

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AS A DETERMINANT OF ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: THE CASE OF FIVE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN THE SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study examined effective communication as a determinant of organisational efficiency of academic libraries. Five academic libraries in the South West were surveyed. They were the University of Ibadan library, Obafemi Awolowo University library (OAU), University of Lagos Library, Lagos State University (LASU) library and Yaba college of Technology library. The objectives of the study were to determine the causes of effective communication in an organisation; to determine whether there is any relationship between effective communication among staff, productivity and organisational goal attainment; to assess the organisational climate in relation to effective communication and organisational efficiency. A critical approach for data collection was adopted through the use of structured questionnaires. The same questionnaires were reacted to by the four categories of staff in the academic libraries surveyed. These were the academic staff of the libraries, the senior staff, the secretarial and clerical staff. The responses in the questionnaires were analysed and discussed with tabular illustrations, figures and simple percentages. The study among other things shows that effective communication among staff is responsible for healthy organisational climate for maximum productivity. Effective communication has a positive effect on efficient human resources management, for organisational efficiency. Lastly recommendations were made on the need for effective communication skills through training and formal education.

Introduction

Many operations have failed because of poor communications, misunderstood concepts, messages, and unclear instructions. Effective communication is very central to human and organizational existence. It is believed and agreed to be the solution to all the problems of the world. With effective communication, consciousness, there would not be domestic quarrels, ethnic prejudices, and ethno-religious wars, war between nations generation gaps, industrial disputes and organizational conflicts. Northup(2006) Ola and oyibo (2000) assert that a major factor militating against organizational goal attainment is conflict. These conflicts could be between individuals or groups of individuals in an organization.

Effective communication plays a vital role in the success of every organization. Northup (2006) believes that successful chief executives could build organizations that value, trust and attract people. One way to do this is for employees to value and trust each other, and for there to be mutual information sharing which is achieved by effective communication. Effective communication skills create a more productive work environment while poor communication skills lessen productivity. Stennes (2008) believes that the hallmark of effective communication is the coherent verbal projection of ideas so that the listener receives the message without misunderstandings and miscommunications. In the words of Northup (2006), "effective communication is the glue that holds organizations together for maximum organizational efficiency"

Statement of the problem.

This study tries to find out how effective communication can be a determinant of organisational effectiveness in academic libraries. Ola and Oyibo(2000) posit that absence of effective communication in any institution or organisation is a problem, and a threat to organisational effectiveness, and goal attainment. Scanty communications in institutions/organisations have been posing problems to the corporate existence of such organisations. For instance top management needs to realize that they have to communicate effectively to subordinates. This would make room for subordinates to feel loved and wanted. This would make room for excellent human resources management. It would encourage organisational effectiveness and maximum goal attainment.

Chandan (1987) and Nwachukwu (1988) posit that absence of effective communication even in developed countries of USA, Japan and Britain posed a threat to corporate excellence according to a cross-cultural study carried out on communication. Linking absence of effective communication as a problem to another theory is to link it to Maslow's motivational theory of needs. It implies that every worker wants to be recognized, loved, understood and his importance established. When it is so, he puts in his best towards maximum goal attainment and organizational efficiency. All these can not be achieved without effective communication. The implication of this problem to any organization/institution is that absence of effective communication, anytime, any day is a threat to corporate existence of any organisation. It can also wind up the organisation especially when its goals are not being achieved, and there is lack of organizational efficiency. That organisation will give it self a decent burial.

It is against this backdrop that the writer embarked on this research, to find out how effective communication can be a determinant of organisational efficiency of Academic libraries.

Objectives of the study.

This study is set to achieve among other things the following;

1. to determine the causes of effective communication
2. to determine whether there is any relationship between effective communication among staff, productivity and organisational goal attainment.
3. to assess the organisational climate in relationship to effective communication and organisational effectiveness.

Significance/justification of the study.

The result of this study could help the staff of the Academic libraries of any Institution or any Organisation to know how to relate to themselves both vertically, laterally or horizontally. All concerned would be happy to give in their best towards institutional/organizational goal attainment.

Secondly the study would make all staff of academic libraries of any institution, or staff of any organization to become conscious of the practice effective communication. This is because many workers communicate without doing it effectively. The result is usually breakdown in communication and consequently breakdown in organizational goal attainment and organizational

efficiency

Thirdly the result of the study could enhance perfect human resources management and ensure subordinates are easy to be governed.

Literature review

According to Ibrahim (1994) effective communication is one that influences the behaviours, attitudes or state of the receiver, as a result of the information he received. Any communication that does not bring about the desired change in behaviour and actions is not an effective communication.

Organizational efficiency according to Chaffey (2009), Dourado (2010) is a situation where an organization produces the desired result without being wasteful. In other words, the capability to achieve organizational goals with minimum input or resources. Efficiency has to do with doing the right things which makes for organizational goal attainment. The desired effect will depend on the goals of the organization, which could be profit maximization.

Factors that aid effective communication for organizational efficiency

A major aid of effective communication could be traced to conspicuous absence of morbid /unhealthy/diseased organisational climate. Organisational climate is referred to as the entire internal environment of the organisation. The climate reflects the needs, desires and aspirations of the people who form the environment. This is the view of Chandan (1987) and corroborated by Cheney (2009). When an organisational climate is conducive, pleasant, inviting and friendly, it could then be described as devoid of morbidity, healthy and undiseased. Ibrahim (1994) asserts that one of the manifestations of morbid organisational climate or abnormal atmosphere/environment is that innocent remarks are being given wrong interpretations. This situation does not augur well for effective communication. This is because in a morbid or diseased organisational climate, there are lots of mutual distrust, resentments, gossips and feelings of incompetence and insecurity.

A second major aid of effective communication among staff in an organisation is the homophily -heterophily theory in communication. According to Mac-pherson (2008), Burgon and Ruffner (1988), homophily refers to the degree to which interacting individuals are similar in certain attributes. Attributes that lead to homophily according to these authors, include such demographic characteristics as age, education, socio-economic status. They equally include attitudes, beliefs, and values. If some people are

identical which would be impossible, then they would be completely homophilous. At the opposite end of the similarity continuum is the heterophily or dissimilarity. The degree to which people differ in attributes is the heterophily between them. Because homophily-heterophily involves a variety of attributes, people can be both homophilous and heterophilous with another person at the same time e.g two people in the same profession are homophilous along the lines of occupation but may be heterophilous on political ideologies. Two people may be highly homophilous in terms of age, sex, race, educational status, and background but heterophilous in beliefs and values. The homophily-heterophily relationship between source and receiver will affect their communication transactions. It will determine who will communicate with who and how effective or successful such communication would be. People of the same socio economic and educational status will have successful and effective communication, which would augur well for organizational efficiency Mac-pherson (2008) is agreed to this and posits that messages that conflict with the values of the receivers will not be accepted even if it is rational and logically desirable. People's interpretation of messages coincide with already held beliefs and attitudes. It is also important according to Mac-pherson that workers be communicated to in the language they understand and in their own words and perception. This means that in recognizing Homophily and heterophily, the communicator must be able to empathize before sending message to the receiver.

A third major aid of effective communication for organizational efficiency is the absence of semantic barriers. According to Stennes (2008), Nwachukwu (1988), semantics is the study of meanings behind words. The five hundred most commonly used words in English language have fourteen thousand dictionary definitions. It is important that for us to communicate effectively we must use words and symbols that have the same meaning with the receivers.

In terms of written communication, barriers to effective communication could

be traced to failure to get to the point quickly and concisely. Cengage (2008) attributes semantic difficulties to:

- i. Lack of sound objectives where words are vague, imprecise and omitting necessary information
- ii. Use of technical jargons
- iii. Transmission problems
- iv. Filtering of sifting data so that only parts are transmitted

v. data that tends to block the communication system. Where in absence of all the barriers to effective communication mentioned above, then communication would be very effective and organisational effectiveness would be certain.

Methodology

A survey research design was adopted. Aina and Ajiferuke (2000) assert that social survey research involves systematic and comprehensive collection of information about the opinions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours of people. This collection is often accomplished through observations, interviews and by administering questionnaires on a representative sample of the population of interest.

Population of the study

The population of the study would be the six-hundred and twenty-five library staff of the five academic libraries chosen in South west Nigeria. The research sample size was sixty-three staff of the libraries in question. This research sample size comprised of all the members of the library staff which were considered to be a homogenous group.

Data analysis and discussion of results

The responses for all the questions in the questionnaire were responses that came from all the staff members of the different academic libraries.

For the purposes of these discussions and analyses, the options of strongly agreed and agreed were merged to become agreed. The options of strongly disagreed and disagreed have been merged as disagreed, while undecided remains itself and independent too.

What are the factors that aid effective communication in organisation?

To answer the above question the responses in questions (1-10) were used.

- (I) effective communication is responsible for healthy organisational climate.

S/N	Table	Agreed	% Agreed	Disagreed	% Disagreed	Undecided	% Undecided	Total %
(1)	Effective communication is responsible for healthy organisational climate	50	79	10	15.7	3	4.76	100
(2)	The organizational climate in your library is conducive with job satisfaction	40	63	10	15.87	13	20.63	100
(3)	The healthy/conducive organisational climate is responsible for not action on assumption by staff	50	79	10	15.87	3	4.76	100
(4)	Employee retention is high because innocent remarks are not given false interpretation	50	79	10	15.87	3	4.76	100
(5)	Employee retention is high due o the absence of mutual distrusts, resentment and gossips among staff caused by effective communication	50	79	8	12.68	5	7.49	100
(6)	Differences in age and socio-economic status (demographic peculiarities) of staff do not encourage integration and defers effective communication.	50	79	10	15.87	3	4.76	100
(7)	The values and beliefs of different staff	40	63	10	15.87	13	20.63	100

Findings and conclusion.

The study was undertaken to find out how effective communication could be a determinant of organisational efficiency of Academic libraries. Five academic libraries in the South West were surveyed for this purpose. These academic libraries were University of Ibadan Library, University of Lagos Library, Lagos state University library, Obafemi Awolowo University library, Ile-Ife, and the Yaba College of Technology library.

It was discovered that the following were responsible for effective communication (1) healthy/ friendly organisational climate (2) absence of mutual distrust, resentments and gossips (3) innocent remarks not being given false interpretations, and messages not being distorted but clarified.

Recommendations

1. Based on all the findings, to achieve to achieve effective communication for staff of all the institutions/ organisations there should be formal training on effective communication skills.
2. There should be effective communication consciousness in all institutions/ organisations, otherwise the workers will not know that they do not communicate well. This would adversely organisational/ institutional efficiency and productivity.

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