



INFORMATION COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The need for information communication skills development especially in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Information communication skill is the harnessing of electronic technology in its various forms to improve the operations in term of communication and profitability of the business as a whole. Organizations without staff with viable information communication skill may experience difficulty in facing modern challenges in the business environment. It is in this light that this paper anchors its objectives. The general objective of the study is to assess the effect of information communication skills on organizational performance in Bayelsa State. Using the simple random sampling technique, a total of 50 retail outlets were selected from the population as the sample size. The study made use of a validated structured questionnaire to generate data from respondents, which were analyzed using chi-square and correlation analysis. From the analysis, it was discovered that there is a significant effect of the variables of information communication technology and organizational performance. It was concluded that information communication skills has a significant effect on organizational performance in Bayelsa State. Among others, it was recommended that business owners should be given some training and retraining of the skills involved in the use of these information technology facilities for effective business performance. Also, efforts should be made by the State governments towards effective funding for information technology facilities and also towards the procurement of information technology facilities for effective business performance.*

KEYWORDS: Business performance, Information communication skills, verbal communication, participatory communication.



INTRODUCTION

Information communication skills influence and permeate virtually every aspect of human endeavor, including organizational performance in Nigeria. Abimbola (2014) posits that information communication skills are significant tools in almost all human endeavors, while Aduda and Kaane (2011) argue that information communication skills are like engines that could be used in so many ways. They explained that the same engine that propels the aircraft to fly could make a conveyor to transport finished product from the production line to the storage. On the other hand, Agumuo (2010) argues that information communication skills have affected every profession in the last 20 years. This includes the marketing profession which is not left out in these profound changes to business and methods of communications. Technology is providing the tools that are revolutionizing the role of financial professionals from that of information recorders to business strategists, making them much more critical to the success of any business (Ahukannah, 2011). According to Akporowho (2006), information communication skills involve the harnessing of electronic technology in its various forms to improve the operations in terms of communication and profitability of the business as a whole. They provide significant improvements with facilities such as word processing, communication facilities in the form of electronic mail, databases in relation to filling and data retrieval. Such advances improve business performance, eliminating unnecessary delays in communication between routine filling and correspondence. Also, Appleton and Scott (2012) opine that information communication skills involve the combination of computing, telecommunication and video techniques for the purpose of acquiring, processing, storing and disseminating vocal, pictorial, textual and numerical information. The computing techniques provide the capacity for processing and storing of information; the telecommunicating techniques provide the capacity for communicating the information to users; and the video techniques, the capability for high quality display of images, socio-cultural, technological and economic destiny of the country (Anekene, 2009).

Alogie (2010) also stressed that information communication skills involve the systematic application of scientific knowledge in order to achieve practical results. They entail a combination of different approaches to solve a problem. This implies that technology is all about methods and the way people apply them in order to get results. Therefore, in a competitive business environment where activities and strategies are changing rapidly, technology driven operations are necessary to tackle the growing complexity of modern day business management. Likewise, the marketer has to be technologically equipped to meet the present and future competitive challenges in order to survive the dynamic business environment. It is therefore germane to examine the contingencies faced by both marketers and/or managers as they grapple with the inconsistencies of the lack of such communication technology skills. It is in this light that the objective of this study is set. This study, therefore, is to examine the effect of information communication skills on business performance.

The need for information communication skills development especially in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. This goal can be attained through the degree to which business organizations can be adequately equipped with state of the art machines and tools, and how well the appropriate skill can be applied in operating the machines to achieve optimum results or performance. The findings of this study if adopted will be of immense benefit to the Bayelsa State government as well as business organizations. The findings of this study will be beneficial to all end users of information. This will enable employees to cope with a variety of



manufacturing systems, improve productivity, improve job mobility and educational standards. Finally, it will create awareness to marketers on the extent of availability and utilization of information and communication skills in the business organization.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that information communication skills have brought about accelerated growth in the business world (Brightman, 2009; Chapman & Oliver, 2011). With the advent of information communication skills, business organizations are now experiencing a transition from the manual information processing operations to more modern digital information processing operations. These new information communication skills are more effective and efficient as information support services in the business production processes. In this light, workers have been introduced to more sophisticated means of processing data for faster decision making. The success of business operations depends on what quality and type of information technology is available vis-à-vis the required skill and personnel for its usage. Studies have also shown that without functional information facilities in business, sales performance output will be very low. Besides, even when facilities are available and the required skilled personnel are not utilized, it brings about failure in operations. Hence, it is the aim of this study to assess the degree of availability of information communication skills and their effect on business or organizational performance in Bayelsa State.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to assess the effect of information communication skills on organizational performance in Bayelsa State. However, the specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the effect of verbal communication skills on organizational productivity in businesses in Bayelsa State.
2. To identify the effect of technological skills on the quality of services delivery in businesses in Bayelsa State.
3. To evaluate the effect of participatory communication skills on the adaptation to change in businesses in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the effect of verbal communication skills on organizational production in businesses in Bayelsa State?
2. What is the effect of technological skills on the quality of services delivery in businesses in Bayelsa State?
3. What is the effect of participation communication skill on adaptation to change in business in Bayelsa State?



Research Hypotheses

HO 1: There is no significant effect of verbal communication skills on organizational production in businesses.

HO 2: There is no significant effect technological skill on the quality of services delivery.

HO 3: There is no significant effect of participation communication skill on adaptation to change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Information and Communication Technology

Information is a very valuable concept in organizations and it is required to plan and control their operations. Clark and Shackleton (2013) and Curtis, Folley and Morin (2014) contend that information are facts that are gathered by reading and observing. Curtis, Folley and Morin (2014) further argue that information is data that has been processed into meaningful and usable context. It involves the transmission and reception of intelligence or knowledge. Basically, information is viewed as data which can be used by people for effective planning and control of their organizations to achieve the organization's goal or objective. Ekruyota (2012) and Emmanuel (2007) posit that information is data that has a particular meaning with a context. In the context of business education, information implies additional knowledge relevant to vocational discipline. Undoubtedly, information is the most critical resource that has the capacity to transform people and their circumstances (Etim, 2011).

Information technology on the other hand refers to the creation, gathering, processing, storage and delivery of information, and the processes and devices that make all these possible (Iredia, 2006). Ikekeonwu (2012) states that information technology is the study or use of electronic equipment for storing, analyzing and distributing information of all kinds, including words, numbers and pictures. On his part, Hornby (2011) opines that information technology is the fusion of information processing techniques and the means by which information is distributed. In other words, information technology has to do with the acquisition, storage, processing and distribution of information usually through the use of radio, television, telephone, computer, etc. It is in this light that the Nigerian National Policy on Information Technology described information technology in two perspectives:

1. It means computer ancillary equipment software, firmware (hardware) and similar procedures, services (including support services and related resources).
2. It means any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, management, movement, control, display, switching interchange transmission or reception of data or information.

According to Lorimer (2011), the current globalization and the development of information technology has introduced an unprecedented degree of competition among nations and business organizations. To enhance competition, Osuala (2015) notes that organizations' systems must provide appropriate incentives to those who operate the system such that the outcomes are satisfactory in the terms of organizational goals.



Concept of Information Communication Skill

Appleton and Scott (2012) opine that information communication skills involve the combination of computing, telecommunication and video techniques for the purpose of acquiring, processing, storing and disseminating vocal, pictorial, textual and numerical information. This singular definition explains information communication skills as a multi faceted approach to digital communication process; hence, it is a veritable tool for making quick and efficient decisions, as well as making the organization sustainable in the global market. Thus, information and communication skills have become the bedrock of globalization in social, economic, political and educational development of the world. Several authors (Oborah & Obi, 2013; Eze, 2015; Nwosu, 2014) postulate that the present curriculum as it affects business courses in relation to information communication skills is outdated. They called for changes of curriculum for information technology. Ahukannah (2014) adds that teachers of information and communication technology related courses should be computer literate, so as to impact current knowledge.

Verbal Communication Skill and Organizational Growth

An organization without a functional or efficient verbal communication system may face a major challenge in terms of proper coordination and control. Speech represents the most strategic and useful form of communication endowed to man. It has a structure and a form, which has to be learned and used to convey information to man about events in his environment, such as the business environment, in order for the organization to grow, and to understand one another in terms of productiveness because, for every organization to succeed, there must be division of labor whereby there are stages in operation toward a common objective. Without an understanding message sent from the sender to the receiver, there will be chaos in the growth of the organization due to lack of understanding of the staff. Verbal communication can be used by management and employees to clarify organizational vision and goals, convey information, instructions, and make strategic statements to outplay competitors. Some of the rewards/benefits of verbal communication include: stipulating and exchanging ideas between management and staff with immediate feedback, the provision of a means of expressing meaning and emotions in the organization, expounding issues, and emphasizing company position in the organization. Face-to-face conferences with those in authority may help to reduce organizational conflicts and crises.

Technology Communication Skills and Quality of Service Delivery

Today's world has shown us that there is a degree of association that exists between technological communication and service delivery in any organization. Evgeuni et al. (2011) argues that technology is the instrumental foundation of every society. Technological ventures are generally associated with the commercial development of an original idea resulting in a new product, process or service, initiated by scientific breakthroughs (Eze, 2012). He defined technology as the systematic application of scientific knowledge in a device, process or concept, with commercial, competitive or socially desirable value. Similarly, Falake (2008), Fapohunda (2009), and Kanu and Ohiri (2007) explained technological skill as a veritable tool to enhance service delivery.



Technology Skills and Quality of Services Delivery

The proliferation of and rapid advances in technology-based systems, especially those related to the internet, e-business, e-commerce, customer services, order procurement process, and electronic learning, are leading to a new trend of fundamental changes in how companies interact with and provide services to their customers (Burinskiene & Burinkas, 2010; Boone & Ganeshan, 2011; Hong et al., 2010; Boone & Ganeshan, 2012; Margherita & Petti, 2010). This trend is well established in the service industry, where service providers are increasingly urged to invest in technology to better secure their future in the electronic age. One of the triggers of the new economic structure is technological skills applications to better service delivery.

Participatory Communication and Adaptation to Change

Participatory communication is the involvement of all parties involved in the active transmission of information from one place to another or from one person to another person. The active view of the need for adaptation, centered on a definite desired outcome of reducing susceptibility to stagnancy, is always likely to promote participatory communication in any business. For any business organization to progress, it must learn how to adapt to change with the changing business environment. An open participatory communication process that gives the opportunity to stakeholders on organizational decisions is necessary if the overall goals and objectives of the organization must be achieved. Hillier (2003) talks of a 'backlash' to participatory communication as being too decentralized and may lead to a loss of the organization's identity. This argument looks logical in the short run but virtually inconsistent in the long run. We therefore suggest that rather than slowing the pace of participatory communication within an organization in the face of participatory difficulties, adaptation to change needs to forge an honest and creative deliberate approach that can be more democratic and can yield genuine benefits for the process of societal adaptation.

METHODOLOGY

A survey design was adopted for the study because survey research focuses on people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behavior. The population of this study comprises all retail outlets in Bayelsa State. Using the simple random sampling technique, a total of 50 retail outlets were selected from the population as the sample size. This sampling technique was adopted because it gives all the respondents in the population an equal chance of being selected. The study made use of a validated structured questionnaire. It was structured on 5 points likert rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (DA), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Cronbach Alpha Reliability test was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The data was analyzed using mean, chi-square, and correlation analysis.



Test of Hypothesis One

HO 1: There is no significant effect of verbal communication skills on organizational productivity.

Chi-Square Test

	value	df	Asymp.sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	71.474	16	.000
Likelihood ratio	68.491	16	.000
Linear-by-linear association	15.485	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	250		

Source: SPSS summary output

The result of the analysis using chi-square tests shows that Pearson chi-square calculated 71.474 is greater than the chi-square tabulated 26.296. Also, the significant level 0.05 is greater than the p-value 0.0000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and we conclude that there is a significant effect of verbal communication skills on organizational productivity.

Correlation

Variables	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N	1 250	.749 .000 250
What is the effect of verbal communication skills on organizational productivity in Bayelsa State?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.749 .000 250	1 250

Source: SPSS summary output

The result of the analysis from the table using Pearson correlation shows a positive correlation of 0.749. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

Test of Hypothesis Two

HO 2: There is no significant effect of technological skills on the quality of service delivery.

Chi-Square Test

	value	df	Asymp.sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	86.385	16	.000
Likelihood ratio	86.888	16	.000
Linear-by-linear association	10.326	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	250		

Source: SPSS summary output

The result of the analysis using chi-square tests shows that the Pearson chi-square calculated 86.385 is greater than the chi-square tabulated 26.296. Also, the significance level 0.05 is



greater than the p-value 0.0000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and we conclude that there is a significant effect of technological skills on quality of service delivery.

Correlation

Variables	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N	1 250	.804 .001 250
What is the effect of technological skills on quality of service delivers in Bayelsa State?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.804 .001 250	1 250

Source: SPSS summary output

The result of the analysis from the table using Pearson correlation shows a positive correlation of 0.804. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

Test of Hypothesis Three

HO 3: There is no significant relationship between participatory communication skills and adaptation to change.

Chi-Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymp.sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	66.131	16	.000
Likelihood ratio	73.587	16	.000
Linear-by-linear association	2.994	1	.084
N of Valid Cases	250		

Source: SPSS summary output

The result of the analysis using chi-square tests shows that the Pearson chi-square calculated 66.131 is greater than the chi-square tabulated 26.296. Also, the significance level 0.05 is greater than the p-value 0.0000. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and we conclude that there is a significant relationship between participatory communication skills and adaptation to change.

Correlation

Variables	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed) N	1 250	.610 .084 250
What is the effect of participations communication skill on adaptation to change in business in Bayelsa State?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.610 .084 250	1 250

Source: SPSS summary output



The result of the analysis from the table using Pearson correlation shows a positive correlation of 0.610. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

It was revealed in question one that there is an effect of verbal communication skills on organizational productivity in Bayelsa State. Also, the null hypothesis was rejected and we conclude that there is a significant effect of verbal communication skills on organizational productivity. It was also revealed that all the variables support the fact that technological skills have an effect on the quality of service delivery in Bayelsa State. The second null hypothesis was rejected and we conclude that there is a significant effect of technological skills on the quality of service delivery. Respondents to the third question revealed that the variables support the fact that participatory communication skills have an effect on adaptation to change in business in Bayelsa State.

The study critically analyzed the role of information communication skills and business performance in Bayelsa State. The study has revealed to us there is an effect of verbal communication skills on the productivity of an organization. Verbal communication stands as a means of quick and accurate communication between colleagues and it enhances understanding—in cases where the receiver does not understand the sender, it is there to explain to them. The study also revealed that technological skills have an effect on the quality of service delivery in Bayelsa State. However, it also revealed that participation and communication skills have an effect on adaptation to change in business in Bayelsa State. For any business organization to progress, it must learn how to adapt to change with the changing business environment. Yet, even within such parameters, business organizations can still collapse with other factors, but the major factor is lack of innovation like packaging, branding, rebranding, active advertisement, etc.

CONCLUSION

This study has been able to establish the vitals of using communication to enhance business performance. Hence, a business person should learn how to adapt to communication skills which will enhance the growth of business. Communication can also stand as a means of expressing meaning and emotions and for asking questions, clarifying issues, and emphasizing points. All these increase the fidelity of the message since misunderstanding and misinterpretation will be reduced in the organization. Face-to-face meetings with those in authority may help to reduce status differences and give subordinates a sense of importance. It breaks the barrier of formal relationship, generates warmth and creates harmony essential for increased productivity.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business owners should be given some training and retraining of the skills involved in the use of these information technology facilities for effective business performance.
2. Efforts should be made by the State governments towards effective funding of information technology facilities and also towards the procurement of information technology facilities for effective business performance. These facilities can be distributed to small business owners at a hire purchase selling method with little interest rate. Some of the facilities can be used by tertiary institutions for teaching and learning purposes.
3. Efforts should be made by the State government towards the requirement of modern information technology facilities such as the portable digital assistant's wireless local area networks (WLAN), wide area network (WAN) and local area network (LAN) for effective performance in business. It will improve their communication ability.
4. The ministry of education in conjunction with the management of tertiary institutions should conduct train-the-trainers programmes in which information technology experts can be posted to small businesses to train their staff members.
5. The federal government of Nigeria should redevelop and reinforce the Nigerian policy of information technology.

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