

Patterns of communication flow and organizational effectiveness in Local Government Councils in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined pattern of communication flow and organizational effectiveness of Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government council in Nigeria. The objectives of the study were Ascertain the pattern of communication flow prevalent in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government council in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Assess the extent to which communication policy and organizational structure affected the communication flow patterns in Local Government Council, determine the extent to which communication flow pattern in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government council enhances organizational/effectiveness, find out the barriers to effective communications flow and organizational effectiveness in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council, determine the extent of employee satisfaction with the pattern of communication flow in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study was survey with questionnaire and interview schedule as instrument of the study. The population of the study comprised subjects who are staff of the select local government councils. The staff strength of the two local government councils stands at 1,876, with Etim Ekpo Local Government having a staff strength of 424 while Uyo Local Government Council has 1,452 as at the time of this study according to the Akwa Ibom State, National Bureau of Statistics. The sample size of 187 for this study was determined using 10% systematically drawn from the population of each local government. Findings reveals that majority of respondents 75 (42%) agreed that the prevalent communication pattern was vertical (Downward communication). That is communication from top to bottom (management to subordinates). Furthermore majority of respondents 120 (70,50) representing 67% (39, 28%) were of the opinion that communication flow pattern enhances organizational effectiveness to a very great extent and a great extent respectively. This implies that communication flow enhances organizational effectiveness*

among other findings. It was recommended that the administrators of Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government council in consonance with local government service commission should look into their communication pattern and improve it. The extent of use of communication should be increased to further foster organizational effectiveness. Staff should be trained regularly to overcome the barriers to effective communication which are lack of proper planning, organizational barriers, semantic barriers, noise, poorly expressed messages, poor listening and distrust.

KEYWORDS: communication, pattern of communication, communication flow, organizational effectiveness, local government councils

INTRODUCTION

Communication with one another is central to life in which all other activities depend. It enables every system to function effectively, such system may include financial institution, sport, government ministries, industries, parastatals as well as councils like Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council. Draft (2000) defines communication as the process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more people usually with the intention to motivate or influence behaviour. Communication refers to the exchange of information between a sender (source) and a receiver (destination) so that is received, understood and leads to action (Obamira, 2008).

Communication is defined as an expression of thoughts, feelings, ideas, messages from the sender to the receiver through verbal, non-verbal, written and non-written forms (Akarika, 2021, p.67). Baran (2007, p.4) defines communication as “the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver”. This means that for communication to be effective, the encoder and the decoder should be able to express their ideas. According to Tayo and Olamigoke (2006), no interaction between two people is possible without one form of communication or the other. Communication is one of the most dominant and important functions in an organization (Haries & Nelson, 2018).

According to Stanton (2004), the art of communication always takes place within a situation or context, and it flows from persons to person, carrying along with it information, ideas, emotional feelings or views in an understanding way through the use of meaningful words, signs, letters or symbols for the purpose of information, education, entertainment, influencing the behaviour of another. Communication is essential for internal function of the organization because it integrates management function (Akarika, 2021). Therefore, every interaction in an organization is made possible through the process of communication. The major objectives of communication in an organization is to inform and educate employees at all levels on the company’s strategy and motivate them to support the strategy and organizational performance goals. This, to a large extent is dependent on the organizational policies inherent in any organization (Akarika, Iwok & Jessica, 2022)

Ugbaja (2001) defines communication as the process which involves all acts of transmitting messages to channels which link people to the language or any symbols which are used to transmit such messages. It is also the means by which such messages are received and stored. It includes the rules, customs and conventions which defines and regulate guan relationship and events. In its simplest form, however, communication is the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver or the process of creating shared meaning.

Effective communication does not only lead to better management of council, but it is a means of making people more aware of their working environment. However, effective pattern of communication flow does apply to all other phases of management; it is particularly vital in directing affairs and instructing in the normal course of everyday business, creating an awareness of a person's working environment.

According to Shonubi and Akintaro (2016) there are different patterns of communication flow in an organization such as: Horizontal communication which is also called lateral communication. For communication to serve the usefulness of an organizational structure, it should allow for easy flow for management to perform her function properly. This in turn will boost the morale of workers in such organization. Quality communication directly related to employees mental peace as well as mental pressure, their job satisfaction, motivation and performance. Communication factors are commonly identified as important causes of and contributors to failures or success. Bikson and Gutex (1984) cited in Verma (2013), conclude in their studies that failure in companies is mainly caused by communication problems than technical problems. Human factors have been found to be the main causes of implementation failures, an important question would be, why is this so? An answer might be found when looking into the process of communication.

Communication is fundamental to organizing. Further, with the fast pace of changes are the needs of the hour and changes require effective environment to convince. In a situation where an open dialogue between superior and subordinates is present, a high degree of trust to changes process will be created (Verma, 2013). Local government councils are not exempted from the application of effective communication if they must boost their effectiveness. Several studies emphasize that effective communication can enhance organizational outcomes. Communication has an influence on the perception and option about persons, communities, organizations, governments and societies as it enables them to share information with one another.

Communication has crucial impacts among work groups in that organizational communication is a channel to flow information, resources and even policies. It is in view of the critical role of communication in every organization and the need for effective communication pattern that necessitate this study on patterns of communication flow and organizational effectiveness using Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Councils. as a case study.

Statement of the Problem

Effective communications pattern in an organization, institutions, government ministries and parastatals as well as local government council such as Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council fosters participative decision making, supportiveness, trust, confidence and credibility, openness and candor and quick attainment of the organizational goals. Management without effective internal communication and employee engagement cannot perform the responsibility of strategic alignment. Effective communication is important to ensure that employees understand their contributing role towards the executing of plans, and thereby helping to achieve organizational goals.

It has been observed that staff of Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Areas does not seem to understand or know how to channel their communication when there is need for such communication to management such that rumour and gossip seem to be the order of the day. There seems to be improper channeling of communication from management to staff, which possibly affects goal achievement in the council. It may also occur that these channels are laid down but the system does not complement it. Therefore, the major thrust of this work is to examine the pattern of communications flow that exists in Etim Ekpo Local Government Council and the extent to which these patterns of communication flow enhance organizational effectiveness.?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. Ascertain the pattern of communication flow prevalent in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government council in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
2. Assess the extent to which communication policy and organizational structure affected the communication flow patterns in Local Government Council.
3. Determine the extent to which communication flow pattern in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government council enhances organizational/effectiveness.
4. Find out the barriers to effective communications flow and organizational effectiveness in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council.
5. Determine the extent of employee satisfaction with the pattern of communication flow in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What patterns of communication flow exist in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent have the communication policy and organizational structure affect the communication flow in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Council?
3. To what extent does communication flow pattern enhance organizational effectiveness in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Councils?

4. What are the barriers to effective communication flow and organizational effectiveness in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government Councils?
5. To what extent are employees satisfied with the communication flow patterns that exist in Uyo and Etim Ekpo Local Government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forms of Communication in an Organization

Communication can be seen as a link through which people within an organization interact to achieve a common goal. Communication can also be viewed as a process through which information is passed between individuals in an organization using previously agreed symbols. Communication functions as a means whereby information is circulated within and out of the organization, the effort is geared towards production maintenance, adaptation and management (Verma, 2013).

Communication can also be seen as the vehicle in which the manager can use to inform, persuade, command, instruct and integrate various parts of the organization. Taken from the above proposition of communication, scholars and researchers, organizational communication, could therefore be seen as a means for diffusion or innovations, integrations and as a help in the accomplishment of organizational laid down goals (Verma, 2013). The three major forms of communication commonly used by managers in organization are:

- (a) **Written Communication:** It involves the use of letters, memos, bulletin, procedures/policy manuals, notices, books, etc. to transmit information in an organization.
- (b) **Oral Communication:** This refers to verbal conversation between two or more persons in an organization. It is a face-to-face interaction and most frequently used kind of communication channel during conferences, seminar, meetings, interviews, among others. It is rich in content, because there is high level of interaction between the sender and the receiver.
- (c) **Non-verbal communication:** This means using any form other than written and oral communications to transmit information. This includes the use of facial expression, body movement and personal appearance to pass information. Important categories are Kinetic behaviour, physical distance, tone of voice and object language.

Principles of Communication in an Organization

In an organization, certain principles are very essential to effective communication. These principles, according to Mangal and Mangal (2009), include:

- (a) **Principle of readiness and motivation:** The communicator and the receiver should be ready and remain motivated throughout the process of communication. Lack of interest, zeal and enthusiasm on the part of either of them may adversely affect the process and product of communication and this may affect effective communication in the organization.

(b) Principles of competent communication skills: The communicator and the receiver should be quite competent and efficient in terms of communicating and receiving the desired information or message. Possession of the required communication skills is crucial, so that the task of communication, in terms of transmission and reception, may be performed by them effectively. This guaranteed smooth running of operations in the organization.

(c) Principles of sharing and interaction: Since communication is a two way process, its success lies in allowing as much as possible exchange of ideas, and keeping mutual interaction between the source of communication and receiver. In an organization, there is consistent sharing of information and interaction using different communication media.

(d) Principle of suitability of the communication contents: The content of what is to be communicated should be very suitable and easily understandable. It should be appropriate on the part of both the communicator and the receiver.

(e) Principle of appropriate media and channel: The effectiveness of the process of communications will depend on the type and appropriateness of the media communication channel used.

(f) Principle of appropriate feedback: Communication flow is deemed to be effective if it continues to receive the desired feedback from the receiver and vice versa.

(g) Principle of facilitators and barriers of Communications: There are many intervening variables lying between the source and the receiver of information in a communication process. The effect of these variables, on the (positive or negative) source and receiver, becomes a decisive factor of the success or the failure of communication.

Communication flow patterns in organizations

Organizational communication flow involves the organizing, selecting and disseminating of information between and within internal and external audience of any organization, as well as institution. (Akarika, 2020). The need for managers to communicate with subordinates in ways that encourage them to identify with the organization has now become more important for organizational effectiveness. (Akarika 2020). Kreitner and Kinick (2001) organizational effectiveness can be gauged by the prevalence of smooth flow of information, employee loyalty and job satisfaction. Without organizational communication, organizational excellence and performance would not exist and the various parts of an organization would not be bonded together for common goals (Akarika, Umoren & Okon, 2021).

Goldhaber (1993), Ikpe (1990) and Soola (1998) cited in Akarika, Ekanem, and Ukpe, (2017) classify organizational communication flow patterns into formal and informal communication flow patterns. Formal communication flow is further sub-divided into downward, upward and subordinate. It radiates from the top-most point of organizational hierarchy to the next vertically. It can be oral, written and mediated mode of message.

Downward communication

Is the flow of messages from the superiors, through conversations, company bulletins, notice boards, and letters, by telephone, e-mail, video conference among others. (Ikpe, 1990), Smith, Rchetto and Zima (1972) cited in Akarika et al. (2017) states as follows regarding downward communication: It is the most frequently studied dimension of formal channels. Authority, tradition, and prestige are implemented through downward communication. Those at the top of the organization are naturally concerned with the communication effectiveness of their downward directed message to employees.

Goldhaber (1993), cited in Akarika et al. (2017) identified five types of downward communication. These are job instructions, job rationale, procedures and practices. Feedback messages appraising how well subordinates do their jobs, and indoctrination of goals. The possible drawbacks to downward communication include: lack of accuracy, information overload, channel distortions, poor timing and problems associated with filtering. On the issue or message overload. Goldhaber (1993) cited research evidence by O'Reilly to the effect that information under-load is associated with lower satisfaction but higher job performance. He also found that individual who are overloaded with information express greater satisfaction in both their job and general communication, but are rated slightly low by superiors as performing less than those who receive less information.

Upward Communication

This is actually the key problem area which hinders or tends to promote institutional disharmony. In many organizations little if any, upward communication exists apparently due to the prevailing tendency by organizational leaders to run a closed environment. Upward communication refers to messages which flow from subordinates to superiors. it is flow of communication from employees to supervisors and continue all through the organizational hierarchy (Appleby, 2003). Usually, for the purpose of asking questions, providing feedback and making suggestions, Goldhaber (1993). Says it has the effect of improving morale and employee attitude. Upward directed messages are usually integrative and innovative. Upward communication serves as feedback to management, giving clues to the relative success of given message.

Horizontal Communication

This is the flow of communication among people in the same organization. According to Madu (2006) this kind of communication is used to speed information to improve understanding and to co-ordinate efforts for the achievement for organizational hierarchy but cuts across the chain of command.

Informal Communication flow in an Organization

Informal communication is the communication flow that does not follow the scalar functional lines network in an organization. Many writers use the word grapevine as synonym for this type of

message behaviour. The term grapevine applies to all informal communication. Thus, the grapevine is an unstructured and informal network founded on social relationship rather than organizational chart or job descriptions. According to some estimates, 7-10% of employees typically receive new from the grapevine before they hear about it through formal channels (EPB.1997. According to Akarika (2020) the use of electronic system, instant message, social networking sites, vault. Com and other websites have replaced the grapevine of the main arena where people share gossips

Communication Barriers

Difficulties in communication do arise as a result of difference in education, age, race, social relationships, communication breakdown, other barriers to communication according to Madu (2006) cited in Samson and Udosen (2019) include emotionality, different perception, mistrust, influence of attitude difference in status and power. In spite of the best intentions of sender and receiver to communicate, several barriers inhibit the effective exchange of information. As author George Bernard Shaw once wrote. "The greatest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished".Communication barriers are technically referred to as NOISE, but few pervasive problems that will be discussed are perceptions, filtering, language and information overload (Mcshane and Glinow 2003).

Perceptions

The perceptual process determines which messages we select or screen out, as well as how the selected formation is organized and interpreted. This process can be a significant source of noise in the communication process if the sender and receiver have different perceptual frames and mental blocks.

Filtering

Some messages are filtered or stopped altogether on their way up or down the organizational hierarchy. Filtering may evolve deleting or delaying negative information or using less harsh words so that events sound more favourable (McShane and Glinow. 2003) Employees and supervisors usually filter communication to create a good impression of themselves to supervisors. Filtering is most common where the organization rewards employees who communicate mainly positive information and among employees with strong career mobility aspirations (Glauser 1984).

Language

Words and gestures carry no inherent meaning, so the sender must ensure receiver understand these symbols and signs. In reality, lack of mutual understanding is a common reason messages are distorted. Two potential language barriers are jargon and ambiguity (McShane and Von Glinow 2003).

Information Overload

Every day, the average office worker sends and receives more than 150 messages through various media in the U.S. One survey reports that 49 percent of managers in the U.S. and several other countries feel they are fairly often or regular incapable of processing this infoglut. More than 40 percent of them say that receiving so much information weakens their decision making ability, delays important decision, makes it difficult to concentrate in their main tasks. Some medical experts also warn that bombardment of electronic information is causing memory loss in young people (Koski 2001).

Benefit of Effective Organizational Communication Flow

The benefits of effective organizational communication flow according to Akarika (2021: 72) are as follows:

1. **Increases Organizational Performance:** Effective communication is pivotal in increasing organizational performances. It plays a very important factor in human life. Whether it is about improving ourselves or our organization. Effective communication is one of the strategies the management employ to increase organizational job performance among the workers in the organization.
2. **Boost Employees' Morale:** Employees when satisfied with their job, give in their full commitment to accomplish the goals of the organization. Effective communication from management can boost employee's morale in addition to their pay (Hahn, 2007).
3. **Encourage Team Communication Network:** Contemporary organizational communication has expanded rapidly from face-to-face team to virtual and real network of people across multiple locality organized to achieve a common goal.
4. **Enhance Productivity:** Effective communication is pivotal in increasing productivity because it directly influences the behaviour of the employees and performance communication with clear instructions because it increases productivity (Nwanwene, 2007) and (Hahn, 2007).
5. **Help Reduce Diversity:** Effective organizational communication help to reduce the frontiers caused by diversity in religion, educational background, social background, differences in age, sex, political affiliations, race, breakdown in communication among other differences thus increasing productivity.

Review of Empirical Studies

Akarika, Ekanem and Ukpe (2017) carried out a study on communication flow patterns and institutional harmony in tertiary institution in Nigeria. The study assessed the role of communion flow in creating industrial harmony in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study was opinion survey, with questionnaire and interview schedule as research instruments. The study which was anchored by modern organization theory and theory of transactional process in organizational communication found that the prevalent communication flow pattern in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria are formal and informal. The communication flow patterns were characterized by

vertical downward, upward and horizontal, dominated by vertical downward. Finding of the study revealed that between 65% to 70% of respondents in the tertiary institution perceived that communication flow patterns are inadequate to guarantee learning. It was review that communication audit should be carried out periodically followed by communication training to maintain effective communication flow, among other recommendations.

Verma, (2013). carried out a study on relationship between organizational communication flow and communication climate. The study examined the relationship between organizational communication flow and communication climate. The study identified communication as an important variable that contributes to failures or success of an organization.

The objective of the study was to identify the relationship between communication climate and internal patterns of communication with main focus on vertical communication against professional and organizational background.

The study adopted a theoretical discourse methodology, thus requiring no case study and samples. Data was gathered from secondary sources such as textbooks, internet and journal papers. Finding revealed that the different pattern of communication flow are: Vertical (Upward and downward communication): upward communication flows from senior to junior, Grapevine or informal communication: The grapevine is a natural phenomenon that serves as a means of emotional release for staff members and provides the administrator with significant information concerning the attitudes and feelings of staff members, Horizontal communications: Horizontal communication flow exists to enhance coordination. The horizontal channel permits a lateral or diagonal flow of messages, enabling units to work with other units without having to follow rigidly up and down channels. It was concluded that the communication system in an organization is both a reciprocal, dynamic process and a structural construct, determined by a set of internal factors, enabling horizontal, vertical, and diagonal information flow throughout the organization and also effectively and efficiently operating a number of communication categories with the aim to help individuals reach both their own and organizations communication goal to help individuals reach both their own and organizations communication goals, creating synergy among communication. It was recommended that a strong effective communication system is required to succeed in these highly competitive environment.

Shonubi, and Akintaro, (2016), carried out a study on the impact of effective communication on organizational performance. The study examined the impact of effective communication on organizational performance. The main objective of this paper was to look at the impact of effective communication on organizational performance. The discussion was based on series of empirical studies of communication and organizational performance. The study adopted a theoretical discourse methodology, thus requiring no case study and samples. Data was gathered from secondary sources such as textbooks, internet and journal papers. The research findings validated

the synerginous relationship between communication approach and efficient organizational performance.

The study recommended that there should be more clarity of ideas before attempting to communicate; better understanding of the physical and human environment when communicating. A thorough analysis of the purpose of communication; in planning communication, consultation should both be top down and bottom up, while all facts are rendered implicit and explicit; consideration should be given to the content and tone of the messages; whenever possible, the language or tone should not only be edifying and elegant, but must be messages the receiver would find valuable; immediate action must be accompanied and accomplished with communication. These reviewed studies are relevant to the present study in the areas of communication flow patterns, organizational communication flow and communication effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

This research made use of two theories namely: modern organizational theory and the theory of transactional process in organizational communication. Modern organization theory sees modern organizations as a system of mutually dependent variables, involving the individual, his personality structure in the organization. There is congruence between the individual expectancies and those of the organization. There is congruence between the individual expectancies and those of the organization. The theory advocates for a system approach where the organization is seen as a unit with highly integrated and interdependent units. In this regard the organization recognizes both its formal and informal structures and their communication systems. Thus, communication is the vehicle that ensures the efficient functioning of the system and its interdependent parts.

Therefore, relating the flow of communication and how that flow enhances or hinders organizational effectiveness situates itself properly in this context. Effective communication flow provides task messages, maintenance messages, human relations messages, and innovative messages to local government councils, institutions and their sub-systems. These messages help to enhance organization effectiveness.

The theory of transactional process in organizational communication states as follows: “All persons are engaged in sending and receiving messages simultaneously. Each person is constantly sharing in the encoding and decoding process and each person is affecting the other” (Wenberg & Wilmont, 1973). The transactional-process approach according to Eisenberg and Goodal (2001) highlights the importance of feedback, or information about how a message is received, and particularly nonverbal feedback, which may accompany or substitute for verbal feedback. The transactional process model differs significantly from the information approach in terms of the presumed location of the meaning of the message. In the information-transfer model, the meaning of a message resides with the sender, and the challenge of communication is to transmit that meaning to others. The transactional model rejects this idea in favour of one in which meanings

are in people not words (Berlo, 1960). It focuses on the person receiving the message and on how the receiver constructs the meaning of that message. The transactional process theory is also relevant to this study because in addition to information transmission in local government institution, persons engaged in sending and receiving information contribute a lot to the content, meaning, adequacy and effects of communication on individuals, departments and the industry. The extent of communication transaction affects the extent of organizational effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study made use of the survey research design. Since communication flow is dependent on participation and actual experience, the researcher undertook a survey of the management and employees of two local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research instruments for the survey were questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaire was administered on the employees while the personal interview was administered on the secretary and information officer of the select local government councils. The population of the study comprised subjects who are staff of the select local government councils. The staff strength of the two local government councils stands at 1,876, with Etim Ekpo Local Government having a staff strength of 424 while Uyo Local Government Council has 1,452 as at the time of this study according to the Akwa Ibom State, National Bureau of Statistics.

The sample size for this study was determined using 10% systematically drawn from the population of each local government. This was considered an adequate representation. According to Best and Khan (1989), Wimmer and Dominick (2000) and Wimmer and Dominick (2006), there is no fixed number of percentage of subjects that determine the size of an adequate sample, it may depend upon the nature or population of interest or data to be gathered. Based on aforementioned submission, using the population of each local government area the sample size was:

Uyo Local Government Area – 145
Etim Ekpo Local Government Area - 42
Total - 187

Two sampling procedure were adopted by the researcher in selecting the samples for the study. There are purposive and systematic techniques. Staff were selected purposively from each local government area and systematic sampling technique was used to select respondents for survey using the questionnaire. Data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages, while the data from personal interview were analyzed using explanation building method based on the research questions. This approach was suggested by Yin (1984).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of 187 copies of questionnaire administered on respondents, 180 copies were returned and found useable for analysis. Therefore, the data are presented and analyzed based on 180 copies of questionnaire returned.

Table 1: Job Cadre of Respondents

Job cadre	Frequency	Percentage
Management cadre	40	22.2
Middle cadre	80	44.5
Lower cadre	60	33.3
Total	180	100

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents 80 (44.5%) were from the middle cadre. This implies that the middle cadre provided the bulk of the answers to the research questions and help to validate the respondents' capacity to answer the questions, in terms of understanding of the subject of discourse.

Table 2: Prevalent patterns of communication flow in Local Government Councils in Nigeria

Patterns of communication flow	Frequency	Percentage
Vertical (upward communication)	20	11
Vertical downward communication)	75	42
Horizontal communication	30	16.5
Informal communication(grapevine)	25	14
All of the above	30	16.5
Total	180	100

Data gathered and presented in table 2 captures the prevalent pattern of communication flow in local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Majority of respondents 75(42%) agreed that the prevalent communication flow pattern was vertical (Downward communication) that is communication flow top to bottom (management to subordinates). This implies that vertical (downward communication) was the major means of communication flow.

Table 3: Extent of influence of communication policy and organizational structure on pattern of communication flow

Options	Frequency	Percentage
A very great extent	65	36
A great extent	60	33
Undecided/neutral	5	3
A little extent	30	17
A very little extent	20	11
Total	180	100

In table 3, majority of respondents 125 (65, 60) representing 69% (36%, 33%) were of the opinion that communication policy and organizational structure influenced communication flow to a very great extent and a great extent respectively. This means that the extent of influence was high.

Table 4: Extent to which communication flow patterns enhance organizational effectiveness

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A very great extent	70	39
A great extent	50	28
Undecided/neutral	10	5.5
A litter extent	40	22
A very little extent	10	5.5
Total	180	100

It was important to determine the extent to which communication flow patterns enhances organizational effectiveness. Table 4 shows that majority of respondents 120 (70, 50) representing 67% (39%, 28%) were of the opinion that communication flow patterns enhances organizational effectiveness to a very great extent and great extents respectively. This implies that communication flow patterns enhance organizational effectiveness.

Table 5: Barriers to effective communication flow and organizational effectiveness

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Communication policy/organizational structure	15	8
Administrative policy	30	17
Undemocratic style of leadership	20	11
Language	5	3
Lack of trust/personnel ineffectiveness	5	3
Non-participation in decision making	20	11
Poorly expressed messages, perception/filtering	15	8
All of the above	70	39
Total	180	100

Table 5 shows that majority of respondents 70 (39%) agreed the following as barriers to effective communication flow and organizational effectiveness. They are communication policy and organizational structure, administrative policy bureaucracy, undemocratic style of leadership, language, lack of trust, personnel ineffectiveness, non-participation in decision making, poorly expressed messages, perception and filtering.

Table 6: Extent of employee satisfaction with the present patterns of communication flow for enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A very great extent	35	20
A great extent	20	11
Undecided/neutral	-	-
A litter extent	60	33
A very little extent	65	36
Total	180	100

Table 6 vividly captures the extent of employee satisfaction with the present communication flow patterns for enhancing organizational effectiveness. Majority of respondents 125 (60,65) representing 69% (33%, 36%) were not satisfied with the present pattern of communication flow in enhancing organizational effectiveness.

DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The findings of this study are discussed in line with the research questions thus:

Research Question 1: What patterns of communication flow exist in Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

Data gathered and presented in table 2 captured the prevalent communication flow patterns in local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Majority of respondents 75(42%) agreed that the prevalent communication pattern was vertical (Downward communication). That is communication from top to bottom (Management to subordinates).Opinion from the interviewees on the communication flow patterns in local government councils pointed to formal and informal. They agreed that formal communication flow is characterized by vertical downward, that is communication flow from management to subordinates, vertical upward communication flow from subordinates to management and horizontal communication flow between units and departments in accordance with organizational communication structure and informal communication flow patterns do not follow the scalar channels of communication in the local government council. It flows through gossips and grapevine.

The findings of this study agrees with the study by Akarika et al. (2017) whose study found that majority of respondents 233 (54%) were of the opinion that the predominant communication flow pattern in higher institutions in Nigeria was vertical (downward) communication. According to Smoth, Richetto and Zimen (1972) cited in Akarika et al. (2017 p.71) downward communication is the most frequent dimension of formal channels. Authority, tradition and prestige are implemented through dominant communication. Those at the top of the organization are naturally concerned with communication effectiveness of their downward directed message to employees.

Research Question 2: To what extent have the communication policy and organizational structure affected communication flow in Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

Table 2 shows that majority of respondents 125 (65, 60) representing 69% (36%, 33%) were of the opinion that communication policy and organizational structure influenced communication flow to a very great extent and a great extent respectively. This means that the extent of influence was high.

Regarding the extent to which communication policy and organizational structure of local government councils have affected communication flow, the interviewees agreed that the effect is positive in principles, but in practice the reverse is the case. The policy at times is often manipulated to favour management in come issues. The finding of the study corroborates with the theoretical framework of the study the modern organization theory. The theory advocates for a system approach that recognizes both its formal and informal structures and their communication systems.

Research Question 3: To what extent does communication flow pattern enhance organizational effectiveness in Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

Data gathered and presented in table 4 shows that majority of respondents 120 (70,50) representing 67% (39, 28%) were of the opinion that communication flow pattern enhances organizational effectiveness to a very great extent and a great extent respectively. This implies that communication flow enhances organizational effectiveness. Concerning the extent to which communication flow patterns enhance organizational effectiveness, interviewees affirmed the opinion of respondents on the issue. Finding supports Obamiro (2008) who observed that messages in an organization transmit information for every variety of reasons which include: to achieve coordinated action, express feelings and emotions, share information regarding organizational goals; task directions and decision making, achieve effective control, encourage staff participation in decision making and crate a good image and reputation for an organization. According to Kreitner, Kinick and Budens, (2002 p.149) Effective communication is critical for both managerial and organizational success". Also, "effective communication is the essence of leadership and management" (Haller, 2002 p. 149). The complexity of modern organizational activities certainly

generates tension and where such arises the communication system part in place, comes hardly to reduce such tension through efficient information distribution.

Research Question 4: What are the barriers to effective communication flow and organizational effectiveness in Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

The answer to this question can be obtained from table 5. Table 5 shows that majority of respondents 70(39%) agreed to the following barriers to effective communication flow and organizational effectiveness in local government councils. The barriers were communication policy and organizational structure, administrative policy, bureaucracy, undemocratic style of leadership, language, lack of trust, personnel inefficiency, non-participation in decision making, poorly expressed messages, perception and filtering. The findings of this study is in line with the view of Gibson and Guttex (1984) cited in Verma (2013) who found that failure in organization is mainly caused by communication problems than technical problems.

The views of interviewees further affirm the barriers as given by respondents. The interviewees pointed to the following barriers: inadequate infrastructure, personnel inefficiency, bureaucracy, ethnicity, staff attitude, communication policy and style of leadership.

Findings further corroborates Moshane and Glinow (2003) communication barriers which include perceptions, filtering, language and information.

Research Question 5: To what extent are employees satisfied with the communication flow pattern that exist in Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government council in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria?

Table 6 vividly captures the extent of satisfaction with the prevalent communication flow patterns for enhancing organizational effectiveness in local government councils in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Majority of respondents 125 (60,65) representing 69%(33%,36%) were not satisfied with the present pattern of communication flow in enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Finding shows that little upward communication exists apparently due to the prevalent tendency by local government council management to run a close environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, it can be concluded that communication flow pattern affects organizational effectiveness positively or negatively. It is therefore imperative that every organization chooses a fitting communication flow pattern and communicate effectively to positively impact on their organizational effectiveness.

Recommendations

Having examined communication flow pattern and organizational effectiveness in Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government council, the following recommendations are made:

1. The administrators of Uyo and Etim Ekpo local government council in consonance with local government service commission should look into their communication pattern and improve it.
2. The extent of use of communication should be increased to further foster organizational effectiveness.
3. Staff should be trained regularly to overcome the barriers to effective communication which are lack of proper planning, organizational barriers, semantic barriers, noise, poorly expressed messages, poor listening and distrust.

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