Communication and Productivity in Vodafone-Ghana, Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana

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Abstract

Communication helps to establish and disseminate goals and facilitates the development of plans for the achievement of goals. Communication assists in the management and utilization of human resource and other resources in the most effective and efficient manner. It also helps a manager to direct and motivate employees. The main objective of the paper was to examine the relationship between effective communication and employee productivity. A random selection of 106 respondents, made up of 6 management staff and 100 employees were selected for the study. Self-administered questionnaires and face-to-face interviews were used to acquire primary data from the respondents. The study found out that emails as mode of communication were widely used by employees, although they encountered certain lapses in the process. Also communication between management and employees was cordial. Some recommendations were made to address policies with regard to effective communication methods in organizations.

Keywords: communication, productivity, human resource, employee relations, telecommunication

1. Introduction

An organization is a group of people associated for business, political, professional, religious, athletic, social, or other purposes. They exchange information, ideas, plans, make decisions, rules, proposals, contracts and agreements. Communication scholars have identified communication as a tool that enhances professional success. Communication helps to establish and disseminate the goals. It facilitates the development of plans for the achievement of goals. Communication assists in the management and utilization of human resource and other resources in the most effective and efficient manner. It also helps a manager to lead, direct and motivate employees. Smith and Taylor (2002) stated that poor communication accounts for a multitude of workplace woes including interpersonal conflict, wasted money and effort, poor productivity, legal exposure, low morale and high turnover but the types and causes of communication problems vary as widely as their impact. Some difficulties will arise because of ineffective relationships and information flow between managers and the employees they supervise. Other problems are endemic to the organization itself, either caused by a breakdown in communication by management to employees, or the lack of the proper systems and infrastructure to enable effective exchange of information.

Mullins (2006) stated that, people in organizations typically spend over 75% of their time in an interpersonal situation. Thus, it is no surprise to find that at the root of a large number of organizational problems is poor communication. Effective communication is an essential component of organizational success whether it is at the interpersonal, intergroup, intra-group, organizational or external levels. Communication can be considered as a personal process that involves the transfer of information and also involves some behavioural input.

The primary challenge for the industry today is how to effectively design and deploy consistent, personalized communications across the growing range of communication delivery channels and to leverage valuable customer information throughout the enterprise. Implementing an enterprise personalization platform is, perhaps, the greatest opportunity to simultaneously cut costs, grow revenue, and increase the loyalty and satisfaction of customers and other stakeholders. Leading telecommunication companies are taking a careful look at the way they communicate with all their stakeholders and understand that effective communication can drive service

improvements and customer satisfaction, thereby, becoming a strategic resource and competitive differentiator. In order to effect change, organizations must be organized around customers rather than products.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In today's fiercely competitive environment, providing timely and relevant communication is a critical component of any effective customer service strategy. Nonetheless, even though much research has been published on the relationship between communication and employee productivity, most of this has focused on North American and Western European settings, leaving information from Africa particularly scanty (Abugre, 2011a). Abugre (2011b) emphasises that this lack of literature on Africa is challenging, especially in the context of globalization and the increasing establishment of international corporations in African settings. These corporations, as revealed by (Abugre, 2011b), requires adequate knowledge of the culture and management systems in developing economies like Africa, in order to perform effectively. This article contributes to the literature base on communication and productivity by using Vodafone Ghana, a nationwide telecommunications company in Ghana as a case. As one of the largest communication networks in Ghana, Vodafone Ghana employs a large number of people across different regions of Ghana. Consequently, effective communication, which has been argued to be important for organisational performance and management effectiveness (Abugre, 2011b; Owusu-Boateng & Jeduah, 2014) is crucial for the continued success of Vodafone. In other words, because employees of the organisation are spread across different regions of Ghana, it is essential that management communicate effectively with these employees in order to enhance performance. Subsequently, this study set out to analyse communication and productivity at Vodafone Ghana by exploring the following research questions. What are communication procedures at Vodafone? How is management and employees' relations improved through organisational communication? What are the problems associated with organisational communication and how are the lapses associated with organisational communication identified? It was in the light of the above that the study sought to investigate the effect of communication on productivity in Vodafone-Ghana in the Ashanti region.

1.2 Objectives of the Paper

The main objective of the paper was to examine the relationship between effective communication and employee productivity. The specific objectives were to identify the organizational communication procedures at Vodafone-Ghana, examine how management and employees' relations had been improved through organizational communication and identify lapses associated with organizational communication in Vodafone-Ghana Limited.

1.3 Significance of the Study

A study of this nature would not only add to the existing canon of knowledge in the telecommunication marketing but also help the academia to appreciate the nature of the communication gaps between the industry and the public so that appropriate models can be developed to remedy the problem. In addition, it would help marketing researchers and other related fields to know the appropriate communication techniques and medium to use in marketing of their products to the target group. Again, the study would help the authors to appreciate the way Ghanaians learn and decode messages so that effective communication techniques could be designed to educate the public on issues and also enact appropriate laws on practices in the industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Communication: Types and Functions

Communication comes from the Latin word 'communicare', which means to share. It is fascinating to note that the French word 'communis' means common or to hold in common (Banahene & Sarfo, 2008). Simply put, communication is a negotiation of a shared meaning. Great many authorities in the field of communication have different perspectives about it. Wickham (2004) identifies three types of interpersonal communication as oral, written and visual communication. Face-to-face (oral) is a verbal type of communication considered as the highest and richest. It involves capturing patterns of thought and giving meanings to words or phrases. This includes both formal and informal discussion, where issues are openly discussed. Speeches, informal rumour or grapevine are other forms of oral communication. The advantage of oral communication, according to Robins and Judge (2007) is that, there is instant feedback. Although face to face is the richest type of communication, it cannot be as good as written communications when the message is for record purposes (Robins & Judge, 2007). They identify other forms of verbal communication as electronic communication transmitted over the radio, telephone line and audio-visual communication. Messages such as rules and regulations, policies, announcement of changes in procedure, can be in writing. It is also useful in communicating instructions about how to use

machinery or manuals to individuals and organizations. This may include memos, letters, fax transmissions, electronic mail text messages, and organizational periodicals, notices placed on bulletin, boards or any written records that are placed on notice boards. Robins and Judge (2007) maintain that, compared to oral communication, more care is taken in written communications, but their drawback is that they are time-consuming, and lack instant feedbacks. This is why Block and Starks (1999) and Verner (2000) think that written communications should be evaluated for clarity, readability and specificity. Other forms of communication include visual communication such as a stare, a smile, a frown and a glance. Body movement, the physical distance between the sender and the receiver, as well as the intonation are examples of other non-verbal forms of communication. Robins and Judge (2007) emphasised that, intonation can change meaning of messages, while physical distance between two people can suggest intimacy, or business. Apart from these, they also identified other forms of non-verbal communications: electronic mail, instant messages, Intranet and extranet.

2.1.1 Communication in Organizations

Wickham (2004) stated that communication is simply not passive in an organization's life: it is the very things that make organizations happen. This is true because people cannot make the right decision unless they have the right information. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) further emphasized that communication is the most visible or audible of marketing activities in the service industries. According to Robins and Judge (2007) and Mullins (2006) formal organizational networks can be very complicated. An organizational structure can be flat, tall, geographical, or divisional in structure. Considering the contrast in these structures, it would not be difficult to predict how communication in these organizations will differ. Subsequently, the direction of communication in organizations can be upward, downward or lateral. Robins and Judge (2007) have explained that downward communication is the flow of information from higher level of a group or organization to a lower level. They also noted that, downward communication is normally not oral. Thus, the main purpose of downward communication is to direct, command and instruct. Upward communication, on the other hand, is the flow of opinions, ideas, complaints and suggestions and other information from subordinates in organizations to another at a higher level. Lateral communication, according to Robins and Judge (2007), is the kind of communication which takes place among the same level. This saves time and facilitates co-ordination. They added that managers conceptualise lateral communication as good, when they occur with knowledge and support of superiors, but can also create dysfunctional conflicts. Outward communication is the exchange of information between an organization and its stakeholders.

2.1.2 Functions of Communication in Organizations

Robins and Judge (2007) highlight six (6) major functions of communication in organizations: Controlling, Co-ordinating, Motivating, Planning, Expressing and Information sharing. In addition, they declare communication as the most important tool through which an administrator has to achieve his/her objective and help to accomplish tasks that require co-ordination. He further stresses the social use as disseminating information, motivating and promoting understanding and aiding decision-making, thus, reinforcing the views of Robins and Judge (2007). Again, through communication, decisions and policies are made and reviewed from time to time to ensure efficiency in attaining the set goals. Communication then becomes crucial in transferring the intentions of the organization to all sectors within it. Leaning on the thoughts of these aforementioned researchers, the authors indicated that the main function of communication is to help organizations achieve their aims and objectives. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) maintain that through communication, marketers explain and promote the value proposition of their firm. They indicated that existing or prospective customers are informed about service features and benefits. Moreover, the price, channels, place and time and process of service delivery are made known. Lovelock (2002) maintains that it adds tangibility to the service offering. Heinonen and Strandvik (2005) learning on Gronroos (2000) argue that, communication is essential part of service and can, consequently, create or destroy customer perceived value. They added that communication effects, in addition to technical quality of service, shape the image of the organization in the minds of customers, as well as prospective clients.

Taken together, the functions of communication as discussed above have implications for organizational performance and productivity. Gaither (1992) defines productivity as the amount of products or services produced with the resources used. Also, productivity is defined as a ratio of a measure of output to a measure of some or all the resources used to produce this output. Defined in this way, one or a number of input measures can be taken and compared with one or a number of output measures. Essentially, productivity is a ratio used to measure how well an organization (or individual, industry, country) converts input resources (labour, materials, machines, etc.) into goods and services. Management productivity in a time period is usually measured as

quantity of products or services produced/Amount of resources used. Thus, productivity varies with the amount of production relative to the amount of resources used (Gaither 1992). Productivity may be measured at various levels: organizational, unit, product line, or any other level that is logical (Milkovich & Glueck, 1985). When attempts are made to include all inputs and all outputs in a system the measure is called Total Productivity Measure (TPM). Gaither (1992) explains in his definition that the inputs used in a process can be hours of labour, units of capital and quantities of raw materials compared with the consequent output. However, partial productivity measures are established by developing ratios of total output to one or more input categories. For example, labour productivity will be calculated as total output/labour input. According to Gaither (1992) and also in the Accel Team web page, productivity can be increased in a number of ways: increase production using the same amount of resources, increase production using smaller amount of resources, reduce the amount of resources used while keeping the same production or increasing it and allow the amount of resources used to increase as long as production increases. To attain improvement in productivity, there has to be productivity improvement objectives. These objectives can be expressed and results measured in terms of one or more of these basic yardsticks: quantity, quality, time, or the dollar value. He added that the objectives set should be specific. Hornbruch (1977) mentioned that productivity is raised through organised motivation. He emphasized that the theme common to all is that productivity is raised through organised motivation. He further stated that the most difficult and rewarding task confronting an executive and a manager is to manage people successfully toward fulfilment of desirable goals and objectives.

2.2 Effective Communication: Elements and Key Components

Robins and Judge (2007) assert that, for communication to be effective, it must include both the transfer and the understanding of meaning. They argued that, no matter how great it is, communication is useless until it is transmitted and understood by others. They succinctly opined that perfect communication, if there were such a thing, would exist, when a thought or an idea was transmitted so that the mental picture perceived by the receiver was exactly the same as envisioned by the sender. Their perspective seems to reinforce why Branthwaithe (2002), Seger and Brehim, (2000) see visual imagery as a potentially powerful effect on human psychology and physiology attaching ideas, perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviour, achieving consistency, across language and culture. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, designed the first model of the communication process. This model depicted a communicator (sender) transmitting a thought, idea or feeling to another person (receiver) in a linear process. To Holm (2002), the linear models focus on transmission effectiveness, efficiency and measurability. Similarly, Robins and Judge (2007) also noted that, before communication can take place, a purpose expressed as a message to be conveyed is needed which passes between the sender and the receiver. Thus, the message is passed by way of some medium (channel) to the receiver, who retranslates (decodes) the message initiated by the sender. The sender is the source of idea, intentions, desires, information or initiator of communication. The sender could be a person, newspaper, reports, professional journal, organizational memorandum, letters, emails, gestures and mannerism. The sender encodes a thought and the message is the actual physical product from the sender's encoding. Lucas (2001) stressed that the success of the message depends on the credibility of the source, the knowledge-base of the sender, the sensitivity to the occasion and the target audience. This reflects an audience-centred approach, but there should be a fit between communication and the organizational strategy (Holm, 2002). If the sender is an organization, then, its financial capabilities will affect its communication strategy (Kitchen & Schultz, 2000). Verner (2000) sees the choice of language and literacy levels of target audience as a crucial issue in sending messages. Encoding is the stimulus that is presented to the audience; it can be an idea, a thought, an impulse, symbols or gestures that can be translated into a mode or a meaningful form (Sarfo, 2007). The result of the encoding process is a message. According to Sarfo (2007) a medium is a pathway of communication. He further argued that the word "medium", comes from the Latin word "medium", meaning between. Research indicates that, target audience uses a combination of channels to research and purchase goods (Zygon, 2002). Farese, Krimbrell, and Wolosszky (2003) identified various channels as face-to-face, sign and sound, written word, emails, letters, memoranda, and reports. However, Macharan and Catherall (2002) are of the view that organization prefers many channels to one channel. Robins and Judge (2007) classify channels as formal and informal communication channels. They believe that organizations should use formal channels in transmitting messages that are related to professional activities of their members. The informal channels they noted are spontaneous and emerge as a response to individuals' choices which are personal or social in nature, within the organization. Lovelock (2002) thinks that technological channels should be integrated with the operations of the company. Sands (2003) contended that, technological channels, particularly, the internet, presents a new mode of relationship building.

The message is the information, the thought, ideas or feeling the receiver shares with the sender. Messages are

represented by symbols, which can be anything that stands firm (Farese et al., 2003). Lucas (2001) also highlights the need for ideas to be organised clearly and must be expressed with words that are clear, vivid and appropriate, so that listeners can follow them without getting lost. Leaning on these writers, it can be inferred that a message can be verbal or non-verbal, but what is important is the meaning it carries, thus, reinforcing the views of Heinonen and Strandvik (2005), who see content relevance of a message as an influential tool in transmitting a message. The receiver is the target of communication. The target receives and decodes the message. Without the receiver, there is no communication. According to Lucas (2001), the message is filtered through receivers' frame of reference, as well as their perception. Mullins (2006) is positive that communication and perception are inextricably bound because how employees communicate with colleagues, bosses, subordinates, friends and partners depends on their perception of them. Kotler and Keller (2006) pointed out that listeners decode information in their perceptual framework, which is the process individual selects, organizes and interprets information to create a meaningful picture out of it. Decoding is translating or interpreting message received. It is the final link in the linear model of the communication process. The decoding process is enhanced by the encoding process as well as the medium. If the first two are wrong, the decoding process will be ultimately affected because the success of a communication process would depend on the quality of linkage between the various elements. Feedback refers to the response the sender gets from the receiver (Farese et al., 2003). Lucas (2001) pointed out that, like any kind of communication, feedback is affected by one's frame of reference. To Robins and Judge (2007), it is a check on how successful a sender has been in transmitting his message as originally intended. The attitudinal change as well as behavioural change of target audience, makes it visible. Swaminathan, Lepko Wska-White, and Rao (1999) noted that feedbacks can be verbal and non-verbal which may be in the form of sensory cues, like gestures, touch and hearing and can be positive, negative or neutral. It is instructive to note that the choice of appropriate media of communication is a critical success factor for effective communication. Media acceptance allows direct contact, influences and enhances the acceptance of communication (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2005). Another important issue which must not be regarded as trivial is the timing at any material moment. A sender must consider the availability of the recipient, so that the right message should be strategically released taking into account the time available to the recipient (Hult, 2002). Besides, audience capability must not be overlooked. Senders must take into consideration the capabilities of the audience and choose appropriate words, materials and channels, in order to enhance the communication effectiveness. Pickton and Broderick (2006) highlight the need to evaluate the target audience response though pretesting, before the main communication is released. Again, for effective communication, there must be continuity and consistency. Since communication is an unending process, there may be the need to repeat information in order to confirm the sender's intention and, also, obtain feedback. Finally, Sarfo (2007) indicated that the level of knowledge and attitude of the sender is vital to the development of effective communication. Kumuyi (2007) supported this view, when he said that "a leader shuns communication skills at his organization's peril" and that, effective leader without effective communication skill is impossible.

2.2.1 Barriers to Effective Communication

According to Farese et al. (2003), detractors and emotional blocks interfere in the understanding of a message. Kotler and Keller (2006) identifies selective perception in which the receiver selectively hears, based on their needs, motivation, experience, background and other personal characteristics. Also, information overload has been identified by many researchers; a situation whereby information exceeds the processing capacity. Others include wrong choice of media. Also, other forms of barriers to communication are lack of clarity and physical barriers - distance, noise as well as long chain of command. Additionally, the timing of communication, semantic barriers, wrong use of words, lack of clear objectives as well as poor human relationship can affect the communication process. Among the barriers to effective communication is communication gap. This occurs when there is a break in smooth flow of expected communication, as a result of an undue delay of message. This is why Hult (2002), Laing and McKee (2000) think that success in communication is based on time efficiencies and flexibility. For effective communication to occur, it is important for the senders to establish trust and maintain credibility between them and the receiver (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Thus, senders must be perceived as competent, knowledgeable, confident and respectful by the target audience. Again, the message should be of mutual interest. It must be meaningful and relevant to the receiver. Ducoffe (2000) and Heinonen & Strandvik, (2005) highlight the need for content relevance and clarity as effective communication tools.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the case study design with focus on Vodafone Ghana Kumasi main branch. The study examined the organizational communication procedures at Vodafone Ghana and how employees and heads of

departments perceive the organization's communication and productivity. The Kumasi branch of Vodafone Ghana was chosen for the case study because of its proximity to the researchers and its possession of operational characteristics like the national office in Accra, the capital city of Ghana.

3.2 Profile of Vodafone-Ghana

The company was established after World War II as a wing of the then Post and Telecommunications Corporation. In order for the company to function as a commercially viable entity, it was split into two autonomous divisions by the government of Ghana, Ghana Postal Services and Ghana Telecom. Two years later GT was privatized to G-Com Limited and subsequently contracted to Telenor Management Partners (TMP) of Norway to manage. A Ghanaian management team then took over the affairs prior to Vodafone's acquisition. Operational in 31 countries, the company is ranked among the top ten global companies by market capitalization. Vodafone has a unique portfolio of products and services. The company has introduced high speed access to the internet, mobile services and fixed lines. The company applies the latest industry technology and is keen on building the most versatile network.

The company has a deep sense of social responsibility. Vodafone does this through responsible employee volunteerism, providing access to communication in deprived communities and investing money through the Vodafone-Ghana Foundation in social causes. Excellent customer care is one of their strengths and the company pride itself as being the only telecommunications company in Ghana with many customer service points. The company employs about one thousand workers nationwide with the Accra branch employing 60% of them.

3.3 Study Population

The population for the study was all the management staff, senior staff, junior staff and field workers of the various departments of Vodafone Ghana Kumasi branch at the time of the study. This included all employees in the various zones working under the Kumasi main branch.

3.3.1 Sampling Frame

The units of analysis were the individual workers in the Vodafone Ghana Kumasi branch. Employees' record was received from the Vodafone Ghana Kumasi branch through the appropriate official channels. This record helped in the constructing of the sampling frame for the workers. A total of 270 employees at the various zonal offices including the main office in Kumasi was ascertained. Out of this 270, six were heads of departments.

3.3.2 Sampling Techniques

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed in the selection of sample for the study. With the non-probability sapling, there was the purposive selection of the six heads of departments. This was because any dissemination of information was authorized by the heads to the employees of the departments. With the probability sampling, the simple random sampling technique by the lottery method of selection without replacement was used to select 100 employees. There was thus a total sample of 106 staff.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Data Collection Tool

The instrument used in the collection of data was the questionnaire. Since the sample could read and write, the questionnaires were self-administered. Both heads of departments and subordinates answered to the same questions. The questionnaires were hand delivered which aided the actual respondents to receive and fill them out appropriately. This also allowed the respondents to answer the questions at their convenience. Though the questions were close-ended, few open ended questions were made available on the questionnaire to probe regarding questions of relative importance. The questionnaire incorporated socio-demographic characteristics, issues of communication lapses and other themes of importance.

3.4.2 Sources of Data

Hancock and Algozzine (2006) indicated that data may be collected as either primary or secondary data. To assess the role of communication in Vodafone-Ghana, the study used both primary and secondary data.

3.4.3 Primary Data

The primary data refers to the data collected expressly for specific purpose. The study used interviews and questionnaires as the major techniques for primary data collection. The primary source of data was gathered from the administration of questionnaires to management and staff of Vodafone. This method provided immense opportunities for the researchers because it produced valuable data and provided insight into issues that otherwise would have been difficult to gather using other methods. The benefits of obtaining a primary data were

that exact information wanted was obtained and it was more reliable.

3.4.4 Secondary Data

Hancock and Algozzine (2006) indicated that secondary data applies to that already collected and compiled data for other purposes. However, the secondary data should be related to the topic under study. Thus, some secondary data were reviewed for the study. This was to identify the relevance of available data to the study. The secondary data that were reviewed in the study were obtained from documents and archival records from Vodafone- Ghana, journals, magazines, newspapers, textbooks and relevant websites. The collection of secondary data was important to identify information that already existed. It also provided in-depth and foundational knowledge on the research topic for the study.

3.5 Field Work

In Ghana, there are specific regulations which control the conduct of research on public and private companies. These include applying to undertake an educational research in the selected company. A hand-delivered application letter to conduct the study was sent to the Regional Manager and the purpose of the study was spelt out for them to know that it was for academic purposes. This created a friendly atmosphere in which the study was conducted. The frequent visit to the Vodafone Ghana Kumasi office established a rapport which aided a level of cooperation in the offices, as shown in the answers given to questions posed to them. The field work for data collection lasted for ten months. The authors used self-administered questionnaire to acquire information which was relevant to the study from the management and some staff of the organisation whereas both face-to-face interviews and self administered questionnaires were used to gather information from customers.

The authors read through all the data in order to determine whether the responses were worthwhile and to find out whether all the questions had been duly answered. Questionnaires which needed clarification, most especially those bordering on explanations to certain answers were given back to the respondents for them to be completed; however not all questions were answered. The results from the field of study were scrutinized and edited to achieve the set aims and the objectives of the research. The field work allows the authors to observe as well as listen. The authors acquired an in-depth knowledge in this field of study which increased their confidence level.

3.5.1 Response Rate

Out of the 100 questionnaires given out to the employees, 84 were returned. Upon scrutiny, two (2) were wrongly filled and could not be used for further analysis. The six questionnaires given to the heads of departments were also returned. In total, 88 questionnaires were used for the analysis. This gave a response rate of 84%.

3.5.2 Field Problems

Information acquisition for research in our part of the world is always a problem and a big challenge. Thus, in some instances, the delay in getting the right and relevant information could affect a research work. It was anticipated that important data and information may be difficult to come by or even be kept away from the authors for fear of plagiarism. In the wake of the emerging competition in the telecommunication industry, some of the respondents were reluctant to respond to the questionnaire presented because the information they provided would be made available to their competitors to gain some undue advantage over them. Another problem was the waiting time phenomenon which was very frustrating and at a point reduced the pace at which the authors were working. In spite of these limitations however, a lot of effort was put into sourcing and reviewing the available information and data for the study. The staff of Vodafone-Ghana, Kumasi branch also did well by providing the needed data and information to make this work more representative to achieve its aims and objectives. However, the authors were tactful in going around these constraints and limitations to get majority of the questionnaires completed.

3.6 Data Handling

The authors began the data analysis by editing the responses to ensure consistency and eliminate any errors. Consequently, the authors read through all the data in order to determine whether the responses were worthwhile and to find out whether all the questions had been properly answered. The authors used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (Version 16) to summarize the data and create appropriate tables, charts and graphs to examine the relationships among the variables.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical dilemma is one of the most difficult, still, much interesting things to discuss under ethical consideration.

Numerous factors such as culture of silence by not releasing company secret, rivalry between companies with the same core function, relationships between the management and subordinates were factored into the design of the study. In the course of data collection, maintaining objectivity and integrity, respecting the respondents' rights to privacy and dignity as well as protecting them from personal harm and preserving confidentiality were carefully observed. Thus, the authors explained to the respondents the nature of the study and obtained their consent for the study. They were assured that their names would be kept confidential and the study did not use specific names. Thus, the indicators identifying specific respondents in the organisation were dropped from the study in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The respondents were given the opportunity to determine the time for their meetings with the authors. Additional precautions were taken by reporting findings in an aggregate manner and minimizing identification of answers to specific respondents in the organization.

4. Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Majority of the respondents (57%) were between the ages of 21-30 years which constituted over half of the total respondents. Males represented about 86% of the respondents whilst females were 14%. About 57% of the respondents had worked with the organisation for less than two years whilst 43% had worked with the organisation for over two years. Majority of the respondents had bachelor degrees representing about two thirds (57%) of the respondents. Over 57% of the respondents were senior staff, 19.2% were junior staff and 23.8% were management staff.

4.2 Mode of Communication

All the respondents stated that the communication mode that was mostly used in the organization was e-mails. According to Johnson (2002), millions of people have incorporated the use of email as an effective and efficient means of communication. Research commissioned by software provider Skype also found that 65% of companies regard email as one of the most reliable communication methods (Richards, 2010). The world has progressed quickly over the years with the inception of digital and electronic forms of communication. Instruments and tools such as computers, faxes, radio, satellite television, the telephone, and the cellular phone have aided human kind in its quest to communicate efficiently. Emails are effective because they deliver clear and standard forms of correspondence. They are also efficient because of their ease and speed (Agarwal, 2006).

4.3 Effectiveness of Communication Modes

Notices are methods used to keep the workforce updated with what goes on in the organization. They are impersonal methods of communication, that is, the same communication is sent to all the workers. Notices may relate to vacant posts, holiday arrangements, union matters or social events and are likely to be displayed on a notice board. They keep workers informed and attempt to make them feel part of the large company (Wood, 2006). Over 75% of the respondents indicated that the effectiveness of notices was low. Thus, the respondents were of the view that notices were not effective forms of communication in the organization because the messages were not clearly sent across, as a lot of detail cannot be included in the notice. But 25% of the respondents indicated that the effectiveness of the notices was high. Besides, if the message was not attractive, it would be ignored as they may not be interesting. Vodafone-Ghana used notice boards to display their notices. Whenever management felt that a particular message had to be disseminated, they would display it on the notice board but the staff did not read them. Thus, rendering information dissemination through notices not effective and hence affecting productivity levels.

Durbars are meetings convened to discuss anything and everything related to the people within an institution. Participatory mode of communication generally takes place in durbar system as the workers have equal right to accept or reject any specific programme and raise objections against any outside agencies' programme (Wood, 2006). Over 90% of the respondents indicated that the effectiveness of durbars as mode of communication was low. Hence, this mode of communication was not practised in the organization because the work was so demanding that the workers could not leave their duties to attend durbars.

Wood (2006) stated that a letter is a written message from one party to another. The role of letters in communication has changed significantly since the 19th century. Historically, letters were the only reliable means of communication between two persons in different locations. Sixty-seven per cent of the respondents indicated that the effectiveness of letters as a means of communication was high. This meant that letters were effective mode of communication in the company. It was revealed that employees received their letters on time and they were able to act on them quickly which enhanced productivity.

A circular is a document intended to be copied and given to a group. A circular can have other purposes such as

advertising. Circulars present technical or non-technical information of popular interest in a format designed for distribution to the public. An essential part of circular communication is to reach out, establish connections and build bridges (Wood, 2006). Over 67% of the respondents were of the view that circulars were ineffective mode of communication. Thus, it was revealed that most of the communication through this medium was ineffective and could have a negative effect on productivity if left unattended to.

Interpersonal communication deals with communication between people. It exists on a continuum from very impersonal to highly personal levels (Wood, 2006). It is usually defined by communication scholars in numerous ways, usually describing participants who are dependent upon one another and have a shared history. About 67% of the respondents indicated that effectiveness of interpersonal communication was high and 33% indicated that effectiveness of interpersonal communication was low. Interpersonal communication was effective because it provided the sender the opportunity to interact directly with the receiver.

4.4 Influence on Performance

About 75% of the respondents stated that communication had a positive impact on performance. Only 25% said that communication did not have a positive effect on performance. According to Agarwal (2006), effective communication between co-workers in an organization leads to the most efficient allocation of human resources, and in turn, higher productivity.

4.5 Communication between Management and Staff

Creed (2000) emphasized that effective communication in the workplace is an essential part of any organization. Also, when a business suffers from poor communication among the employees, it generally leads to misunderstanding, lack of information, poor performance, frustration and increased staff turnover. In order for an organization to ensure that goals are being accomplished to the best of the group's ability, there must be solid communication between the management and employees involved (Van Zandt, 1999). Thus, 70% of the respondents indicated that there was good communication between management and staff in the organization.

4.6 Improvement in Management and Employee Relations

San Diego (2002) emphasized that management should always make their expectations clear since the more specific management is in their communication with employees, the more likely work turned out will be positive to enhance progress. In most organizations, management make decisions as to how various policies should be implemented and executed. How those policies are implemented and the relations that exist between management and employees could have an effect on the productivity of the organization. It was revealed that 67% of the respondents said that communication between staff and management was good. This explained that there was a cordial relationship between management and staff. The respondents further stated that the modes of communication employed in their organization had influenced their performance at work.

4.7 Lapses Associated with Organisational Communication in the Organization

Since almost all the staff used computers in their daily activities at the work place information at the work place was sent through their network system and received by the employees through their personal computers at their offices. Though this mode of transmission could be said to be very effective, it was noted to be too formal and problems were encountered when the computer network system broke down. Some of the respondents indicated that there were lapses in the communication and indicated issues such as "too formal process of communication", "not being able to express ones feelings" and "not fully understanding the context of the information sent" as some of the lapses that they encountered in their communication process. Hobson (2010) emphasized that relying on emails to conduct business communications may be a fast way of operating but it is not an effective one because interacting face-to-face is a vital part of building an effective relationship. He indicated that reliance on email strips away the personal interaction that builds trust and indicated that trust is a vital component of an effective team effort.

5. Discussion of Findings

The study found out that though there were several modes of communication such as e-mails, notices, circulars and letters, the mode of communication widely used by the staff at Vodafone-Ghana was e-mails. This is similar to the findings of Owusu-Boateng and Jeduah (2014) who, after investigating the effects of organizational communication on performance in a nationwide Ghanaian Bank revealed that the use of the internet, website and e-mails were common forms of communication between management and employees. Though emails may be a fast way of communication, this study revealed that it was not an effective one. There were lapses which the respondents encountered in the use of the e-mail as a medium of communication. Some of the lapses indicated were "too formal process of communication", "not being able to express ones feelings" and "not fully

understanding the context of the information sent". Information was sent through the network system and received by the employees through their personal computers at their offices. Though this mode of transmission was very effective, it was noted to be too formal, since it could strip away the personal interaction that built trust between staff and may result in misunderstandings between parties if not well managed. This is a major limitation in the communication between management and employees at Vodafone, since weaknesses in the channel of communication, in this case e-mails, had been revealed as negatively affecting the efficient decoding of the message and an accurate interpretation and feedback as a result (Farese et al., 2003). Furthermore, the lack of personal interaction with regards to the use of e-mails, which affected the level of trust between employees and management, was an important finding. This is because, for effective communication to occur, it is essential for the senders of the message to establish trust between them and the receiver (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Thus, the relationship between the use of formal e-mails and employee satisfaction and productivity was negatively affected by the inability of employees to accurately understand the context within which the information was sent as well as the lack of personal interaction that could potentially establish trust between management and staff. The paper also revealed that the use of e-mails in Vodafone was affected by frequent internet (network) and computer breakdowns. This challenge created what Laing and Mckee (2000) term as communication gap, when there occur a break in the flow of communication. Such break-down in communication affect the success and effectiveness of communicated instructions since success in communication has been argued to be dependent also, on the efficiency of delivery (Laing & Mckee, 2000; Hult, 2002).

Another key finding was that the other forms of communication such as letters, circulars and notices were not fully utilized because of certain inherent problems associated with them, although these forms of communication had been proven to be effective. This has important implications for Vodafone since the main form of communication, the use of e-mails, has been found to have some limitations. Thus, the use of these other forms of communication could complement, and further strengthen the effectiveness of communication between management and employees within the organization.

This research also revealed that another form of communication which the members of staff acknowledged that it was effective but under-utilized by the management was face-to-face or interpersonal communication in the form of durbars. This form of communication built trust and also boosted the morale of the employees since they were able to put across their grievances and opinions in the decision making processes of the company. Nonetheless, although durbars were convened to discuss anything and everything related to the employees, over 90% of the respondents indicated that their effectiveness as mode of communication was low. This mode of communication was therefore not practised in the organization because the work schedules were so demanding that the workers could not leave their duties to attend durbars. In other words, this medium of communication, though preferred, was ineffective since it was not favorable for the recipients of the message. As has been revealed in the literature, for communication to be effective, the medium of communication must be favorable for both the sender and receiver of the information (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

A finding was that there was cordial relationship between management and staff. It was revealed that 67% of the respondents said that communication between staff and management was good which explained that there was a cordial relationship between management and staff which consequently influenced their performance at work. Thus, management should always make their expectations clear since the more specific management communicated with employees the more likely work turned out would be positive to enhance progress.

6. Recommendations

The use of e-mails is effective because it delivers a clear and standard form of correspondence. It is also efficient because of its ease and speed. However, unlike the face-to-face and telephone communication, e-mail is limited to textual information as its primary form of communication. As a result, its use may unnecessarily escalate conflict between parties if not properly managed. It is recommended that face-to-face meetings and telephone conversations which engender effective interaction among staff should be encouraged.

Hobson (2010) has emphasized that relying on emails to conduct business communications may be a fast way of operating but it is not an effective one. Speaking face-to-face is a vital part of building an effective relationship. The reliance on lean communication such as e-mail, where only one form of information is sent between correspondents, strips away the personal interaction that builds trust and in a business setting, trust is a vital component of an effective team effort, particularly where colleagues are working independently towards a shared goal. It is recommended that Vodafone-Ghana should encourage face-to-face communication. This is because those who use e-mail are usually unable to get together and complete their task, whilst those who use face-to-face as a mode of communication are more productive and likely to meet their responsibilities.

Communication between management and employees can help the management better address the concerns of employees, reassuring the staff and helping management to remedy potential problems facing the organization. It is therefore critical that management be as transparent as possible with their employees. By keeping employees in the loop about what is happening to the company as a whole, management has the ability to keep rumors at bay, which can help keep employees confident about their employment and loyal to the organization as a whole.

Although there is little or no time at all for staff to leave their post to attend durbars, the authors were of the view that since these durbars should be participated by all staff management could devise a mechanism for durbars to be organized annually or biannually during which all employees may attend and could feel part of the decision making process which would spur them on to work hard to enhance productivity.

7. Conclusion

With the competitive global climate, businesses are constantly honing their strategies to gain an edge in the market place. However, their ability to compete does not necessarily stem from their products or services, but the way they communicate both internally and externally. For an organization to be successful, it must have effective communication among employees. Whether this communication takes place through face-to-face or via computer mediated techniques such as e-mail, it is incredibly important that all employees are aware of what tasks are being worked on, what progress is being made and what the ultimate goal is. Effective communication between management and employees leads to the most efficient allocation of human resources, and consequently, higher productivity. In order for an organization to ensure that goals are accomplished to the best of the group's ability, there must be strong communication between management and the employees involved. Thus, effective communication in the work place does not happen accidentally. It requires time, resource and investment. It is a well crafted and coordinated process.

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