

UPWARD COMMUNICATION: A MODERN TECHNIQUE FOR EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT OF SELECTED HOTEL STAFF IN ADO-EKITI

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Abstract: The study analysed the effectiveness of upward communication as a modern technique for participation and performance enhancement with reference to selected hotels in Ado-Ekiti. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised the number of selected hotel staff in Ado-Ekiti. The sample size was 87. Census sampling was employed and primary data used for the study was gathered through structured questionnaire. Data gathered were analyzed using regression model. The result showed upward communication positively affects employee performance. Thus, concluded that upward communication positively affects the performance of selected Hotels staff in Ado-Ekiti.

Keyword: Communication, Upward Communication, Employee, Performance

I. Introduction

One of the best assets of any service oriented organization in recent time is her employees. Therefore, the more effective a communication pattern or structure is, the higher their performance and this would have serious positive implications on the organization's interest. One factor that contributes to employees feeling they are of value to their organization is effective communication. A wide range of studies have linked organizational communication to several performance outcomes including employees' performance. To this end, Himelstein in Taylor (2015) stated that clear communication and consistent feedback are important keys to achieving organisational success. Communication covers all activities that an individual does when he or she wants to make a change in someone else's mind. Communication is a meaning connection between an individual or individuals and organization. Communication is a process that contains expressing, listening and understanding (Banerji & Dayal, 2005). In business context, individuals use communication as a channel to interact with each other in day to day life (Okoye, 2011). Good communication is a necessary tool in achieving high quality of performance and maintaining strong working relationships within the organization. The study will be of benefit to Hospitality Managers or owners on the need to prioritise upward communication as major tool to reckon with while dealing with subordinates and ensuring subordinates voice are heard through suggestions and feedback. Thus study will also add more value to academic research for future references in the field of management. Hospitalism business is becoming more increasing in Ekiti State, the rate at which people are ventures into hotel business is very rapid recently. This may be because of the multi-functional attributes it offers such as lodging, eatery, bar, club house and event halls. However, this business also has a larger capacity to employ based on their category ranging from "one star to five star". Communication has been largely centred on organizational structure with respect to the line of authority and neglecting the strategic importance resulting to ineffective use of communication major channels. This has resulted into feed forward communication where top employees refuse to listen to the observation, suggestion and opinion of lower employees because of cumbersome reporting lines hence poor communication, which makes it more difficult for the employee to abide it (Mihud, 2017). In some cases, the communication gap that exist between supervisors and employees makes them to generally sense a foul play or not trustworthy, respected or valued to be responsible in their field of work (Gou, 2012). Based on this, some superior don't believe in the competence of their subordinate and making any suggestions from subordinate irrelevant. Therefore, this study will explore on the imperatives of upward communication as a tool to ensure participation and enhancing performance in the Hospitality Industry considering Ado-Ekiti metropolis in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of effective communication on organisational performance of selected hotels in Ado-Ekiti.

II. Literature Review

Communication

Communication begins at the beginning of the universe. That is, the beginning would have not been complete without communication. Communication is a many-sided phenomenon that means different things to different people. Thus, communication assist transformation of the human society and it is a process of a means of access to the mind or thought of another (Asamu 2014). Effective communication is necessary for any business or organization to flourish (Mutiku & Mathooko, 2014). Communication cuts out on wasted time and provides both customers and employees with the necessary tools to succeed and find satisfaction. In view of this, communication can be defined as the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver, and the assumption or perception of meaning between the individuals involved (Bowditch, Ben-Ner & Jones, 1997). Analysis of this exchange reveals that communication is a two way process consisting of consecutively linked elements. Superiors who understand this process can analyze their own communication patterns as well as design communication programs that fit organizational needs (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2006). Therefore, communication can be divided into horizontal and vertical communication but this study will be channelled towards upward communication.

Upward Communication

Upward communication is seen as a channel from which information flows from the lower levels to the upper levels of a hierarchy in an organization, that is, information from the subordinate to the superior. However, the progress of the business can only be gotten from the source due to their direct dealings with the customers. It is of no doubt that this type of communication is becoming more popular in organisations while the formal form of communication is becoming less popular in recent time. This is because the voice of employees at this level needs to be heard for proper decision to be taken. It is argued that upward communication keeps managers on their toes in executing their roles and also enlightens them of subordinates intended actions through treating employees as an important asset and giving them that sense of belongingness. Through upward communication it is derived that superiors get the chance to know how their subordinates feels about their work, their relationship with customers, colleagues, and the organisation generally. Accordingly, this helps to identify talents or skilful employees, productive employee and enhancing performance (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Robbins, Judge & Campbell, 2010). Upward communication is considered very important to the success of an organization. This is because the suggestions and opinions of employees are needed for decision making and this will improve the chance of participation from the subordinate. Moreso, timely feedback is very crucial to ensure understanding and to identify the actors in organisational environment for competitive reasons in the service sector. This type of communication promotes peaceful atmosphere and relationship among subordinate and managements. The absence of upward communication can destruct an organisation from reaching its goals and objectives through underutilising the subordinates, inappropriate political behaviour and management incompetency. Information at grassroots level can make and unmake the chance of survival of an organisation (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Thus communication system must be effectively managed to avoid disharmony.

Performance

The term performance describes how an employee carries out the tasks that make up the job. Good performance results from efforts, ability and direction (Faghamiye, 2000). Performance reflects the value of output over input; it is the ability of an organization to efficiently and effectively achieve independent goals (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). Performance of the individual is vital in measuring the overall performance of an organization as each individual's effort is a sub-set of overall organizational effort (Nyakundi, Karanja, Charles & Nyamwamu, 2012). Performance can never be ruled out in any organization because it is the yardstick on which input is measured.

Theoretical Framework

Human Relations Theory

The concepts of upward communication and performance have been based on several theories but this study will adopt human relation theory. The human relations approach is important because through this study, two-way communication like upward and downward communication were encouraged, or communication between a worker and their subordinate through dialogue instead of unidirectional communication from the manager targeted at the worker. Furthermore, the human relations perspective sees communication as a tool that can be used by management to "buy" cooperation from subordinates and that workers too want to have a voice through providing input in their tasks (Wrench, Punyanunt-Carter & Ward, 2015). The human relations theory can be applied practically in an organizational context by encouraging upward communication especially in the service sector where feedback is very paramount to boost effectiveness of services and improve performance. Therefore, the relationship between upward communication and performance can be best described through human relations theory.

**Conceptual Framework
Independent Variable**

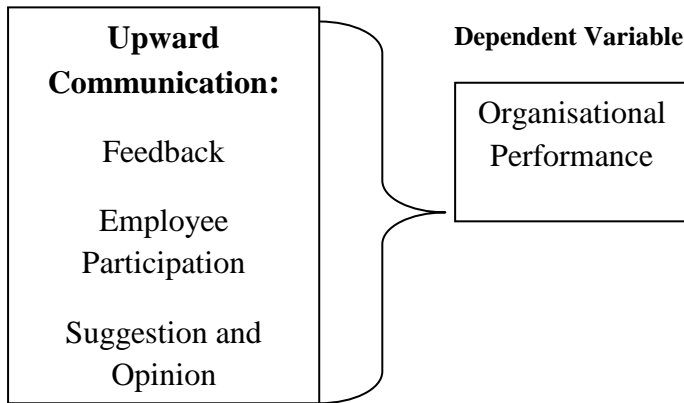


Fig 2.1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between communication and organisational performance

Source: Author’s Conceptualisation (2021)

The role of upward communication can never be left out because the mode of communication is not limited to the top echelon but the subordinates who are saddle with the responsibility of operationalizing the organisational set goals. Therefore, upward communication was broken down into three to be feedback, employee participation and employee suggestion and opinion. However, there is need for feedback from the employee which necessitates upward communication.

III. Methodology

This research was carried out in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design. Data used for this research work was gathered through the primary source of data collection via circulation of carefully designed questionnaires to the respondents. The five likert scale questionnaire was used. The study population covers three hotels in Ado-Ekiti Metropolis. The Hotels employed among others are: Eleventh House, Kototel and KSSD. However, the population of this study is eighty seven (87) comprising the number of staff of the selected hotels in Ado-Ekiti. The selected hotels were purposively sampled. Therefore, the entire staff were sampled using census. Both descriptive statistic and inferential statistic were employed. Demographic information was analysed via frequency table and percentages while the data generated based on the study objectives was analyzed through multiple regression analysis. T- Statistic was used to test the study hypotheses. Therefore, the above functional notation was transformed to the following equations:

$$E_p = \beta_0 + \beta_1 F_{db} + \beta_2 E_{pp} + \beta_3 S_{ao} + \mu \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

- β_0 = Constant
- $\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = Intercept
- E_p = Employee Performance
- F_{db} = Feedback
- E_{pp} = Employee Participation
- S_{ao} = Suggestion and Opinion
- μ = Stochastic or Error Term

Description of Respondent

From the data gathered, 87 copies of questionnaire was administered, filled and submitted for analysis which depicted a reasonable percentage of the research instrument distributed for data analysis.

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Distribution

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	55	63.2
Female	32	36.8
Total	87	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	74	85.1
Married	13	14.9
Total	87	100.0
Academic Qualification		

Polytechnic	54	62.1
University	33	37.9
Total	87	100.0
Work Experience		
Below 5	66	75.9
6-10	21	24.1
Total	87	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2021)

Table 1 showed that 63.2% of the respondents are male while 36.8% of the respondents are female. Moreso, marital status distribution showed that 85.1% of the respondents were single while 14.9% of the respondents were married. Furthermore, academic qualification distribution showed that 62.1% of the respondents attended polytechnic while 37.9% of the respondents attended university. Table 1 showed that 75.9% of the respondent's falls below 5 years of working experience while 24.1% of the respondent falls between 6-10 years of working experience. With respect to the demographic data gathered, it was shown that the various demographic variables employed are adequate enough in determining the effectiveness of upward communication on the performance of hospitality firms in Ado-Ekiti.

Interpretation of Result

Restatement of Hypothesis: *Upward communication has no significant effect on employee performance of Selected Hotels in Ado-Ekiti.*

Table 2: Effect of Upward Communication on Performance

Variables	Beta	T-Statics	P-value
Constant	1.193	7.265	.000
Feedback	0.455	5.506	.000
Employee Participation	0.429	4.207	.000
Suggestion and Opinion	0.775	8.746	.000
R	.743*		
R²	.552*		
R²	.531*		

Source: Author's Field Survey, (2021)

Table 2 revealed that the regression co-efficient between performance and the explanatory variable on upward communication show a positive figure of 0.743, this indicated that there is a very strong relationship between upward communication and performance which implies that the explanatory variable has a positive effect on the performance of selected hotels in Ado-Ekiti. The co-efficient of multiple determinant (R²) with a co-efficient of 0.552 showed that the explanatory variable can explain 55.2% of the behaviour of performance while the remaining 44.8% can be explained by the stochastic variable or other variables that were not put into consideration. The adjusted R² further confirms the result of the R² with a co-efficient of 0.531, which showed 53.1% explanation of the behaviour of the performance by the explanatory variables after adjustment while the remaining 46.9% is explained by the error term.

The table 2 gives a summary of the regression result using SPSS 20.0 software. From the table it can be deduced that the value of constant parameter is given as 1.193 and upward communication variables are: Feedback 0.455, Employee Participation 0.429 and Employee Suggestion and Opinion 0.743 respectively. The regression result above shows that performance is constant at 1.19;3 this implies that if the explanatory variable is held constant, organisational performance will increase by 1.193%. The co-efficient of upward communication variables are given as Feedback 0.455, Employee Participation 0.429 and Employee Suggestion and Opinion 0.743 respectively, this showed that upward communication is positively related to performance and therefore implies that an increase in upward communication will result in to 45.5%, 42.9%, 74.3% and 42.9% all at 0.05 level of significance increases on the performance selected hotel staff in Ado-Ekiti.

Therefore, the regression line is stated below:

$$\text{Performance} = 1.193 + 0.455Fdb + 0.429Epp + 0.743Sao + \mu$$

IV. Discussion of the Findings

This study analysed the data collected from the respondents through multiple regression and tested the hypothesis through T-statistic. It is discovered from the findings that feedback, participation and opinion and suggestion significantly affects employee performance in the selected hotels. However, the study revealed that feedback from subordinates on sales, customer complaint and service situation significantly affect performance. In the same vein, it was revealed that through upward communication, employees are able to participate in decision that has to do with their task. Based on the result, this study revealed that through upward communication, opinions and suggestions of the subordinate are gotten and likely solutions to problem may be

derived based on the suggestion. However, employees in hotel industry deal directly with the customers and display their expertise in satisfying them to maintain more patronage and retain the existing customer through their effectiveness and work quality. As depicted in the study, the role of upward communication cannot be undermined in determining the performance particularly in the hospitality sector in Nigeria at large.

V. Conclusion

This study determined upward communication as a modern technique for participation and performance enhancement with reference to selected hotels in Ado-Ekiti. Three variables (feedback, employee participation and suggestions and opinion) were used in measuring upward communication. From the regression result, it was found that feedback has a significant effect on performance. Moreover, it was found that employee participation significantly affects performance and that suggestions and opinion significantly affect performance of selected hotels in Ado-Ekiti at 0.05 level of significance. From the tested hypothesis, alternate hypothesis was accepted while the study rejected otherwise. This indicated that upward communication attributes have strong positive and significant effect on employee performance thus concluded that upward communication positively and significantly related to employee performance of selected Hotels in Ado-Ekiti.

Recommendation

The study recommends that hotel managers should enhance its upward communication practices to enable it play its rightful role in improving performance through timely feedback to the management particularly when timely decision and corrections need to be put in place.

Since participation is positive and significant on performance, it is recommended that Top management needs to adopt policies and procedures aimed at allowing participation in decision making that has to do with employee task to enhance employee motivation and performance.

Finally, this study recommends that employees opinion and suggestion should be cherished and taken serious to make them feel as an important asset and sense of belongingness to the organisation. In view of these recommendations, hospitality owners should put up strategy that will promote the relationship among subordinate and the superiors through effective communication in recent time to enhance performance and competitiveness.

Suggestion for Further Study

Further study should be conducted to examine the impact of internal communication on organisational performance in other services oriented industry in Nigeria.

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