ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION CLIMATE AND EMPLOYEES' JOB COMMITMENT IN IBOM AIR

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ABSTRACT*: This research on organisational communication climate and employees' job satisfaction in Ibom Air was conducted using survey research method. Questionnaire was used as the major instrument of data collection. The population of the study comprised staff of Ibom Air which according to Akwa Ibom State Government is 300 (Twitter.com/aksgovt/stutus). Since the population of the study is not too large enough, the same figure was also used as the sample size. Thus, the sample size for the study is 300. The study which was anchored on the modern organisation theory found out that majority of respondents (63%) agreed that downward communication flow dominates. The study also found out that 100% of respondents agreed that the organisational communication climate influences employees job commitment. The study recommends that management of Ibom Air should involve their employees in the decision making process of the organisation in order to enhance job commitment.*

KEYWORDS: organisational communication, communication climate, job commitment, Covid-19 and Ibom Air

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a form of expression of human behaviour and the basic survival skill of human race. It is processual in nature and has clearly defined purpose or purposes (Wilson, 2006). Communication is used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in development activities (Choudhury, 2011).According to Akarika, Ekanem & Ukpe (2017) citing Soola (1998) communication plays a critical role in all aspects of organisational activities. This explain why

organisations invest huge amount of resources in improving their organisational communication environments.In the Covid-19 era, which has generated so much anxiety and tension globally (Akarika, Kerian & Ikon 2020), the coronavirus pandemic has added another dimension to the already existing organisational communication climate and its impact on employees job commitment. Communication climate refers to the social tone of a relationship among individuals who interact with one another. Organisational communication climate represents a metaphor of the physical climate. It refers to the degree to which an organisation focuses on and emphasis on individual perception and notions. The organisational communication climate according to Pace and Faules (2013) is a combination of the perception of communication events, human behaviour members responses to other members, expectation, interpersonal conflicts and opportunities for growth of the organisation.

Ibom Air is a Nigerian Airtime owned by the Akwa Ibom State Government (wikipedia). The Airline commenced operation on June 7, 2019. Presently it has a fleet size of 5 bombardier CRJ900 air crafts and a hub in Akwa Ibom Airport. When a Bombardier CRJ900 aircraft marked Ibom Air took off from victor Attah international Airport Uyo, with government officials on board, en route to Muritala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos. Akwa Ibom State is the first state in the country to own an airline. Its destination include, Abuja, Lagos, Enugu, Calabar and Uyo. In the past fifteen years, many private and government owned airlines in Nigeria have witnessed losses, some of which resulted in forced closures. A good example is Nigeria Airways which belonged to the federal government. Some of the perceived reasons for the closure were management failure, corruption, unsatisfactory condition of service, high cost of aviation fuel, poor working environment, ineffective communication flow and unfavourable communication climate.

On unfavourable communication climate, there is hardly any empirical proof to confirm this except informal communication from the organisation. Nevertheless, since communication plays a vital role in all aspects of organisations (Soola, 1998 cited in Akarika et al 2017) it is illogical to state that organisational communication climate is a major factor that affects employees job commitment. Hence, the central problem underlying this study is to what extent has organisational communication climate guaranteed employees' job commitment in Ibom Air?

Objectives of the study
1.   Assess the communication climate existing in Ibom Air and its impact on employees' commitment.
2.   Determine employees' perceptions of organisational communication climate and employees' job commitment.
3.   Identify (if any) the possible factors that influence organisations communication climate and ways to manage them.

Theoretical Framework

This study relies on modern organisaion theory. This theory posits that an organisation is a system that changes with the change in its environment, both internal and external. There are several features of the modern theory that make it distinct from other sets of organisational theories, these are: the modern theory considers the organisation as an open system. Modern organisation theory sees modern organisations as a system of mutually dependent variables, involving the individual, his personality structure in the organisation. There is congruence between the individual expectancies and those of the organisation. The theory advocates for a system approach where the organisation is seen as a unit with highly integrated and interdependent units. In this regard the organisation 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 organisational communication climate and employee job commitment situates itself properly in this context. A favourable communication climate enhances employee job commitment, thus the relevance of this theory to the present study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is survey. According to Akarika, Ikon & Kierian (2019), the rationale for the use of survey method is to elicit responses from the sample respondents.

The population of the study consist of all staff of Ibom Air which according to Akwa Ibom State Government is 300 (twitter.com/aksgovt/status). Since the population of the study is not too large the figure was also used as the sample size. A census study was conducted on staff of Ibom Air according to their unit/department. The selection process was carried out in such a way that all categories of staff were represented. Out of 300 copies of the questionnaire administered on respondents, 275 copies were found useful for the analysis. This represents a response rate of 92%. The data gathered from the questionnaire were analysed in simple percentages and tables.

LITERATURES REVIEW

Communication has a vital role in an organisational life. It is one of the main thing that must be owned in order to achieve organisational goals and objectives. Wiryanto (2005) defines organisational communication as the activity of sending and receiving vain messages of the organisation with the formal and informal group of an organisation. Communication climate according to Denis cited in Ayandhasurya and Kurniawan (2017) is an objective quality of experience about the internal environment of the organisation that includes the organisation members: perception of messages and the relationship of messages with event that occur within the organisation. Communication climate that in favourable encourages its members to communicate openly, relaxed, and friendly with any other members. In order to analyse the communication climate within an organisation, Pace and Faules (2013) offers six factors for consideration, which are

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1.   **Trust**: Organisational members at all levels of the organisation should strive to develop and maintain trustworthy relationships, beliefs, and credibility supported by statements and actions
2.   **Joint decision making**: Members at all levels of the organisation should participate in the decision making process in all areas of the organisation's policy relevant to their position.
3.   **Honesty**: A general atmosphere of openness and honesty should be seen in all relationship in the organisation.
4.   **Openness in downward communication:** There should be an uninterrupted flow of messages from management to the subordinates except for classified information.
5.   **Ability to listen in upward communication:** Suggestion from subordinates is very important especially in the report of problems, in order to implement unless there are contrary to the aspirations of the organisation.
6.   **Attention to high preference goals:** This result in greater productivity, high quality and low cost.
According to Redding (in Pace and Faules 2001:148), the climate of an organisation is more important than the skills or communication techniques to create an effective organisation. One of the basic tenets of organisational climate is that the perception and behaviour of organisational members will be influenced by the perception and behaviour of other members of the organisation. Organisations climate includes the flow of information and activities that involve communication process.

Commitment to work is defined as the level of enthusiasm an employee has towards his/her tasks assigned at a workplace. It is the feeling of responsibility that a person has towards the goals, mission and vision of the organisation he/she is associated with (question pro.com/deliver). In this regard, management of organisations have a role to play in ensuring a favourable communication climate for their employees. By so doing employees would be committed to their assigned jobs and their commitment will enhance the growth of their various organisations. According to Nomuoja and Johnson (2019) doing so, employee performance and growth of the organisation will be assured, guaranteed and its goals are met to succeed in the competitive market.

Ukere (2008) in her study entitled "Communication Climate and Employee Job Satisfaction in Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua sought to find out the communication flow pattern in the polytechnic, amount of information available to employees from organisational and departmental leaders, find out whether employees were satisfied with the organisational climate as well as to find out the perception of employees about how communication climate affects their job performance. The study adopted the description survey as its design. The study found out that communication flow patterns in the institution is mainly downward, according to 25% of staff opinion, horizontal communication attracts an opinion rating of 17%. While 60% of staff admitted that they interact regularly with their superiors, 57% of respondents agreed that they are satisfied with the state of communication climate and a similar percentage agreed that the communication

climate affect their job satisfaction positively while 37% said it affected their job performance negatively.

In another study carried out by Ndada (2000) on organisational communication climate and job satisfaction in the University of Uyo, the researcher focused on the impact of communication climate on job satisfaction of the employees of the University over a span of 6 years. The research design used for the study was analytical survey. The finding suggest negative employees perception of the organisational communication climate at the top management level, while there was a positive perception of the superior-subordinate communication climate. The study also found out that the employees were not satisfied with their level of exposure to communication activities in the University system.

Furthermore, one of the findings shows unfavourable communication climate with regard to employees participation in decision making, reward and praise for employees performance and inter-personal communication relationship. The reviewed studies have thrown some insight into the likely nature of communication in organisations in Akwa Ibom State and are relevant to the present study because both studies focused on organisational climate and job satisfaction which is the focus of the present study.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	175	64
Female	100	36
Total	275	100

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents 175 representing 64% were male

Table 2: Educational Level of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE/its equivalent	120	44
HND/BA	105	38
MA/MSC	50	18
PhD	-	-
Total	275	100

Table 2 shows that majority of respondents 225 (120, 105) representing 82% (44%, 38%) were from the junior and middle cadre respectively. This means that respondents were assigned various job roles in the organisation and as such could determine their level of job commitment

Table 3: Prevalent patterns of communication flow that exist in Ibom Air

Pattern of communication	Frequency	Percentage
Downward communication	175	63
Upward communication	30	11
Horizontal communication	70	26
Total	275	100

Data gathered and presented in table 3 shows the prevalent pattern of communication flow in Ibom Air. Majority of respondents 175 (63%) agreed that the prevalent communication flow pattern in Ibom Air is downward communication. This is communication from the superiors to the subordinates. This means that there is little upward communication, that is communication from the subordinates to the superiors as depicted by 11% of respondents.

Table 4: Respondents Response on if Organisational Communication climate influences employees job commitment.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	275	100
No	-	-
Total	275	100

Table 4 shows that all respondents 275 (100%) agreed that organistional communication climate influences employees job commitment. This implies that a favourable communication climate influences employees job commitment positively, while an unfavourable organisational communication climate influences employees job commitment negatively.

Table 5: Extent of influence of organisational communication climate on employee job commitment.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A very great extent	125	45
A great extent	100	36
Undecided or neutral	-	-
A little extent	30	11
A very little extent	20	8
Total	275	100

Table 5 captures extent of influence of organisational communication climate on employees job commitment. Majority of respondents 225 (125, 100) representing 81% (45%, 36%) were of the opinion that the extent of influence of organisational communication climate on employee job

commitment is a very great extent and a great extent respectively. This means that the prevalent communication climate in Ibom Air greatly influences employee job commitment.

Table 6: Extent of employee satisfaction with the present organisational communication climate on employee job communication in Ibom Air.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
A very great extent	45	16
A great extent	35	13
Undecided or neutral	-	-
A little extent	105	18
A very little extent	90	33
Total	275	100

This study sought to determine from the perception of employees whether the organisational climate help enhance employee job commitment. Data gathered and presented in table 6 shows that 195 respondents representing 71% are not satisfied with the present organisational climate in enhancing employee job commitment.

Table 7: Barriers to positive organisational communication climate and employees job commitment

Barriers	Frequency	Percentage
Leadership style	20	7
Organisational culture	25	9
Lack of trust	25	9
Non-participation in decision making	30	11
All of the above	175	64
Total	275	100

Table 7 shows that 175 respondents representing 64% agreed that organisational culture, leadership style, lack of trust and non-participation of employees in decision making constitute barriers to positive organisational communication climate and employees job commitment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1 captures the sex of respondents. Majority of respondents (64%) were male. Data gathered and presented in table 2 shows that majority of respondents 82% were from the junior and middle cadre. This means that respondents were assigned job roles in the organisation and as such could determine their level of job commitment. On the communication climate that exist in Ibom Air

and its impact on employees job commitment table 3 captures the prevalent pattern of communication flow in Ibom Air. Majority of respondents 63% agreed that the prevalent communication flow pattern is downward communication. This means that there exist little upward communication (11%) and horizontal communication (26%). Table 4 shows that majority of respondents 100% agreed that organisational communication climate influences employees job communication. The finding of this study corroborates the notion that communication is used as a tool to facilitate the participation of people in developmental activities (Choudhury, 2011). This finding agrees with Wiryanto (2005) definition of organisational communication as the activity of sending and receiving various messages of the organisation within the formal and informal group of an organization. This finding also agrees with the finding by Ekere (2008) that communication climate that is favourable encourages its members to communicate openly, related and friendly with other members.

Regarding employees perception of organisational communication climate on employees job commitment, table 4 shows that 100% respondents responded "yes" on if organisational communication climate influences employees job commitment and table 5 captures the extent of influence of organisational communication climate on employee job commitment. Majority of respondents 81% were of the opinion that the extent of influence was very great. This implies that the communication climate in Ibom Air greatly influence employee job commitment. The finding of this study gives credence to Denis definition of communication climate cited in Ayandhasurya et al (2017) as an objective quality of experience about the internal environment of the organisation that includes the organisation members perception of messages and the relationship of messages with events that occur within the organisation. The findings of this study further agrees with Redding cited in Pace et al (2001) who says the climate of an organisation is more important than the skills of communication technologies to create an effective organisation. In this regard, management of organisation have a role to play in ensuring a favourable communication climate for their employees. By so doing employees would be committed to their assigned jobs and their commitment will enhance the growth of the organisation which according to Nomuoja et al (2019) employee performance and growth of the organisation will be assured, guaranteed and its goals are meant to succeed in the competitive market.

Table 6 also captures the extent of employee satisfaction with the present organisational communication climate on employee job commitment. Majority of respondents 71% said that they were not satisfied with the present organisational communication climate in enhancing employee job commitment. This finding further support Redding cited in Pace et al (2001). The finding of this study also corroborates the finding by Ndada (2000) who found out that the employees were not satisfied with communication climate.

Concerning the possible factors that influence organisations communication climate and ways to manage them, table 7 shows that majority of respondents 64% agreed that organisational culture,

leadership style, lack of trust and non-participation of employees in decision making constitute barriers to positive organisational climate and employees job commitment. The finding of this study corroborates Pace et al (2013) who offered six factors which include: trust, Joint decision making, honesty, openness in downward communication, ability to listen to upward communication and attention to high performance goals.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Majority of respondents (64%) agreed that organisational culture, leadership style, lack of trust and non-participation of employees in decision making constitute barriers to positive organisational climate and employees job commitment. Thus, the study concludes that a negative organisational communication climate can have an adverse effect on employees job commitment especially in this covid-19 era. In lieu of this, the study recommends that:
1.   Management of Ibom Air should involve their employees in the decision making process of the organisation in order to enhance job commitment.
2.   Management of Ibom Air should encourage upward and horizontal communication for the purpose of sending feedback from the subordinate to the superior and enhance effective communication of messages from one department to the other.

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