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*Original Paper*

## Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Performance and Communication in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study investigated the performance of the small scale enterprises in Nigeria with special focus on the role of communication. Vertical and horizontal communications were identified and the questionnaire was used to harvest information from the respondents who are mainly SMEs owners in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data collected. The result of the analysis indicated that vertical communication which is the communication from the top management level to other staff is more germane for the SMEs performance. Notwithstanding, the analysis further showed that the combinations of the two are also important for the performance and success of the SMEs.

**Keywords:** Small Medium Scale Enterprises, Performance, Vertical Communication, Horizontal Communication

### 1. Introduction

Despite the importance associated with communication for improving organizational performance, the level of effective communication is very low in most business organizations which is evident in the increase in level of grapevine that are unhealthy for the achievement of the organizations performance. With communication gap in the organization, informal communication could do more harm than good to the organization especially when it is not guided with rules and regulations (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). Inappropriate and ineffective communication whether upwards, downward and horizontal in nature could also bring about a negative effect on morale, productivity, and interdepartmental working relationship (Haiemann, 2011). View differently, inefficient communication or partial communication in which management gives directions to employees without any care to get feedback through the upward communication can be detrimental to the organization, as naturally communication will flow through an informal means which could be a wrong and untrue information that could affect decision making towards employee motivation, organizational efficiency, productivity, sales turnover and profitability among other factors that indicates organizational performance.

There have not been many state level studies in Nigeria on communication and organization performance and most the available studies focused more on the employee performance which is an aspect of organizational performance. Related literatures available and accessible include internal communication strategy and performance (Okuneye, Lasisi, Omoniyi, & Shodiya, 2014); competitive advantage through effective communication in a global environment (Uche & Joan, 2018); impact of effective communication on employee performance (Stavros, 2020; Rukmana, Sophia, & Elfia, 2018; Nebo, Nwankwo, & Okonkwo, 2015, Ong, Delanie, Tan, Maizaitulaidawati, & Lim, 2019; Temidayo, Adebayo, & Linus, 2018); impact of effective business communication on performance of construction organization (Leje, Kasimu, & Asimiyu, 2019); effect of employee communication on organizational performance (Otoo, 2015; Brenda, Esther, & Agnes (2015); effect of communication strategy on organizational performance (Caroline, 2014); the impact of organizational communication on job performance (Yasini, 2015); role of communication in enhancing employees' organizational commitment (Wang, 2011); role and impact of business communication on employee performances and job satisfaction. Therefore, this study attempts to assess the impact of communication on organization

performance using business organizations in Ekiti state as a case study.

## 2. Literature Review

Stavros (2020) examined impact of effective business communication on employee performance. The study was notably designed for effect of horizontal, upward and downward communications on employee performance in Greece. They employed primary data collected through questionnaire from 110 employees of different banking institutions in Greece. They analyzed data with multiple regression analysis which revealed that effective communication has positive effect on employee performance. Therefore, the study concluded that effective communication in any business entity has a great influence on their employee performance. Thus, the study recommended good flow of information across the organization to as to improve employee performances and business profitability in the long run.

Leje, Kasimu and Asimiyu (2019) assessed impact of effective communication on performance of construction organization. The study specifically examined the degree of agreement to which effective communication affects performance of construction organization from the consultants and contractors' viewpoint. The study employed primary data collected through questionnaire from 200 construction contractors and consultants from the Bureau of Public Procurement database. Data were analyzed using Relative Importance Index and Kendall coefficient of concordance, which revealed that improve productivity in the organization, reduce project delay, better safety precautions on construction sites, better use of materials and equipment and improve professional commitment to the organization are the top five impacts of effective communication towards the performance of construction organization. It was also shown in the study that high agreement between construction professionals occurred in the ranking of the impacts of effective communication towards the performance of the construction organization. Thus, the study recommended that stakeholders in the construction organization should adopt the use of effective communication tools and instruments for organizational performance.

Rukmana, Sophia and Elfia (2018) checked the impact of organization communication on employee performance through employees' work motivation. The study specifically analyzed the condition of organizational communication, employee motivation and performance as well as the effect of organizational communication on employee performance through employee motivation at PT Putri Panda Unit II Tulugagung, Indonesia. The study employed data collected from 72 respondents which was analyzed using path analysis. The study showed Condition organizational communication in the category of obvious, employee motivation in the high category and employee performance in the high category. The study also revealed that there is positive effect of organizational communication directly and indirectly on employee performance through employee motivation. Therefore, they recommended that Increase or improve organizational communication by organizing joint activities outside working hours.

Brenda, Esther and Agnes (2015) assessed effect of employee communication on organization performance in Kenya's horticultural sector. The study employed primary data collected through questionnaire from 2460 employees of 14 flower farms in Kenya. The study analyzed data with descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis which revealed that communication facilitates exchange of information and opinion with the organization. The study also revealed that relationship between employee communication and organizational performance is statistically significant. Therefore, the study concluded that communication helps in improving the operational efficiency thus improving organizational performance. As such, the study recommended that organizations should develop effective communication strategies to facilitate passing of information both within and outside the organization thus improving performance.

Ayman (2013) checked the effect of training and information and communication technology on employee performance. The study specifically assessed the impact of training, information and communication technology on the quantity of work, quality of work and speed of work achievement. The study employed primary data collected through questionnaire from 120 managers of different departments in 15 pharmaceutical companies. The study analyzed data with descriptive statistics and regression analysis, which showed that training and information and communication technology have significant impact on the quality of work, quantity of work and speed of work achievement in

manufacturing companies. Therefore, the study concluded that training and information and communication technology have significant effect on employee performance. As such, the study recommended keeping an updated technology tools in pharmaceutical manufacturing companies which will help employees to perform their work accurately, efficiently and effectively.

Caroline (2014) checked the effect of communication strategies on organizational performance. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of four communication strategies on organizational performance of Kenya Port Authority. These communication strategies are open door policy, group effort, organization structure and formal channel of communication. The study employed primary data collected through questionnaire distributed to 200 employees of Kenya Port Authority. The study analyzed data using descriptive statistics which showed that organization structure and group effort have significant effect on organizational performance. Therefore, the study concluded that for any organizational performance to be effective the communication applied should be open, inclusive, two-way, result driven and multi-channeled. Thus, the study recommended that communication should flow in all directions in the organization, the clarity of language used should be concise and the person receiving the contents of the communication should pay attention.

Yasini (2015) investigated the impact of organizational communication on job performance in Tanzania. Particularly, the study assessed the benefit from implementation of effective communication in Tanzania Social action Fund (TASAF). The study employed primary data collected through questionnaire and interview from 100 respondents. Data were analyzed with which showed that there was a communication gap between employees and the management. The study also showed that the communication gap affect job performance through poor provision of services to the community they served. It was further revealed that apart from communication, others factors such as poor facilities, low salaries among employees and poor community supports affects organizational performance. Therefore, the study recommended that cooperative efforts should be made between the TASAF management, employees and the community; salaries among the TASAF workers should be improved; and facilities and other infrastructures should be provided time is to facilitate conducive-environment for workers to perform their duties.

### **3. Research Methods**

#### *3.1 Research Design*

This study will employ cross-sectional survey research design. This is because survey research design involves the study of group of people by collection and analysis of data from selected few people in the group considered to be representatives of the entire group. This means that survey research design allow the use of sampled population in the empirical study in place of the total population and the result can be used to generalize the situation in the total population since the sampled population represents the entire population of the study.

#### *3.2 Area of Study*

The area of the study is Ekiti state. Ekiti state is in south west region of Nigeria. Ekiti was declared a state in the country on 1 October 1996 alongside five other states in the country by the then military government under head of state, General Sani Abacha. As one of the newest states of the Nigeria federation, it was carved out of the territory of old Ondo state, and covers former 12 local government areas that made up Ekiti zone of old Ondo state. On creation, it had 16 local government areas, having had an additional four carved out of the old ones.

#### *3.3 Population of the Study*

The population of the study consists of all employees of business organizations in Ekiti state, Nigeria.

#### **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique that will be employed in this research work is random sampling. The study will randomly sample 100 employees of five (5) randomly selected SMEs including Oyato Bakery, Ayodel Ventures, Damod Water, Ramkay industries ltd, and Moyomola investment ltd.

### Model Specification

This study will specify an ANOVA model in which organizational performance of SMEs is the dependent variable, while both vertical communication and horizontal communication are the explanatory variables in the model. The model is thus presented in linear form below:

$$OP = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 VC + \alpha_2 HC + \mu$$

Where

OP= SMEs organizational Performance

VC=Vertical communication

HC-horizontal communication

$\mu$  =error term

$\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \alpha_2$  =constant terms

### Source of Data and Research Instrument

This study will make use of primary source of data collection, in order to make sure that relevant information is adequately obtained. The data will be collected through the use of a well-structured questionnaire that will be prepared and administered to the employees of the banking organizations in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The statements of close-ended questionnaire were phrased with a possible response continuum based on a likert-style. Five -point scale (1= strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). To encourage high response rate of respondents, anonymity of respondents was ensured and this was communicated to all respondents before they answered the questions. The questionnaire has two sections, section A which covers the demographic details of respondent while Section B contained questions that are directly related to the variable factors and the stated hypotheses for the purpose of this research work.

### Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The content of validity of the data collection instrument was determined through discussing the research instrument with the researcher experts in the field of study especially the researcher's supervisor. The valuable comments, corrections, suggestions given by the research experts will assist the validation of the instrument. Reliability is the level to which the employed set of research instruments causes consistent or balanced result. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed in ascertaining the reliability of the research instrument. In order to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, this study will employ Cronbach's alpha test (Numullay and Bernstein, 1994). This method will be used in an attempt to test the internal consistency in the items used in the study. The implication of the application of this measure is that the research instrument is acceptable and appropriate for the study.

### Method of data analysis

This study will employ descriptive analysis and inferential techniques of analysis such as descriptive analysis involving percentage and frequency analysis, correlation analysis and ANOVA regression analysis.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This aspect presents the results of the analysis carried out in the study an attempt to examine the impact of communication on organizational performance in Ekiti State. The presentation of the analysis entails the demographic details of sampled respondents, followed by the correlation and regression analysis. However, short discussion of findings will be made at the concluding part of the chapter.

### Demographic Details of the Respondents

This section presents the descriptive analysis of demographic details of respondents covered in the study. Details of the respondents presented include, sex of respondents, marital status, age, qualification as well as the years of experience.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Sex

| Variable | Detail       | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Sex      | Male         | 42         | 42.0         |
|          | Female       | 58         | 58.0         |
|          | <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

*Source: Field Survey (2021)*

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by sex. Notably, the result shows that 42 (42.0%) of the total respondents are male while 58(58.0%) are female. However, the result obviously shows that majority of respondents are female though there is no evidence of gender bias.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

| Variable       | Detail       | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Marital Status | Single       | 56         | 56.0         |
|                | Married      | 44         | 44.0         |
|                | <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

*Source: Field Survey (2021)*

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by marital status. The result therefore shows that 56(55.0%) of the total respondents are single while 44(44.0%) of the total sampled respondents are married. The result however shows that majority of the respondents sampled are single. This result might additionally help in ascertaining the fact about the study subject matter.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Variable | Detail             | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Age      | 25-35 YEARS        | 52         | 52.0         |
|          | 35-45 YEARS        | 27         | 27.0         |
|          | 50-55 YEARS        | 15         | 15.0         |
|          | 55 YEARS AND ABOVE | 6          | 6.0          |
|          | <b>Total</b>       | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

*Source: Field Survey (2021)*

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents by age. However, result shows that 52 (52.0%) of the total respondents are within the age bracket of 25-35, 27(27.0%) are within the age range of 35-45, 15 (15.0%) are within the age bracket of 50-55 years while 6 (6.0%) of the total respondents are within the age range of 55 years and above. The result evidently shows that majority of the sampled respondents are within the age range of 25-35 years.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by Qualification

| Variable                  | Detail              | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| Educational Qualification | PRIMARY EDUCATION   | 30         | 30.0         |
|                           | SECONDARY EDUCATION | 29         | 29.0         |
|                           | TERTIARY EDUCATION  | 41         | 41.0         |
|                           | <b>Total</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 4 reveals the distribution of respondents by qualification. Notably, the result shows that 30 (30.0%) of the total respondents are primary school certificate, 29 (29.0%) are secondary school certificate holder while 41 (41.0%) of the respondents are tertiary education certificate holder. The result therefore shows that majority of respondents sampled are tertiary education certificated holder. This connotes that majority of the respondents are learned and may have suitable answers to the set of questions raised in the study.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents by Years of Experience

| Variable          | Detail             | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Length of Service | 0-5 YEARS          | 11         | 11.0         |
|                   | 6-10 YEARS         | 65         | 65.0         |
|                   | 11-15 YEARS        | 12         | 12.0         |
|                   | 15 YEARS AND ABOVE | 12         | 12.0         |
|                   | <b>Total</b>       | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 5 presents the demographic details of respondents by the length of service. However, the result reveals that 11 (11.0%) of the total respondents have been in service between 0- 5 years. The result shows that 65 (65.0%) of the respondents have been in service for 6 to 10 years, 12 (12.0%) are experienced from 11 to 15 years while the remaining respondents are those who have been in service for 15 years and above. The greater percentage of the respondents is tailed toward respondents with 6 to 10 years of experience.

### Correlation Analyses

Table 6. Correlation Matrix

|    | OP       | VC       | HC |
|----|----------|----------|----|
| OP | 1        |          |    |
| VC | 0.879131 | 1        |    |
| HC | 0.693808 | 0.738774 | 1  |

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 6 presents the correlation coefficient for the pairs of variables used in the study. Specifically, the table reported coefficient statistics of 0.879131, 0.693808, 0.738774 for organizational performance and vertical communication, organizational performance and horizontal communication, vertical communication and horizontal communication respectively. The correlations result shows that there is a strong relationship between organizational performance and vertical communication which implies that the movement of the two explanatory variables are positive skewed. The correlation result also shows that there is a strong relationship between organizational performance and horizontal communication which also implies that organizational performance moves in same direction with horizontal communication. However, the correlation analysis reveals the strength of the association between the pairs of variables used in the study.

#### **Analysis of the impact of horizontal and vertical communication on organizational Performance of SMEs in Ekiti state,**

This section presents analysis of the effect of horizontal and vertical communication strategies on organizational performance of small and Medium scale enterprises in Ekiti State, the analysis showed the result of the ANOVA regression analysis conducted in this regard.

Table 7. ANOVA regression estimation

Dependent Variable: OP

| Variable | Coefficient | Std Error | t-statistics | Prob.  |
|----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------|
| C        | 4.700692    | 3.592419  | 1.308503     | 0.2042 |
| VC       | 0.617204    | 0.114198  | 5.404684     | 0.0000 |
| HC       | 0.147762    | 0.226076  | 0.653593     | 0.5201 |

R-Squared=0.777197

Adjusted R-Square=0.756942

F-statistics=38.37096

Prob(F-statistics)= 0.000000

Table 7 above shows the regression estimated values for the pairs of variables used in the study. Notably, the results revealed regression coefficient of 0.617204 and 0.147762 and probability values of 0.0000, 0.5201 for vertical communication and horizontal communication respectively. The regression result reveals that vertical communication exerts insignificant positive impact on organizational performance in Eki State with the regression estimated value of 0.617204 and P-value of 0.0000 (<0.05) level of significance. This result implies that increase in vertical communication will result to increase in organizational performance. The regression result also shows that horizontal communication exerts insignificant positive impact on organizational performance in Ekiti State with the coefficient estimated figure of 0.147762 and P-value of 0.5201 (>0.05) level of significance. This implies that increase in horizontal communication will trigger a corresponding increase in organizational performance.

R-square value reported in table 7 stood at 0.777197 which connotes that about 77% of the systematic variation in organizational performance can be jointly explained in both vertical communication and horizontal communication, while the remaining 23% can be explained by the error term.

Table 7 reported an f-statistics and probability values of 38.37096, and 0.000000 respectively thus confirming the joint significant impact of the two adopted explanatory variables on organizational performance. However, the F-statistics and probability values reported in table 4,7 reflects that the model is a good fit, with the probability value of the reported statistics less than 0.05.

### Analysis of the Effectiveness of Communication Strategies Used by SMEs in Ekiti State

This section present analysis showing the level of effectiveness of communication strategies used by small and medium scale enterprises surveyed in the study.

Table 8. Effectiveness of Communication Strategies Used by SMEs in Ekiti State

| s/n | Items   | SA         | A          | UD         | D          | SD         |
|-----|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1   | Marketing strategies are properly implemented in SMEs     | 32(32.0%)  | 32 (32.0%) | 12 (12.0%) | 9 (9.0%)   | 15 (15.0%) |
| 2   | Marketing strategies is engaged to attract more customers | 9 (9.0%)   | 39 (39.0%) | 17 (17.0)  | 15 (15.0%) | 20 (20.0%) |
| 3   | Marketing strategies is used as designed in SMEs          | 10 (10.0%) | 39 (39.0%) | 9 (8.0%)   | 16 (16.0%) | 17 (17.0%) |
| 4   | Marketing strategies of SMEs hap retain customers         | 21 (21.0%) | 36(36.0%)  | 9 (9.0%)   | 17 (17.0%) | 17 (17.0%) |
| 5   | Marketing strategies used in SMEs is cost effective       | 19 (19.0%) | 34 (34.0%) | 8 (8.0%)   | 19 (19.0%) | 20 (20.0%) |

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 8 above revealed the result based on the research question in quest to know how effective communication strategies are used by SMEs in Ekiti State. Notably, 32 (32.0%) of the total respondents strongly agree that marketing strategies are properly implemented in their SMEs, 32 (32.0%) agree, 12 (12.-%) undecided, 9 (9.0%) disagree while the remaining 15 (15.0%) strongly disagree. Based on result, majority attested that marketing strategies are properly implemented in SMEs. Result based on the second assertion revealed that 9 (9.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that marketing strategies is engaged to attract more customers, 39 (39.0%) agree, 17 (17.0) undecided, 15 (15.0%) disagree while 20 (20.0%) strongly disagree. with the result evidence, majority of the respondents affirmed that marketing strategies is engaged to attract more customers. Notably, the result revealed the responses of the sampled respondents with respect to the third statement. However, the result revealed that only 10 (10.0%) of the total respondents strongly agree that marketing strategies is used as designed in SMEs, 39 (39.0%) agree, 9 (8.0%) undecided, 16 (16.0%) disagree while 17 (17.0%) strongly disagree. The table revealed the result based on the fourth statement and 21 (21.0%) of the respondents strongly agree, 36( 36.0%) agree, 9 (9.0%) undecided while 17 (17.0%) strongly disagree. The result therefore shows that majority of the sampled respondents agree that marketing strategies of SMEs hap retain customers. Lastly, the result revealed that 19 (19.0%) of the total respondent strongly agree that marketing strategies used in SMEs is cost effective, 34 (34.0%), agree, 8 (8.0%) undecided, 19 (19.0%) disagree while 20 (20.0%) strongly disagree. Based on the overall results, greater percentage of the responses are skewed towards the affirmation that there are effective communication strategies used in their respective SMEs. This reflect the effectiveness of information flow from the superior to the subordinates also from a particular unit or team to another.

### 5. Discussion of Findings

Based on the analysis conducted in the above tables in an attempt to examine the impact of communication on organizational performance in Ekiti State, the following discoveries were made:

First, the result of the analysis showed that vertical communication exerts significant positive impact on organizational performance in Ekiti State with the coefficient figure of 0.617204 alongside the P-value of 0.0000 (>0.05) level of significance. This reflects the increase in organizational performance

as a result of increase in vertical communication. However, the significant effect may be explained as a result of perfect flow of information from the top level management to the low level management which may in turn affect the expected outcome thus shows reflects a consensus on the organization's priorities. Therefore, since the P-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis that vertical information exerts significant effect on organizational performance of SMEs in Ekiti State.

Secondly, the result of the analysis shows that horizontal communication exerts insignificant positive impact on organizational performance of SMEs in Ekiti State with the coefficient estimated value of 0.147762 and P-value of 0.5201(>0.05) level of significance. This result reflects a less quality of information exchange occurring directly between people working in the environment of the organization. The insignificant effect as the result revealed could mean an ineffective communication within a team in the organization that which may affect workers in the aspect of task coordination, working together as well as resolving conflicts that may arise in the organization. therefore, ineffective horizontal communication is prone to significant prejudicial effect on the organizational performance of SMEs in Ekiti State. Therefore, since the P-value is greater than 0.05 level of significance, we accept the null hypothesis that horizontal communication exerts insignificant effect on organizational performance of SMEs in Ekiti State.

Finally, based on the responses gathered from the sampled respondents, the result showed that communication strategies have often enhanced the communication flow from the top management to the low level management. This reflects the magnitude and the potency of communication strategies to the development of most SMEs in Ekiti State and the significance of these strategies on their level of performance.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings of the study revealed that communication is an integral component that helps organization in achieving its set of goals. The flow of information between and among individual is paramount in the day to day activities of any business. However, communication from the top level management cannot be undermined as well as the communication among various units of the organization. Inappropriate and ineffective communication whether upwards, downward and horizontal in nature could also bring about a negative effect on morale, productivity, and interdepartmental working relationship. However, both vertical and horizontal communication according to the analysis conducted, are significant tools for measuring organizational performance.

## 7. Recommendations

(1) Management should device means through which a top down communication from the right channels can be conveyed in order to reduce the level of communication problem and conflicts arising in the organization

(2) Management should ensure that there is effective information flow among various units or teams within the organization through the conscious cognizance of ambiguity in any form of information transferred among individuals within the organization.

(3) Management should build up strategies that would enhance effective and efficient communication flow from the top level managers to the low level managers and also among various units in the organization so as to reduce the rate of problems arising from ineffective communication in order to ensure better improvement in the performance of the organization.

(4) Management should device communication strategies in the manner that would help in enhancing the flow of information from the top management to the low level management as well as across various units of the organization to foster a high scaling improvement in the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Ekiti State.

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