
COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN PLASTICS MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract:	Keywords:
<p>The study examined communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In this study, two measures of communication such as downward communication and upward communication were explored to determine the relationship with employee performance. The reachable population size for this study was 102 selected workers from 5 carefully chosen plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The researcher applied survey research design and convenience sampling technique to aid business decision. The sample size for the study was 85 revealed through Taro Yamane's formula. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to collect data useful in answering research questions. Primary data was collected from structured questionnaire while the secondary data was information received from human resource data of various selected plastics manufacturing firms. The validity of the research instrument was successful through contributions from management intellectuals and professionals. Reliability instrument was illustrated through Cronbach's alpha test. Statistical instrument used for this study was Spearman correlation coefficient to test the relationship between the variables. The findings disclosed that downward communication has positive significant relationship with employee performance, together with upward communication has positive association with employee performance. The researcher concluded, an increase in effective communication may lead to more employee performance. Thus, it was recommended that plastics manufacturing firms should have effective upward communication which the subordinates may use to express their performance and grievances on job related issues like poor working conditions and painful salary.</p>	<p>Communication, downward communication, employee performance</p>

Introduction

Public and private organizations count on some forms of communication to send their messages across to their target audience, or inform the customers about the mission and vision of their entity. Communication is an integral part of the organizational process as the flow of communication up and down the organizational hierarchy has its effects on employee performance, efficiency, decision-making, and morale of organizations (Griffin, 2013). This declaration concurs to Boone and Kurtz (2003) who maintained that the provision of information, motivates and directs the workers on how to increase the availability of task related information thereby being positively related to employee satisfaction and overall job performance. The more complex task demands and greater role ambiguity of professional jobs requires to increase the need for effective communication. Meanwhile, communication is the process of sending information, making emotions, or ideas known to individuals (Chandani, 2001). Communication denotes the process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more persons, with the aim to influence behavior (Richard & Daft, 2000). Indeed, communication refers to a process that involves the transmission of ideas, messages, and meaningful information from the sender to the receiver. Communication is successful when meaning is understood. The most successful organization appears to use open door policy, ethical communication, and understand cultural differences in a way that all employees have access to the necessary information (Bovee & Thill, 2000). In organizations employees engage in exchange of ideas and transmit information among themselves.

Manufacturing firms that have plans to achieve large ambitious goals, are to increase their efforts through encouraging feedback, sharing ideas, follow up, and help workers to communicate more effectively. Communication facilitates smooth coordination between employers and employees, as well as improved overall organizational performance. However, poor communication system has led to poor decision making, increased the rate of conflict, reduced workers commitment, and morale of employees towards objectives of the companies (Griffin, 2006). Most organizations evaluate their employee's performance on an annual or quarterly basis in order to define certain areas that need improvement. Katz et al. (2017) described employee performance as the contributions of employees on the job that creates excellence and development in the organization. Employee performance is the execution of job duties and responsibilities. The performance of employees depends on the nature of the job which requires close monitoring, supervision, and coordination to galvanize success of the organization (Kabazarwe, 2010). Employees improve their performance at the work place when effective communication is at optimum level with openness and accuracy with good feedback (Ajila & Abiola, 2016). The lack of communication in plastics manufacturing firms resulted in low performance and poor relationship among workers, created the vacuum for the researcher to examine the impact of communication on employee performance.

Research Hypotheses

H_{0:1} There is no significant relationship between downward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

H_{0:2} There is no significant relationship between upward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Literature Review

Communication

Koontz and O'Donnell (1984) explained communication as the broadcast and reception of ideas, feelings, and attitudes verbally or non-verbally to produce a favourable response. Communication skill depends on the capacity of an employee to transfer ideas and feelings to another to develop a desired response. Communication denotes the exchange of information between the sender and receiver so that message could be understood for proper actions (Hellweg & Phillips, 1982). Correspondingly, Luthans (2005) perceived communication as a process of transmission of message from a sender to the receiver. Communication is also a means by which a thought is transferred from one person to another (Folarin, 2003). Although, communication could be defined as the statistics or data which the researcher reveals to aid decision making and improve knowledge. Within management parlance, communication is a mixture of personal attributes and organizational characteristics. Good communication is essential for all organizations to promote employee performance and customer's patronage. It is through communication that management functions are enforced in organizations. Progressive management is a function of effective communication. Darwis et al. (2021) narrated that communication creates channels in which employees could transfer their grievances over poor working condition, poor wages, salaries, and low performance to the top management. The level at which employees have conversations using different means of communication such as written or nonverbal communication create favorable environment for effective performance in an organization. Moreover, communication entails the means by which symbols, values, are shared and messages are received or stored. It is displayed in form of policies, rules, customs, and conventions to guide individual behaviours. Good communication helps increase openness to customers, efficiency, quality, and gain competitive advantage (Hussaini, 2021). One of the best traditions to ensure effective communication is for organizations to provide opportunities for employees to develop their communication skills (Stavros, 2020). The skills in sending and receiving messages seriously reduce the possibility that a distorted message may be spread. The main communication skills include presentation skills, nonverbal communication skills, and listening skills (Odine, 2015). Furthermore, Coombs (2010) identified two measures of communication as downward communication and upward communication.

Downward Communication

Downward communication refers to a system when the message is sent from top position in the organization to employees at the lower level (Otoo, 2016). Similarly, downward

communication signifies transfer of information from higher ranking employee to various subordinates within the organization (Rukmana et al., 2018). Downward communication is the movement of information or instructions from top management to lower-level workers in the organization. Downward communication frequently occurs between managers and subordinates, where employees have the opportunity to exchange knowledge and information with other superiors across different departments. It assists managers to provide directions, feedback, and critical information which help the subordinates to improve their performance. Apparently, through downward communication, managers could carry out employee performance evaluation, orientation of new employees, job description, orders, instructions, and organizational policies to increase job performance (Ronald et al., 2002). Furthermore, Osborne and Hammoud (2017) advocate that exchanging information and sharing thoughts with the most skilled and experienced managers or superiors give the workers freedom and motivation to achieve higher levels of performance within the organization.

Upward Communication

Wang (2010) conceived upward communication as the method of sending information from subordinates to their managers or supervisors within an organization. It is the form of communication where vital messages and information flow from lower ranks to higher levels within the established hierarchy of a specific organization. In upward communication, a message, ideas, and experience are conveyed from employees at the lower level to top managers in higher hierarchy of the organization. Upward communication exists among team members, different teams, employees in various units. For example, when a staff in production department discusses with production manager over plant layout, changes in the manufacturing process, and product packaging in plastics manufacturing firm. Upward communication involves collaboration between workers with different skills and competencies. Al-Tokhais (2016) pronounced that upward communication permits workers to openly express their opinions or sentiments regarding job-related matters so that the employees could collaborate with top management to boost organizational performance.

Employee Performance

Employee performance relates to dedicated efforts of the employees directed towards achieving organizational effectiveness and financial outcomes (Santos & Brito, 2012). Similarly, Diamantidis & Chatzoglou (2014) explained employee performance as the contributions of employees on job for the purpose of creating profitability and excellence in the organization. Employee performance is the personal commitment of the worker to achieve productivity, efficiency, and organizational goals. The decisive goal of a business organization is to make higher financial performance or maximization of wealth for stakeholders. Employee performance is generally driven by various factors like fringe benefits, salary, promotion, skills, training, motivation, dedication, welfare, management policies, and open communication responsible to encourage the workers to give their best output (Kabazarwe, 2010). Indeed, organizations that are prepared for job performance or productivity are to invest more on

training and development of employees, so that the workers could exercise their skills to create high quality products and services. Employee performance is generally characterized by the conduct of the employees demonstrated to execute a specific task delegated by the employer. Ordinarily, Jiang et al. (2020) noted that skilled and talented workers often display high commitment, performance, and devoted their experiences or skills to accomplish profitability and organizational productivity.

Methodology

The researcher used survey research design essential in improving business decisions. Population size for this study include 102 selected employees from five reachable plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Selected workers who were available for the scientific inquiry consist of managers and graduate staff from the firms under study. Convenience sampling technique was also utilized to enhance collection of data. The primary data was collected from structured questionnaire while the secondary data was information received from human resource data of various selected plastics manufacturing firms. The sample size for the study was 85 revealed through Taro Yamane's formula. Copies of questionnaire were distributed to collect data useful in answering research questions. The questionnaire was structured on communication and employee performance (Nachimias & Nachmias, 1976). It was also divided into three sections like section A, B, and C, where A represents participants profile, B focused on independent variable, and C deals on dependent variable. This study contains five items stated in an ordinal scale using the 4-point Likert's scale of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree). Statistical instrument used for this study was Spearman correlation coefficient to measure the relationship between the variables. The reliability of the research instrument was stated in Cronbach's alpha with 0.971 value, which indicates that the research instrument is reliable and consistent. The research instrument was validated by experts in management. The information offered by the participants were voluntarily and confidential.

Table 1 Population Distribution

S/No	Name of Plastics firms	Population
1.	Ace Toys & Plastics Nigeria Ltd	12
2.	Explosive & Plastic & Co Ltd	10
3.	Zenith Plastics Conglomerates Ltd	24
4.	Belhope Plastics Industries Ltd.	15
5.	Metal & Plastic Industries (Nigeria) Ltd	15
Total		60

Source: Human Resource Data, 2025.

Results and Discussion

Test of Hypothesis One

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between downward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

HA₁: There is significant relationship between downward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 2 Spearman Correlation Coefficient between Downward Communication and Employee Performance

Correlations			Downward Communication	Employee Performance
Spearman's rho	Downward Communication	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.945**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	85	85
	Employee Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.945**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	85	85

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 2 verified that there was significant positive relationship between downward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This advocated that the relationship between the variables was statistically significant. The r- value was 0.945 and p – value 0.000 which specified that downward communication has positive significant relationship with employee performance. Where p – value = 0.000 < 0.005, the null hypothesis was rejected while alternative hypothesis was accepted. The positive significance r- value of 0.945 revealed that 94.5% rise in downward communication may result in high employee performance in the organization.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between upward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

HA₂: There is significant relationship between upward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 3 Spearman Correlation Coefficient between Upward Communication and Employee Performance Correlations

		Upward Communication	Employee Performance
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.955**
	Upward Communication Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	85	85
	Correlation Coefficient	.955**	1.000
	Employee Performance Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	85	85

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 3 specified that there was positive significant relationship between upward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This showed that r- value was 0.955 and p – value 0.000 which revealed that upward communication is meaningfully connected to employee performance of the firms. Where p – value = 0.000 < 0.005, the null hypothesis was rejected while alternative hypothesis was accepted. The positive significance r- value of 0.955 displayed that 95.5% growth in upward communication could lead to more employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in hypothesis one shows that there is a positive significant relationship between downward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This result divulges that availability of effective downward communication helps employees to improve product standard. The finding is in accordance with Goris et al. (2000) who narrated that job performance and job satisfaction can be achieved only when there is a balance relationship between employees needs for growth and job characteristics. These scholars also discover that high level of downward communication in the organizations energize employees to feel dependent on their bosses. The second hypothesis proves that there is positive significant relationship between upward communication and employee performance in plastics manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This result implies that upward communication brings cooperation between the subordinates and superiors which enable the workers to deliver prompt services to our customers. The finding is in harmony with Monge et al., (1992), they insisted that communication variables like information sharing and interaction among group members leads to innovation in the organization. They also found that communication variables have a strong effect on the organizational outcome as well as participative environment increases productivity and improves employee performance.

Conclusion

The results from the analysis reveal positives significant levels of association between the measures of communication such as downward communication, upward communication, and employee performance. Thus, this study also discovered that effective communication system contributes to high productivity and overall organizational performance. However, it was found that poor communication network creates low performance and conflicts in the plastics manufacturing firms. The researcher recommended that:

- i. Plastics manufacturing firms should have result oriented downward communication system that contains electronic information system, video conferencing mechanisms, and modern technologies, through which management may use to transmit policy, company goals, to enhance workers performance or productivity.
- ii. Plastics manufacturing firms should have effective upward communication which the subordinates may use to express their performance and grievances on job related issues like poor working conditions and painful salary. These result in low job performance and high employee turnover.

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