COMMUNICATION FLOW PATTERNS AND INSTITUTIONAL HARMONY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study assessed the role of communication flow in creating industrial harmony in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research method used for data collection was opinion survey. Personal interviews were conducted with the management and union leaders in the institutions. Purposive and systematic sampling procedures were used for selecting samples for the study. The data collected from personal interviews were analyzed qualitatively using explanation building based on the research question. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed in simple percentages and the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The major findings were: the prevalent communication flow patterns in the tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria are formal and informal. The communication flow patterns are characterized by vertical downward, upward and horizontal flow patterns. Vertical downward flow dominates. Between 65% to 70% of respondents in the three tertiary institutions perceived that communication flow patterns are inadequate to guarantee institutional harmony in the tertiary institutions. The hypotheses tested show that effective communication flow patterns influence institutional harmony positively. It was recommended that communication audit should be carried periodically followed by communication training to maintain effective communication flow. Furthermore, the management of these institutions should encourage their employees to participate effectively in decision making.*

KEYWORDS: Communication, Communication Flow, Communication Flow Patterns, Institutional Harmony

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Communication is the life-wire of modern business and industrial organizations. It is through it that organizations maintain fruitful relationships with their many publics. As it is in all human affairs, communication plays a critical role in all aspects of organizational life. Soola (1998), says communication plays a critical role in all aspects of organizational activities. This is why modern organizations invest huge resources in improving their organizational communication environments.

Despite the recognition of the importance of communication in business and organizational life, Soola (1998) observes that it is yet to be accorded a pride of place in many professions and businesses. Perhaps, the reason is the misconceptions surrounding the concept of communication. So, it is pertinent to examine the concept in relation to organizational activity. Murphy and Hildebrandt (1991), define communication as a "process of transmitting and receiving verbal and non verbal messages that produce a response". Luthan's (1985) sees communication as the flow of material, information, perception and understanding between various parts of an organization. It deals with all the person – to – person interchange,

employing all aspects of communication: up, down, lateral, speaking, writing, listening, reading as well as methods, media and modes. Soola (1998) in his definition of the concept of communication says it is an on-going, interactive and recursive process which involves the transmission or exchange of thoughts, imparting and sharing information and conveying and receiving ideas, data, facts, attitudes and feelings.

Modern organizations cultivate a process of two-way communication not a linear, unidirectional' communication flow. Goldhaber (1993), justifies the adoption of two way interactive communication process, saying that modern organizations now find themselves in an information society. Information therefore becomes the single most important resource that is traded and exchanged in the 21st century. He highlights that rapid changes brought about by unexpected problems such as soaring cost of fuel, scarcity of raw materials, environmental changes, labour cost and double digit inflation. These have combined to require that modern businesses seek better and faster means of responding to these changes in a more efficient manner. Thus, information has become a vital asset required by all sorts of competing personnel – corporate planners, financial planners/officers, marketing executives, general counselors and public affairs officers.

Information is the life line of any organization or society. It is the stimulus of all the thoughts and actions of living creatures (Omotayo, 2015). Information, in its various forms, is the prerequisite for the functioning of modern organizations because success in every area of industry is attributed to the intelligent use of information of the appropriate types. Moreover, information is clearly an important commodity that can generate and be manipulated to produce more information resources as a prerequisite in the drive for decision making. Hence, organizations and institutions are implementing strategies and policies that enable them take advantage of the opportunities that are offered by the use of information. Among the strategies are: Creating information and communication infrastructure that enables information to flow efficiently and cheaply among internal and external audiences of these institutions and organization (Omotayo 2015).

Information is an important tool in any society. It is a vital took required for the functioning of every society. This means that the usefulness of information in a society is an all-encompassing one as different individuals desire information at specific times for various purposes. Through information citizens get informed about certain trends, innovations, ideas and occurrence in their environment, governmental policies, decisions and laws are also communicated as well as other vital information needed to keep the citizens informed. Therefore, it becomes necessary that information is made available everywhere, and for a society to function effectively, it depends on a variety of rapid, clear, swift, pervasive and useful kinds of information and communication (Kur, 2012). The mass media which include the radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and books etc. are responsible for the dissemination of information. It is upon the realization of this that the bill to guarantee the "freedom to hold opinions, receive and impart ideas with interference" that two members of the House of Representatives introduced a private member's bill in 1999 calling for a right of access to public records (Idowu, 2011).

According to Freedom of Information Act (2011), information includes all records, documents and information stored in whatever form, including written, electronic, visual images, sound, audio recording etc. Bard (2001), states that unless there is a good reason, the organization must provide the information within the seven working days. Although the media deal in information more than any other segment of the society, the Freedom of Information Act is not

a law for the Nigerian media alone; rather, it is a law that guarantees a right of access to information in those who hold information (Arogundade 2012). Information flows in a spherical layout, just like water flows from one place to another even into people's houses, shops and offices. Like crude oil flowing in pipelines and lubricants into people's cars and generators, so does information pervade every facet of society (Oyadonghan, 2010).

Availability and access to information has therefore been identified as a most crucial factor for the development process of all nations as it aids in evidence-based forecasting and policy making for the authorities, helps researchers analyse the society and assists the citizenry in general to have opinions and hold government accountable for their policies and actions (Gewalli, 2009). Lack of access to information breeds poverty, ignorance, corruption, bad governance and backwardness for any nation (Denedo, 2003). In this present era of globalization and democratization, information has become a social, political, educational, health and economic necessity. It has become a tool of empowerment for all and a stimulus for social change, active and participatory citizenship and lifelong learning (Carlsson, 2010).

Information properly gathered and adequately provided to all sections of an organization ensures that the organization stays healthy and continues to discharge its functions unhindered by cracks from within and without. Jim van Eyek (1995), emphasized that an efficient communication system in any organization shows clearly the quality of the organization. Communication he says, is what differentiates a qualify organization. Thus, communication is just as essential as human resources in an organization.

He stresses that a quality communication system is measured by the quality of customer response, promptness of response to issues and problems and the creativity employed by the company in targeting its various publics with adequate mid useful information about its current activities. A poor performing organization therefore is one which fails to communicate adequately with its various often cherished publics. An organizational environment which does not permit or restrict the efficient flow of information appears to be the one which is deliberately courting trouble.

According to Kreitner, R. Kinick A and Buelens, M (2002, p. 149) "Effective communication is critical for both managerial and organizational success". Also, effective communication is the essence of leadership and management, (Haller, 2002, p.149). For Bovee and Thill (2013, p.42), effective communication helps businesses in numerous ways: providing practical information, given facts rather than vague impressions, presenting information in a concise and efficient manner.

The complexity of modern organizational activities certainly generates tension and where such arises the communication system put in place, comes handy to reduce such tensions through efficient information distribution. Goldhaber (1993) and Soola (1998) believe organizations must put in place an efficient communication system to deal with environmental uncertainties. Uncertainty refers to the amount of information available and the amount that is actually needed. As organizations handle different complex activities. It is necessary that communication flow is adequate and efficient.

However, in many organizations there is less than an efficient and adequate flow of information within and outside the organization. Communication flow is usually and officially top to bottom, with a snippet of official explanation to activities, issues and events. Ajala (2001) has reminded us that we are organizational people who live and die working in all manner of

organizational settings. Some organizations are deficient since communication systems are in a state of crisis' due partly, to archaic structure and poor communication flow.

In many discourse on organizational communication, the issue now is not lack of sufficient information flow, but the issue of information overload. Shenk (1998), says the issue has generated much unease and anxiety. Mackay (1998) believes the world is now overwhelmed by information provided essentially through the internet. The obvious implications of this trend for any modern organization is that information is now a critical resource produced and marketed by organizations. Thus, organizations which do not embrace efficient methods of sharing information are left behind. Nevertheless, information flow in many Nigerian organizations are less than desirable. Hence, the necessity for effective communication flow and the role of communication to guarantee institutional and industrial harmony motivated this researcher. Effective communication flow in an organization promotes indicators of cooperation which include job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational identification, organization commitment, employee empowerment and employee productivity (Eissenberga and Goodall, 2001).

Statement of the problem

In the past nine years, many tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State have witnessed unrests, some of which resulted forced closures. A good example is the College of Education, Afaha Nsit in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Some of the perceived reasons for the unrest were leadership failure, unsatisfactory conditions of service, poor working environment and ineffective communication flow.

On lack of ineffective communication flow, there is hardly any empirical evidence to confirm this except informal communication from the institutions. Nevertheless, since communication is the life-wire of the organization, according to Miller (2006), it is logical to state that ineffective communication is a major factor in disharmony and unrest in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Hence, the central problem underlying this study is to what extent have communication flow patterns guaranteed institutional harmony in the tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

Objectives of the study

Based on the stated problem, the following objectives have been formulated as a guide to the study:

1. Ascertain the communication flow patterns prevalent in the tertiary educational institution in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

2. Assess the extent to which the communication policy and organizational structure affected the communication flow in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

3. Assess the influence of leadership style on communication flows in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

4. Find out the barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

5. Determine from the perception of employees whether the communication flow patterns in their institutions help to guarantee institution harmony.

Research questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the prevalent communication flow patterns in the tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

2. What extent have the communication policy and organizational structure affected the communication flow in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

3. What extent has the leadership style influenced communication flow in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

4. What are the barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

5. Based on the employees perception, to what extent have communication flow patterns help to guarantee institutional harmony?

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated for this study as follows:

H_1: Effective communication flow patterns in an institution of learning will lead to institutional harmony.

H_2: Open door policy will influence institutional harmony more than any other leadership style.

Justification for the study

Literature abound to show that researchers interest tend to have centered on just the study of institutional communication flow patterns. Little empirical evidence exist in Nigeria to relate communication flow to institutional harmony. There are several factors which may affect instructional harmony, communication flow is certainly an important factor which may have attracted little scholarly attention. This study is necessary because it will enable scholars and institutional managers to know the role effective and efficient communication flow can play in ensuring institution harmony. Moreover our tertiary institutions have begun to look for ways of ensuring stability. This study will add to knowledge from the data it will make available. In a world where organizational stability is primary to growth and sustainability, this study is taking up an issue in organizational communication which is presently engaging the attention of scholars in field, thus this study will add knowledge to that quest.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purposes/Functions of Messages in an Organization

Message purpose has to do with the reasons for sending and receiving messages within an organization. Also, it relates to what function(s) each message(s) is supposed to perform.

Goldhaber (1993) list the four functions of messages as: task, maintenance, human and innovative. He cited Thayer (1968) as recommending the following: to inform, to persuade, to command, to instruct and to integrate. While Berlo (1960) mentioned three key functions namely: production (ie. Getting the job done); innovation (exploring new behavioural alternatives), and maintenance (keeping the system and its components working).

Updating the purposes/functions of messages in an organization, Miller (2006) described the purposes to include task, maintenance, human and innovation communication.

1. **Task Messages:** Task message according to Goldhaber (1993) are concerned with messages about improving sales, market, quality or service and products. Such messages give the employee the relevant messages to execute their jobs efficiently. These information or messages are given during orientation courses, and other training sessions. This is done to ensure achievement of maximum results in job execution by employees.

2. **Maintenance Messages:** Maintenance messages pertain to policy and regulations. They include commands, dictates, procedures, orders and other controls vital for the achievement of organizational objectives. An organization may decide to review its policies in the light changing business environment. It may decide to give that responsibility to a committee to execute. Messages multitude of effective task and maintenance messages, but if human element is governing the working of the committee will constitute maintenance messages.

3. **Human Messages:** These are messages directed at the people working in the organization in terms of their attitudes, satisfaction and fulfillment. Such messages are concerned with the feelings of interpersonal relationships, self concept, and moral background of employees. They may involve praising superior achievement, appraisal interviews, conflict - resolution sessions, grapevine activities and even counseling sessions. Organizations can generate a multitude of effective task and maintenance messages, but if human element is absent, severe morale problems dysfunctional to the organization objectives may develop.

4. **Innovative Messages:** Innovative messages on the other hand, enable an organization to adapt to its changing environment. It allows for the generation of new plans, new activities and programmes, new directions and new projects. Also, it allows for the development of new product sessions such as in the annual planning conferences, to set tasks and specific objectives. Goldhaber (1993), recalled that research by Schiler and Blank (1976) had indicated a positive relationship between adequate communication of task, human and innovative messages and job' satisfaction and worker performance. He said the research found positive evidence of a negative relationship between over-communication of regulative messages and job satisfaction. The researchers according to Goldhaber (1993) also found that employees at higher levels of organizational ranking need more task and human messages because of the complexity of the activities they perform.

Communication Flow Patterns in Organizations: Goldhaber (1993), Ikpe (1990) and Soola (1998) classify organizational communication flow patterns into formal and informal communication flow patterns. Formal communication flow is further sub-divided into downward, upward and subordinates. It radiates from the top-most point of organizational hierarchy to the next vertically. It can be oral, written and mediated mode of message.

Downward Communication is the flow of messages from the superiors, to conversations, company bulletins, notice boards, and letters, by telephone, e-mail, video conference etc. (Ikpe, 1990), Smith, Rchetto and Zima (1972) states as follows regarding downward communication:

> It is the most frequently studied dimension of formal channels. Authority, tradition, and prestige are implemented through downward communication. Those at the top of the organization are naturally concerned with the communication effectiveness of their downward directed message to employees.

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

On timing, the authors advised-that messages should he sent at a time that is advantageous to both management and employees. On the whole Tompkins (1967) in his study of sixteen organizations makes the following conclusions regarding downward communication:

(a) Most employees do not receive a great amount of information in their organizations.

(b) Primarily, employees require more information about personal job-related matters and information about organizational decision making.

(c) The best sources of message are persons closest to employees and the worst are persons farther from them. Employees appear to want more job-related information from immediate supervisors and more organization-related information from top management.

(d) Information from top management is of lower quality than that from other key sources. Although low quality information appear to he more general a top management problems. Tompkins (1967) therefore advised that modern organizational management should:

(a) Develop a communication system which guarantees uniform and limely dissemination of information.

(b) Realize that the benefit of information disclosure are improved understanding, more employee involvement with organizational goals and greater efficiency. Underlying this therefore is the promotion of institutional harmony.

Upward Communication

This is actually the key problem area which hinders or tends to promote Institutional disharmony. In many organizations little if any, upward communication exist apparently due to the prevailing tendency by organizational leaders to run a closed environment. Upward communication refers to messages which flow from subordinates to superiors.

Usually, for the purpose of asking questions. providing feedback and making suggestions, Goldhaber *(1993).* says it has the effect of improving morale and employee attitude. Upward directed messages arc usually integrative and innovative. Upward communication serves as feedback to management, giving clues to the relative success of given message. It can also stimulate employee participation in formation of policies a various units and departments. Goldhaber says the reasons management should seek to encourage upward communication should be to encourage the receptivity of downward communication, encourage acceptance of subordinate participation decision making and provide and gauge the feedback process. Upward communication is also valuable in effective planning and motivation of subordinates.

Popular organizational activities used to complement upward communication include: counseling, grievance system. rap sessions, open‑ door policies, suggestion systems, employee letters, social gatherings, and periodic meetings. Planty and Machaver cited by Goldhaber (1993) also recommended that upward communication should include messages on what employees are doing. stating unresolved problems, making suggestions improvement and how they feel about the jobs they do. Despite these suggestions Goldhaber (1993) states his perception about the nature: of upward communication in organizations as follows:

a) Employees are not usually given opportunity to send large amounts of upward information in their organization.

b) Most employees want to receive more information rather than send more information.

c) Farther up the organizational hierarchy employees tend generally not to follow up information sent to the top management.

d) The best method of encouraging upward communication is by sympathetic listening during the many informal contacts.

Ikpe (1990) however states that upward communication can present some problems. chief among which is psychological barrier. Psychological barrier, Gemmill (1970) says can occur in the following ways as cited in Ikpe (1990):

a) In a situation where a subordinate perceives that honest disclosure of his/her feelings, opinions and difficulties may cause the superior to block or hinder his/her upward attainment of personal goals.

b) Where a superior tend to oppose or punish honest disclosure of opinion or expression of feelings.

c) Where subordinates tend to send upward those messages that are likely to enhance their credibility and filter out those he/she feels might bring or affect them adversely.

d) Upward communication suffers from ethnic prejudices against supcliors ho arc not of the same ethnic group. Scholars such as Haney *(1973)* cited by Ikpe (1990) recommend that organizational communication climate should adopt more supportive measures, such as giving more description. defining problems without inhibiting the receivers ability to seek own goals and employing empathy, mutual trust and respect and identifying and sharing problems and feelings.

Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication is a lateral exchange of messages among people in the same organizational environment (lkpe. 1990). Messages likely to occur in this format usually relate to task or human purposes. For example. messages about coordination. problem solving, conflict resolution and information sharing. Horizontal communication can function to facilitate common understanding, resolve differences and develop supportive and productive relationships (Reuben. 1988 cited in lkpe. 1990). The key problems usually associated with horizontal communication include rivalry, specialization and lack of' motivation. Rivalry may open up especially in a competitive job environment where upward job mobility is tied to success in the competitive endeavour. Regarding specialization. it can create a more hostile competitive atmosphere, where employees want to outdo one another. On the other hand, lack of motivation may hinder frequent upward communication.

Communication Network

Contemporary organizational communication has expanded rapidly from face-to-face teams to real and virtual networks of people across multiple locales organized-for a common purpose. Although networking has always been key to business success, defined Communication Networks — groups of individuals who may he identified as sharing regular lines of communication - have emerged as a primary mode of organizing in the new economy. Networks are as a rule emergent, informal, and somewhat less interdependent than teams. Networks matter because regular contact between identifiable groups of people. whether they be scientists or political action groups, can play an important role in establishing access to information and in the quality and direction of decision making.

Within organizations, the concept of a "network" has emerged as a result of researchers' long-term interest in the structure of organizational group. Human relations theorists recognized that small groups do much of the important work in organizations. The pattern of communication among group members, called the "communication structure," is affected by many factors. For example, management may design a group in a way that hinders its communication or employees with low status in a group (e.g., newcomers) may be less willing to communicate freely than those with high status. Formal lines of' authority and rules about communication may also restrict the flow of information in a group.

These investigations into communication structures have led to the idea of communication networks.

Types of Networks

Small-Group Communication Networks:

Early research on communication structure focused on examining small-group communication networks (groups of five people) to determine the effects of centralized versus decentralized networks on decision making. In-one well-known example;

> A small number of individuals are placed in cubicles and allowed to communicate only by means of written messages passed through slots in the cubicle walls. The slots Connecting each cubicle can be opened or closed by the experimenter, so that different communication patterns can be imposed 011 the' interacting subjects… A typical task presented to groups of individuals placed in these

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> networks is to provide each individual with a card containing several symbols, only one of which is present on the cards of all subjects. The task is... completed when all participants are able to ... identify the common symbol. (Scott, 1981).

Four types of small-group communication networks were typically studied: the circle. wheel, chain, and all-channel networks (Figure 3). The circle and all channel networks are highly decentralized, whereas the chain and wheel are centralized. It was found that centralized networks are more efficient than de- centralized networks, as reflected in the speed with which they can complete a task (Leavitt. 1951). Further investigations, however, reveal that centralized networks are not necessarily superior to decentralized networks:

> As tasks become more complex or ambiguous, decentralized networks are usually superior to centralized structures.... Formal hierarchies aid the performance of tasks requiring the efficient coordination of information and routine decision making whereas they interfere with tasks presenting very complex or ambiguous problems…. Specifically, hierarchies impede work on the latter by stifling free interactions that can result in error-correction, by undermining the social support necessary to encourage all participants to propose solutions, and/ by reducing incentives for participants to search for solution. (Scott, 1981).

This early research also yielded some interesting findings about small-group decision making. For example, when a group faces a routine task or a tight deadline, participation by and input from all members is not expected. In contrast, when a group faces more complex issues or problems a more open dialogue promotes member satisfaction and better solution
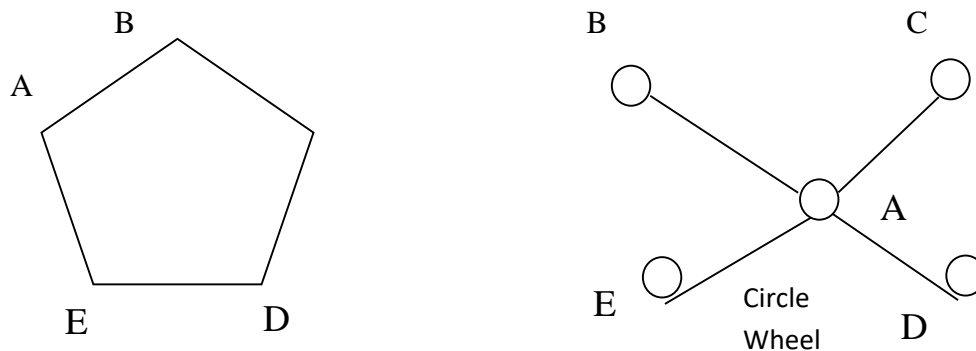
FIG I: Small Group Communication Networks

Sources: W. Richard Scott. (1981)

Organizations

Rational. Natural. and Open Systems (Englewood Cliffs. N. J. Prentice - Hall)., However, many critics argued that the experimental small group networks studied had little in common with actual groups in organizations (Farace, Monge, & Russell. 1977). In fact, research interest has recent turned toward what has been dubbed "bona tide groups" in organizations, groups that really function that way in their "natural habitat." Examples of bona tide groups are surgical teams and juries. Earls' research suggests that these "real" embedded groups act in more contradictory and disorderly ways than was ever anticipated by Laboratory studies (Sun wolf & Seibold, 1998).

Emergent Communication Networks

The most powerful groups in organizations are those that emerge from the formal and informal communication among people who work together. These groups are referred to as "emergent Communication Networks" (Eisenberg and Goodall. 2001). The current focus on communication networks in organizations stems from a general acceptance of systems theories, which emphasize the connections between people and the relationships that constitute an organization. In terms of communication networks, researchers examine those relationships that merge naturally within organizations as well as the groups and member roles associated with them (Rogers Kincaid. Kincaid, 1981). Formal networks and emergent networks coexist in organizations, and each is best understood in the Context of the other (Monge & Eisenberg. 1987). For example, although ne employees may rely on a copy of the formal organizational chart to understand reporting relationships and the structure of departments. over time they realize that the actual communication relationships among employees do not precisely mirror the organizational chart. Departments with no formal connections may nonetheless communicate in order to manage the work how, and salespeople working on different product lines may share common experiences at lunchtime. A great deal can be learned about an organizations culture by identifying the discrepancies between informal emergent networks and the formal organizational chart.

Early research on emergent communication networks investigated the so called organizational "grapevine." The term grapevine dates to the Civil War. When telegraph wires strung through trees resembled grapevines (Daniel & Spiker. 1991). This term has since come to mean the persistent informal network in an organization, sometimes referred to disparagingly by management as the "rumor mill.' In reality, most of the time the rumors are true; important information travels quickest through informal channels. Building on Chester Barnard's (1938) observations about the value of informal communication, Keith Davis (1953) argued against the standard party line which encouraged managers to suppress the rumour mill, and instead supported the importance of such communication to the health of an organization, both as a source of information and for bolstering a sense of belonging. Subsequent research has shown that informal communication on the "grapevine" is as a rule more efficient and accurate than the formal dissemination of information (Hellweg. 1987).

Researchers and managers alike seek to identify the paths of informal communication and the structure of informal networks in order to understand the distribution of information and informal power in organizations. Complex network analysis techniques have been used to "map" the emergent communication networks of an organization (Monge & Eisenberg. 1987). For example, in one such effort, employees arc asked to participate in a survey to determine how often they engage in informal communication with co-workers and to identify the topics of their conversations.
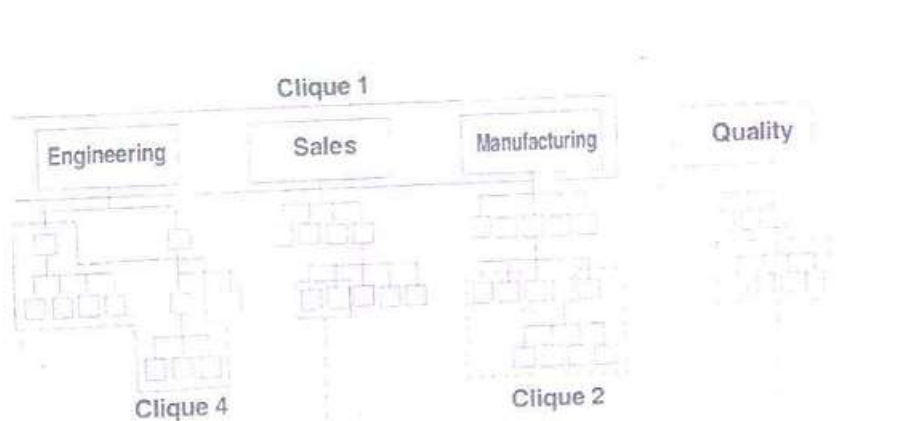
Communication Networks Analysis

Analyses of communication networks are used to examine the structure of informal, emergent communication in organizations, sensitizing us to the tendency of individuals to forge new linkages, apart from formal rules or boundaries. Informal communication in organizations is fluid and in a constant state of change. Whereas formal reorganizations may occur only infrequently, informal reorganizations occur continuously (Monge & Eisenberg, 1987). In studying emergent communication networks, we are concerned mainly with overall patterns of interaction, communication roles, and areas of communication content.

Patterns of Interaction

As illustrated in the sample communication network shown in Figure 2, a number of informal groups, or cliques, emerge as a result of communication among people in organizations, both within and across departments or functions. Communication networks also vary in density, which is determined by dividing the number of communication links (reported communication contact) that exist among all organizational members by the number of possible links. For example, a professional association is a low-density network because communication among its members is infrequent, but the kitchen crew of a restaurant is a high density network in which most or all members communicate regularly with one another. Similarly formal hierarchies are less dense than more progressive organizations that encourage employee participation and communication.

Research suggests that dense organizational networks have considerable influence over whether other employees adopt a new idea or technology. In a study of elementary schools and administrations, it was found that-personal relationships play a key role in the development and acceptance of new ideas when cliques form to focus on those ideas (Albrecht & Hall, 1991). These close connections help people overcome feeling of uncertainty and make them more likely to accept and adapt to change.

Clique 1

FIG. 2. A Sample Organizational Communication Network

Source: Eisenberg and Goodall, 2001.

The density of an organizational communication network can have some less-obvious implications for organizational effectiveness. For example, we get less new information from people we work with every day than we do from People we know but contact less often. These infrequent contacts are called "Weakties" and they can be very helpful for surfacing new perspectives and helpful people, as often happens in job hunting or recruiting (Granovetter, 1973). When all members are closely connected, the risk of group thinking greatly increases. Communication researcher Michael Papa (1990) makes a similar point about network density in his study of an insurance company: "The more diverse an employee's network [is], the more coworkers he or she talk[s] to about [a] new technology, and the more frequently he or she

talk[s] about [it], the more productive that employee [is] likely to be using the new system". In addition, Karl Weick (1979) notes the benefits of loosely coupled systems (in which decisions and actions can occur independently) as sources of organizational flexibility, adaptation. creativity, and competitiveness.

A study of a community church found that "joint involvement in focused activities" is crucial to the development of networks of relationships (McPhee & Corman. 1995). In addition, people who are frequently involved in joint activities are also likely to he connected in the communication network.

Finally, some researchers use what they call a "network approach Lo participation" to redefine the notion of empowerment (Marshall & Stohl. 1993). According to his view empowerment is a "process of developing key relationships in the organization in order to gain greater control over one's organizational life". An employee's personal communication network affects the experience of empowerment, Involvement, and participation at work.

Communication Roles

A communication role in a network determines a person's influence on the flow of information. Well-connected individuals in an organization tend to he the most influential (Brass, 1984) and the least likely to leave. Four types communication roles occur in networks: the isolate, group member, bridge, and liaison roles. Isolates have little contact with others in the organization: they work alone either by choice or because their jobs require them to he structurally or geographically isolated from other employees (e.g. salespeople or service technicians who travel constantly). Group members communicate mainly within an informal clique, which may at times involve communication with a departmental. professional, or demographic grouping (e.g. an accounts receivable specialist or a member of an advertising team). Bridges (who are also group members) have significant communication contact with at least one member of another informal group (e.g. a human resources representative dedicated to serving a particular department), and liaisons have connections with two or more cliques but are not exclusive members of anyone group (e.g. mediators or facilitators who are not themselves part of a team: some senior managers specializing in cross-functional initiatives like quality or strategy).

Recent developments in information technology have reduced the felt isolation of many jobs by connecting them through various forms of' electronic communication. Research has not yet been conducted on whether these types of connections sufficiently substitute for face-to-face contact. In our experience, some people are more likely to seek out and to even thrive under relatively solitary conditions. Moreover, isolation within the organization does not necessarily mean a lack of connection in the field or profession: in the new economy, a person's network of connections outside the organization (both personal and professional) may be far more important than organizational communication networks.

Within organizations, liaisons can be the dominant interpreters or the organizational culture. As key communicators with tremendous influence on the direction of the company, they are able to transform any message into an interpretation that is consistent with their beliefs and to pass that interpretation quickly throughout the Company (and at limes to customers and the community). When organizational improvement efforts fall, it is most often a result of the improper mobilization of liaisons.

Any attempt to analyze network communication roles in an organization may he a sensitive issue for employees, who do not always perceive their degree of communication contact with others in the same way. For example, a subordinate might report having fail contact with a superior, whereas the superior may perception may also cause employee to respond in ways that reflect not actual but expected communication roles, reporting contact only with people they "ought" to communicate with at work. In addition, employees may he reluctant to participate in a network analysis because the results may reflect negatively on themselves. For example, in our analysis of network roles in a professional association, a department head who was identified by subordinates as an isolate as dismissed from the organization. Consequently, it is critically important to collect and handle network analysis data with an awareness of the political implications of various findings. Network structure should not he shared with top management or the public without first considering the possible impact on employees who participated in the study.

Content Areas of Communication

Emergent communication networks develop around specific topics or content areas of communication (Farace. Monge. & Russell. 1977). Each content area is regarded as defining a separate network. For example, a bank may have a social network for communication about personal matters and a task network for discussion of work duties. Someone who is an isolate in one network may be a bridge or a group member in another. For example, we have all known people who are "well connected" when it comes to gossip hut less so with regard o business updates and company strategy.

Moreover, the identification of multiple types of communication content contributes to our understanding of the relationships between people in networks. Thus, for example, two people who communicate about only one topic say, task issues arc said to have a uniplex relationship, whereas people who communicate about two or more topics – say, task issues task issues, and new ideas - are said to have a multiplex relationship. Multiplex linkages have been identified as sources of social support and organizational innovation (Albrecht & Hall. 1991; The content of communication networks takes on added significance when we consider it in terms of the sense making process. In an attempt to extend the cultural approach to organizations, Monge & Eisenberg, (1987) suggested that analysis of "semantic" networks (in which people hold similar interpretations of key organizational symbols or events) may be useful. The same network measures may he applied (e.g.. bridge, group member, isolate, and liaison), but in this case they would refer not to the presence or absence of communication, but more specifically to overlapping interpretations of key cultural symbols. Individuals who are in the mainstream with regard to employee values and beliefs would be group members: those holding radically different interpretations would he isolates. Measures of network density would also apply. In a dense semantic network. For example, there is shared meaning about major organizational issues. This. approach has been successfully applied to the analysis of perceptions of organizational missions and value statements (Contractor. Eisenberg. & Monge. 1 *992:* Peterson. I 995).

Interorganizational Communication Networks

Employees communicate with co-workers within the organization as well as with customers, suppliers, and others in different organizations or institutions. In an advertising agency, for example, account managers interact with people from various newspapers and television stations, and in a university, the gifts and development staff communicate with alumni,

accountants, attorneys and local officials. Communication networks thus cross organizational boundaries.

Interorganizational communication network:' are the enduring transactions, flows and linkages that occur among or between organizations (Eisenberg and Goodall. 2001). Such networks vary in terms or their openness, density and interdependence. Tightly coupled or highly interdependent interorganizational networks are sensitive to environmental jolts that affect whole industries (e.g. in the deregulated airline industry, a minor change introduced by one carrier, such as reduced fares. significantly affects all others).

Open-systems theory affords great significance to an organization's environment. Some researchers regard organizational environments as consisting mostly of networks of other organizations. The complexity or this network or interorganizational relations varies, and highly complex interorganizational environments require great vigilance and skill to manage (Metcalfe. 1976). Put differently, an organization's environment is a kind of nested box problem.' where each network exists within a larger network. ranging from one's division, to one's industry nation and the world (Perrow 1986).

Organizations participate in interorganizational communication networks in various ways. Two organizations are said to be vertically integrated when one builds parts or provides services that the other needs for its deli very of a product or service. For example, Pratt-Whitney manufactures aircraft engines for sale to Boeing. In contrast, to or more companies are horizontally integrated when their customers are passed from one to the other in the service cycle. An example or this is the connections between a cancer screening clinic, a hospital and a hospice center (Eisenberg and Goodall. 2001).

Eisenberg developed a typology of interorganizational communication that is useful in sorting out different kinds of linkages (Eisenberg et.al 2001). Specifically, there are three types of network linkages for the exchange of materials and information institutional representative, and personal. An institutional linkage occurs without human communication, as in automatic transfer of data between companies. A representatives linkage exists when people from various organizations meet to negotiate a contract, plan a joint venture, and the like. A personal linkage occurs when members of two organizations communicate privately. However, it may be difficult to distinguish between personal and representative linkages when people meet informally without any intentions of discussing business hut do discuss business with significant results.

The various types of linkages may also change over time: for example, two companies planning to engage in a joint venture ma initially host luncheons or dinners intended to make people more comfortable with each other personally. Later, representatives may be identified to work out the details of the plan, part of which may include the automatic transfer of data between the organizations.

Interestingly, the most efficient way of sharing information across organizational lines is not through overt communication but by hiring employees from other companies. Ideas about management, Marketing, Structure, communication and employee treatment are "imported" through personnel changes. In some cases, new employees ho bring both their technical ability and their interpretive framework to organizations can help promote needed change. For instance, when Hughes Aircraft Company hired a former IBM *executive* to serve as its CEO, the company's emphasis shifted from engineering to business and financial management

(Eisenberg and Goodall. 2001). In other cases, however, new employee previous experience may become an obstacle to initiating change.

In the contemporary economic environment, organizations are most likely to turn to strategic alliances- such as mergers, acquisitions, and joint ventures to enhance their financial status and political power. Most companies recognize that they need to narrow the scope of their services by coordinating their activities with those of other organizations. Especially common among highly specialized health-care providers (e.g. transplantation centers). Strategic alliances are increasingly seen in higher education, where universities can no longer afford to offer a wide array of programmes, as well as among companies engaged in international business. Similarly, high-technology organizations are investing in joint research and development ventures in order to cut costs and improve the collective work of scientists.

Recent studies show clearly the advantages of interorganizational participation for organizations. A study of 230 private colleges over a sixteen year period showed that "well connected" schools were—better able to learn from and adapt to changing environmental conditions (Kraatz. 1998). A ten—year stud" of more than four hundred hospitals in California showed that hospitals were more likely to adopt service innovations when they were linked to their peer institutions (Goes & Park. 1997). Perhaps there is safety in numbers. Smaller companies may' be especially well served by interorganizational relations. Such partnership (like the Kentucky wood manufacturers network) have been shown to he associated with more process improvements, enhanced company credibility, and access to important resources. (Human & Provan, 1997).

However, interorganizational communication networks can at time be difficult to manage. For example, scientists from one organization may he reluctant to share their best ideas with scientists from another organization. Formal interorganizational alliances are risk' because they require a good deal of trust. a willingness to give up autonomy, and the juxtaposition of potentially incompatible organizational cultures (Eisenberg and Goodall. 2001). Many mergers and acquisitions in recent years have been problematic because the organizational partners brought different levels of formality and different attitudes toward employees to the alliance. This has been the experience reported in mergers in the banking industry in Nigeria.

Like multidisciplinary groups, interorganizational communication networks are potential sites of dialogue. As interorganizational cooperation across organizational, industrial and national boundaries increases, the challenges of communication will become greater in turn. In particular, ways of promoting productive dialogue among diverse networks will become increasingly important. (Eisenberg and Goodall. 2001).

Informal Communication Flow in an Organization

Informal communication is the communication how that does not flow the scalar functional lines network in an organization. Many writers use the word grapevine as synonym for this type of message behavior. The term grapevine applies to all informal communication. Thus, the grapevine is an unstructured and informal network founded on social relationships rather than organizational chart or job descriptions. According to some estimates, 7-10% of employees typically receive news from the grapevine before they hear about it through formal channels (EPB]. 1997).

Grapevine Characteristics

Early research identified by Kreps 1986 several unique features of the grapevine namely;
1. Transmits information very rapidly in all directions throughout the organization.

2. The typical pattern is chain whereby a few people actively transmit rumours to many others.

3. The grapevine works through informal social network, so it is more active where employees have similar background and are able to communicate easily.

4. Many rumours seem to have at least a kernel of truth, possibly because rumours are transmitted through media rich communication channels (e.g. face-to-face) and employees are motivated to communicate effectively.

5. The grapevine distorts information by deleting fine details and exaggerating key points of the message.

According to McShane and Glinow (2003) the problem with some of these earlier finding is that they might not be representative of the grapevine in this era of information technology. E-mail and instant messaging have replaced the traditional watercooler as the main place where 'people share gossips. Social network have expanded a employees communicate with each other around the globe, not just around the next cubicle. Vault.com and other public websites have become virtual watercoolers by posting anonymous comments about specific companies for all to view. This technology extends gossip to anyone, not just employees connected to social networks.

Communication Barriers

In spite of the best intentions of sender and receiver to communicate, several barriers inhibit the effective exchange of information. As author George Bernard Shaw once wrote. "The greatest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.

Communication barriers are technically referred to as NOISE, but few pervasive problems that will be discussed are perceptions. filtering, language and information overload (Mcshane and Glinow 2003).

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

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

Language: Words and gestures carry no inherent meaning, so the sender must ensure receiver understand these symbols and signs. In reality, lack of mutual understanding is a common

reason messages are distorted. Two potential language barriers arc jargon and ambiguity (McShane and Von Glinow 2003).

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

Communication guru, Marshall McLuhan predicted more than 30 years ago that employees would become overloaded with messages. "One of the effects of living with electric information is that we live in a state of information overload, said McLuhan" there is always more than you can cope with. Information overload occurs when the volume of information received exceeds the person's capacity to process it. Employees have a certain information processing capacity, that is, the amount of information to be processed per unit of time (Alesandrini 1993). These three pervasive factors also affect communication in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Communication Flow and Institutional Harmony

It is not in doubt whether communication flow can cause disharmony in aim organization or significantly contribute to bringing it about. Organizational communication climate which is not efficient, but tends to be secretive, or may give ample room for the existence of a fertile grapevine where employees receive most of their accurate information. Grapevine according to Goldhaber (1993) may benefit both the employees and management. For example, management can rely on the grapevine to gauge employee sentiments and feelings about policies and decisions. On the other hand, employees sometimes rely on it for more 'clarified information which may not be sufficient in the official channel. However, grapevine also serves as the network by which rumours travel.

Information in the rumour mill are often times magnified beyond their limit and importance and the presence of ambiguity may give room for some disquiet. Modern organizational managers tend not to encourage the existence of rumour which quite frankly, cannot be totally eliminated in any business environment. However, one way to reduce its negative impact is to encourage more efficient communication flow in all fronts: downward, upward and horizontal. Bergin (1981), also adds that more effort should be made by organizational leaders to provide more clarifications and seek out the barriers to message reception and understanding in their organizations. Institutional disharmony may begin to build up when vital information about staff welfare, pay matters, job security, retirement and pension matters are not fully communicated to employees or where they do not take part in the process leading to their evaluation, recommendation for disciplinary measures and termination of appointment.

Also, institutional disharmony tends to build up when there is severe lack of motivation and participation in the organizational process. Where employees feel left out, informal networks may build whose objectives may depart from those of the organization Okoro (2005), stresses the fact that information management in an organization invokes bringing together other different disparate activities, of the organization to ensure that information is utilized fully to support organizational goals. Falorami (2008). adds that organizations show the symbiotic

relationship which exist between people. Communication therefore is the vehicle to enhance this symbiotic relationship.

REVIEW OF STUDIES

This study reviewed the following studies:

Ima Ekerete Ukere (2008) **"Communication Climate and Employee Job satisfaction in Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua**" An unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Nigeria**.**

The study sets out' among other objectives to find out the communication flow patterns in the Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic; find out the amount of information available to employees from organizational and departmental leaders and to find out whether employees are satisfied with the overall communication climate in the institution, as well as the perception of employees about how communication climate affects their job performance. The study adopted descriptive survey as its method and studied 634 staff of the institution as its population. From this population, the researcher sampled 317 representing 50% of the population. The major instrument adopted for the study was questionnaire supplemented with an interview schedule.

The findings of the study shows that the communication flow patterns in the institution is mainly downward, accounting for 25% of staff opinion, while horizontal communication attracts an opinion rating of l7%. While 60% of stall admitted that they interact regularly with their superiors, most of the interactions border on staff welfare matters while a small percentage (15%) dwelled on matters of job performance. Surprisingly, 57% of respondents agreed that they are satisfied with the state of communication climate. A similar percentage agrees that the communication climate affect their job performance positively, while 37% said it affected their job negatively.

This study has thrown some insight into the likely nature of communication in the institution though the focus of the present study dwells on institutional harmony

lkpe, Essienubong H. (2005). ''Assessment of Communication in Personnel Management and Employee productivity in Nigerian Breweries Plc, Aba." Journal of Media Studies, Vol. 1 No.1

This study sought to find out the level of effective communication in personnel management at Nigerian Breweries Plc, Aba. The researcher is motivated by the impressive personal records and the records of industrial actions to find out if effective communication in personnel management of the company are the magic recipe for its success story**.** The researcher carried out in-depth investigations on the organization's communication activities with the following objectives:

- To assess the personnel administration communication policy of Nigerian Breweries Plc. Aba and its impact on employee productivity.

- To determine the patterns of communication flow adopted in personnel management

- To assess the media used m personnel administration and their impact on employee productivity

- To assess the communication climate existing in the company and its impact on productivity.

The study adopts a survey as a research design using interview to obtain information from the personnel and general managers to determine the contribution of communication to employee productivity. Furthermore, participant observation is adopted to assess the management and employees' communication relationships. A purposive sampling procedure is used to select the personnel and general managers for the personal interview, while 55 employees of not less than 5 years in the service are served with questionnaire, using the same sampling technique.

One of the main findings of the study suggests that the employees of Nigerian Breweries Plc, Aba experience a high level of motivation through effective communication flow in the organization. This in turn, leads to a very low rate of personnel turnover, cordial organizational climate and high employee productivity.

Another finding suggests that supportive communication climate in personnel management does promote employee productivity and low personnel turnover. This study would have been very commendable, except for two flaws that the study suffers. The study does not show substantial evidence for employees' productivity, such as a company's production or sales record as the bases for the attribution of the organization's successes to the "contribution of effective communication in personnel management and employee productivity.

Worker productivity is usually linked to efficiency or an individual's ability to convert input into output. In broader perspective, productivity includes effectiveness as well, which can be measured in terms of product or service quality. In view of this, personnel low turnover is a weak variable to be attributed to either effective employee communication or supportive Communication climate in personnel management. Low personnel turnover could come from possible influence of the country's harsh economic environment. The second problem concerns the sampling technique. The technique used in the study cannot in any manner produce an effective sampling size for an efficient research study of this nature. This study needs to address these issues. Nevertheless, this study is relevant to the present because it demonstrates the influence of communication in personnel management and productivity.

Ndada, Aniebo Inang (2000). "Organizational Communication Climate and job Satisfaction in the University of Uyo (1991 -1997)". An Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

This study focuses on the impact of the communication climate on job satisfaction of the employees of the University of Uyo over a span of 6 years. It seeks to:

- Bring to limelight the problem (if any) of the organizations communication climate and ways to manage them.

- Show the importance of employee's positive perceptions of organizational communication climate on job satisfaction.

The research design was analytical survey. A systematic sampling technique as adopted to have 205 sample size made up of members of teaching staff involved in administrative duties teaching staff of the ranks of senior lecture and above and non teaching members of senior

20

ranks in the organization. The questionnaire and personal interview are used as research instruments.

The first finding suggests negative employees' perceptions of the organizational communication climate at the top management level, while there is a positive perception oh the superior-subordinate communication climate. The findings also show that the employees are not satisfied with their level of exposure to communication activities in the university system. Furthermore, one of the findings shows unfavorable communication climate with regard to employees' participation in decision making, reward and praise for employees' performance and inter-personal communication relationships. Finally the findings show management's positive responses to the university's communication climate.

The following shortcomings are noticed in the study. The methodology is flawed in so many ways. First, the sampling technique used in the study cannot give a fair representation of the teaching and non-teaching members in each faculty and department of the university. Secondly, the sampling technique used in the selection of the subjects for personal interview is not stated. Also, the analysis of data from personal interview is not shown. This study is relevant to the present study because it studied organizational climate and employee job satisfaction in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State.

Theoretical framework

This research made use of two theories namely: modern organizational theory and the theory of transactional process in organizational communication.

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

Therefore, relating the flow of communication and how that flow enhances or hinders institutional harmony situates itself properly in this context. Effective communication flow provides task messages, maintenance messages, human relations messages, and innovative messages to tertiary institutions and their sub-systems. These messages help to maintain harmony in the tertiary institutions.

The theory of transactional process in organizational communication states as follows: "All persons are engaged in sending and receiving messages simultaneously. Each person is constantly sharing in the encoding and decoding process and each person is affecting the other" (Wenberg and Wilmont, 1973). The transactional-process approach according to Eisenberg and Goodal (2001) highlights the importance of feedback, or information about how a message IS received, and particularly nonverbal feedback, which may accompany or substitute for verbal feedback.

The transactional process model differs significantly from the information approach in terms of the presumed location of the meaning of the message. In the information-transfer model, the meaning of a message resides with the sender, and the challenge of communication is to transmit that meaning to others. The transactional model rejects this idea in favour of one in

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

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To gather data for this study, the study made use of the survey method. Since communication flow is based on participation and actual experience, the study undertook a survey of the management and employees of the three tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The research instruments for the survey were interview schedule and questionnaire. The personal interview was administered on the management of the tertiary institutions while the questionnaire was administered on the employees. The population of the study is made up of subjects who are staff of the three tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The staff strength of the three institutions stands at 4,619, with the University of Uyo having a staff strength of 3,500 while Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua has a staff strength of 614 and the College of Education, Afaha Nsit has 505 as at the time of this study. The sources for the population were as follows: University of Uyo Personnel Division of the University, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua – Convocation Newsletter and College of Education – Convocation Newsletter.

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

University of Uyo   -   -   -   350

Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic-   -   61

College of Education -   -   -   51

Total   -   -   -   -   -   462

Two sampling procedures were used for selecting the samples for the study. These are purposive and systematic. Two officers were selected purposively from each tertiary institutions for personal interview. These were the Registrar and the Chairman of Academic Staff Union of Universities for University of Uyo and the Registrar and the Academic Staff Union Leader for the Polytechnic and College of Education. They were selected because of their strategic importance in information dissemination and reception in the tertiary institutions. Systematic sampling procedure was used to select respondents from the tertiary institutions for survey using the questionnaire.

Here, the sampling intervals were:

University of Uyo   -   -   20

Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic-   20

College of Education -   -   20

Data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages. While the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The formula for Pearson Product Moment Correlation is as follows;

$$\frac{N\Sigma XY - \Sigma X\Sigma Y}{(N\Sigma X2 - (\Sigma X)2)(N\Sigma Y2 - (\Sigma Y2)}$$

where X and Y stand for the original scores.

N is the number of pairs of scores

Σ = is the summation symbol

ΣXY = stand for the sum of the products of each x and y

The rule of decision on computing the Pearson 'r' is: if the calculated correlation value 'r' is equal to or greater than the critical value of 'r' at 0.05 level of significance in the two tailed test, with degree of freedom of (n-1) (n-2) then accept the Null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis and vice versa.

The data from personal interview were analyzed Using explanation building based on the research question. This approach was suggested by Yin (1984).

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Out of a total of 462 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the management and employees of the three tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, 430 were retrieved and were found useful for analysis. The return rate was 93.1% with a mortality rate of 6.9%. The retrieval from each tertiary institution were:

University of Uyo   -   340

Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic-   46

College of Education   -   44

The questionnaire was administered at a sampling interval of 20 in each tertiary institution as presented in the sampling procedure. The justified the population proportion of each institution. The data gathered from each institution are presented in tables in separate units namely: University of Uyo, Polytechnic and College of Education are treated together because they are owned by Akwa Ibom State Government of Nigeria.

The data collected from the survey and personal interviews are presented as follows:

DATA PRESENTATION FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 1: Job Cadre of Respondents

JOB CADRE	HIGHER INSTITUTIONS		TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	UNIUYO	AKWA POLY & COE		
Management cadre	68	22	90	21
Middle cadre	170	36	206	48
Lower cadre	102	32	134	31
Total	**340**	**90**	**430**	**100**

It was important to determine the job cadre of respondents of various institutions under study. This helped to validate the respondents' capacity to answer the questions, in terms of the understanding of the subject of discourse.

Table 1 above clearly shows that the majority of respondents 206 (48%) and 134 (31%) were from the middle cadre and lower cadre of the Universities. Both have a combined percentage of 79%. See Table 1 for further details.

Table 2: Predominant Communication Flow Patterns in Higher Institutions in   Nigeria

COMMUNICATION FLOW PATTERN	HIGHER INSTITUTIONS		TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	UNIUYO	AKWA POLY & COE		
Vertical (Upward communication)	102	13	115	26
Vertical (Downward)	170	63	233	54
Horizontal Communication	34	-	34	8
All of the above	34	14	48	12
Total	**340**	**90**	**430**	**100**

Table 2 shows that the predominant communication flow patterns in higher institutions are as follows: downward 233 (54%), upward 115 (26%), horizontal 34 (8%). Other responses are as presented in Table 2.

Table 3: Extent of Influence of Communication policy and Organizational Structure on Communication Flow in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

KEY	HIGHER INSTITUTIONS			TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	OPTIONS	UNIUYO	AKWA POLY & COE		
5	A very great extent	34	40	74	17
4	A great extent	102	14	116	30
3	Undecided or neutral	170	27	197	49
2	A little extent	134	4	138	32
1	A very little extent	-	5	5	1
Total		**340**	**90**	**430**	**100**

In Table 3, 190 (47%) respondents are of the opinion that communication policy and organizational structure affect communication flow in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria to a great extent, 138 (32%) a little extent, while 197 (49%) could not decide.

Table 4: Extent of the Influence of Leadership style on Institutional Harmony in Tertiary Institution in Nigeria

KEY	HIGHER INSTITUTIONS			TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	OPTIONS	UNIUYO	AKWA POLY & COE		
5	A very great extent	119	40	159	37
4	A very great extent	68	14	82	19
3	Undecided or neutral	17	27	44	10
2	A little extent	119	4	123	29
1	A very little extent	17	5	22	5
Total		**340**	**90**	**430**	**100**

One of the objective of the study was to assess the influence of leadership style on communication flows in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The data gathered and presented in Table 4 shows that majority of respondents (159,82) representing a total of 56% shows a very great extent, 145 (29.5%) (29%) a little extent. Other responses are as presented in Table 4.

Table 5: Barriers to Effective Communication Flow and Instituting Harmony in Tertiary Institution in Nigeria

	HIGHER INSTITUTIONS			TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION	UNIUYO	AKWA POLY & COE		
A	Administrative policy	-	4	4	1
B	Undemocratic leadership	-	4	4	1
C	Lack of trust	68	4	72	17
D	Non participation in decision making	68	15	83	19
E	All of the above	204	63	267	62
Total		**340**	**90**	**430**	**100**

One of the expectations of the study was to find out the barriers to effective communication flow and institutional harmony in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The data gathered and presented in Table 5 shows that 267 (62%) of respondents indicated that all the factors listed in the table above constitutes barriers to effective communication flow and institutional harmony. Other responses are as presented in Table 5.

Table 6: Extent of Employee Satisfaction with the Present Patterns of Communication Flow for Institutional Harmony in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

KEY	HIGHER INSTITUTIONS			TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	OPTIONS	UNIUYO	AKWA POLY & COE		
5	A very great extent	34	10	44	10
4	A great extent	102	18	120	28
3	Undecided or neutral	-	-	-	-
2	A little extent	102	30	132	31
1	A very little extent	102	32	134	31
Total		**340**	**90**	**430**	**100**

This study sought to determine from the perception of employees whether the communication flow patterns in the institutions help to guarantee institutional harmony. Data gathered and presented in Table 6 shows that 266 respondents representing (62%) are not satisfied that the present pattern of communication flow in enhance institutional harmony. Other responses are as presented in Table 6.

Data from the personal interviews

Personal interviews were conducted on the registrars of the three selected tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria and the union leaders in the three tertiary institutions. They were selected because of their strategic importance in information dissemination, reception and storage in the tertiary institutions. The focus of the interview was on the following elements of communication flow and harmony in the institutions:

1. The prevalent communication flow patterns in each tertiary institution.

2. The extent to which the communication policy and organizational structure affected the communication flow in each tertiary institution.

3. The barriers to effective communication flow and institutional harmony in the tertiary institutions.

4. Adequacy of the present patterns of communication flow and promotion of institutional harmony.

5. The extent to which communication flow patterns help to guarantee institutional harmony.

A Summary of Opinion from the interviewees, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

On the prevalent communication flow patterns in the University, the interviewees noted two major communication flow patterns, namely formal and informal. They further noted that formal communication flow is characterized by vertical downward communication flow from the management to the subordinates; vertical upward communication flow from the subordinates to the management; and horizontal communication flow between departments and units. These patterns according to the interviewees are in accordance with the formal structure of the university. On the other hand, informal communication flow patterns do not follow the prescribed channels of communication in the University. It flows via the grapevine.

Concerning the extent to which communication policy and organizational structure of the University have affected the communication flow, the interviewees remarked that the policy and the structure have affected communication flow positively in principles but in practice, the union leader remarked that the policy is often bent in favour of management in conflict situation and in delicate and strategic decisions.

On the observed and perceived barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony, the registrar representing the management observed the following: inadequate information infrastructure, personnel inefficiency, timing, staff attitude to information, too much reliance on the grapevine and ethnicity. The union leader observed more barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in the university to include: inadequate information infrastructure, bureaucracy, secrecy on the part of management, personnel inefficiency, timing, management negative attitudes toward union activities, information underload, information espionage, and ethnicity. According to the union leader, theses barriers affect industrial harmony in the University. About adequacy of communication flow for promotion of institutional harmony, the interviewees had different opinion. The management representative felt, the communication flow patterns were adequate while the union leader felt they were insufficient. According to the union leader, sometimes, management exhibited the

following behaviour: inaccessible management approach, hostility, lack of cooperation and hoarding of information and outward distrust and lack of confidence in unions management. These served as stumbling blocks to effective industrial harmony.

On the extent to which communication flow has accounted for the strain in management employee relations in the past, the interviewees affirmed this especially in times of conflict or crisis and during strikes.

A Summary of opinion from the Interviewees, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, Nigeria

The Registrar and ASUP chairman were interviewed. On the prevalent communication flow patterns in the polytechnic, the interviewees noted formal and informal communication flow. However, they commented that the formal was recognized and more documented. The informal is unofficial and is a channel for grapevine, rumour, gossips etc. Concerning the extent to which communication policy and organizational structure of the polytechnic have affected the communication flow. The interviewees remarked that they have affected communication flow positively in principles by encouraging communication flow. The union leader however remarked this is often bent in favour of management during conflict, strikes, and in controversial decisions. This often promotes rumour in the institution.

On barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in the polytechnic, the registrar observed the following barriers: inadequate information infrastructure, personnel inefficiency, staff attitude to information, timing, too much reliance on the grapevine and ethnic influence. The union leader observed more barriers to communication flow and industrial harmony as follows: inadequate information infrastructure, bureaucracy, secrecy on the part of management, lack of recognition and respect for the unions, information overload, personnel inefficiency, timing, information espionage, and ethnic influence. According to the union leader, these barriers affect industrial harmony negatively in the Polytechnic.

Concerning communication flow for promotion of industrial harmony, the interviewees had different opinion. The registrar felt that the communication flow was adequate to promote industrial harmony. The union leader opined that it was inadequate and deficient. According to him the management exhibited the following behaviour; lack of trust and confidence for union management, closed management, hostility, lack of cooperation, hoarding of information. These poor management union relationship behaviours affect industrial harmony in the institution. On the extent to which communication flow has accounted for the strain in the management employee relations in the past in the polytechnics, the interviewees affirmed this especially in times of crisis management such as strikes.

A Summary of opinion from the Interviewees, College of Education, Afaha Nsit, Nigeria.

The Registrar and the union leader were interviewed. On the prevailing communication flow patterns at the College of Education, the interviewees specified formal and informal communication flow. They stated that formal flow was dominant and more recognized by the institution. The formal manifests in three patterns namely: vertical downward, vertical upward and horizontal. The informal flow pattern is unofficial, informal and it manifests as grapevine, rumour and gossips.

About the extent to which communication policy and organizational structure have affected communication flow, the interviewees stated that they have affected communication flow

positively. Communication flows officially according to organizational structure, however, the union leader remarked that the communication policy is practiced in favour of management, especially in management union issues.

On the observed and perceived barriers to effective communication flow and institutional harmony in College of Education, Afaha Nsit, Nigeria, the Registrar made the following observations: inadequate communication infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel, stall attitude to information reception and dissemination, poor timing, too much reliance on informal communication, ethnicity and organizational politics. The union made the following critical observation on barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony: inadequate information infrastructure, bureaucracy, secrecy on the part of management, personnel inefficiency, managements negative attitudes toward union activities, information overload, information espionage, ethnicity and organizational politics.

About adequacy of communication flow for promotion of industrial harmony in the college, the interviewees had different opinion. The registrar who represents the management of the college, felt that the communication flow patterns were adequate for industrial harmony while, the union leader disagreed. According to the union leader, management often exhibits the following uncooperative behaviours: inaccessible management approach, hostility, hoarding of information, outward distrust, hatred, lack of confidence in the union leadership. These behaviours hamper effective industrial harmony.

On the extent to which communication flow has accounted for the strain in management employee relations in the college, the interviewees, affirmed this especially in times of conflicts and crises and during strikes.

Testing of Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. The hypotheses are tested below:

Hypothesis 1

Ho$_1$: Effective communication flow patterns in an institution of learning will lead to institutional harmony than ineffective communication flow.

Responses from the items related to communication flow patterns and institutional harmony were used for analysis with the help of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) as shown n Table 7. Relationship between the influence of effective communication flow patterns on institutional harmony in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 7: Relationship Between the Influence of Effective Communication Flow Patterns on Institutional Harmony in Tertiary Institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Effective communication flow Patterns X	Industrial harmony Y	X2	Y2	Y	r calculated	R critical	Df	Significant level	Remarks
O	34	0	1156	0					
68	102	4624	10,404	6936					
34	0	1156	10,404	0					
238	102	56,644	0	24,276					
0	102	0	10,404	0	0.531	0.195	429	0.05	
0	10	0	100	0					
9	18	81	324	162					
18	0	324	0	0					
58	30	3,364	900	1740					
5	32	25	1,024	160					
430	**430**	**66,218**	**34716**	**33,274**					

The result as shown on the above table reveals that effective communication flow patterns have significant relationship with institutional harmony. The calculated r value of 0.531 is significantly greater than the critical r value of 0.19. the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that effective communication flow patterns will lead to institutional harmony in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 2

Ho$_2$: Open – door policy or free unhindered communication flow leadership style will not influence institutional harmony more than any other leadership style.

Table 8: Relationship Between the Influence of Free-unhindered Communication Flow Leadership Style and Institutional Harmony in Tertiary Institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Leadership style	Industrial harmony Y	X2	Y2	Y	r calculated	R critical	Df	Significant level	Remarks
119	85	14161	7225	10,115					
68	136	4624	18496	10,115					
17	85	289	7225	9,248					
119	17	14161	289	1445					
17	17	289	2R9	2,023	0.531	0.195	429	0.05	
32	22	1024	484	289					
22	40	484	1,600	704					
4	5	16	25	880					
27	18	729	324	20					
55	5	25	25	486					
430	**430**	**35802**	**35982**	**25235**					

The result as shown in Table 8 reveals a significant influence of free-unhindered communication flow on institutional harmony. The calculated r-value of 0.30 was higher than the critical r-value of 0.19. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This shows that free-unhindered communication flow leadership style has a significant influence on institutional harmony.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of findings of this study is based on providing answers to the research questions bearing in mind the objectives of the study, the theoretical framework, the studies reviewed and the propositions supported by the hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What are the prevalent communication flow patterns in the tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

The prevalent communication flow patterns in the University of Uyo according to the interviewees are formal and informal flow. The formal flow patterns are characterized by vertical downward, vertical upward and horizontal communication. These patterns are in accordance with the formal structure of the University. On the other hand, informal communication flow patterns do not follow the prescribed channels of communication in the university. It flows via the grapevine. In the Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua and the College of Education, Afaha Nsit, the interviewees also specified the prevalent communication flow patterns as formal and informal. The formal was reported to be dominant and recognized than informal. From the survey (questionnaire), the employees from tertiary institution indicated that the predominant communication flow patterns were as follows: downward communication 54%, upward communication 26%, horizontal 8% and all the three patterns 12%. From these figures, downward communication from the management to the subordinates dominates. The findings of this study support the finding of the study by Ukere (2008) which found that the communication flow patterns were predominantly formal and downward. In Ukeres' study, the respondents felt satisfied with the communication flow patterns while in this present study, the respondents were dissatisfied.

The findings of this study are not fully in congruence with the theoretical framework of the study – modern organization theory which advocates mutuality and interdependence.

Research Question 2: To what extent have the communication policy and organizational structure affected the communication flow in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

Concerning the extent to which communication policy and organizational structure have affected the communication flow in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, the interviewees in the three tertiary institutions opined that they are affected positively in principles; but in practice the case is the reverse as communication policy and organizational structure really affects communication flow. However, the union leaders in the three tertiary institutions is often bent in favour of management in conflict situations, strikes and in delicate and strategic decisions.

The finding on Table 3 confirm the opinion of the interviewees from the three tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, in Table 3, 47% of respondents from tertiary institutions were of the opinion that communication policy and organizational structure affect

communication flow in the various institutions to a great extent, 32% felt a little extent, while 49% could not decide.

The findings in this study that the communication flow of the three tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria affect communication in these institutions positively in principles corroborates with Ikpe (2005) study on communication in Personnel Management and Employee Productivity in Nigeria Breweries Plc, Aba. In this study Ikpe (2005) found that employees of Nigerian Breweries Plc Aba, experienced a high level of motivation through effective communication flow in the organization. Also, the present study also supports Ukere (2008) study who found 60% of staff of Polytechnic admitting interacting regularly with their superiors, most of the interactions border on staff welfare matters, while 15% dwelled in matters of job performance. These results show a positive effect of communication flow.

The findings of this study affirm the theoretical framework of this study, namely: modern organization theory and the theory of transactional process n organization communication. For the modern organizational theory, the positive effect on communication flow in the tertiary institutions support the idea of mutuality, but negates he ideas of congruence between the individual expectancies and those of the organization. In the tertiary institutions studied, communication flow is bent in favour of management.

Research Question 3: To what extent has the leadership style influenced communication flow in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

Table 4 shows that 56% of respondents in the tertiary institutions under study felt that to a great extent there is a relationship between the leadership style of management of the institution and institutional harmony, 29% of the respondents felt the relationship exists to a little extent, while 10% could not decide. This shows that the leadership style influenced the communication flow effectively in tertiary institution in Nigeria.

Table 8 tested the relationship between the influence of free-unhindered communication flow leadership style and institutional harmony in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The result of the test shown in Table 8 reveals a significant influence of leadership style and institutional harmony in the tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The calculated r-value of 0.30 was higher than the critical r-value of 0.19. Hence, leadership styles of the management of tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria have significant relationship with effective communication flow. The finding of this study is that leadership style of management of tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria influenced institutional harmony agrees with the findings of Ikpe (2005) that the employees of Nigerian Breweries Plc Aba experienced a high level of motivation through effective communication flow in the organization and that communication climate in personnel management does promote employee productivity.

The finding of this study and the test of the hypothesis affirm the theoretical framework of the study, namely: Modern organizational theory. For modern organization theory, the leadership style influences effective communication flow and institutional harmony. This translates to mean mutuality and interdependence.

Research Question 4: What are the barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria?

Based on the observed and perceived barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, the Registrar, University of Uyo observed the

following: inadequate information infrastructure, personnel inefficiency, timing, staff attitude to information, too much reliance on the grapevine and ethnicity. The Union Leader observed more barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in the university to include; inadequate information infrastructure, bureaucracy, secrecy on the part of management, personnel inefficiency, timing, management's negative attitudes toward union activities, information overload, information espionage and ethnicity. According to the Union Leader, these barriers affect industrial harmony in the University.

The observed and perceived barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony from the polytechnic and the College of Education were similar. According to the Registrars of the two institutions, they include: inadequate information infrastructure, personnel inefficiency, staff attitude to information, timing, too much reliance on the grapevine and ethnic influence. The observation from the union leaders from the two institutions were as follows; inadequate information infrastructure, bureaucracy, secrecy on the part of management, lack of recognition and respect for the unions, information overload, personnel inefficiency, timing, information espionage and ethnic influence.

From the survey (questionnaire), Table 5 indicates the perception of respondents on barriers to effective communication flow in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, 267 (62%) of the respondents felt the barriers include administrative policy, undemocratic leadership, lack of trust and non-participation in decision making. Other responses are as presented in Table 5.

The findings of the study on barriers to effective communication and industrial harmony confirm Ndada (2000) findings of negative employee perceptions or organizational communication climate at the top management level in University of Uyo, unfavourable communication climate with regard to employees participation in decision making, reward and praise for employees' performance and interpersonal communication relationships. Furthermore, the findings of this study re-echo the important of modern organizational theory and the theory of transactional process in organizational communication. These two theories support effective communication flow in an organization for institutional harmony.

Research Question 5: Based on the employees perception, to what extent have communication flow patterns help to guarantee institutional harmony?

From the survey (questionnaire), Table 6 indicates that 62% perceived to a little extent that the communication flow patterns are inadequate to guarantee institutional harmony in tertiary institutions while only 38% perceived to a great extent. From employee perception, communication flow patterns are inadequate to guarantee institutional harmony.

Hypothesis 1, Table 7 tested the relationship between the patterns of communication flow and institutional harmony in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The result shows that the patterns of communication follow have significant relationship with intuitional harmony. The calculated r value of 0.531 is significantly greater than the critical r –value of 0.19. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that the patterns of communication flow influences institutional harmony in tertiary institution in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Hence, employees in University of Uyo, College of Education and Akwa Ibom State polytechnic perceived poor communication flow leading to institutional disharmony.

The findings of the study on communication flow patterns and institutional harmony confirm Ndada (2,000) findings of negative employee perceptions of communication climate in University of Uyo. These findings support the submissions of Modern Organizational Theory and the theory of transactional process which advocate effective communication flows in an organization for institutional harmony.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following findings were obtained from the study:

1. The prevalent communication flow patterns in the tertiary educational institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria are formal and informal. The formal flow patterns are characterized by vertical downward, vertical upward and horizontal communication. The informal patterns use the grapevine. Vertical downward communication flow patterns dominate which make the employees dissatisfied.

2. Communication policy and organizational structure have affected the communication flow patterns in each institution positively in principle. However, the union leaders in the three institutions remarked that in practice, communication policy in the three institutions is often in favour of management in conflict situations, strikes and in delicate and strategic decisions. This trend is also reflected in the employees opinion.

3. The leadership style influences communication flow pattern effectively n the University of Uyo. A similar trend is being observed in the Polytechnic and College of Education. The hypothesis tested shows that leadership styles of the management of tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State have significant relationship with effective communication flow and institutional harmony.

4. The observed and perceived barriers to effective communication flow and industrial harmony in tertiary institutions were listed by the Registrars to include inadequate information infrastructure, personnel inefficiency, timing, staff attitude to information, too much reliance on the grape vine and ethnicity. The union leaders observed more barriers to include: inadequate information infrastructure, bureaucracy, secrecy on the part of management, management negative attitudes towards union activities, information overload, information espionage and ethnicity. Accordingly, these barriers affect institutional and industrial harmony in the tertiary institutions. Furthermore, majority of respondents from the three tertiary institutions felt that the barriers include administrative policy, undemocratic leadership, lack of trust and non-participation by the subordinates in decision making. These barriers affect industrial harmony. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between barriers to effective communication flow and institutional and industrial harmony in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

5. Moreso, 62% of respondents in the three tertiary institutions perceived that communication flow patterns are inadequate to guarantee institutional harmony in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. From the hypotheses tested, the result shows that the patterns of communication now have significant relationship with institutional harmony in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Communication flow and its attendant communication network for effective interdependent relationships among all the subsystems. In an organization are among the pillars of growth and survival of any organization. Effective Communication flow promotes harmony, stability, growth and other indicators of cooperation namely; employee job satisfaction, empowerment, identification and productivity. As an evidence of the important of communication flow, organizational communication has been glorified by Goldhaber (1993 p.5) as "the life blood of the organization", "the oil that smoothes the organizations functions", "the thread that ties the system together", "the force that pervades the organization", the binding agent that cements all relationship", and "the organization embalming fluid".

This research has thus confirmed that there is a correlation between effective communication flow and institutional harmony. The management of tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria have acknowledged this in principles but in practice they have failed to apply this principle. Hence, this deficiency has led to institutional and industrial disharmony in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To maintain effective communication flow patterns in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, the management of these institutions need to be aware of the deficiency in the communication flow patterns in practice in the institutions. This can be done in the following ways;

1. Submitting the findings of this research to the management of each tertiary institutions.

2. Conducting Communication Audit periodically in each institution to evaluate the current management communication practices and the current employee communication behaviours.

3. As a direct outcome of communication audit, purposive efforts should be made by the management of these institutions to create and maintain a supportive communication climate and institutional and industrial harmony through the introduction of communication training to all cadres of staff of the institutions. This specialized service can be offered by specialists in Organizational Communication in the Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

4. Management of these institutions should trust their employees and encourage them to participate effectively in decision making (PDM). These factors are among those recommended by Modern Human Resource Management (MHRM) reported by Lee 1971.

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