
AN EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATION BARRIERS AND PRODUCTIVITY IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLITAN COUNCIL (MMC) OF BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study evaluates a communication Barriers and productivity in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, of Borno State. The study used survey method and purposive sampling techniques. A total of 600 respondents were selected out of the approximately 2000 staff of the Council (MMC): Data for the study were gathered through the administering of self designed questionnaire coupled with interviews. The data collected were translated into tables using statistical method of simple frequency distribution and percentages. The result obtained from the analysis showed that there was a none or very little communication problems Spreads across due to ignorance of the communication importance from some of the staff and inability of the council to assign most of the employee a tasks to carryout responsibilities as well as demand for modern communication strategies and facilities if necessary were some of the factors noticed as the principal communication barriers that discourages council productivity. On the basis of these finding, recommendations are made in order to find solution to arrest the communication barrier for present and future purpose.

Keywords: Evaluation; Communication; Barriers; Productivity

INTRODUCTION

The present day low level of organization productivity phenomena is believe to have emanated from socio-economic and financial recession crisis the entire world experiencing that led many Northern African State and Asian tigers Nation citizens to embark on revolutionary uprising, violent demonstration and protest were attributed for global communication gap among(s) national and international communities, leader and their Followers as well as employer and employees. A communication barrier is one of the problems faced by many organizations. According to Pillai. M, (2002) opined that there is 50% 70% loss of meaning while conveying the messages from a Sender to a receiver. It is noted that communication distortion in organization interactions is inevitable. This is due to the fact that working place is a milieu where you meet people from different walks of life and also from different socio-economic political and cultural background. In view of that aiming to achieve effective communication is one thing; actually doing it is another task (*Buzzle.com*) Micheal, (2011). Inability of a heads or Managers of any organization to coordinate a perfect and smooth flow of Communication interaction among employee and outside business environment may likely create and facilitate low productivity with high degree of workers boring and disarray. As opined by Ijaduola (2007), much of the job done in today organization was conversational in nature, which required good interpersonal relationship between the co-workers, management and workers as well as the immediate Environment and society at large. However, people understand and interpret messages differently. In communication, there are many unwanted interference that can distort a message

and remain always a potential threat to effective communication, because it can interfere with the accuracy of a message communication and communicated.

According to Hambagda (1996) communication has been characterized as the lifeblood of an organization, and miscommunication has caused the equivalent of cardiovascular damage in more than one organization. No doubt, today's managers or heads of institution face an environment in which the issues of communication has become increasingly complex. James *et al* (2006) reported that organization no matter how good the communication is, communication to exist, there is bound to be an obstacle or a factor that hinders effective communication since the society is dynamic and one cannot always predict human behavior. It should be noted that any organization where effective communication is lacking the employees will not be motivated to work maximally and management activities of all sort centre on effective communication. Burton and Thaka,(2006). Communication has been seen as a very great factor in the success or failure of human endeavors. Studies have revealed that effective communication is vital to managerial success and that communication is important to managers or heads of organization to achieve the set goals and objective whereby increase productivity and workers performance. Against this backdrop, the researcher intend to evaluate the communication barriers existing in the council and to extent the barriers hinder effective communication and productivity as well as worker Performance. The researcher also provides strategies for effective communication and performance. Answering the identified questions is the concern of this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the communication barriers and examine how the barriers affect Productivity and workers performance.
2. Suggest strategies for effective communication and productivity.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. That communication barrier distorts effective and accurate transmission of information in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

A survey research design method was utilized to collect data from the respondents in this study. This method was chosen so as to go deep of the existing phenomena and it is relatively economical in terms of time and resources.

Instruments of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used to obtain the information. These involve a series of consultation of related records and personal interviews. Other source used in this study was a closed ended questionnaire purposely designs to get into genesis of the issues understudy. The questionnaire comprises of one section only, which sought to generate information on an evaluation of communication barriers and productivity in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) of Borno State. Nigeria.

Procedure of Data Collection

The respondents were interviewed and presented with open and close ended questionnaires. All were done within the six (6) departments of Maiduguri Metropolitan Council. (MMC). Instrument on how to fill the questionnaire and answer the interview questions was shown. Confidential of information was assured. However, with regards to the scoring of responses. The study organized in an option of Yes and No and other similar option of getting information from respondents was employed.

Samples and Sampling Strategies

The Study is conducted at Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) of Borno State. The population of this study comprises of all male and female, senior and Junior drawn from the (6) department of Maiduguri Metropolitan Council. A purposive sampling method was employed to this study in order to make acceptable representation of the study population. The study population is approximately (2000) staffs (Source; MMC. Treasury and Acct. Dept; 2011). A sample size of 600 six hundred respondents was selected and randomly administered with questionnaires and held series of interview, were also practicable without discrimination with regards to Bio-data nor any form of demographic affiliation purposely done to get effective and genuine information.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey were analyzed based upon the research hypothesis and objectives of study identified. A statistical technique of simple frequency distribution and percentages was used to comprehend and analyze the data to distinguish responses and test the hypothesis of the study.

RESULTS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Single hypothesis was formulated in this study with support of some related questions and interpreted the results using statistical technique of simple frequency distribution and percentages.

Table 1 : Respondent opinion on the causes of poor communication.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Poor preparation from speaker	30	5.00
2.	Managerial failure to follow-up	31	5.17
3.	Inadequate listening	30	5.00
4.	All of the above	509	84.83
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table one shows that two separate group of respondents with 5.00% each agreed that poor speaker preparation and inadequate listening are the causes of poor communication and 5.17% also said inadequate listening. However, about 84.83% of respondents were attributed the whole identified causes as the principal genesis of poor communication. This implies that all responses of the respondent were factors that create poor communication in organization.

Table 2: Respondents opinion on key barriers for effective communication.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Noise	40	6.67
2.	Gossips	40	6.67
3.	Information overload	50	8.33
4.	Time pressure	50	8.33
5.	Information distortion	40	6.67
6.	Semantics phenomena	50	8.33
7.	All of the above	330	55.00
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table two indicates that about 3 separates group of respondent with 6.67% responded that Noise, Gossips and information distortion are the barriers for effective communication in their respective department, while similar sub group of respondents each with 8.33 also admitted and semantic phenomena were the known barriers that hinders effectiveness of communication. Though, the bulk of the respondents responded that all the stated problems coned be attributed as barrier to effective communication. This implies that there are many factors affecting smooth operation of communication in the organization since they agreed that all identified as the barriers for communication effectiveness.

Table 3: Respondents opinion on channel of communication problems.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Upward communication	300	50
2.	Downward communication	300	50
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table three appears to have equal responses of respondents with same 50.00% percentages each who are 300 in number either were of the opinion that both upward and down ward channels of communication were sometime having problematic in understanding messages or information going up and coming down, between and from management to subordinates to top management as well as subordinates to subordinates. The implication of this result showed that neither upward nor downward Communication is associated with problems that distort information communicated.

Table 4: Respondents opinion on whether excessive work overload could distort communication.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Yes	450	75.00
2.	No	150	50
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table four shows a over whelming response of 450 respondents with 75.00% who agreed that excessive work overload could trigger communication ineffectiveness, while 25.00% of respondents who are 150 in number, were of the opinion that excessive work overload should not be a communication barriers, if the work load is accordingly assigned. The implication of this results shown that excessive work overload no dot cripples communication effectiveness and established confusion and boring.

Table 5 :Respondents opinion on whether MMC have modern communication facilities or not.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
3.	Yes	280	46.67
4.	No	320	53.33
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table five outcomes proved with confident of relatively high majority that of about 53.33% who are 320 out of the 600 respondents, agreed that their local government does not have modern day facilities to ease their burden. However, 46.67% of other respondents opposed and said yes and opinion that they have modern communication gadgets available to convey messages and carryout tasks assign to them. The implication of this table clearly vindicated that the council demand modern communication gadgets.

Table 6:Respondents opinion on whether untimely message delivery hindereffective communication.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Yes	410	68.33
2.	No	190	31.67
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table six result shows that about 68.33% of the respondents were of the views that untimely messages delivery usually resulted to communication ineffectiveness leading to postponements and subsequently generate low productivity. Though, 31.67% of other respondents claimed that there is nothing like untimely message delivery failure in their department and reported that untimely delivery does not have link with communication effectiveness nor productivity. The implication of the table proves that the majority of the staff conversant with the negative impact of the untimely message delivery the cause communication problems and low workers performance and organization productivity.

Table 7: Respondents opinion on whether demand modern day communication style or not.

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Yes	320	53.33
2.	No	280	46.67
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table seven indicates that about 53.33% of the respondent highly wishes to see a change in the communication phase of their local government area (MMC), while 46.67% of other respondents declined comments and said the communication situations is satisfactory. This implies that some of the Council staff wishes to see a change that enhances good cordial relationship between the seniors and the junior staff, politician and the non-politicians Staff of the local government.

Table 8: Respondents opinion on whether they have receive training on communication equipment

S/N	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Yes	300	50.00
2.	No	300	50.00
	TOTAL	600	100

Source: Field survey, 2011

Table eight obviously proved with equal weight or number of 50.00% that they had never went to or receive any training in respect of communication equipments of the council rather they were investing informal skills and talents to operate the equipments available . While similar number of respondents of 50.00% of said yes they were sent for various courses to learn communication devices operation, but declined to make comment on how, where and when they received the training. This implies that more staff is requiring to sending for training courses formally to enhance internal communication flow effectiveness of the council.

Hambagda, (2000; 68; 79) like Szilagy and Wallace (1992); Ojo, (2008) identified some factors as barriers for effective communication in organization. He categorizes the barriers into individual and organizational barriers. The individual barriers to effective communication arises from judgments, emotion, experiences and social values of the participants in the communication acts and these include, inadequately throughout messages unqualified assumptions; lack of clarity and precision; sources credibility differing perceptions; semantic and status differences.

The organization barriers include, noise; information overload; time pressure; breakdowns

in the communication network; and information distortion

SOME BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

- Hearing what we expected to hear
- Ignoring information that conflict with what we already think we know
- Perception about the communicator
- Influence of references group
- Words mean different things to different peoples.
- Jargon
- Non-Verbal communication (body language)
- Emotional context
- Noise
- Size of organization. (cited in Rare Konsult Manual,2010)

TIPS FOR OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS.

Rare Konsult, (2010; 70) in their participant manual "the work ethics and organizational productivity". Provides the followings as solutions to the organizational communication Barriers.

- Using feedback
- Using reinforcement
- Reinforcing words with actions
- Using direct, simple language
- Using face to face communication
- Using different channels of communication
- Reducing problems of size (cited in Rare Konsult Manual,2010)

FACTORS AFFECTING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND PRODUCTION IN THE NIGERIA PUBLIC SERVICE

There are a number of factors which are responsible for the low level of productivity in the Nigerian public sector. According to Koroma (2005). These factors include:

1. Government actions and policies
2. The state of the communication scientific and technological knows how.
3. The aspect of workers training and retraining.
4. Finance/funds
5. Poor attitude and lack of commitment and dedication to public work.
6. Poor condition of service for workers and their families.
7. Lack of Conducive working environment and job security.
8. Lack of sufficient communication devices
9. Lack of modern communication facilities
10. Lack of cooperation and coordination within

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The hypothesis of the study earlier advanced which state that communication barriers distort effective and accurate transmission of information in organization was highly upheld and accepted in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC). This indicates that a barrier in communication culminate to generate communication ineffectiveness and establish

information transmission meaningless. In support of the findings, Nicholas (1962) in his study found that white collar employees communicated 70% of the time without interruption and help achieve their goals. He said directing requires effective communication; all good leaders encourages effective communication by having established channels or means of transmitting information to people. Fisher (2006) like Nicholas (1962), asserted that as important as communication is to the organizational survival, the cooperate bodies contributes to its breakdown by paying lip service to good communication. According to him barriers to communication often prevent the sender and the recover from achieving mutual understanding or the fidelity of meaning necessary for effective performance. This finding also align with the opinions of Ojo, (2008) that communication barriers could arise as a result of a manager sending conflicting or inconsistent signals to the receiver and some time arises when the source or sender lacks credibility with respect to the issue at hand. Barriers may also arise as a result of a manager feeling reluctant to communicate with people just leaving every one guess. Ojo,(2008) in reflection to the study tables results, attributed the following as the infections and challenges of effective communication in organization, thus, emotion, distrust, language, time, noise, physical and psychological, group size, physical arrangements, and information overload can distort a free flow of communication. Moreover, lack of planning unqualified assumptions, semantic distortion omissions lack of coherence, poor organization awkward sentence structure, jargons and failure to clarify implications of information sent are some of the barriers according them could hinder effective communication and productivity.

Another work this finding can be said to have corroborated is the work of Drucker, (1977) whose study channels of communication notes that down ward communication does not work because it ignores the receiver of the communication. He further suggests that communication has to start with the recipient, the subordinate and this implies primarily upward communication. According to him downward communication is, therefore must effective in conjunction with upward communication; with feedback and continued exchange of information, errors and distortion can be corrected. On the other hand, Davis, (1967) reported that down ward communication flow breakdown occur frequently because of management's inability to emphasizes to reflect the aptitudes, experiences and languages skills of subordinate in their message. In addition to this finding, Davis, noted that "fancy booklets, expensive failures and noisy public address systems which management employs to improve communication have often failed to achieve employee understanding. It is obvious that upward communication flow is even more vulnerable to breakdowns than down ward communication (Hambagda 1996).

In contrast, Bruce (1974) in his theory of ups and downs, believed that downward communication are usually better than any one realizes and frequently more accurate than those at higher levels want them to be conversely upward communication have to be pumped and piped with a minimum of filtration, alteration and modification, in order to suit interest and ensure the communication effectiveness. Markham (1972) opined that effectiveness of communication in organization has with the sender's ability to convince, Understand, accepts and perceives that importance of the message commutated. Similarly, Krech, *et al* (1962) stressed that "the

capricious use of any other word for the object will block communication and the individual will be hindered in making his wants known to others". According to Drucker, (1977) for an organization to perform well, the manager must be able to motivate, guide, and organize his subordinates to do their work through spoken, written word and language of numbers. Drucker, (1977) further argued of the written and spoken words or telling the numbers, and other socio-economic and physicals motivation, a manager cannot be successful. Consistent to the Drucker findings. Thus, Batten (1978) emphasize that, communication is complete only when the recipient knows what you mean and reacts in the way you desire. This implies that effective communication can be achieved only if the communication message can be understood vividly by either communicator. (Hambagda, 1996:43).

The findings of Tarkowski (1958) also agree with the work of Drucker and Davis, that good communication is essential for productivity and for good human relations. It is also essential if technical problems are to be adequately discussed and grievances aired, since criticisms are required if friction between groups and individuals is to be smoothly resolved. However, Likert, (1961) in that the logical implications of good communication in organization are unproved efficiency of working together: improved effectiveness of planning and making decision and increase effectiveness of achieving goals and objectives. Likert, further proved that good communication and high performance have a greatest linkage and often interwoven in some circumstance. According to him, poor and ineffective communication at the lower levels, most often associated with adverse effects on the morals of subordinates do not understand the reasons for policies or actions, they then react with hostility, fear, distrust, and similar attitudes. Other study related to the finding conducted by Thomas and Fryar, (1981) shows that communications who have high credibility with the audience will create more opinion change than those who have low credibility. In line with the above findings. Baty (1984) point out that when employees follow the prescribed channels in communicating both upward and downward effective communication is probable. In order to escape or avoid communication barriers in organization. Bradley (1977) reported that the managers give suggestions, ask questions, stimulate participation encourage alternative suggestions, and demonstrate a desire for a group to reach its own conclusion. Porter, (1979) with agreements to the finding of Bradley showed that for an organization to maintain sound communication without barriers, the manager must excelled in giving suggestions, addressing employees by name, and engaging in information exchange. These are not necessarily traits of communication but training is necessary in order to develop these traits and to ensure that the study of management within an organization is conducive to effective communication since training itself is a motivational tool, because when given the opportunity to participate in training performances, employees feel, accepted, recognized and learnt the ability to deal with communication barriers Barbalic (1995) in Alimi (2011) took a close look on communication systems in college administration information dissemination interpersonal communication and organizational communication. The result of the study indicated that use of multiple and modern effective communication facilities go a long way to enhance communication effectiveness and worker's performance in organization.

CONCLUSION

Communication plays a vital role in the success of any organization. Tom (2006) sees communication as glue that holds organization together but can be affected by some communication barriers leading to low productivity, particularly the organization under study. Highly effective communication is a powerful factor in determining a manager's career success. Therefore, the importance of effective communication cannot be overemphasized in our daily activity as human beings. Poor communications generates poor organization results and create a negative, impression among communications towards achieving organizational goals and objectives. The results obtained from the hypothesis and the analysis of the table outcome informed that employees performance from Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) were seriously undermine by the communication existing and operating systems that often delay and role over load as well as absenteeism, boring and non performing caricature. However, it was discovered that most of the communication facilities of using are outdated while majority of the staff were never went for training course to operate the communication system or facilities and they are ignorance of the channels of the communication, the local government using in executing it day to day administrative affairs. Moreover, many also not aware of them responsibility or duties assign to them. Though gossiping, rumors and political calculation of the day remain a powerful communication apparatus for them to give ground for grapevine circle, neither the heads of the local governments nor the subordinates were ignorance of the important of effective communication towards achieving set goals and objectives. Having stressed the significance of effective communication on the performance of the workers and productivity of the organization, this study can therefore be seen as a call for chairman and secretary of the council to put in place all appropriate communication facilities and organize an awareness campaign on significant of effective communication and training in achieving all manifest and latent set goals.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study that communication barrier is an impediment for effective communication and productively in Maiduguri metropolitan council. The following recommendations are proffered.

1. The Maiduguri metropolitan council can improve it chances of success through effective communication effort and diagnosing all communication related barriers the research identified. This would make possible through consultation with experts and professionals who are renowned in the field of communication panacea.
2. That the chairman and other top staff of the Council (MMC) in collaboration with Academicians, organize a seminar and workshops to sensitize and enlighten the employees on the important of effective Communication in achieving organization objectives.
3. The management of Maiduguri Metropolitan Council should use multiple channel of communication that satisfies both the apex management and the Subordinates, so as to establish common understanding towards achieving common goals.
4. That the management of the local Government (MMC) should provides new modern Communication facilities and resuscitate the existing one in

order to meet the present day target and arrest the modern day internal communication flow challenges facing organization.

5. That the Management should sponsor some of the staffs for training courses at renown training organization like Rare Konsult Ltd, so as to learn the use and operation of the modern day communication facilities and equipment as well as their day to day working responsibilities toward success of the Local Government (MMC).
6. That the management of the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) should technically motivate and encourage workers to be punctual to duty and on their part ,the staffs should extend or give all deserves maximum cooperation to the council Chairman and Ward Councilors of the day in order to establish mutual understanding to achieve internal communication objectives and managerial goals.
7. The council should study Koroma factors with Keen interest and advise to effect all factors to effective communication identified by Rare Konsult as a solution to overcome existing communication barriers in organizations.
8. That the council should provide modern day systems of communication addition to the existing notice board, circular issuance and labour union ceremonial bulletins.

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