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EFFECT OF DOWNWARD AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION ON THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY PERSONNEL IN NIGERIA

KATAMBA ABUBAKAR SAKA*

AND

DR EVAREST CHIBUOGWU MADU**

I. INTRODUCTION

The existence, stability and productivity of organizations and the world in general depend on effective communication. This, therefore, means that productivity or otherwise in any organization is a function of the degree of communication. The concept of communication, according to Adeosun (2002), is the process of information exchange between two or more individuals in an attempt by one or more of them to change the behaviour of the other(s). Guided by this definition, we can say that communication is one of the motivational factors since individuals will make attempt to change the behaviour of others to ensure productivity. The elements of communication process include the source, the message, channel, receiver, effects and feedback (Adeosun, 2002).

It should be noted, however, that communication could be vertical or horizontal. Vertical communication could either be downward or upward communication, while horizontal communication is also known as interpersonal communication. Downward communication is the transferring or sending of message or information from the superior officer(s), or top management to the middle and lower cadre of workers, i.e. from executive chairman to senior and junior workers in an organization. Upward communication is the reverse of downward communication. The interpersonal communication is the exchange of message or information among the workers in an organization of equal status or in the same profession.

The performance and, of course, the productivity of workers in any organization largely

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depends on the extent of the flow of information either from the superior to subordinates or within subordinate workers. This also goes to depend on the medium of information dissemination and exchange (verbal, memo, circular, meetings, media, internal, etc).

A school library is a library that is established in either nursery, primary or postprimary schools with organized collection of books and other literary materials kept for consultation by both teachers and pupils/students. The school library is managed by school librarian, teacher librarian, library assistant, or media specialist. The minimum standard for school libraries in Nigeria (1992) recommends six categories of staff that are to manage school library of any type, thus:

- i. The School Librarian
- ii. The Library Assistant
- iii. Technician
- iv. The Typist
- v. Cleaner
- vi. Security man

The objective of establishing any library is to be in line with the objective of establishing the parent institution. Therefore, school libraries are established to provide information resources to support school curricula. For this objective to be achieved, the school library personnel are expected to be wellinformed, communicated on the decisions taken by school authority/management as they affect school libraries. School authorities as well as stakeholders are expected to communicate the school library personnel on the current issues of libraries. Literature search on communication in librarianship shows that majority of writeups, citations or examples were centered on communication in academic libraries (Fasola, 2004; Okon, 2005), (Raji, 2008; Onwukanjo, 2010). Others such as (Onwubiko, 2004) looked at communication in libraries on general scope. Based on this shortcoming, it is assumed that communication between superior and junior staff as well as among school library personnel is not accorded due recognition. This may be one of the factors responsible for poor job performance in school libraries in Nigeria.

The broad objective of the study, therefore, is to determine the effect of communication on job performance of school library personnel in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. determine the effect of downward communication on job performance of school library personnel;
- ii. determine the effect of interpersonal communication on job performance of school library personnel;

- iii. investigate the effect of channels of communication on job performance of school library personnel in Nigeria.

The investigation was guided by the following research questions:

- i. is there any effect of downward communication on job performance of school library personnel?
- ii. is there any effect of interpersonal communication on job performance of school library personnel?
- iii. does the channel of communication improve the job performance of school library personnel?

The scope of the study is limited to the investigation of the effect of downward, interpersonal and channels of communication on job performance of school library personnel's in Nigeria. The upward communication and intercommunication is excluded.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature pertinent of communication in librarianship is hereby reviewed. Udensi (2002) examines the principles of library administration such as planning, formulation of objectives, reporting, measurement and evaluation as well as communication. He sees communication as the key to successful administration and that there is the need for a free flow of communication both vertically and horizontally. There is wide range of activities which consist of various units, functions and human beings. In all libraries, there should be good channels of communication. There is the need for librarians to keep staff abreast of any development such as new policy under consideration or when a decision is reached. The University Librarian is expected to make it a personal policy to invite or hold meetings with all staff from time to time on a monthly basis, where developments in committees are discussed as he/she is one of the Principal Officers in the University.

In a study on the effects of interpersonal communication skills in library services at the Kenneth Dike Library using post graduate students as the target population, Fasola (2004) found that positive skills (reaching, writing and speaking/listening to users' complaints, etc) promote library patronage and hence encourage effective library services. The conclusion was that the interpersonal communication skills of staff were at a very low level. The study recommended (among others) regular workshops, seminars and conferences for training and retraining programmes for staff in interpersonal skills.

Raji (2007) studied staff perception of the communication effectiveness in University of Maiduguri using survey research method with a population of 258 staff. The major finding

shows that both verbal and written communication are used and that the written media is most frequently used communication media. On the other hand, downward communication was mostly used. The study recommended (among others) that there should be clear, precise and unambiguous communication whether verbal or written. There should be prompt and regular meetings between subordinates and supervisors.

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Okon (2005) asserted that in a traditional setting in librarianship, two components of communication exist within the administrative structure of the academic. The first component is the written, printed and electronic format; the second component is the intellectual tool sets, i.e. cataloguing, indexing and reference work. Onwukanjo (2010) studied the factors that aid effective communication in organization using five academic libraries in SouthWest as a case study. The study reveals that healthy/friendly organizational climate, absence of mutual distrust, resentments and gossips were responsible for effective communication. The study recommended that there should be formal training in effective communication skills and that there should be awareness about effective communication.

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The uniqueness of this study is that apart from the fact that it is empirical in nature, it also adopts descriptive statistics (mean) to analyze the data obtained from downward, interpersonal and channels of communication variables. The present study adopts simple descriptive statistics for demographic data and descriptive statistics for independence variables downward, interpersonal and channels of communication.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

Survey research was adopted for the study due to the fact that it involves population and samples. The population of the study comprises of 300 school library personnel, librarians in State Education Board, Media resource centres, lecturers, other Information professionals and members of Nigerian School Library Association (NSLA) that attended the conference. The entire population of 300 conference participants is adopted due to the small size of the population. Thus, Afolabi (1999) opined that the entire population in a study can be adopted if the population is manageable and at the same time if the accessibility to subjects of the study would not create problem in terms of cost.

Questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. It was self-designed, contained 18 items, and divided into four sections (demographic information, downward communication, interpersonal communication, and channels of communication and job performance).

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The administration of the 300 questionnaires was done during the 25th Annual General Meeting of NSLA which took place on the 25th October, 2010 at Abeokuta. They were administered through the NSLA registration officers' desk so that delegates were issued

copies as they register for the conference. Copies of questionnaire were filled and collected while other completed copies were sent by post to researchers. In all, 190 copies were retrieved and this represented 63% response rate.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Out of the 300 copies of questionnaire administered, 190 copies were filled, returned and found usable as this represents 63% success. The data from the returned copies of the questionnaire are hereby presented using simple descriptive statistics, i.e. mean. It should be noted however, that the cutoff point is 2.5 meaning that the statement is agreed upon, where the mean fall below 2.5 it means that respondents disagreed with the statement(s)

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

Response by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	84	44
Female	106	56
Total	190	100

Table 1 reveals the gender of respondents. Female personnel are more than the male counterparts in school librarianship.

Table 2: Respondents by highest Educational Qualifications

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Degree in librarianship	71	38
Diploma/NCE librarianship	24	13
Certificate in librarianship	07	04
Degree/Dip/Certificate in other fields	82	43
SSCE	04	02
Total	190	100

Table 2 shows respondents by highest educational qualifications

The highest educational qualifications of respondents were examined and it 82(43%) respondents hold degree, diploma and certificate outside librarianship and 71(38%) hold degrees in librarianship while 24 (13%) and 7(4%) hold diploma, NCE and certificate in librarianship respectively.

Table 3: Respondents by State Chapters of NSLA in Rank Order

Rank order	State	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Ogun	42	23
2	Oyo	36	20
3	Lagos	16	8.89
3	Niger	16	8.29
4	Katsina	08	4
5	Abuja (FCT)	07	3.89
5	Ekiti	07	3.89
5	Kaduna	07	3.89
6	Osun	06	3
7	Benue	05	2.78
7	Enugu	05	2.78
7	Ondo	05	2.78
8	Abia	03	1.67
8	Adamawa	03	1.67
8	Akwa Ibom	03	1.67
8	Anambra	03	1.67
	Total	180	100

N.B: 10 respondents did not indicate their state chapter

Data on respondents by state chapters of Nigerian School Library Association (NSLA) in Table 3 were arranged by ranked order: Respondents from Ogun and Oyo State top 1st and 2nd respectively. This is because copies of the questionnaire were administered during the 25th Annual Conference at Abeokuta (Ogun State); the lowest respondents were discovered to be from Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Anambra and Nasarawa States.

Research question 1: Is there any effect of downward communication on job performance of school library personnel in Nigeria?

Table 4: Downward Communication and Job Performance

		4	3	2	1	0	\bar{x}	
S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD			Decision
1.	Ideas communicated from the top management level enable subordinates to perform job better?	54	102	22	2	10	2.99	Agree
2.	Free flow of information from boss enable subordinates to perform professional duties better?	16	36	66	52	14	1.97	Disagree
3.	Effective job performance is possible because my boss do communicate professional matters to me?	14	46	63	60	4	2.02	Disagree
4.	Ideas are communicated from the superior to subordinate through internet for quick job performance?	61	90	24	10	4	3.03	Agree
5.	Important messages on job rotation are sent to lower cadre of staff regularly?	24	44	64	34	20	2.12	Disagree
6.	Latest information on library services are communicated down to ordinary cleaner in library	20	28	58	53	28	1.78	Disagree
	Total	31.5	58	49.5	35.1	13.3	2.16	Disagree

N.B: Cut-off point = 2.5 mean

The analysis of the responses presented in research question 1, table 4 shows that items 1 and 4 agree with that statement that ideas communicated from top management as well as from superior to subordinate via internet enhances job performance of school library personnel because their means are 2.99 and 3.03 respectively. On the other hand, responses on items 2,3,5 and 6 statements on free flow of information, dissemination of latest information, dissemination of information from boss to subordinates and thus improves job performance hence their means are 1.97, 2.12 and 1.78 respectively. The means are below 2.5 and as such respondents disagree with those statements.

The overall mean is 2.16 which shows that there is no positive effect of downward

communication on job performance of school library personnel. The 2.16 is below the cutoff point which is 2.5. It, therefore, reveals that ideas communication from the top management/superior to subordinates do not improve the job performance in school libraries in Nigeria.

Research Question 2

Does interpersonal communication improve the job performance of school library personnel in Nigeria?

Table 5: Interpersonal Communication and Job Performance

		4	3	2	1	0		
S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	UD	\bar{x}	Decision
1.	Communication among colleagues always help in the effective job performance	68	75	29	12	4	3.01	Agree
2.	I share ideas with colleagues on acquisition, cataloguing, classification reference services etc	87	76	16	4	6	3.24	Agree
3.	Information on Nigeria School Library Association are always disseminated among colleagues and improves job performance	20	28	77	36	15	2.07	Disagree
4.	Exchange of ideas during meetings with colleagues do assist personnel in the performance of library jobs	50	84	36	4	10	2.86	Agree
5.	Exchange of professional ideas among school library staff enhances productivity	20	28	58	53	28	1.78	Disagree
6.	News bulletin, memo, and notice board are the best avenues for communication and thus improve job performance	40	42	55	38	14	2.29	Disagree
	Total	47.5	55.5	45.1	24.5	12.83	2.54	Agree

N.B: Cutoff point = 2.5 mean

Table 5 shows interpersonal communication and job performance

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the channels of communication as their means are 1.97 and 2.37 respectively. Data on items 3, 4, 5 and 6 shows staff meeting, verbal discussion among colleagues and telephone seems to be the best channels of communication that enhances job performance among school library personnel in Nigeria. Their means are 2.73, 2.51, 2.68 and 2.86. The overall mean score is 2.52 and since it is within the cutoff point of 2.5, it can be inferred that channels of communication improve job performance of school library personnel. It can then be concluded that there is positive effect of channels of communication on job performance.

V. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of the study showed that there are 18 items appearing in the three tables to answer the three research questions. Out of the 18 items, respondents agree with nine items and disagree with the other nine items.

The responses to the effect of downward communication on job performance of library personnel showed that respondents agree with two statements and disagree with four statements. The overall mean of 2.16 showed that there is no positive effect of downward communication on job performance of school library personnel in Nigeria. This finding is contrary to the opinion of Udensi (2002) which states that there is the need for a good flow of information.

The responses in table 5, i.e. effect of interpersonal communication on job performance of school library personnel in Nigeria show that respondents disagree with three statements. The overall mean for six statements was 2.54 which showed that interpersonal communication improves job performance of school library personnel in Nigeria. This finding corresponds with the findings of Fasola (2004) who affirmed that positive skills (reading, speaking/listening to users' complaints etc) encourage effective library services.

The findings showed that circular, memo, internet and e mail are not effective channels of communication hence respondents disagree with two statements. Verbal communication through staff meetings, from boss and colleagues and through telephone are regarded as the best channels of communication and thus respondents agree with the four items. The overall mean (2.52) shows that respondents agree with the statement which states that channels of communication improve job performance of school library personnel. This finding agrees with the opinion shared by Udensi, (2002), Raji, (2007), as well as Okon, (2005). Udensi (2002) lamented on good channel of communication while Okon (2005) lamented that written media is most frequently used communication media.

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VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that:

- i. Downward communication has not been effectively used in school libraries in Nigeria and has led to poor job performance.
- ii. Ideas from Nigerian School Library Association and written media have not been recognized in Nigeria as these are the bane of school library personnel job performance.
- iii. School library personnel are not computer/IT literate with their inability to access the internet and email services as channels of communication.

Guided by the findings and conclusion, the authors recommend that:

- i. Management of schools/Heads of school libraries should devise simple effective and easy means of disseminating ideas to their subordinates.
- ii. Regular conferences, workshop and seminars should be organized to serve as avenues where school library personnel meet to exchange professional ideas among themselves.
- iii. There should be regular training programmes on IT visavis internet, email services to enable personnel to send and receive emails and access internet. This will bridge the communication gap among the school library personnel in Nigeria.