



# Impact of Effective Communication on Goal Achievement in Nigerian Polytechnics

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the impact of effective communication on goal achievement in Nigerian Polytechnic educational system. The extent to which functions of communication were practiced and their outcome noticeable in institutions was evaluated through a survey conducted in three polytechnics among 102 respondents. Structured, closed ended questionnaire was designed to elicit data. A Pearson Product Correlation of degree of communication functions with level of outcome reveals a positive correlation or dependence of organizational achievement on level of communication. The implication of the finding is that negligence of ideal communication structure can lead to organizational failure where goal congruence is illusive. It is recommended that the leadership of Nigerian public polytechnics should give attention to cordial superior / subordinate relationship and occasional update on communication skills.

**Keywords:** Effective Communication, Goal Achievement, Polytechnic Education

## 1. Introduction

Both developed and developing nations of the world attach much importance to education since it has been established over time that development is synonymous with education and research. For educational institutions to achieve their conceived goal of being a vehicle for development, efficient and effective leadership is required to drive the mandate. A very crucial consideration that will be an indispensable condition for achieving effectiveness, efficiency, professionalism, proficiency and productivity in public tertiary institutions is a workforce that is capable of delivering superior value to clients with skills, flexibility, speed and right attitude. Therefore, the gateway to breeding and maintaining a competent and motivated team of workers is effective communication.

The success or failure of any organization to a considerable extent depends on the efficiency of its communication process. Good management recognizes the fact that it has to transmit skills and knowledge to those in the organization through its directing, controlling, organizing ability, decision making, and coordinating techniques. The quality of communication skills possessed by the management of any institution determines the degree of accomplishment.

Despite the fact that positions of leadership in Nigerian

Polytechnics are filled by highly trained and educated personalities, it is not uncommon to experience incessant labor unrest and debacles in these institutions like their university counterparts. Sometimes, there are national disputes and some other times, there are in-house or chapter disputes to settle. Does this situation prevail because the workers are dissatisfied with the communication process? How satisfied are the workers with the communication practices in Polytechnics? What impact does the degree of communication practice have on the employee satisfaction? These are the questions which the objectives of this study sought to answer. It was also hypothesized that the achievement of organizational goals does not depend on the effective communication between management and staff.

This study is significant in the sense that it provides additional resource for superior and subordinate staff of Nigerian public Polytechnics to recognize the fact that they need to be updated with communication skills necessary for achieving results efficiently, effectively, mutually and smoothly.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### 2.1. Effective Communication

Effective communication occurs when its outcome is the result of intentional or unintentional information sharing,

which is interpreted between multiple entities and acted on in a desired way. When the desired effect is not achieved, factors such as barriers to effective communication are explored, with the intention to discover how the communication has been made ineffective [1]. Communication in an institution of learning is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another. It involves a sender transmitting an idea, information, or feeling to a receiver [2]. As observed by [3] and [4], effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. Many of the problems that occur in an organization are either the direct result of people failing to communicate or using processes, which lead to confusion and causing good plans to fail. Effective communication is a very essential tool in administration [5]

## **2.2. Theories of Organizational Communication**

Communication in an organization is associated with classical theories of management. The classical theories focus on organizational structure. They emphasize such aspects as optimal organizational performance plans, organizational power relationships, and compartmentalization of different organizational units [6] Fredrick Taylor, Max Weber and Henri Fayol are renowned protagonists of classical theories. These schools of thought cannot be overlooked when talking about effective communication system in the institutions of learning.

Frederick Taylor created the idea of “scientific management”, which is a management style that focuses on producing outcomes and high orientation on management. It tends to weaken the competitive power of the individual worker and thwarts the formation of shop groups and weakens group solidarity; hence discouraging the actual voicing of the workers’ ideas and complaints and democratic consideration and adjustment of grievances. This management approach therefore prevents effective communication model which gives room for free flow of information within the organization.

Max Weber felt that bureaucracy was the best way to select authority. It is based on criterion and standard for the task rather than other variables such as family relationship or popularity. According to Weber, bureaucracy should be synonymous with order, consistency, reason, and reliability. Though it is argued that this management style remains the best for public originations, it contributes to delays and bottlenecks in the communication process.

Henri Fayol believed that there are principles of management, which include unity of direction, unity of command, authority, order, subordination of individual interest to the general interests, scalar chain. He also felt that classical perspectives allow for control and command. Fayol believes that organizations must limit their communication to precise and explicit words for task design and implementation. Thus, communication is not spontaneous but planned and centralized to give room for cohesion.

Theories of organization and communication should enhance our ability to articulate alternative ways of approaching and acting on practical issues [7, [8]. A management structure that allows for flexibility in

communication enhances employee satisfaction and performance.

## **2.3. Flow of Communication Network**

The Centre for Teaching Excellence [9] defines managerial communication network as the process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of an organization to another, an integrating device bringing together frequently conflicting elements of an organization to secure cooperative group. Thus, [8] delineates the types of communication flow to include vertical, horizontal, diagonal or cross sectional, be it written or oral. The vertical communication flows downward from the top to bottom of the organizational hierarchy and in feedback, flows upward from bottom to top management, e. g. from the Governing Council to Management to Deans to HODs to Line staff). Horizontal communication occurs among sectional heads on the same or similar level of authority such as deans or HODs while diagonal or cross sectional communication is the exchange of ideas or information that cuts across units on different levels of authority and responsibilities. Where information flows from the superior to the subordinate only without a feedback, it is known as one way communication but where a feedback system is allowed, there is a two-way communication model. A two way communication system is more effective than the one-way as the former allows for interactions, questions, suggestions and explicit feedback [10]. If the subordinates are allowed to air their views, it enhances understanding, confidence and commitment.

## **2.4. Enhancing Effective Communication**

The reasons for most of the breakdown of harmony in the Polytechnic are connected with the quality of communication system, [1] have observed that misunderstanding often ensues when there are barriers in communication link between management and staff. Some of these communication barriers may include environmental factors, organization’s structural design, and attitudinal behaviors of leaders, physiological factors, interpersonal skills, language styles and emotional factors.

Identifying and minimizing the causes of ineffective communication is a golden step to enhancing effective communication. Building an efficient and effective communication system is a solid foundation for maintaining industrial peace and improving staff satisfaction and loyalty. [11] and [12] suggest a number of attitudes that enhance effective communication in any goal oriented organization. Transmitting message in clear terms, active listening, an uninterrupted feedback system, occasional refresher training on communication skills, among others, are good keys for achieving desirable level of communication in the Polytechnics. In their contribution, [13] suggest audience analysis, language style, review process and logical planning of message as ways for maintaining good communication link between management and staff of institutions.

### 3. Methodology

The objective of this study was to determine the impact of effective communication on staff motivation and the achievement of organizational goals. It was hypothesized that the achievement of organizational goals is not dependent on effective communication between management and staff.

A cross sectional survey technique was adopted in this study. The respondents were drawn from one federal polytechnic and two state polytechnics. A total of 170 staff out of which 102 responded adequately made up the sample chosen from different departments of the polytechnics of study. The sampling technique was based on convenience and the size was determined by [14] model,  $n = N/1+N(e)2$ .

Data were collected with the use of structured questionnaire containing a set of questions deliberately designed to elicit response on the effectiveness of communication practice with the corresponding staff satisfaction and performance. The response criteria to determine the extent to which communication functions are noticeable were set at 10-point scale ranging from 1 (Extremely poor) to 10 (Extremely good). Similarly, the evidence of the outcome of the communication functions in achieving organizational objectives was measured on 10-point scale from 1 (Extremely poor) to 10 (Extremely good). At least, nine advantages and functions of effective communication advanced by [15] were adopted as the variables of interest in the study.

Determining the impact of communication on the achievement of organizational objectives, a Pearson Product Correlation was performed between noticeable communication functions and their apparent outcome with the aid of online resources provided by Social Science Statistics at [www.socscistatistics.com](http://www.socscistatistics.com).

### 4. Results and Discussions

As a pretest for determining the employees' knowledge about the contribution of effective communication to achievement of organizational goal congruence, the

respondents were asked to comment on the relative advantages of communication. The respondents agreed that effective communication system in an institution is of great advantages (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Relative Advantages of Effective Managerial communication in Polytechnics.

	SD	D	UN	A	SA	X	St.D
Enhances superior – subordinate relationship (team building)	0	0	0	58	44	4.44	0.499
Increases productivity	2	13	16	47	24	3.76	1.03
Minimizes workplace diversity	7	18	2	59	16	3.57	1.16
Boosts employee morale and satisfaction on the job	7	10	0	40	45	4.02	1.21
Reduces conflicts	12	27	6	35	22	3.26	1.38
Helps in achieving goals	0	0	0	69	33	4.33	0.47
Better acceptance of ideas	6	32	25	19	20	3.15	1.24
Helps to save time	11	21	24	20	26	3.25	1.33
Facilitates easy promotion of staff	3	30	29	28	12	3.14	1.07

Field Survey 2015

These include enhancing superior – subordinate relationship (team building), increasing productivity, minimizing workplace diversity, boosting employee morale and satisfaction on the job and achieving goals at minimum costs. All these factors have mean rating of between 3.57 and 4.44 with maximum SD of 1.21 which means 'AGREE'. The result of this analysis is in line with the opinion of [3]. It is not an exaggeration to say that effective communication is the pivot of success in tertiary institutions, especially in the polytechnics. Timely communication of policies and programs is a great catalyst to successful achievement of organizational objectives. [15].

**Table 2.** Attainment Status of Communication Functions in Polytechnic.

Communication Functions	Attainment Scores										x	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Enhances superior – subordinate relationship (team building)	0	0	0	5	20	12	7	14	34	10	7.41	1.89
Increases employee productivity	0	0	7	5	2	4	20	32	21	11	7.53	1.88
Minimizes workplace diversity	0	4	12	17	16	2	27	8	12	4	5.91	2.21
Boosts employee morale and satisfaction on the job	0	0	5	10	15	0	4	32	13	23	7.45	2.25
Reduces conflicts	12	27	6	3	2	5	27	17	3	0	4.74	2.77
Helps in achieving goals	0	0	0	16	14	3	15	31	17	6	7.02	1.89
Better acceptance of ideas	6	3	23	19	20	1	28	2	0	0	4.61	1.86
Helps to save time	0	0	1	0	14	6	19	12	23	27	7.99	1.81
Facilitates easy promotion of staff	9	19	12	28	12	3	9	10	0	0	4.08	2.10

Field Survey 2015

Assessing how far the advantages of communication have been noticeable in the institutions (Table 2), measured on a 10-point ranking ranging from 1 (Extremely poor) to 10 (Extremely good), the respondents viewed as 'Good' the assertion that effective communication increases employee

productivity ( $x = 7.53$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ) and helps to save time ( $x = 7.99$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ). On the other hand, they consider as 'Moderately Good' that it enhances superior – subordinate relationship or team building ( $x = 7.41$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ), boosts employee morale and satisfaction on the job ( $x = 7.45$ ,  $SD =$

2.25), and helps in achieving goals ( $x = 7.02$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ).

The implication of this result is a revelation that the practice of communication system in Polytechnics is noticeable and yielding dividend.

There was evidence that effective communication contributed to achievement of the institutions' objectives (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Contribution of Communication Functions to Organizational Achievement.

Communication Functions	Attainment Scores										$x$	$SD$
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Enhances superior – subordinate relationship (team building)	0	0	0	8	18	12	44	20	0	0	6.48	1.23
Increases employee productivity	0	0	1	15	24	1	33	16	10	2	6.44	1.71
Minimizes workplace diversity	0	3	2	5	16	26	35	10	4	1	6.25	1.49
Boosts employee morale and satisfaction on the job	0	2	0	8	10	18	29	20	11	4	6.82	1.67
Reduces conflicts	0	0	2	17	24	3	15	9	18	14	6.81	2.20
Helps in achieving goals	0	0	0	0	13	18	22	12	27	10	7.48	1.59
Better acceptance of ideas	6	24	13	8	20	12	8	11	0	0	4.37	2.12
Helps to save time	0	0	0	0	10	7	17	15	33	20	8.10	1.57
Facilitates easy promotion of staff	5	0	10	6	12	3	46	20	0	0	6.05	1.95

Field Survey 2015

Rating from 1 – 10 point scale, the respondents admitted that the outcome of the functions of communication system in the Polytechnic shows evidence of significant contribution. Those functions whose contributions were rated from Slightly Good to Moderately Good with  $SD$  of 1.23 – 1.95 include:

- Enhances superior – subordinate relationship (team building) (6.48)
- Increases employee productivity (6.44)
- Minimizes workplace diversity (6.25)
- Boosts employee morale and satisfaction on the job (6.82)
- Reduces conflicts (6.81)
- Helps in achieving goals (7.48)
- Helps to save time (8.10)
- Facilitates easy promotion of staff (6.05)

Contributing, [15] was emphatic on the role communication plays in an organized system like the polytechnics. Both the staff and management are aware of this and are able to identify when it makes impact [15].

## 5. Testing of Hypothesis

$H_0$ : That achievement of organizational goals is not dependent on effective communication between management and staff.

$H_1$ : That achievement of organizational goals is dependent on effective communication between management and staff

This hypothesis was tested by correlating Noticeable Practice of Effective Communication Functions in Polytechnics (Table 2) with Evidence of Contribution of Effective Communication Functions to Organizational Achievement (Table 3)

This test which was performed with the aid of Social Science Statistics template measures the strength of linear association between practice and outcome of communication in the Polytechnics, where the value  $r = 1$  means a perfect positive correlation and the value  $r = -1$  means a perfect negative correlation (See table 4)

**Table 4.** Correlation of Communication Functions with Organizational Goal Achievement.

Communication Functions	Practice	Contribution
Enhances superior – subordinate relationship (team building)	7.41	6.48
Increases productivity	7.53	6.44
Minimizes workplace diversity	5.91	6.25
Boosts employee morale and satisfaction on the job	7.45	6.82
Reduces conflicts	4.74	6.81
Helps in achieving goals	7.02	7.48
Better acceptance of ideas	4.61	4.37
Helps to save time	7.99	8.10
Facilitates easy promotion of staff	4.08	6.05

R Calculation

$$r = \frac{\sum((X - M_x)(Y - M_y))}{\sqrt{((SS_x)(SS_y))}} \quad r = 7.893 / \sqrt{(17.812)(8.515)} = 0.6409 \quad r = 0.6409$$

The test result is significant at  $p < 0.05 = 0.00001^{**}$ .

This is a moderate positive correlation, which means that achievement of organizational goal is dependent to some extent on the internal communication functions in the workplace. This is in tune with [11] that draws a close association between effective internal managerial communication and the level of achievement of organizational objectives.

The test result is significant at  $p < 0.05 = 0.00001^{**}$ . Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate. This means achievement of organizational goal is dependent on effective internal communication between management and staff

It is clearly stated that effective communication enhances team building in the workplace as well as increases productivity, boosts workers' morale and job satisfaction [12].

Therefore, the polytechnic management must realize the importance of effective communication in the conduct of their affairs. There can be no better way to carry subordinates along than to keep them informed adequately about existing rules and procedures and changes that could affect them in the discharge of their responsibilities. Misunderstanding as a

result of ineffective communication system is often responsible for the breakdown of industrial harmony.

There are certainly barriers to effective communication in any organization and these must be surmounted to give way to credible intercom for the purpose of harmonious conduct of the organization's activities, directed at goal congruence. [2] and [4] are synonymous on the need to address challenges faced in internal communication set up. They listed stress, noise, poor listening, pre-conclusion and poorly coded message as some of the major obstacles to effective internal communication in institutions. Leader/subordinate relationship and lack of motivation affect the communication process. Messages sent down to subordinate staff are rarely carefully planned and selected. [11] suggests training as one of the ways for improving internal communication in Polytechnics.

## 6. Conclusion

Effective communication is a very critical prerequisite for maintaining harmonious working relationship in the polytechnics. The frequent disputes recorded in the polytechnics are not unconnected with absence or inadequate communication structure. Streamlined chain of command, cordial superior/ subordinate relationship, management consideration of subordinates interest and exposing staff to training in communication programmes are essential ingredients for maintaining an efficient and effective communication. There should be culture of responsive management to complaints and grievances. The implication of poor internal communication system is made manifest in poor organizational culture and non-realization of predetermined objectives.

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