

MANAGEMENT’S COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS AND STAFF PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, OKO.

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Abstract

This paper explores communication effectiveness of the management and its impact on staff performance in Federal Polytechnic, Oko. The study was guided by three research questions. The population of the study was 3000 staff (academic and non-academic) out of which 200 staff were used as sample using simple random sampling technique. The major instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Tables and simple percentage were adopted as statistical tools for data presentation and analysis. It was discovered from study among other facts that timely communication, use of proper channel, etc. foster management’s communication effectiveness as it concerns staff job performances. On the other hand, lack of emotional awareness skill by management eg. negligence of staff welfare and other physical conditions, irregularities in handling staff matters etc. amount to ineffective communication. The study came up with some recommendations to forestall the identified challenging factors in management-staff communication relationships in relation to job performances. The recommendations included among others that the management of Federal Polytechnic, Oko should not bombard her staff with a lot of information (information overload) demanding too much from them within a short space of time hence stress on the part of the staff which usually leads to non-performance.

Keywords: Management, Effective Communication, Staff- Performance, organizational resources, Verbal and non-verbal communication

Citation of article: Anunike, P. E (2023). Management’s Communication Effectiveness and Staff Performance: A Study of Federal Polytechnic, Oko. *International Journal of Public administration (IJOPAD)*, 2(1): 45-55.

Date submitted: 22/12/2022 Date accepted: January 20/02/ 2023 Date published: February 2023

Introduction.

Every organization has its management team that plans, organizes, controls and directs the affairs of the organization to achieve pre-determined objectives. The objective cannot be achieved by the management in isolation from the other non-management members of the organization. Management plans what to do, when it will be done and how it will be done by conveying the information to everyone in the organization. This speaks why Follett (1933) gave the popular definition of management as “the art of getting things done through people” (*en.m.wikipedia.org*). Management is expected to convey their ideas clearly to others so that they understand what is required from them and positively contribute to the organization. This aim could only be achieved through effective communication. The existence of effective communication is most cost-effective way of high performance. For effective management of an organizational resources especially the human aspect, effective communication skill must be fundamental.

Effective communication bridges the gap in the management and staff relationships. Federal Polytechnic Oko which is the focus of this study is an organization with its defined objective to produce people who are equipped with technical knowledge and skills for societal economic growth and development. This is to be achieved by the management team in collaboration with the staff through effective communication.

According to Martins (2022), workplace communication is “communication you do at work about the work.” Therefore, this study is to investigate into how the management’s communication influences the performances of the non-management members to achieve the institutions set goals.

Statement of Problem

Federal Polytechnic, Oko like every other organization is a social system not only because it is where dissimilar individuals of unique characteristics are called to work together but because the individuals must interact among themselves to meet a common need. The general administration and management of the institution are placed in the hands of the management team to ensure that every member of staff performs optimally to the corporate objective of the institution. From the organizational perspectives, effective communication is valuable not only because it gives insight to the management of the Polytechnic into the staff performances, ensures a creative and conducive climate but also fosters quality service delivery towards goal attainment. In view of the above, this study is to investigate into how management’s communication effectiveness influences the job performances of the staff in Federal Polytechnic, Oko.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the management’s communication effectiveness and how it affect the performances of staff in Federal Polytechnic Oko. Specifically, the study wants to:

1. Find out the type and means of communication adopted by the management of Federal Polytechnic Oko.
2. Assess the management's level of communication effectiveness in relation to staff performances.
3. Identify the challenges of management's communication effectiveness in relation to staff performances.

Research Questions:

The following questions guided this research:

1. What is the type and media of communication adopted by the management of Fed Poly Oko?
2. To what extent is managements' communication effective in relation to staff performance in Fed Poly Oko?
3. What challenges the management's communication effectiveness in relation to staff performance in Fed Poly Oko?

Conceptual Framework

Definition and Meaning of Management

Management is very essential to human race and plays cardinal functions in the development of man and society. Management has the features of both art and science. The art and science of management are not exclusively and totally independent but are complementary. Therefore a manager must have the knowledge of management principles (science) and as well have the skillful ability to put them in practical application (art) (Anunike: 2015)

Several definitions have been given to the concept of management by different scholars. There is no generally accepted definition of the concept. For the purpose of clearer understanding of this study, few definitions are given. Herrity (2022) defined management as “the co-ordination and administration of tasks to achieve a goal, such administration activities include setting the organization's strategy and coordinating the efforts of staff to accomplish those objectives, through the application of available resources”. Herrity (2022) also stated that the five basic operations of a manager are (a) Setting of objectives (b) Organizing work and dividing them into achievable tasks (c) Motivating the team through effective leadership skill (d) Devising systems of measurement for task performances and (e) Developing people at work by investing in their skill development and trainings.

Merriam Webster defined management as “the collective body of those who manage or direct an enterprise (www.merriam-webster.com). This implies that decision-making and control of an organization are vested in the hands of few individuals other than the entire members. Chandan (2005) as cited in Anunike (2015), stated that “management is a problem-solving process of effectively achieving organizational objectives though the efficient use of scarce resources in a changing environment”. In this definition, a manager is to make decisions and be able to solve problems. He must ensure effective achievement of goal in the most efficient way. This implies that the available resources

must be judiciously used to achieve the intended goal at most reduced cost. Managers are expected to predict accurately the likely changes in the business environment and develop strategies to contain same.

Other functions of management are planning, organizing, controlling and directing of organization's resources towards goal attainment. It also involves systematic and continuous act of establishing and sustaining good working conditions for the members of organization to achieve goals.

In view of our understanding of management and in consideration of our focus organization which Federal Polytechnic Oko, the management is a few group of people who take rational decisions, make strategic plans on how to achieve the objectives of the institution in most effective and efficient manner.

The Concept of Communication/Effective Communication

Communication is the “act of sharing and receiving information through a variety of media to various individuals or groups” (Evans: 2021). Communication is the life-source of organization because organizations involve people and human beings are social animals that interact among themselves or with one another. Interactions and inter-relationships are impossible without one form of communication or the other. Communication could be understood as “the process of sending and receiving messages through verbal or non-verbal means, including speech, or oral communication writing and graphical representations The creation and exchange of meaning” (Nordquist: 2019). Communication is of two major categories- verbal and non-verbal. There are also two forms of communication in organisation, formal and informal (Jones, George and Hill (2000). Individuals, groups, organizations etc, have different ways (means) through which messages, information, ideas, feelings, desires, wishes etc are transmitted to another. Nadeem (2020) defined communication as “a process of exchange of facts, ideas and opinions as a means that individual or organization share meaning and understanding with one another. It could be seen that a lot of explanations have been given to communication by many scholars especially as it concerns the management of offices and organizations. It is one of managerial skills an effective manager. Communication in its simplest term is the process of transmitting a message, idea, information, feelings, even emotion etc, from the sender to the receiver. It therefore involves the transmission and reception of information. It is deduced from the above definitions that communication is a process, continuous and systematic. What defines any batch of communication process is the feedback. If there is no feedback, no communication has taken place. In organizations, verbal and formal types of communication are commonly used. Organisations adopt several media to communicate verbally. These include written, oral, face-to-face, electronic such as e-mail, internet, mobile phone, video conferencing etc.

What then is Effective Communication? To answer this question, one begins with the idea that if there is an effective communication, it means that communication can possibly be ineffective. “Effective communication involves not only sending information but also receiving it by listening to staff concerns, allowing them have input on their work and their work place. It not only informs, but makes people feel that they belong to and want to support the organization”. (*courses.lumenlearning.com*). Anjali (2018) defined an effective communication as “a process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, knowledge and information such that the purpose or intention is fulfilled in the best possible manner”. It is the presentation of views by the sender in a way best understood by the receiver. Effective communication

has been defined by Coursera (2022) as “the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and data so that the message is received and understood with clarity and purpose” Seven principles of effective communication are clarity, correctness, completeness, concreteness, conciseness, courtesy, considered/coherent. (Source: *World of Work Project*).

Effective Communication is also defined as a communication between two or more persons wherein the intended message is successfully delivered, received and understood (*businessjargons.com*). In other words, a communication becomes effective when the parties (sender and receiver) assign similar meanings to the message. In organizational setting, when the information shared among the employees contributes towards the success and achievement of goal, communication is effective. To achieve effective communication in organization, a manager must be an effective communicator whether as a receiver or a sender of information. The following are some tips to be an effective communicator.

- Know your objectives
- Be an active listener
- Watch your body language
- Understand your audience
- Watch the speed of your speaking
- Make appropriate choice of time.
- Be clear (Walden University (2021))

Other communication skills for Effective Management include:

- Conversation Skill: Ability to speak, listen and apply non-verbal signs well either as sender or receiver of information.
- Written communication skill: Ability to handle emotions of yourself or your audience well
- Job allocation skill: Ability to organize job well to enable effective flow of communication.
- Organization Design skill: Ability to design proper structure which stands a framework holding all departments/units together gives clear channel or pathway for effective communication. (Jones et al as cited in Anunike: 2015)

In contrast, there are barriers against effective communication. In the views of Papa (2018), communication is effective when it generates positive connection between people. The implication is that effective communication has a function of relaying a message in such a way that results in a mutual understanding. It involves the process of encoding and decoding until there is a common understanding. Some factors responsible for ineffective communication are among others as follows:

- Poor listening: (when there is marginal listening by the audience)
- Information load: (when the audience is bombard with too many information/messages)
- Language: (when the parties do not speak and understand the same language)
- Noise: (any form of interference in the course of communication)
- Poor Timing (sending information at the wrong time)
- Wrong Channel (the use of wrong method/medium to communicate)

- Incredible Source (when the source of information is not reliable) (Anunike: 2015)

The list is not exhausted here due to time and space constraints

Importance of Effective Communication in Organizations.

There are lots of benefits derivable from effective communication in organization among which include these:

- Increases productivity
- Ceases confusion
- Builds trust
- Creates cohesion within the team
- Reduces staff turn-over
- Resolves conflicts
- Relieves tense relationships
- Boosts morale of employees (Techfunnel:2020)

Others are:

- Allows corporate policy to be easily understood (Papa:2018)
- Increases innovation
- Boosts job satisfaction
- Gives direction to employees
- Improves public impression
- Improves healthy work environment (Career Guide: 2022)
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Methodology:

This study made use of survey design method. The study sampled 200 staff using simple random sampling method to give all the staff equal chance of being selected. The validated instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, while test re-test method was adopted which proved the instrument reliable. A total of 200 copies were administered and were all retrieved. However, 20 copies not correctly filled and so they were invalid. Therefore only 180 copies were used for data presentations and analysis.

Presentation and Analysis of data

Research Question 1: What type and means of communication is adopted by the management of Federal Polytechnic, Oko?

Table 1 showing the type and means of communication

Responses

Field Survey 2022.

Items	Yes	%	No	%
Verbal	180	100%	0	0%
Nonverbal comm	0	0%	180	100%
Formal form of comm	180	100%	0	0%
Informal form of comm	0	0%	180	100%
Both downward and upward flow	170	94%	10	6%
Downward flow only	10	6%	170	94%
Physical means	60	33%	120	67%
Electronic / digital means	50	28%	130	72%
Both physical and digital means	110	61%	170	59%

The above table shows that all the respondents (100%) agreed that the management of Federal Polytechnic Oko uses only verbal communication such as letter, memo etc to communicate to staff and also 100% agreed that all management communication to staff are formal. It shows again that 170 (94%) respondents agreed that management uses both downward and upward channels of communication in Federal Polytechnic Oko. While only 10 respondents (6%) disagreed and stated that the management makes use of downward channel only. The table also shows that 60(33%) of the respondents said the management convey to staff by physical means only while 120 (67%) disagreed to that. The table also shows that 50 (28%) of the respondents agreed that the management uses only digital / electronic means while 130 (72%) disagreed. Also, 110 (61%) stated that both physical and digital means are adopted by the management to communicate to staff while 170(59%) disagreed.

Research Question 2: To what extent is management’s communication effective in relation to staff performance in Fed Poly Oko?

Table2: Responses on impact of management communication on staff performance.

Responses

Items	Yes	%	No	%
Very high impact	100	56%	80	44%
High impact	140	78%	80	22%
Insignificant impact	40	22%	140	78%

Field Survey 2022.

Table 2 reveals that 100(56%) and 80 (44%) are the total respondents said the management’s communication has very high impact and high impact respectively on staff performance. It shows also that 40(22%) of the respondents were of the view that there is no significant impact of management communication on staff performance.

Research Question 3: What challenges the management’s communication effectiveness in relation to staff performances in Fed Poly Oko?

Table 3: Responses to challenging factors of effectiveness in management’s communication.

Responses

s/n	Factors that hinders full effectiveness of management’s communication	Yes	Percentage { % }	No	Percentage { % }
1	Poor timing/time management	95	53	85	47
2	Wrong channel/medium	120	67	60	33
3	Lack of confidence/trust occasioned by irregular academic calendar, inconsistencies in handling lapses, non-discipline of staff	140	78	40	22
4	Information overload leading to stress	100	56	80	44
5	Laxity of staff	90	50	90	50
6	Lack of emotional awareness occasionally e.g negligence of staff interest, lack of conducive workplace [offices etc]	120	67	60	33

Field Survey 2022.

From table 3 above, 95 representing 53% of the total respondents said poor timing and time management made most of the management's communication ineffective while 85 (47%) disagreed. Out of the total respondents 120 (67%) said that the use of wrong medium to communicate amounts to ineffective communication while only 60 (33%) disagreed. It was shown also that 140 (78%) disagreed that the major cause of ineffectiveness in management's communication was lack of confidence and inconsistencies in handling issues, while only 40(22%) disagreed. It was also discovered that 100(56%) were of the view that information overload which most times results to stress hinder management's communication effectiveness while 80(44%) disagreed to that. It was also revealed by 90(50%) of the total respondents that ineffectiveness in management communication was as a result of laxity on the part of staff while 90(50%) also disagreed. Lastly from the table was revealed that lack of emotional awareness skill by the management causes non - performance of staff. This was agreed by 120 (67%) of the total respondents while only 60(33%) disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

This study after in-depth investigation, came up with the following results which were both informative, educative and challenging to management and staff of Federal Poly Oko.

Management of the Federal Poly Oko uses formal form of communication. They mostly use verbal communication, both physical and digital means. Both downward and upward flow of communication are also used. This means when messages are communicated to staff about their jobs, they (staff) are allowed to give feedback to the management in return or vice versa. It was also discovered that the level of management's communication effectiveness has to some high extent impacted staff performances. However, there were some impediments in full utilization of staff. Those factors make management's communication to staff sometimes ineffective. These were shown in the Table 3 above, in which lack of emotional awareness such as negligence of staff welfare, physical conditions and irregularities in handling staff matters are the major impediments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concluded that the management's communication effectiveness level is relatively high. This is because majority of staff still discharge their duties creditably in the face of every odd.

It was concluded that the type and various means through which management communicates to staff were relatively alright though there are rooms for improvement being aware that the institution is operating in ever changing environment. More so, the staff is of different personalities with diverse attitudes towards work. On realization of these and with conscious efforts, the performance of staff will always contribute to the growth and achievement of the objectives of the institution.

However, this study will not be conclusive if those challenging factors were not addressed. In view of this, the study made the following recommendations.

- The management will always give timely and adequate information concerning every task to be performed by staff whether academic or non-academic

- The management should not bombard the staff with a lot of information (Information overload) demanding too much from them within a short space of time otherwise it leads to stress on the part of staff which eventually will result to non-performance.
- Proper channel should always be used in communication of some information. The management should know when to use physical or electronic medium.
- The management should be emotionally aware of the feelings of the staff at the point of communication. For instance, when staff is denied their obvious rights and you expect them to perform optimally, it may not be effective. Most importantly the management should take staff welfare as one of the top priorities.
- Let management be consistent in the way of handling lawful offenders so that it will inculcate discipline in the staff.
- Most importantly, the management should take office accommodation for staff as one of the top priorities.

When these and other efforts are exploited, the management of the polytechnic is positioned on the path of reinventing governance and management for sustainable development.

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