The Impact Of Effective Internal Communication On Employee Engagement And Productivity In Some Selected Nigerian Organizations

By

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Abstract

Effective internal communication is a cornerstone of organizational success, influencing employee engagement, morale, and productivity. This study investigates the impact of internal communication strategies on employee performance in selected Nigerian organizations across the banking, telecommunications, media, and construction sectors. Adopting a descriptive research design, data were collected through questionnaires and interviews targeting employees at managerial, middle, and junior levels. Findings reveal that transparent, consistent, and participatory communication fosters trust, strengthens alignment with organizational goals, and enhances productivity. Results show that 92.5% of respondents believe internal communication directly drives performance, while 76.1% affirm that leadership approachability improves engagement. However, challenges such as infrequent communication from senior leaders, distorted feedback, and inadequate information flow were identified as barriers to effective engagement. The study concludes that organizations with structured communication frameworks achieve higher employee satisfaction, stronger motivation, and improved efficiency. Recommendations include strengthening leadership visibility, establishing clear communication channels, enhancing two-way feedback mechanisms, increasing communication frequency, and building communication skills across all organizational levels. By adopting these strategies, Nigerian organizations can foster a culture of openness, trust, and collaboration, ultimately driving sustainable employee engagement and productivity.

Keywords: Internal communication, employee engagement, productivity, organizational communication, leadership communication, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Communication within any organization is crucial for its smooth functioning. It is the tool with which organizational goals and objectives, and the goal of profit and progress, are attained. Ineffective communication may lead to misunderstandings, a lack of information, lower performance, and more employee rotations. The inability of managers to effectively communicate with their employees leads to poor performance (Varttala & Varttala, 2010).

Internal communication refers to the exchange of information and meaning among members of an organization to achieve shared understanding and objectives (Welch & Jackson, 2007). However, in today's dynamic business environment, communication goes beyond memos and meetings; it encompasses digital collaboration, leadership dialogue, and storytelling that shapes corporate culture. In Nigeria, where diverse workforces, hierarchical structures, and digital transformation intersect, effective internal communication is crucial for aligning employees with organizational goals. In contemporary organizations, internal communication strategies play a pivotal role in enhancing employee engagement, morale, productivity, and shaping organizational culture. When communication is open and participatory, employees tend to feel valued, informed, appreciated, and well connected, which invariably leads to stronger motivation and higher productivity. However, poor communication, on the other hand, breeds confusion, distrust, and disagreement among employees.

This study explores how effective internal communication influences employee engagement and productivity in Nigerian organizations, highlighting communication strategies that drive performance. It also examines how internal corporate communication influences employees' engagement and productivity in selected organizations. The research will look at the different forms of communication (formal, informal, verbal, and non-verbal) and their influence on employees' motivation, job satisfaction, and task efficiency. It will also look at and identify communication barriers that hinder employees and propose strategies to improve the organization's communication system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations in Nigeria have been faced with an array of problems that seem to be an impediment to the growth of any organization, such as poor leadership skills, low level of followership, which has a turnover on profits of the

organisation. It is in this context that this study examines the challenges of communication on workers' performance, their productivity, and their general engagement to work, using selected organizations in both Abuja and Lagos.

1.1 Internal Communication and Employee Engagement

In Nigerian organizations, hierarchical communication styles, limited digital adoption, and inadequate feedback mechanisms often obstruct information flow (Eze, 2018). This creates gaps between management and employees, reducing engagement. Employee engagement refers to the degree to which employees are emotionally invested in their work and the organization's success (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees demonstrate a high level of discipline and contribute creatively to organizational goals. Effective internal communication plays a central role in building engagement through recognition, information sharing, and inclusion in decision-making.

In a study by Yates (2006), identifying how effective internal communication enhances employee/ business performance found that organizations that excel in internal communication also have a higher market premium.

Higher shareholder returns over five years, a higher level of employee engagement, and lower employee turnover than companies less effective at communication. In other words, most employees are satisfied with their jobs due to regular communication activities in a pleasant atmosphere. A further analysis of the responses of employees shows that good and modest communication from organizational leadership to employees will motivate workers to be satisfied to give their best.

1.2 Communication and Productivity

According to Towers Watson (2012), companies with highly effective communication practices are more likely to outperform their peers. In Nigeria, organizations, for example, productivity challenges often stem from miscommunication, lack of clarity on tasks, and poor feedback loop (Adeleke & Adegbite, 2019). Hence, when communication systems are efficient, employees understand priorities, minimize duplication, and execute tasks more efficiently.

Abugre (2012), in a study of how managerial interactions affect employees' work output, adopted the survey method using questionnaires to collect data from 120 workers. Findings from the survey showed that a lack of regularinteractions between managers and their subordinates will poorly affect employees' attitudes to work. As much as 94 percent of the total respondents agreed that effective communication between superiors and their subordinates will increase job satisfaction, leading to improved work performance. Results emerging from the analysis further showed that for organizations to make a significant impact on performance, both managers and their subordinates must have a very good climate of social interactions. The involvement of lower-level employees in organizational activities and decision-making is of crucial importance to organizational performance. Employee performance, according to Dugguh and Dennis (2014, p. 16), is the job-related activities expected of an employee and how those activities are executed. This definition suggests the intervening role of internal communication in the relationship between the expectation of the organization from the employee, and that of the employee from the organization. Effective internal corporate communication is termed the 'secret weapon' that distinguishes first-rate companies, causing them to consistently deliver superior financial performance (Yates, 2006; Abugre, 2012; and Dasgupta et al., 2013). This superior financial performance cannot be possible without the employees. Thus, from these studies, employee satisfaction and happiness with the organization's internal communication are associated with high performance.

Methodology (Design)

This study adopted a descriptive research design; the design involves collecting data from the target population using questionnaires and interviews to describe and analyze relationships between variables. It will allow the research to assess employees' and managers' perceptions of the impact of internal communication in the organization.

The descriptive design is appropriate because the research focuses on employees' experiences and opinions.

The study seeks to describe how internal corporate communication influences employee engagement and productivity through the perception of some employees in the organizations under study. The quantitative and qualitative method was used to carry out the study.

The Study Areas

The study area is in Lagos and Abuja, and a few other parts of Nigeria in some selected private organizations in the Banking, media, and construction organization with a clear functional corporate communication department in Nigeria. As Africa's most populous nation and a key driver of corporate communication on the continent, Nigeria provides a unique environment for this particular research.

Study Method

This research involves the use of the questionnaire to target the opinion of the study population which included junior and senior level employees and some management level personnel of these selected private organizations in Nigeria.

The social cultural diversity and highly rated business environment in Nigeria present opportunities and challenges in the corporate communication sectors in any thriving private organization.

Population of the study

The population of this study is made up of Professionals across various key sectors of Nigeria private organizations: Media, Banking, Communication, Developmental sector, Construction. These groups were targeted because of their direct involvement in communication, especially internal communication, the main focus here is the private sector.

Making them relevant in assessing the impact of effective internal communication in an organization in Nigeria.

Result Findings

The findings of this study are derived from seventeen questionnaires

(https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ok8Y_CKV5a1r8oyQJukqKu8NqDt_XWir0Knr2D9P0r0/edit) with the results for each question presented in the charts below.

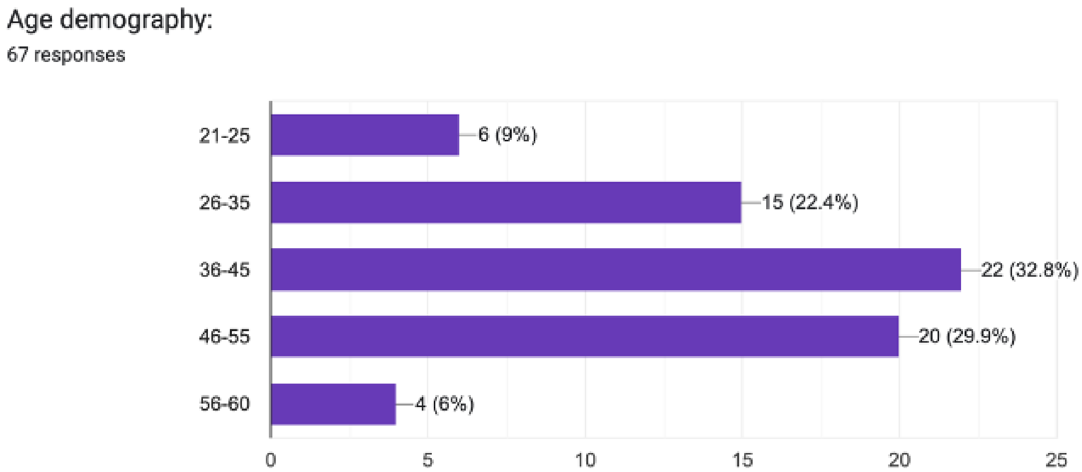

Figure I: Age demography of respondents.

From the chart above, the dominant Age Group is 36-45 years (32.8%), the Implications of this include: This age group typically includes mid-career professionals; they are likely experienced, stable, and may hold supervisory or managerial positions. And their views heavily shape organizational culture and decision-making. Next to this, the Mature Employees are between 46-55 years (29.9%), this group represents a quarter of the population, and the implications are: Indicates a workforce with significant institutional knowledge, Likely to be deeply familiar with company processes, and Succession planning and knowledge transfer may be essential.

The next with the highest is the Young Professional between 26-35 years (22.4%), this includes a sizeable segment of younger professionals, and the implications are: It represents emerging talent and future leadership pipeline, more open to digital tools, innovation, and agile work practices, and Internal communication strategies should consider

their preferences for quick, technology-driven updates. Then a Smaller young Adult Group between 21-25 years with (9%). A relatively small group of entry-level or early-career employees. And finally, older employees Nearing Retirement between 56-60 years (6%).

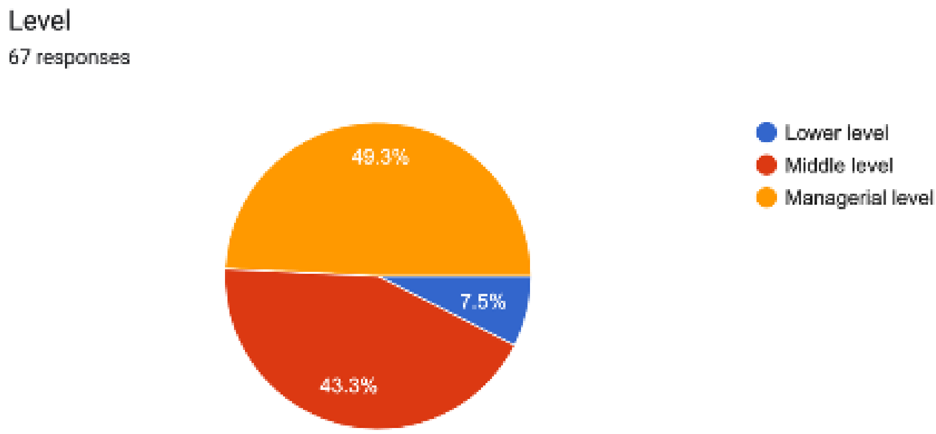

Figure II: levels of Respondents.

From the chart above, the Level Distribution Provided includes:

Managerial Level: 49.3%

Middle Level: 43.3%

Lower level: (7.5%)

Managerial Level is dominant with 49.3%, almost half of the respondents are in managerial positions and the implication of this includes: The organization has a strong leadership presence in its decision-making process. Managerial employees likely influence the strategic direction, performance expectations, and internal communication flow. High managerial representation may indicate: A mature, structured organization, strong administrative oversight, high involvement of leadership in survey and organizational assessments. The Impact of this on Organizational Processes includeManagerial staff may prioritize efficiency, compliance, and goal alignment and Their feedback heavily shapes policy formation, resource allocation,

and organizational culture.

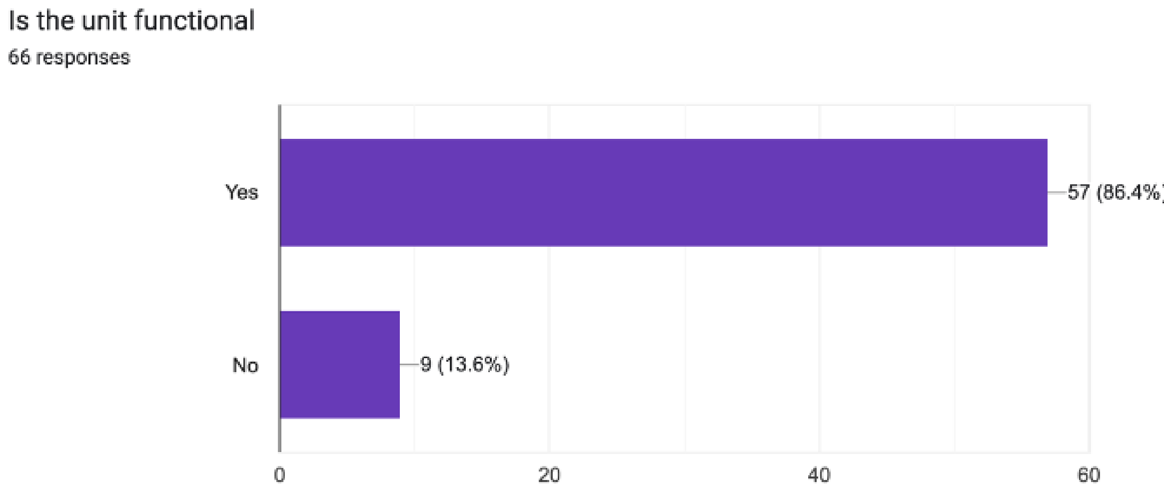

Figure III: Functional Internal Corporate Communication Unit

The bar chart above displays responses to a survey question asking whether internal communication is a functional unit in their organization? A total of 66 respondents participated. About (86.4%) respondents answered “Yes”, indicating that the overwhelming majority perceive the unit as functional. This suggests general satisfaction with

the unit’s operations, performance, or service delivery. About (13.6%) answered “No”, indicating that while the unit is largely seen as functional, a noteworthy minority does not share this view. The high percentage of positive responses reflects strong confidence in the unit’s functionality and indicates that it is meeting expectations for most stakeholders. However, the 13.6% negative responses should not be ignored.

Even a small group can highlight structural or service-related issues that may escalate if not addressed.

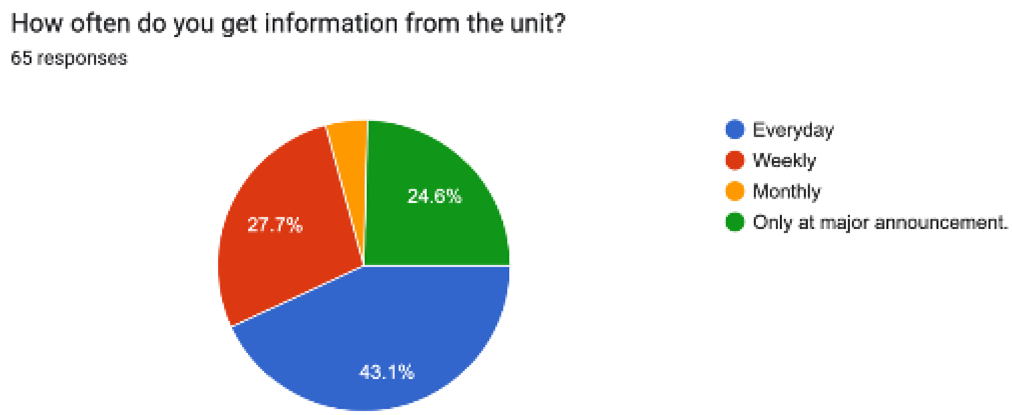

Figure IV: Regularity of information from the unit

From the above, most Employees respondents receive daily information from their offices (43.1%). The largest portion of respondents, almost 5 in 10, receive information every day. This however, indicates a functional communication flow, High frequency of updates, Strong visibility of unit activities, and potentially effective internal communication channels. Daily communication usually reflects a unit that prioritizes transparency and continuous engagement.

Employees who receive weekly information from their offices is (27.7%) which represents nearly 1 in 3 employees who get updates weekly. This suggests that these staff are still engaged but not in real-time loops, weekly updates may be tied to departmental meetings, memos, or summaries, and could indicate varying information needs across roles or levels. A significant quarter of respondents only receive information during major announcements. This raises concerns as these employees may feel disconnected from ongoing processes, a lack of consistent communication may lead to misunderstandings or low engagement, and Indicates uneven communication distribution across teams or levels.

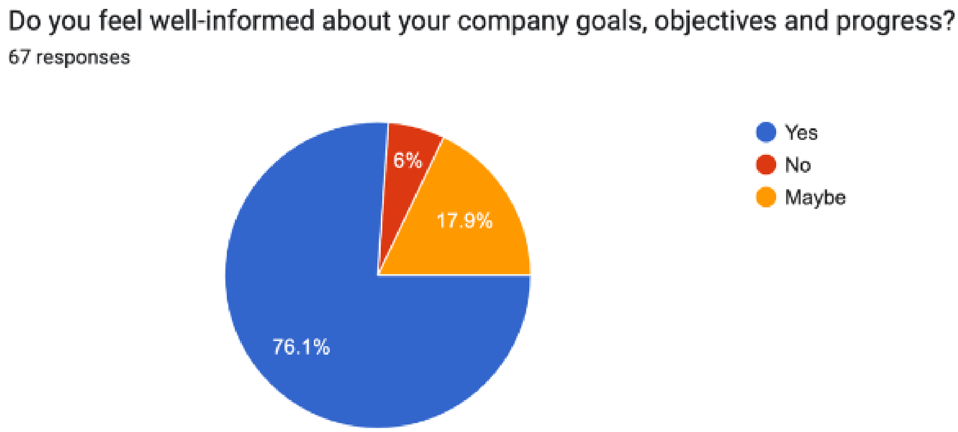

Figure V: Getting informed on the organisation's goals, objectives, and progress

The largest portion of the pie chart (76.1%) answered "Yes." In being well-informed about company goals, objectives, and progress through the means of internal communication**.** This indicates strong internal communication in terms of sharing company goals, objectives, and progress. Employees generally feel aligned with organizational direction. Around (17.9%) answered "Maybe**."** This suggests partial information gaps. These employees may receive updates inconsistently or feel that communication is unclear or insufficiently detailed. A smaller segment, 6% (roughly 4 respondents), answered "No." Even though the percentage is low, it is critical.

The results show strong communication performance overall, but not perfect.

The presence of "Maybe" and "No" responses indicate opportunities to improve.

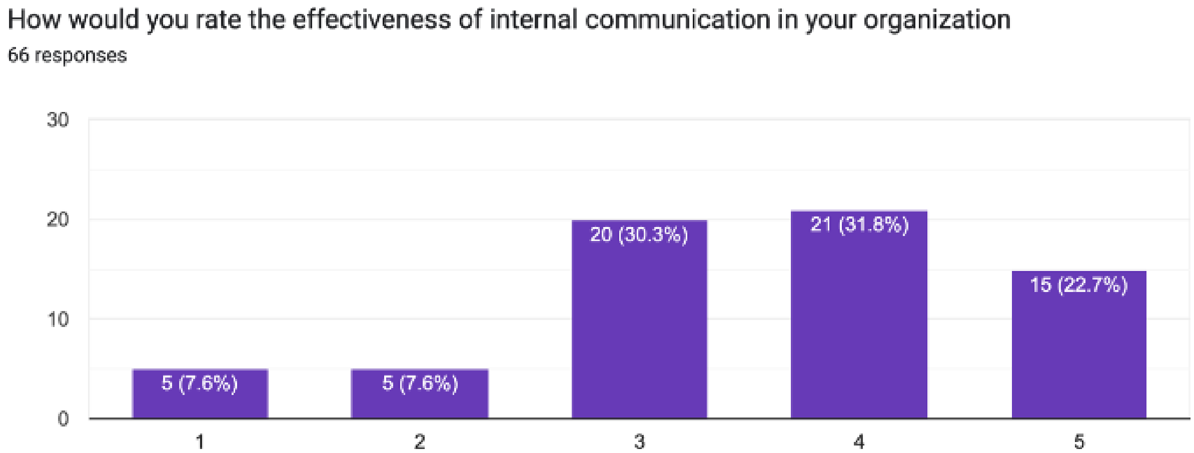

Figure VI: Internal communication rating in an organisation

The bar chart shows the distribution of responses from people on the effectiveness of internal communication in their various organisations. The top two options (3 and 4) account for about 62.2% of the responses. Options 1, 2, and 5 make up the remaining 35.8%. Most people (30.3% + 31.2% = 62.2%) think internal communication is either good or average (option 3and 4). A significant portion (22.7%) think it's not great (option 1). Very few people think it's excellent (option 5: 7.5%) or very poor (option 4: 5.7%). Overall, the sentiment seems somewhat positive, but there's room for improvement.

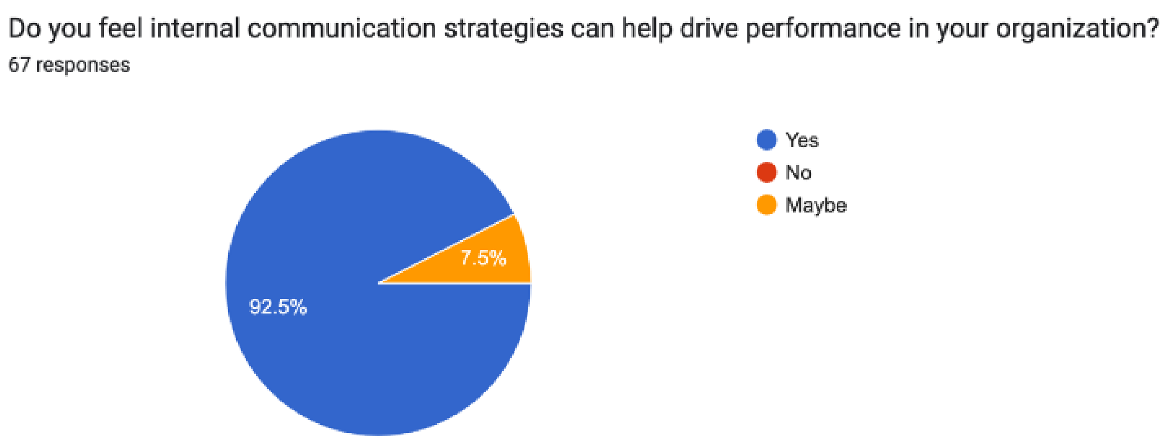

Figure VII: Drive performance through Internal Communication

An exceptionally high percentage nearly all respondents (92.5%) believe that internal communication strategies can improve organizational performance. Employees clearly understand the link between communication and

productivity. This high agreement shows employees are open to change and eager for effective communication tools. Such a strong consensus provides leadership with a clear mandate to invest in improved communication systems. A small portion of respondents (7.5%), however, do not believe internal communication influences performance. Possible Reasons may be that they do not see communication gaps in their own roles, or prioritize other performance drivers like resources, leadership style, or have had negative experiences with communication tools.

Internal communication is perceived as a driver of productivity, engagement, and efficiency. The overwhelming "Yes" response (92.5%) signals readiness for policy improvements, such as: Structured communication plans, Digital communication platforms, Leadership briefings, and Regular updates and feedback loops.

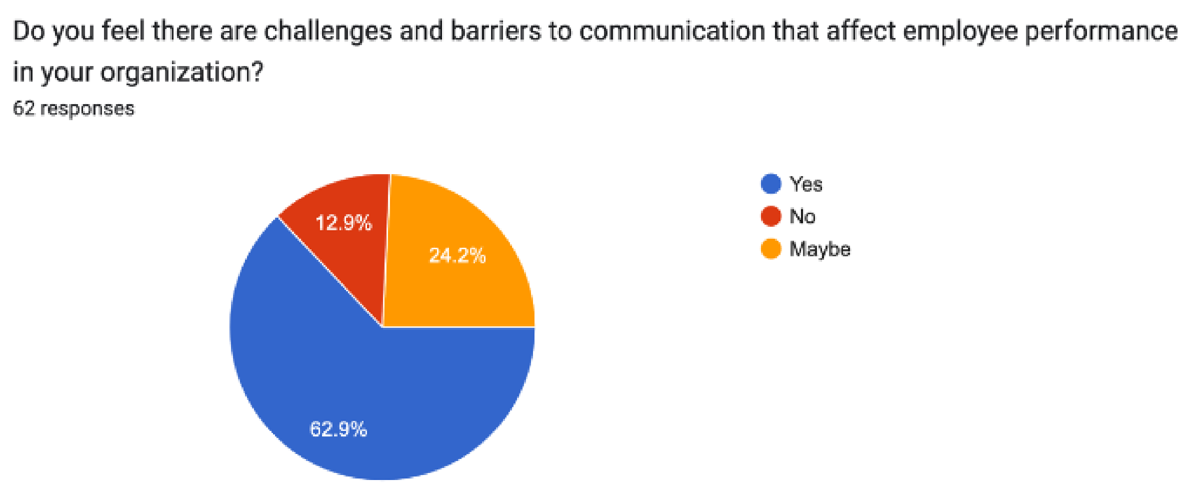

Figure VIII: Challenges to communication

Nearly two-thirds (62.9%) of respondents believe that communication challenges and barriers do exist, and that these have a direct impact on employee performance. This is a significant indication that employees experience real obstacles that limit clarity, collaboration, or efficiency within the organization. About 24.2% of employees responded with "Maybe", which indicates a considerable number of employees are unsure about whether communication issues

impact performance. A small 12.9% feel there are no communication challenges affecting performance.

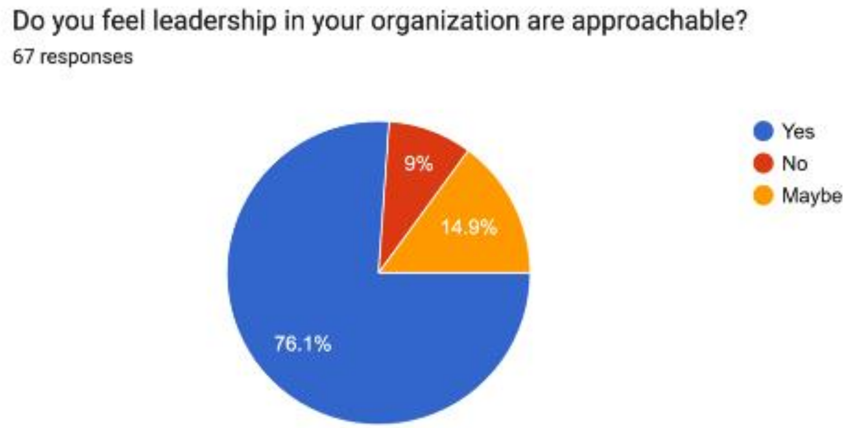

Figure IX: Approachable leadership

A strong majority (76.1), nearly three-quarters of respondents, believe leadership is approachable.

This is a positive indicator of organizational culture and suggests employees feel comfortable raising concerns.

The **(14.9%) "Maybe"** indicates a group that is unsure or experiences inconsistency. This group may find leadership approachable sometimes, but not always. While **Small but Important Portion See Leadership as Unapproachable (9. %)** Although the percentage is relatively low, **almost 1 in 10 employees** do **not** find leadership approachable. Combining "No" and "Maybe" gives 25.9% of employees (over a quarter) who are not fully confident in leadership approachability. This suggests that while the general perception is positive, there is still a significant portion who need more accessibility, require better relationship-building and from leaders, or experience inconsistent leadership behaviour.

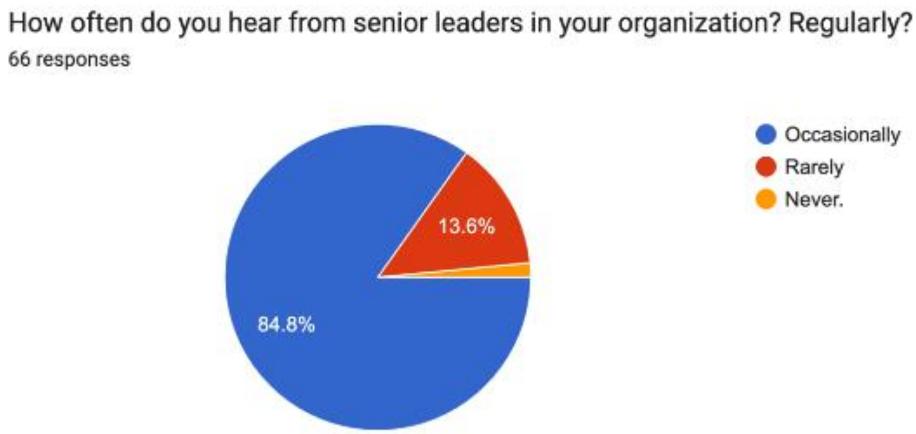

Figure X: How often do you hear from the Management

As the graph indicates Communication from senior leaders is mostly *infrequent but present* (84.8% Occasionally)**.** A large majority, about 84.8%, report hearing from senior leaders only occasionally. This means communication is

not regular or consistent, but it does happen from time to time. A small but notable portion rarely hears from senior leaders (13.6%), and about 6% of respondents say they rarely hear from senior leadership. Combining both categories (84.8% + 13.6%), a full 98.4% of employees do *not* receive frequent communication from senior leaders. Given the other survey responses provided earlier specially on communication barriers, this lack of regular leadership communication likely contributes to unclear goals and progress updates, lower trust or visibility of leadership, reduced engagement, and increased uncertainty about organizational direction.

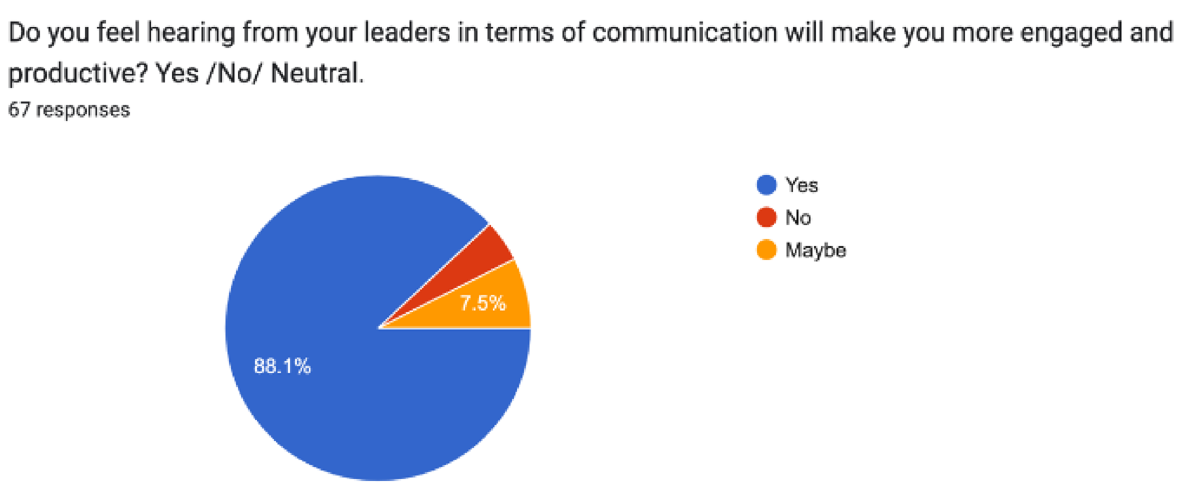

Figure XI: Leadership communication

There is a strong Consensus on the Importance of Leadership Communication (88.1%). **A**n overwhelming majority, almost 9 out of 10 employees, believe that hearing more from leadership would increase their engagement and productivity. The combined (7.5%) who responded "Maybe" or "No" represent employees who may not see communication as a major factor in their personal productivity. The data strongly suggests that leadership communication is not just desired, but essential to boosting employee engagement. Investing in more consistent, transparent, and meaningful communication from leadership would likely produce measurable improvements in performance across the organization.

DISCUSSIONS

The employees' responses showed that supportive communication from organizational leadership will motivate workers to be satisfied thus enhancing their performance. Abugre (2011) and Tuzun (2013), opined that companies that excel in internal communication also have higher levels of employee performance. From the responses of most employees and management, people tend to be productive and efficient when there is solid communication in a work environment.

The employees' responses showed that supportive communication from organizational leadership will motivate workers to be satisfied thus enhancing their performance. Abugre (2011) and Tuzun (2013), opined that companies that excel in internal communication also have higher levels of employee performance. This also agrees with the proposition of social exchange theory that a party in an exchange relationship voluntarily provides benefits to the other party. This, in turn, invokes an obligation on the other party to return the favor in the near future. Thus, in this theory, the internal communication process within organizations is seen as an exchange that is motivated by the benefits expected from the people involved in the process.

Hence, when organizations through the process of internal communication give their employees opportunity to be heard, they feel valuable to the organization. They are satisfied with their jobs and in return, they give their best back to the organization in terms of increased performance. However, it is observed that a great number of the employees disagreed that management informs and seeks employees' opinion within the organization. The implication of this is that organizations in Nigeria operate an exclusive style of management where employees at the lower cadre are allowed to take part in decisions that affect only their day-to-day tasks but are excluded from the decisions that affect the entire organization. Elegbe and Ibikunle (2015, p. 47) study of effective communication and participative decision-making in the organization further affirms this submission.

The opportunity for fine-tuning, according to Marasse and Maselli's (2009, p. 17) view that a better starting point in every information transmission process is for the sender to focus more on questions of reception than on transmission. So, an organization, more than just knowing its audience (internal and external), should strive further to know what really grabs people's attention inside organizations, i.e. What they are listening for and package messages to suit these criteria. This study also attempted to find out the challenges of internal corporate communication in relation to employee job output. The views from management showed that internal corporate communication occupies a predominant position among the drivers of employee job output. They also agreed that they encounter diverse operational challenges in the communication process, which, if not properly handled, defeat every other effort at achieving employee job output. One of the challenges encountered by organizations' management in the utilization of these channels is distorted feedback. Another challenge is inadequate information, which comprises faulty information and one-sided information. By inadequate information, she tried to differentiate between information received and information desired. For her, "when employees are not rightly informed, they cannot be productive because they are not equipped to work, they are not satisfied, and the organization suffers". "Being rightly informed" here suggests that inadequate, faulty, and one-sided information means no information. White et al. (2004, p. 7) noted that receiving a large amount of information is not necessarily the same as getting the right amount of information.

Most Nigerian organizations often face barriers such as rigid hierarchies that discourage communication for fear of reprisal when offering feedback, Technological limitations in rural or less digitally connected branches. Addressing these barriers requires leadership commitment and digital inclusion. This challenge arises as a result of the diverse nature of the employees, which can also be traced to their diverse orientations derived from their different cultures, educational backgrounds, and life experiences. These all together form the environment from which these employees emerge. Management personnel, especially those in the federal government establishments, complained of the challenge of a complete communication breakdown. They agreed that internal communication greatly influences employee job satisfaction and performance. They agreed with Marasse and Maselli (2009, p. 16) that "the internal 'juice' that fuels the system's engine, is internal communication."

2.1 Leadership Communication

In financial organizations like Moniepoint, leadership visibility and open-door policies have been shown to increase employee trust. When executives communicate directly through town-hall meetings or digital messages, employees feel more aligned with organizational goals. In contrast, in organizations where communication is opaque, employees often feel alienated and uninspired.

2.2 Productivity Implications

Effective internal communication ensures that employees understand their roles, organizational priorities, and how their work contributes to larger objectives. At Monipoint, employees who participate in regular team updates report better performance metrics and fewer task redundancies. Conversely, poor communication contributes to delays, errors, and low morale.

CONCLUSION

Internal corporate communication is an organizational communication concept that positively influences both employees and the organization at large. Effective internal communication is a cornerstone of employee engagement and productivity. Organizations that want to retain a satisfied and productive workforce must be willing to employ and deploy a communication style that is more participative and employee supportive.

The evidence from the Nigerian organizations shows that when communication is transparent, consistent, and interactive, employees become motivated, innovative, and aligned with the company's vision. In contrast, poor communication leads to disengagement, low morale, and inefficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen Leadership Communication

In strengthening leadership communication, senior leaders within an organization should be encouraged to communicate more frequently through emails, townhalls, video messages, or weekly updates. Ensure leadership communication is transparent, consistent, and aligned with organizational goals. And train leaders on communication skills so they can better engage employees and demonstrate approachability. Employees feel more connected, motivated, and informed when they regularly hear from leadership.

Establish Clear Communication Channels

There is a need to create a structured communication framework outlining how and where information is shared (e.g., email, intranet, WhatsApp groups, newsletters). Reduce channel overload by selecting a few reliable platforms and sticking to them. Introduce a one-stop central information system where staff can access documents, updates, and resources. Clear, predictable channels prevent information gaps and reduce confusion. Organizations should ensure that their internal communication networks are coordinated by communication experts. They can achieve this by creating full-time jobs for people who have received training in the communication discipline. This way, their internal communication practices will be productive because they will be handled by people who are skilled in the art.

Enhance Two-Way Communication

Implement feedback mechanisms such as surveys, digital suggestion boxes, or monthly Q&A forums. Encourage managers to schedule regular team check-ins. Use polls during meetings to capture live employee input. Employees feel heard, valued, and more engaged when communication flows both ways. Organizations should adopt a two-way communication system where dialogue between management and staff is open. Open forums, surveys, and digital platforms should be encouraged. The usage of technology should be leveraged by utilizing intranet systems, collaborative tools (Teams, Slack), and digital town halls to bridge the communication gap.

Improve Communication Frequency

Provide consistent updates on organizational progress, departmental activities, and strategic goals. Share short weekly summaries or "What You Need to Know This Week" messages. Ensure employees hear from their immediate supervisors at least weekly. This will help to communicate frequently builds trust, and keep employees aligned with organizational direction.

Communication Feedback

A feedback culture should be encouraged by creating safe, anonymous feedback channels to foster trust and openness.

The usage of internal communication should be encouraged to celebrate achievements and reinforce desired behaviors.

And more importantly, monitor communication KPIs by tracking metrics such as employee satisfaction, engagement scores, and message reach. Organizations should work hard at eliminating all the distortions in the feedback in their internal communication network.

Build communication Skill across all Levels

Communication effectiveness depends heavily on individual capability; there is a need to train managers in effective communication, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Offer workshops on writing, presentation, and interpersonal communication skills. Introduce onboarding modules explaining communication protocols and channels. This will enhance message clarity and reduce misunderstandings. Training is vital to growth in any work environment; hence organizations should train and retrain communication managers, equip supervisors with communication and emotional intelligence skills.

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