

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND WORKPLACE EFFICIENCY: A STUDY OF FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA LIMITED

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ABSTRACT

The Study examined Organisational Communication and Workplace Efficiency: A Study of Flour Mills Limited, Nigeria. The main objective of the study was to find out the role of organisational communication in bringing about workplace efficiency in an organization like Flour Mills Limited and also to find out the various means of communication between the employers and employees of Flour Mills Limited. The researchers consulted relevant literature to raise secondary data while survey method was used to generate primary data for the analysis. The researchers' theoretical framework was built on "The Hypodermic Needle theory" propounded by Harold Lasswel which emphasized on communication as a linear process. The study adopted the random sampling technique. The data generated at the course of the study were presented in tables and were discussed to enable the researchers draw conclusion and recommendations. Findings in the study revealed that organisational communication plays a significant role in promoting efficiency in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar. Further findings shows that there are various means of communication between the employers and employees in the organisation and the workers prefer to get information about the organisation and other matters that affect them and their job through the various means of communication. The study recommended that, Flour Mills Limited and other organisations should regularly articulate their policies, goals and objectives to it workers in other to improve work performance through the Public Relations unit. The study further recommends that organisations should eliminate the barriers on communication and create efficient, participative, and transparent communication medium to improve workers commitment. To encourage employees for desired change, Flour Mill Limited, Calabar and other organisations must address the apprehensions and issues related with them.

KEYWORDS: Organization, Efficiency, Performance, Behaviour, Workplace.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the most important component of our lives, because we are forced to communicate, regardless of means or channel.

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As it is today, communication is present in any relationship, and the communication processes are of vital importance. We are all aware nowadays that a successful communication is the basis for the personal or professional success of every organisation. Communication is everywhere, and the field of communication has become large. Zemor (2003, p. 26), avers that "communication is part of action and reflection, just as currency is part of the - economy."

According to Krepes (2010, p. 51), "organisational communication is the process whereby members gather pertinent information about their organisation and the changes occurring within it." A motivated employee is a valuable asset which delivers immense value to the organisation in maintaining and strengthening its business and revenue growth.

For instance, it has been found that effective communication improves job satisfaction and which in turn improves productivity. According to Goris (2007, p. 231), "communication improves employee job performance", while Kramer (1999, p. 199) pointed out that, "poor communication results to low employee commitment to the organisation," There is therefore the need to explore the relationship between organisational communication and workers performance since communication integrates different units and functions in the organisation.

Organisational communication is the human activity that links people together and create relationship in an organisation (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). This means that employees relate with each other and their employers by means of communication. It is the glue that binds them together in an organisation. Managers have traditionally spent the majority of their time communicating in one form or another (face-to-face discussion, memos,

notice boards, mass meeting, employees hand book, public lectures, etc. Today, however, more and more workers find out that an important aspect of their work is communication which is the mutual exchange of understanding, originating with the receiver that leads to effective and efficient work performance in an organisation because it is the essence of management. The basic functions of management (Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing and Controlling) cannot be performed well without effective communication. Different units exist in an organisation and it is through communication that interaction takes place for the attainment of organisational goals.

On the other hand, workplace efficiency is regarded as how well an employee is able to dispatch his/ her duties to the specified organisation. Setting and clearly communicating performance standards and expectations, observing and providing feedback, and conducting appraisals enable employers to achieve the best results through managing employee performance. According to Wang (2005), employees choose to perform tasks out of identification with the managers or with the organisation roles and objectives. This relationship results in the employees' basic agreement with the norms to which they are required to perform. Thus, the flow of organisational communication can create identification with workers internalising desirable values, as regarding an organisation's goals and objective.

Flour Mill Limited is a Nigerian agribusiness company founded in 1960 by George S. Coumantaros as a private limited company and in 1978; it became a public company, with its shares listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. The chairman of the organisation since 2014 is the founder's son, John Coumantaros. The organisation has employed over twelve (12,000) thousand people. Organisational

communication between employees' and managers in Flour Mill Limited is crucial in that employees will need to know what is expected of them, managers will need to provide a clear job description for every employee which would make employee have immediate access to the necessary tools to complete assignments given to them. Organisational communication covers all activities that the management do to enhance workers performance and efficiency in Flour Mill Limited.

FOCUS OF INQUIRY

Organisational communication provides employees with important information about their jobs, organisation, environment and each other. It helps motivate, build trust, create shared identity and spur engagement; it provides a way for workers to express emotions, take their tasks seriously, share hopes and ambitions and celebrate accomplishments. Workplace efficiency is achievable when there is effective organisational communication in every organisation. Employees in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar are the foundation of the organisation and when they do not have an easy way to communicate with all levels of management, it takes a toll both on them and the business. If employees have no way to share their concerns about common problems, or they do share but nobody is listening, it creates frustrated, disengaged employees who are likely to quit. Unfortunately, it is saddening to note that there is breakdown in communication among managers and employees of most organizations such as lack of openness and accuracy, workers' performance feedback and inadequate information about organisational policies and plans for effective workplace efficiency. Rather than communicate with the employees on vital information, managers of these organizations prefer conveying the information on their social media handles and the mass media. This is a big

problem especially when such information is necessary for the employees to effectively complete the task at hand. As might be expected, when workers do not get along with the managers of the company, work or productivity suffers.

Given a scenario as this, one then wonders if the productivity or not of employees in any organization has a correlation with organizational communication.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study. They are:

- To find out the role of organisational communication in promoting workplace efficiency in Flour Mills Limited.
- To find out the various means of communication between the employers and employees of Flour Mill Limited.
- To identify the causes of breakdown in organisational communication in Flour Mills Limited.
- To find out how the causes of breakdown in communication can be addressed for workplace efficiency.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions. They include:

- What is the role of organisational communication in promoting workplace efficiency in Flour Mills Limited?
- What are the various means of communication between the employers and employees of Flour Mills Limited?
- What are the causes of breakdown in organisational communication in Flour Mills Limited?
- How can the causes of breakdown in communication be addressed for workplace efficiency?

ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION DEFINED

It has been recognized that effective and appropriate organisational communication is a vital ingredient in the success of any organization. Organisational communication represents the communication and interactions between the employees and members of an organisation. When all parts of an organisation like Flour Mills Limited, Calabar communicate smoothly, it can improve workflow and overall productivity. By making an effort to improve effective communication, managers can build a stronger organisation that will have a staying power in the market. We live nowadays in an era of information and communication, an era which, according to Hargie and Tourish (2009), "is born from the clash of new values and techniques, new lifestyles and means of communication." All organisations, regardless of size or object of activity, have to listen to their interlocutors and, at the same time, meet the expectations of a public characterized by diversity and exigency.

As regards to the organisation, communication is defined as the process of exchanging messages with the view of achieving the individual and common objectives of its members. Kreps (2010, p. 152) defined organisational communication as "the process whereby members gather pertinent information about their organisation and the changes occurring within it." Generally speaking, organisational communication has two objectives. According to Witherspoon (1997, p. 152), organisational communication is defined as "transmitting news about the work from organisation to employees and through employees for workplace efficiency. Cornelissen (2008, p. 88) also add that, organisational communication is defined as "communication with employees internally within the organization."

According to Bran (2010, p. 8), organisational communication is "a way to describe and explain organization's decision makings." It specifies that communication is the central process through which employees exchange information, create relationship, and build meaning, values, and an organisational culture. The primary goal is to inform the workforce about their tasks and the policy of the organisation. The second goal of organisational communication is to construct a community within the organisation. According to Barrett (2002, p. 11), meaningful communication informs and educates employees at all levels and motivates them to support the strategy. This is important as positive attitudes to change are vital in successful change programmes, as resistance to change is one of the biggest barriers to overcome. Meaningful communication requires a degree of cognitive organisational reorientation; that is, comprehension and appreciation of the proposed change.

Elving (2005) proposed a conceptual framework to study communication in organisations. According to him, communication needs to inform the organisational members about the change and how that change will alter the individual's work. Communication also should be used to create a community which will increase commitment, trust, and identification with the organisation and management. According to Klein (1996, p. 55), "communication strategy should coincide with the general stages of the change process and the relevant associated information requirements in every organisation." Klein (1996, p. 55) states further that, "communication objective is to prepare employees and the organisation for the change. This step is also identified as readying the organisation." Thus, communication is very important and it has the following objectives:

- To provide those not involved in decision making with detailed and accurate information of what is happening;
- To provide those involved in the process with information about their roles in decision process, as well as information about how the decision will affect them, and their new roles and responsibilities; and;
- To dismiss all the misinformation that is circulating through the organisation.

ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND WORKPLACE EFFICIENCY IN AN ORGANISATION

A review of the literature with respect to organisational communication and workplace efficiency reveals a central, shared emphasis on the issues of control and coordination through proper communication.

Organisational communication research has evolved considerably from the early conceptions of communication and its role in the organization for efficiency.

In modern days, according to Harris and Nelson (2008, p. 141), "we understand organisational communication as one of the most dominant and important activities in organisations." Fundamentally, relationships grow out of communication, and the functioning and survival of organisations for workplace efficiency is based on effective relationships among individuals and groups. In addition, organisational capabilities are developed and enacted through "intensely social and communicative processes" (Jones, 2004). Organisational communication helps employers and employees coordinate activities to achieve goals, and it is vital in socialisation, decision-making, problem-solving and change-management processes.

Communication is vital in organisations for workplace efficiency among employees such that Orpen (1997, p. 162) argues that, "communication has a vital role in the failure or accomplishment of any organisation, it is used for the purpose of resolving the contradictions in work organisation in other that such organisation may progress." Depending on the organisational culture, size or profile, each organisation, has its own communication system. For workplace to be efficient, there must be effective organisational communication between the employers and employees. It is through organisational communication that workers carry out their duties in every organization. For example, organisational communication helps employers or employees in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar to communicate their tasks and the goals of the organization. Organisational communication also provides employees in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar with important information about their jobs, organisation, environment and each other. It can help motivate, build trust, create shared identity and spur engagement; it provides a way for employees to express emotions, share hopes and ambitions and celebrate and remember accomplishments.

CAUSES OF BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANISATION

Communication is the key factor in the success of any organisation. When it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organisation faces. People often feel that communication is as easy and simple as it sounds. No doubt, but what makes it complex, difficult and frustrating are the barriers that come in its way. According to Pauley (2010, p. 12), "an employer has no greater responsibility than to develop effective communication." Why then does communication breakdown? On the surface, the answer is relatively simple. The study earlier identified the elements of

communication as the sender, the encoding, the message, the medium, the decoding, the receiver, and the feedback. If noise exists in these elements in any way, complete clarity of meaning and understanding does not occur. The author, George Bernard Shaw wrote, the greatest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished. Barriers to successful communication include message overload (when a person receives too many messages at the same time), and message complexity. According to Mattelart (1996, p. 56), "lack of understanding of the organization. sometimes hierarchy in the organisation becomes an impediment in the ability of the employees to understand the organization."

Communication is crucial for getting all leaders, departments, and employees on the same page and working together toward a shared goal. Breakdowns in communication can knock things off track and prevent the company from reaching its full potential. When a company's teams are dispersed across different offices and geographic regions, with a large number of employees working alone in the field, communication becomes even more critical. Understanding the common causes of a communication breakdown can help companies proactively avoid it. According to Tayyaba (2013, p. 33), "a barrier to communication is something that keeps meanings from meeting. Meaning, barriers exists between employers and employees, making communication much more difficult than most people seem to realize." It is false to assume that if one can talk, he can communicate. Communication breakdown in an organisation like Flour Mill Limited, Calabar can lead to frustration, loss of productivity, strained employee relations and inefficient workplace. Failing to address a problem in communication with employees can cause the situation to deteriorate even further. Some causes of a break in communication are easy to spot, like cultural and personality

differences, but others may require a closer look at the overall work situation to identify. Breakdown in communication is anything that prevents and employees from receiving and understanding the messages used to convey their information, ideas and thoughts.

A common cause of communication breakdown in a workplace situation is people holding different attitudes, values and discrimination. Valuing people who are different allows us to draw on a broader range of insights, ideas, experience and knowledge. The behaviors like bias, generalisations and stereotyping can cause communication breakdown. Empathy is important for overcoming barriers to communication based on culture. Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. There are many environmental factors affecting the effective communication process. According to Luthans, F, (2016, pp. 78-80), There are five causes of breakdown in communication in organisation. It includes:

1. Attitudinal barriers
2. Behavioural barriers
3. Cultural barriers
4. Language barriers and
5. Environment Barriers

1. ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

A common cause of communication breakdown in a workplace situation is people holding different attitudes, values and discrimination. An example of this is differing perceptions people have of power and status. Some people may think that they should treat people or be treated differently based on what they perceive as their status or power within a workplace or in the community. If they think that managers and supervisors have power over staff, for example, that they can allocate duties, reward, promote, or dismiss staff, this may lead to

breakdown in communication. However, what one person considers power and control might be considered leadership or mentoring by another person. Effective communication is necessary no matter what level or position one occupy in an organisation. If one feels someone is trying to exert power or control over others, communicate this to him or her. Discrimination arises when people make judgments about individuals or groups in an organization without thinking clearly. Behaviours such as stereotyping, bias and prejudice are forms of discrimination.

When people discriminate, they make decisions without bothering to get all the necessary information about the people they are judging. Discrimination causes people to miss out on the value of difference, and the benefits that individuals and groups bring to any situation. Valuing people who are different allows individuals in an organisation to draw on a broader range of insights, ideas, experience and knowledge. Each person's uniqueness comes from personal characteristics such as race, gender, education, age, ability, lifestyle and experience. Attitudinal barriers according to Turner (2004, p. 16), "come about as a result of problems with staff in an organisation. These may be brought about, for example, by such factors as poor management, lack of consultation with employees, personality conflicts which can result in people delaying or refusing to communicate, the personal attitudes of individual employees which may be due to lack of motivation or dissatisfaction at work, brought about by insufficient training to enable them to carry out particular tasks, or just resistance to change due to entrenched attitudes and ideas.

2. BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS

The behaviours like bias, generalizations and stereotyping can cause breakdown in

communication. Having these attitudes and not confronting them is not just wrong, it is bad for individuals in organizations. In the workplace, such attitudes can cost the organisation time and money. Stereotyping occurs when individuals assume they know something about a person because of their cultural or social background. Our views may come from a bias one may have against a particular behaviour, appearance, possession or even a particular geographical area. Our situation, appearance and behaviour may contribute to other people's stereotyped views. This could contribute to communication breakdown and workplace efficiency,

3. CULTURAL BARRIERS

Communication with people of different cultures and backgrounds means becoming aware of the differences in values, beliefs and attitudes that people hold. Our cultural heritage, biases, and prejudices often causes breakdown in communication. The fact that we are Africans, young or old, male or female have all proved to be obstacles in communicating effectively in organizations. Empathy is important for overcoming breakdown in communication based on culture. Empathy means sensing the feelings and attitudes of others as if we had experienced them personally. Respecting other's feelings and attitudes, using active listening skills, encouraging involvement of others by asking questions while respecting personal privacy, using open body language and an encouraging vocal tone, taking other people's fears and concerns into consideration and not blaming, instead working towards a solution are ways of avoiding cultural breakdown in communication and workplace efficiency in organizations.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

Not all breakdown in communication in organisation are caused by the staff. There are

many environmental factors affecting the effective communication process. Messages can be blocked by environmental factors, such as the physical setting or the situation where communication takes place. Environmental barriers are often due to the nature of the environment.

Thus, for example, the natural barrier which exists, if staff are located in different buildings or on different sites. Likewise, poor or outdated equipment, particularly the failure of management to introduce new technology, may also cause breakdown in communication and workplace efficiency. Staff shortages are another factor which frequently causes communication difficulties for an organisation. Whilst distractions like background noise, poor lighting or an environment which is too hot or cold can all affect people's morale and concentration, which in turn interfere with effective communication.

5. LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. However, barriers can also occur when people are speaking the same language. Sometimes barriers occur when we use inappropriate levels of language or we use jargon or slang which is not understood by one or more of the people communicating. Often the situation in which the conversation is taking place, and whether or not people have prior experience of the matter being discussed, can also contribute to such barriers being formed. Individual linguistic ability is also important. The use of difficult or inappropriate words in communication can prevent people from understanding the message. Poorly explained or misunderstood messages can also result in confusion.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATION

The importance of communication to workplace efficiency cannot be overemphasized in every business organisation. According to Gray and Laidlaw (2004), quoted in Tsai and Chuang (2009, p. 162), "research has shown that when employee needs are met through satisfying communication, employees are more likely to build effective work relationships." Further, certain facets of employees' communication satisfaction that exhibit both information and relationship features supervisory communication, personal feedback, and communication climate were found to be the major dimensions of communication-job performance relationships, (Tsai and Chuang 2009). In other words, the ways in which information flows in an organisation is critical to the way that employees understand their relationship to and within the organisation. In short, as Chen (2008, p. 43) stated, each passing study seems to reveal "that the relationship between internal/employee communication and corporate effectiveness is more significant than what has previously been assumed."

If managers of organisations overlook the importance of organisational communication, they are overlooking the organisation's ability to succeed. Communication covers all activities that an individual does when he wants to make a transformation in someone else's mind. This is a meaning bridge between an individual or individuals and organisation. According to Banerji and Dayal (2005, p. 188), "communication is a process that contains expressing, listening and understanding." Similarly, emphasizing social aspect of communication, communication that takes part on the base of social life and forms the content of organisational structure is a process which aims at conducting good relationships between

groups and organisations. Price (1997, p.52) defined organisational communication "as the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organisation to its members and among members of the organisation." Ayatse (2005) observed that communication "is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. This is because the competencies and skills they possess will enable them to exhibit work behaviours appropriate and relevant to the performance of the job."

Communication is vital in organisations such that Orpen (1997, p. 22) argued that, "communication has a vital role in the failure or accomplishment of any organisation, it is used for the purpose of resolving the contradictions in work organisation in other that such organisation may progress." Since it influence action towards the welfare of organisation. Indeed, communication also brings about utilization, improvement and retention of various organisation manpower (labour force). Moreso, communication is important in that, it leads, directs, motivates and create a climate in which people want to contribute to achieve organisational objectives and goals.

People must come together, think together, work together, learn together, advance together and meet up the tasks given to them by their employers in every organisations. Human interaction allows man to forge new horizons and explore new possibilities. Thus, by meeting people in an organisation, they can communicate in the language of themselves. The variety of communication aids/techniques used in an organisation depends on the nature of the organisation, its kind and range of personnel that best suits the management and also the location of the workplace.

Miller (2006, p. 141) defines communication as "a means through which the task and the resources needed to carry out an assignment,

the roles and duties and the expected results are made known to the subordinates in an organisation." This means that communication is the transfer of information (a message) from the employers to the employees. Thus, effective communication is very important to every organisation because it transfers messages, followed by feedback, from the receiver to the sender (employers to employee), indicating an understanding of the message. Communication is also important in the dissemination of information which is related to the daily performance of an employer's job and also important if the worker is expected to be an effective member of staff. According to Buchanan and Doyle (1999, p 87), "it connotes a consideration of human beings as a vital resource." Communication is the transfer of information from a sender to a receiver, with the message being understood by the receiver.

Communication is said to be the foundation for sound management; it helps greater coordination and interaction among workers; good communication helps in motivating the workers, and communication helps in establishing links between different hierarchies and functions of management. Communication clears confusion, misunderstanding and delays in administration; it helps in achieving maximum productivity with minimum cost. It helps in building genuine human relation. Witherspoon (1991, p. 221) added that "communication is not only an essential aspect of organisations, but effective communication can be seen as the foundation of modern organisations." Effective communication is needed for management to develop and sustain a competitive advantage for workplace efficiency and improvement. Effective communication between employers and employees is critically important for the potential success of an organisation like flour Mill Limited, Calabar. According to Gray and

Laidlaw (2002, p. 271), it is important that employers need to enact strategies to improve communication that could lead to positive work consequences." Improvements in supervisor-subordinate communication will assist organizations toward the goal of managing diversity by promoting equality and integration in the workplace. Conversely, poor communication can have negative effects on workers performance and in turn productivity. The process by which employees are made aware of organizational goals and their involvement in the achievement of them is made through communication.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The importance of organisational communication and workplace efficiency during intended change has been empirically demonstrated and commonly agreed among researchers. Recent studies about communication show that communication has positive correlation with many organisational outputs like organizational commitment, performance, organizational citizenship behaviours, and job satisfaction among employees. In contrast, communication failure may cause functionless results like stress, job dissatisfaction, low trust, decrease in organisational commitment, severance intention, and absence and this can affect organization's efficiency negatively. In a study by Parker, Chmiel and Wall (1997) on the Effects of Organisational Communication on Work Commitment: A Case Study on a Public Agency in Ankara, they found out that employee participation was associated with effective organisational communication from the management to the employees.

The study further found out that employees tend to report higher job satisfaction when they have an opportunity to provide input into how decisions are made through communication with the management. The study utilized the

agenda selling theory as its theoretical framework. The study adopted the survey method and questionnaire as its primary method of data collection. 250 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents. The study concluded that organisational communication is essential for an organisation that wishes to make profit. The employees are the key sources to bring about change in organization if they are carried along. The study recommended that, management of the business organisations should as a matter of urgency, communicate the ideology, aspirations of the organisation to the employees through a channel of communication for workplace efficiency.

In a similar study by Nweke (2004) on the topic: The Importance of Organisational Communication within Organisations: A Study of Dangote Cement, Lagos, they found out that increased participation in decision-making of employees by their employers has been found to have a positive effect on the efficiency of the decision-making process. The study also revealed that, employees who participate in the decision-making process have higher levels of satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. Social responsibility media theory was used as the theoretical framework to further explain the study. The study adopted the survey method and questionnaire as its primary method of data collection. 300 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents. The study concluded to encourage employees for desired change, organisations must address the apprehensions and issues related with them. The study hereby recommends that for an effective and efficient organisational performance, management must embrace more clarity of ideas before communicating; better understanding of the physical and human environment when communicating and the purpose of communication must be thoroughly analyzed.

The above studies have shown how important organisational communication is for effective workplace efficiency. Communication is, without doubt, the control engine of effective and productive organisation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the **Hypodermic Needle Theory of Communication**

Hypodermic Needle Theory, also known as Magic Bullet Theory (hypodermic syringe model or transmission-belt model) was promulgated by Harold Lasswell in 1920s. It was written in the book "Propaganda Technique" in the World War. The theory is a linear model of communication and talks about media's power on audience. The message, in this theory, is said to be like a magic bullet which enters the minds of audience and injects a particular message. The theory explains how media controls what the audience views and listens to and the effects, which can be immediate or later in future.

The words bullet and needle are used to show the powerlessness of the audience as media impacts public opinion and behavior change. The theory was also influenced by media behaviorism of 1930s. The "Magic Bullet" theory graphically assumes that the media's message is a bullet fired from the "media gun" into the viewer's "head."

Audience cannot resist the received message from media and it creates a uniform thinking among people. A fixed mindset and perception is created, given a single piece of information can cause many brain alterations and change opinions subconsciously. Public is taken to be vulnerable as message is always infused and media is tremendously strong. The theory believes that there are no other sources of media or alternative media to compare the media's message to.

The theory is said to be based on assumptions and not empirical findings. It is based on supposition of human nature or biological nature. External stimuli are considered to encourage instincts and reactions. People are more influenced by interpersonal communication, especially, in organisations such as Flour Mill Nigeria Limited, Calabar branch. Messages are supposed to create public opinion and change behaviour of the audiences. This is exactly how the hypodermic theory works by injecting the message directly into the bloodstream of the public, attempting to create a uniform thinking.

The theory is relevant to the study because of the significant role organisational communication has played in workplace efficiency in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar. Today, organisational communication process is aimed at the individual or at the direct messaging of assembled networks of like demographics. Employers communicates directly to employees through the most efficient and available channel(s). The bullet theory graphically suggests that the message is a bullet from the employers, fired from the 'media gun' (a channel) into the receiver's (employees) 'head.' Once there is flow of information from the managers/employees of Flour Mill Limited, Calabar to employees, there is commitment on the individual's acceptance and adoption of organisational goals and values; they will strive voluntarily to achieve organisational objectives, and feeling a strong desire to continue the organisational membership.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design represents the systematic plan which clearly reveals how data relating to a particular study will be collected, collated and analyzed. The research is an essential part of a research study. One can also say that research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place, including how data

is expected to be collected, what instruments will be employed in collecting the said data, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing the data collected.

The survey method is considered suitable for this research because it involves drawing up a set of questions via the questionnaire on various subjects or aspect of a subject and a selected number of populations are requested to answer.

AREA OF STUDY

The study area is Flour Mill Limited, Calabar. Flour Mill Limited is a Nigerian agribusiness company founded in 1960 by George S. Coumantaros as a private limited company and in 1978, it became a public company, with its shares listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. The chairman of the organization since 2014 is the founder's son, John Coumantaros. The organization has employed twelve (12,000) thousand people. It is located at Calabar Municipality. Flour Mills of Nigeria, Calabar branch has been a part of the lives of Nigerians at home and abroad. Her global vision is to be a leading foods company in Africa providing high quality and affordable products in the most convenient ways to consumers through world class brands like Golden Penny Flour, Golden Penny Semovita, Goldenvita, Golden Pasta and Golden Noodles. The company's flagship brand, Golden Penny remains one of the best known and the preferred brands amongst bakers, confectioneries and consumers in Nigeria.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Population refers to all the members or elements of a particular group of animals, or things in a defined area. It simply refers to the totality of the research subjects in a given research situation. The total population of the company is twelve (12,000) thousand people.

Population of the study consists of staff of Flour Mill Limited, Calabar. They include staff, senior staff and management staff.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLE SIZE

A sample is a subject or any sub group which is fair representation of the entire population of interest. However, the sample size of 380 staff of Flour Mill Limited, Calabar was chosen for the purpose of this study. Responses from the three hundred and eighty people will be a representative of all the workers.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sampling techniques represents or symbolize the actual strategy, techniques or logic through which representation of the population can be selected. However, this study adopts the random sampling technique. Random sampling guarantees every member of the population, equal and independent opportunity of being selected. The technique is considered best for the study because it allows all the staff in the population (organisation) equal chance of being part of the sample without any form of bias. Three hundred respondents from Flour Mill Limited, Calabar were randomly selected. This was done to avoid being biased. A total of 380 respondents were randomly selected from the various departments in the organization. The researcher went to the various units and administered the questionnaire to the staff.

DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION

The various instruments that used in gathering data for this research included primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained through questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section 'A' contained respondent's personal data such as sex, age, marital status, educational qualifications, and occupation respectively; while the second part

(Section B) contained questions relating to the subject matter. It includes close-ended questions. With this, respondents will be restricted to ticking more than one option while answering the questions in the questionnaire. It is aimed at providing very high objective data from respondents and also to save time. It will also give the researcher opportunity to meet the respondents personally.

The secondary data was obtained through documented facts such as text books, internet and journals.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher to the respondents in their various department/units in the organisation through face-to-face contact. It was collected same way it was administered to avoid loss of copies of the questionnaire and the challenge(s) respondents may encounter in the process of filling it.

In all, it took two days to administer and retrieve the questionnaire from the respondents.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Tables and simple percentage were used in analyzing the various responses of respondents in the questionnaire. Statistically, the table helped in displaying the number of occurrence of each subject matter, while the simple percentage assisted to indicate the frequency of each subject matter on the table.

The percentage is usually connoted using the sign ‘%.’ Equally, the percentage is mathematically calculated or assumed using the ratio of one hundred (100%). Mathematically, this can be shown as:

$$\frac{\text{Number of respondents} \times 100}{\text{Number of sample}}$$

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

A total of 380 copies of the 380 copies questionnaire were administered to staff of Flour Mill Limited, Calabar. Out of the 380 copies administered, 373 copies were retrieved from the respondents. For this reason, the data analysis is based on the 373 copies questionnaires.

Table 4.1. Distributions of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Number of respondent	Percentage
Male	258	69%
Female	115	31%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: Table 4.1 above shows that 258 respondents representing 69% were males, while 115 respondents representing 31% were female. This means that the number of male respondents is more than the number of female respondents.

Table 4.2. Distributions of Respondents by Age

Age	Number of respondent	Percentage
18-24	65	18%
25-30	78	31%
31-35	91	24%
36-40	83	22%
41 and above	56	15%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: Table 4.2 above shows that, 65 respondents representing 18% fall within the age brackets of 18-24, 78 respondents representing 21% fall within the age brackets of 25-30, 91 respondents representing 22% fall within the age brackets of 31-35, 83s respondents representing 22% fall within the age brackets of 36-40. Whereas, 56 respondents representing 15% fall within the age brackets of 41 years and above.

Table 4.3.Distributions of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital status	Number of respondent	Percentage
Married	111	30%
Singles	262	70%
Divorced	0	0%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: From the marital status table 4.3 above, 111 respondents representing 30% were married, while 262 respondents representing 70% were single. There were no divorcees.

Table 4.4.Distributions of Respondents by Religion

Religion	Number of respondent	Percentage
Christians	324	87%
Muslims	49	13%
Others	0	0%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: From the above table 4.4, 324 respondents representing 87% were Christians, whereas 49 respondents representing 13% were Muslims. None of the respondents fall among others.

Table 4.5.Distributions of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Qualification	Number of respondent	Percentage
FSLC	35	9%
SSCE	217	59%
OND/NCE	42	11%
HND/B.Sc.	79	21%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: From the academic distribution table 4.5 above, 35 respondents representing 10% were FLSC holders, 217 respondents representing 58% were SSCE holders, 42 respondents representing 11% were OND/NCE holders, while 79 respondents representing 21% were HND/B.Sc holders.

Table 4.6.Distributions of Respondents by Position

Occupation	Number of respondent	Percentage
Senior staff	119	32%
Junior staff	238	64%
Manager/directors	16	4%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: Table 4.6 above shows that, 119 junior staff, while 16 respondents representing 4% were management/directors. 238 respondents representing 64% were senior staff, 32% were junior staff, while 16 respondents representing 4% were management/directors.

Table 4.7. Job Survey

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Full-time	298	80%
Part-time	75	20%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: From table 4.7 above, 298 respondents representing 80% admitted that, they are full-time staff of the organization, whereas 75 respondents representing 20% admitted that, they are part-time staff of the organization.

Table 4.8. Years of working experience with the organization

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
0-3 years	156	42%
4-7 years	173	46%
8-10 years	44	12%
11-14 years	0	0%
15 years and above	0	0%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: Table 4.8 above shows that, 156 respondents representing 42% admitted that, they have been working with the organization between 0-3 years, 173 respondents representing 46% admitted that, they have been working with the organization between 4-7 years whereas 44 respondents representing 12% admitted that, they have been working with the organization between 8-10 years. None of the respondents admitted to have exceeded 8-10 years.

Table 4.9. Respondents' opinion on whether they communicate with other staff and managers/directors of the organisation

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	373	100%
No	0	0%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: They above table 4.9 shows that, all the 373 respondents representing 100% admitted that, they communicate with other staff and managers/directors of the organization. None of the respondents admitted otherwise.

Table 4.10. Respondents' opinion on whether they communicate with other staff and managers/directors of the organisation often

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	325	87%
No	48	13%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: Table 4.10 above shows that, 325 respondents representing 87% affirmed that, they communicate with other staff and managers/directors of the organization often, whereas 48 respondents representing 13% claimed that, they do not communicate with other staff and managers/directors of the organization often.

Table 4.11. Respondents' opinion on whether they agree that organizational communication and workplace efficiency play a significant role in the organisation

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	373	100%
No	0	0%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: Table 4.10 above indicates that, all the 373 respondents representing 100% agreed that organizational communication and workplace efficiency play a significant role in the organization. None of the respondents said "NO".

Table 4.12. Respondents' opinion on whether there are various means of communication between the employers and employees in the organisation

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	373	100%
No	0	0%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: From table 4.12 above, all the 373s respondents representing 100% affirmed that, there are various means of communication between the employers and employees in the organization. None of the respondents disapproved.

Table 4.13. Respondents' opinion on whether they prefer to get information about the organization and other matters that affect them and their job through the various means of communication

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	373	100%
No	0	0%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: The above table 4.13 shows that all the 373 respondents representing 100% admitted that, they prefer to get information about the organization and other matters that affect them and their job through the various means of communication. None of the respondents admitted negatively.

Table 4.14. Respondents' opinion on whether there are causes of breakdown in communication in the organisation

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	269	72%
No	104	28%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: From table 4.14 above, 269 respondents representing 72% admitted that there are causes of breakdown in communication in the organization, whereas 104 respondents representing 28% admitted that, there are no causes of breakdown in communications in the organization.

Table 4.15. Respondents' opinion on whether the causes of breakdown in communication can be addressed for effective workplace efficiency

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	301	81%
No	72	19%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: table 4.15 above shows that, 301 respondents representing 81% admitted that, the causes of breakdown in communication can be addressed for effective workplace efficiency, while 72 respondents representing 19% admitted that, the causes of breakdown in communication cannot be addressed for effective workplace efficiency.

Table 4.16. Respondents' opinion on whether they can rate the level which their managers/directors shares important information with the employees

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	320	86%
No	53	14%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: The above table 4.16 shows that, 320s respondents representing 86% admitted that, they can rate the level with which their managers/directors shares important information with the employees, whereas 53s respondents representing 14% admitted that, they cannot rate the level with which their managers/directors shares important information with the employees.

Table 4.17. Respondents' opinion on whether the suggestions, opinions or thoughts of the employees are listened to and acted on by the managers/directors

Responses	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	227	61%
No	146	39%
TOTAL	373	100%

Source: Field Survey 2019

Analysis: The above 4.18 shows that, 227 respondents representing 61% affirmed that, the suggestions, opinions or thoughts of the employees are listened to and acted on by the managers Directors, while 146 respondents representing 39% claimed that, the suggestions, opinions or thoughts of the employees are not listened to and acted on by the managers directors.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of findings is based on the research questions.

Research Question 1: What is the role of organisational communication and workplace efficiency in Flour Mills Limited?

The role of organizational communication in every business firm cannot be undermined. In response to the above research question, analysis in table 4.11 shows that, all the 373 respondents representing 100% agreed that organisational communication play a significant role in promoting work place efficiency in the organisation.

The above analysis implies that, organisational communication and workplace efficiency play a significant role in the organisation. In support of the above findings, Banerji and Dayal (2005, p. 44) asserts that, "communication is a process that contains expressing, listening and understanding." Price (1997, p. 34) added that, organisational communication is "the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organisation to its members and among members of the organisation for workplace efficiency." Communication is vital in organisations for workplace efficiency among employees such that Orpen (1997, p. 162) argued that, "communication has a vital role in the failure or accomplishment of any organisation, it is used for the purpose of resolving the contradictions in work organisation in other that such organisation may progress. Organisational communication establishes and disseminates the goals of the organisation to the employees, it resolves the contradictions in workplace efficiency in other that the organisation may progress , it provides employees with important information about their jobs/tasks and it can help motivate, build trust, create shared identity and spur engagement among managers and employees. Banerji and Dayal (2005, p. 188) sum it up that, "communication is a process, that contains expressing, listening and understanding."

As stated by Grunig, Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Repper, and White (1992, p. 5) on the excellence theory that; Public Relations makes organisations more effective and contributes most to organisational effectiveness.

Research Question 2: What are the various means of communication between the employers and employees of Flour Mill Limited?

The level of workers' commitment to the tasks given to them is proportional to the effectiveness of communication between the workers and their employers through the various channels of communication. In view of the above research question, tables 4.12 and 4.13 were analysed. Analysis in table 4.12 shows that, all the 373 respondents representing 100% affirmed that, there are various means of communication between the employers and employees in the organisation.

Similarly, analysis in table shows that, all the 373 respondents representing 100% admitted that, they prefer to get information about the organisation and other matters that affect them and their job through the various means of communication.

The above findings implies that, there are various means of communication between the employers and employees in the organisation and the workers prefer to get information about the organisation and other matters that affect them and their job through the various means of communication. The various channels of communication adopted by most organisations are general meeting, employees' individual discussion with the manager/directors and Short Messages Services (SMS). According to Imaga (2003, p. 75), "channels of communication usually mean the strategic approach to organising, staffing, directing, leading, controlling and coordinating the activities of organisations like the public enterprise and parastatals with a view to achieving the optimally designed goals with the minimum possible resources at the quickest possible time through various platforms such as general meeting, employees' individual discussion with the manager/directors and

Short Messages Services (SMS)." Through these platforms, employers' tasks are stated clearly in accordance with the vision and mission of the organisation. According to Grunig, Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Repper, and White (1992, p. 5) on the excellence theory, "by helping organisations build relationships and by resolving conflicts between the organization and its strategic publics. Public Relations departments contribute to organisational effectiveness through the various means of communication."

Research Question 3: What are the causes of breakdown in organisational communication and workplace efficiency in Flour Mills Limited?

There is no functional organisation without breakdown in communication. Staff maybe aggrieved by the decision of the managers and its reflected in the task given to them. In view of the research question, table 4.14 was analysed. According to table 4.14 shows that, 269 respondents representing 72% admitted that, there are causes of breakdown in communication in the organisation, whereas 104 respondents representing 28% admitted that, there are no causes of breakdown in communication in the organisation.

From the responses above, it is clear that, there are -causes of breakdown in communication in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar. As earlier stated in the previous chapters, barriers to successful communication include message overload (when a person receives too many messages at the same time), and message complexity. According to Mattelart (1996. p. 56), "lack of understanding of the organization: Sometimes hierarchy in the organisation becomes an impediment in the ability of the employees to understand the organisation." Breakdowns in communication can knock things off track and prevent the company from reaching its full potential. When a company's teams are

dispersed across different offices and geographic regions, with a large number of employees working alone in the field, communication becomes even more critical. Understanding the common causes of a communication breakdown can help companies proactively avoid it. According to Tayyaba (2013, p. 33), "a barrier to communication is something that keeps meanings from meeting. Meaning, barriers exist between employers and employees, making communication much more difficult than most people seem to realize." Communication breakdown in an organisation like Flour Mill Limited, Calabar can lead to frustration, loss of productivity, strained employee relations and inefficient workplace. The behaviours like bias, generalisations and stereotyping can cause communication breakdown.

Research Question 4: How can the causes of breakdown in communication be addressed for effective workplace efficiency?

Analysis in table 4.15 shows that, 301 respondents representing 81% admitted that, the causes of breakdown in communication can be addressed for effective workplace efficiency, while "2 respondents representing 19% admitted that, the causes of breakdown in communication cannot be addressed for effective workplace efficiency.

The above findings implies that, the causes of breakdown in communication can be addressed for effective workplace efficiency. Communication is crucial for getting all leaders, departments, and employees on the same page and working together toward a shared goal.

The above findings conforms with the view of Turner (2004, p. 18) that, "failing to address a problem in communication with employees can cause the situation to deteriorate even further." Some causes of a break in

communication are easy to spot, like cultural and personality differences, but others may require a closer look at the overall work situation to identify. Breakdown in communication is anything that prevents and employees from receiving and understanding the messages used to convey their information, ideas and thoughts. Empathy is important for overcoming barriers to communication based on culture. Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. There are many environmental factors affecting the effective communication process. Luthans, F, (2016, p. 78) asserts that, "effective communication is necessity no matter what level or position one occupy in an organisation. If one feels someone is trying to- exert power or control over others, communicate this to him or her." It is very important that, through- the Public Relations unit, all issues bothering the employees as regards their welfare, salaries, among others, are resolved. As sated in one the assumptions of the excellence theory according to Grunig et al. (1996) that, "involvement of Public Relations in strategic management should be paramount."

SUMMARY

This work has successfully examined the Organisational Communication and Workplace Efficiency: The overall objective was to find out the role of organisational communication and workplace efficiency in Flour Mills Limited and to identify the causes of breakdown in organisational communication and workplace efficiency in Flour Mills Limited.

The study adopted the survey method were 373 copies of the questionnaire were administered to staff of Flour Mill Limited, Calabar and 373 copies of the questionnaire were, successfully returned for analysis. The researcher adopted the random sampling technique.

Finding from the study shows that: Organisational communication play a significant role in promoting workplace efficiency in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar.

Findings also revealed that, there are various means of communication between the employers and employees in the organisation and the workers prefer to get information about the organisation and other matters that affect them and their job through the various means of communication.

Findings further show that, there are causes of breakdown in communication in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar.

The causes of breakdown in communication can be addressed for effective workplace efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The employees are the key sources to bring about change in organisations. This is achieved through organisational communication. It is believed that an efficient communication is essential to every business organisation. Today, human resources are the most strategic assets to organisations. Organisational communication as mentioned earlier, may have effects on work commitment as an in-house factor. The study has shown that organisational communication plays a vital role in employee motivation and performance as real changes are taking place in modern organisations which confront the new reality of tighter staffing, increased workloads, longer hours and a greater emphasis on performance, risk-taking and flexibility. Public Relations have a crucial role to play in the management effort to reorient employees perplexed by changes, or inform and motivate those who adapt more readily. Within this general need to communicate, there exists the specialised requirement for effective communication as an outcome of managing an

organisation's employee relations and the general publics.

Based on the findings of this research, the study has been able to reveal that effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helps in building genuine relationship among both parties in the organisations. Also, this study reveals that poor communication can affect workers performance. Today's organisations are run by multi and cross-functional teams which show little tolerance for unquestioned authority. To deal with this situation, the art of persuasion and the effort to find the correct emotional match with the employees is necessary. This match means that it is not enough for communication to be one way ticket. There has to be downward and upward communication. Effective downward communication allows decisions taken by the management of the organisation to be converted into action by employees, also boosts teamwork, trust, better relations, productivity and fewer chances of rumours and miscommunication. Upward communication helps managers to understand both business and personal issues that affect employees. In addition, creative suggestions from employees help management in decision making and improvement of the organisation.

This study has also revealed that there are causes of breakdown in communication in Flour Mill Limited, Calabar and they can be addressed for effective workplace efficiency. They should eliminate the barriers on communication and create efficient, participative, and transparent communication medium to improve workers commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this work, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Flour Mill Limited and other organisations should regularly articulate its policies, goals and objectives to its workers in order to improve work performance through the Public Relations unit.
2. Organisations should eliminate the barriers on communication and create efficient, participative, and transparent communication medium to improve workers commitment. To encourage employees for desired change, Flour Mill Limited, Calabar and other organisations must address the apprehensions and issues related with them.
3. That is, communication is a means through which the task and the resources needed to carry out an assignment, the roles and duties and the expected results are made known to the subordinates which makes work easier for better performance.
4. Managers need to communicate with employees regularly to get feedback and offer suggestions in order to prevent confusion about future job assignments: this will help improve workers performance and organisational productivity.

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