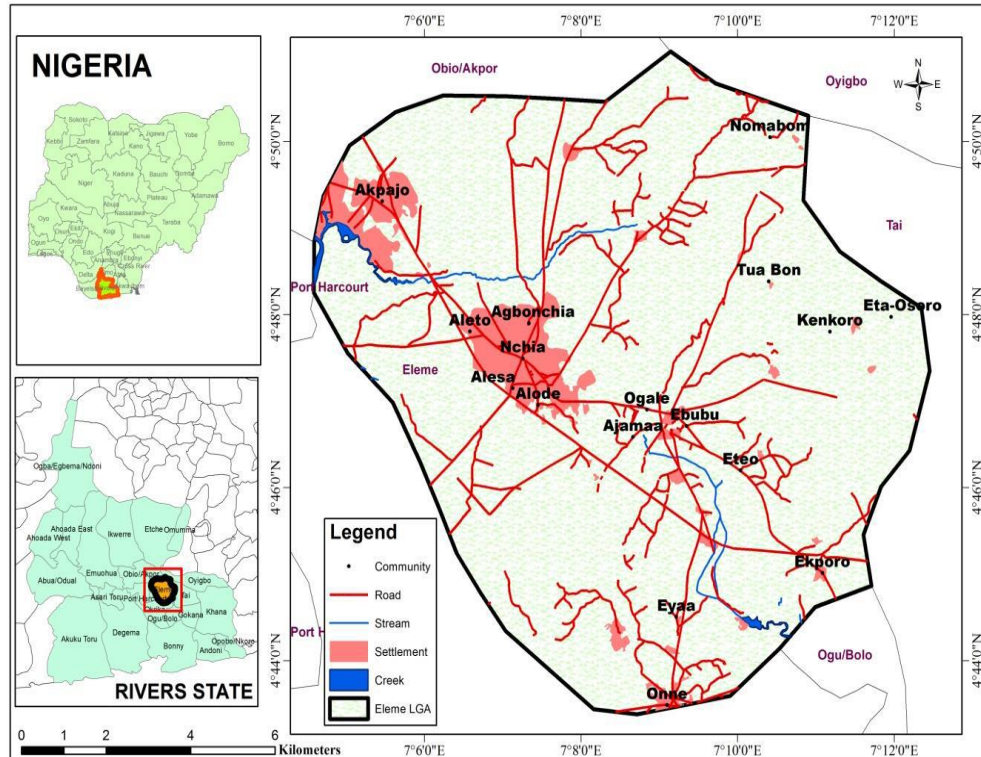


Figure 3.1: Overview of the Eleme LGA showing the major settlement

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 the collection of data from a sample of elements drawn from a well-defined population through the use of a questionnaire (Visser et al., 2002). This method was adopted because it is a suitable and efficient way of studying large population. The population of the study comprised companies and their employees within the Eleme LGA, Rivers state, Nigeria. A list of registered companies' operating within the LGA was source 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);

$$n = \frac{N}{\dots\dots\dots} \quad (3.1)$$

$$1 + N (e)^2$$

Where: e= Level of precision (0.05)

N= Population

n= Sample size

1= Constant

$$n = \frac{6876}{1 + 6876 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{6876}{1 + 6876 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{6876}{1 + 17.19}$$

$$n = \frac{6876}{18.19}$$

$$n = 378$$

For non-response increase by 6%

$$= 378 + 23$$

$$= 401$$

A total of 401 copies of questionnaire was randomly administered using simple random sampling technique in respondents' selection; however, 379 of the questionnaires were properly filled and subjected to further analysis.

Data Analysis

The retrieved copies of questionnaire were coded and subjected to statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-21) for proper analysis. The data of the study were analysed through descriptive statistics tool such as frequency counts and percentages of response were adopted for the analysis. The use of such statistics allows the researcher to present the evidence of the study in a way that can be understandable and makes conclusion concerning the variables of study. 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% of the respondents were female. The age categories showed that 24.8% of the respondents were below 30 years of age, 43.0% of the 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 to possess a diploma certificate, 37.7% of the respondents possess Bachelor degree, 22.4% possess a master degree while 10.6% and 6.6% of the respondents indicated to possess a doctorate degree and professional certification respectively. Considering the years of experience, 29.6% of the respondents indicated 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.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Details of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n=379)	Percentage (%)
Sex of Respondents		
Male	241	63.6
Female	138	36.4
Age (years)		
Below 30 years	94	24.8
30-40 years	163	43.0
41-50 years	87	23.0
51years and Above	35	9.2
Level of Educational		
Diploma Certification	86	22.7
Bachelor Degree	143	37.7
Master Degree	85	22.4
Doctorate Degree	40	10.6
Professional Certification	25	6.6
Years of Experiences		
Below 5years	112	29.6

5-10years	186	49.1
11-15years	49	12.9
16years above	32	8.4

Effective Communication on the Employee Safety and Injurious Hazard

The influence of effective communication on the employee safety and injurious hazard was examined and the outcome was presented in Table 2. On the existing communication policy in your organisation that influences effective communication on the safety of employees, 50.7% of the respondents agreed while 8.4% and 40.9% of the respondents were undecided and disagreed, respectively. 48.3% of the respondents agreed that the organization policy allows for regular meetings on safety procedures while 8.7% and 40.0% of the respondents undecided and disagreed respectively. 74.9% of the respondents agreed that the effective communication ensures adherence to chain of command while 9.9% and 15% of the respondents undecided and disagreed about the effective communication ensures adherence to chain of command respectively. 54.4% of the respondents agreed that the communication strategies allow for effective feedbacks while 3.4% and 42.2% of the respondents are undecided and disagreed respectively. Considering the communication policy allows for active listening and concerns, 51.7% of the respondents agreed while 5.8% and 42.5% of the respondents undecided and disagreed respectively. 49.3% of the respondents agreed that communication styles ensure teamwork among employees while 6.9% and 43.6% of the respondents undecided and disagreed that communication styles ensures teamwork among employees respectively.

The influence of effective communication on the employee safety and injurious hazard indicated that the respondents agreed that the existing communication policy in your organization influences effective communication on safety of employees, the policy

allows for regular meetings on safety procedures, effective communication ensures adherence to chain of command, the communication strategies allow for effective feedbacks, the communication policy allows for active listening and concerns and the communication styles ensure teamwork among employees.

The outcome supported the notion of Hansson et al (2020) which noted that some forms of communicative inaction by people may increase their own vulnerability or that of the people around them. Also, communication is one of the key factors that can either increase or decrease people's safety from danger. The outcome shared similarity with of Lay et al. (2016) which indicated that right information and communication can reduce occupational-related safety vulnerability. Osborne and Hammoud (2017) noted that effective communication is the basis for employee engagement.

Research Hypothesis

From Table 3, the hypothesis of the study was tested using the PPMC analysis. The hypothesis was tested based on the following statement:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between effective communication and employment educational profile of workers in the study area.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between influence of effective communication and employment educational profile of workers in the study area.

In explaining the outcome from the multivariate tests of significance, the Pearson correlation (r) was used in ascertaining the extent of possible relationship between the influence of effective communication and employment educational profile of workers while the p-value was adopted to establish either to accept or reject the hypothesis statement (where $P \leq 0.05$ reject null hypothesis). The outcome revealed that there was no significant relationship between influence of effective communication and employment educational profile of workers of selected

organizations (where $p > 0.05$, $p = 0.067, 0.603, 0.623, 0.293$ and 0.179) and the relationships are insignificant. Also, the test for relationship between the effective communication and employment educational profile of workers revealed no significant relationship indicating that effective communication is not necessarily based on the educational profile of the respondents.

Table 4.6: Influence of Effective Communication on the Employee Safety and Injurious Hazard

Influence of Effective Communication	U	SD	D	A	SA	Total	Mean	SD	Decision
The existing communication policy in your organization influences effective communication on safety of employees.	32 (8.4)	21 (5.5)	134 (35.4)	136 (35.9)	56 (14.8)	379 (100)	3.45	1.02	Accept
The policy allows for regular meetings on safety procedures	33 (8.7)	28 (7.4)	135 (35.6)	138 (36.4)	45 (11.9)	379 (100)	3.35	1.07	Accept
Effective communication ensures adherence to chain of command	37 (9.9)	24 (6.3)	33 (8.7)	122 (32.2)	162 (42.7)	379 (100)	3.91	1.32	Accept
The communication strategies allow for effective feedbacks	13 (3.4)	31 (8.2)	129 (34.0)	164 (43.3)	42 (11.1)	379 (100)	3.11	0.99	Accept
The communication policy allows for active listening and concerns	22 (5.8)	121 (31.9)	40 (10.6)	168 (44.3)	28 (7.4)	379 (100)	3.18	0.95	Accept
The communication styles ensure teamwork among employees	26 (6.9)	29 (7.7)	136 (35.9)	157 (41.4)	31 (8.2)	379 (100)	3.29	0.97	Accept

Undecided (U), Strongly Disagreed (SD), Disagreed (D), Agreed (A), and Strongly Agreed (SA)

Table 3: Tests of Significance Relationship for Effective Communication and Educational Profile

S/N	Influence of Effective Communication	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N	Remark
1	The existing communication policy in your organization influences effective communication on safety of employees.	1		379	
2	The policy allows for regular meetings on safety procedures	0.094	0.067	379	NC/H ₁ Rejected
3	Effective communication ensures adherence to chain of command	0.075	0.603	379	NC/H ₁ Rejected
4	The communication strategies allow for effective feedbacks	-0.025	0.623	379	NC/H ₁ Rejected
5	The communication policy allows for active listening and concerns	0.054	0.293	379	NC/H ₁ Rejected
6	The communication styles ensure teamwork among employees	-0.069	0.179	379	NC/H ₁ Rejected

NC-No Correlation

Source: Researcher's field work, 2023

Conclusion and Recommendations

Communication is one of the key factors that can either increase or decrease people's vulnerability to hazards and serves as tool to increase safety among employees. The study examined the impact of effective communication on employee safety and vulnerability to hazards among selected companies in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers state Nigeria and based on the outcome of the study, it was concluded that the selected organisations adopted effective communication exchange through regular meeting and their downward communication alleviates organisational performance and safety. Therefore, it was recommended that employees must under the chain-of-command and various communication channel that will ensure prevention of misinformation and follow through on safety practices

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