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### ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION CLIMATE AND EMPLOYEE'S JOB PERFORMANCE IN CROSS RIVER UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, NIGERIA

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study on organisational communication climate and employees' job performance in Cross River University of Technology (Crutech) made use of the survey research design with a questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. The population of the study is 1,000 which comprise the management and staff of Crutech (https://crutech.edu.ng). The sample size for the study was determined using Krejice and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula. The sample size is 278. The study made use of the census technique to administer questionnaires to the respondents. The study which was anchored on modern organisational theory and McGregor's Theory X and Y found out that the majority of respondents (48%) agreed that the pattern of communication flow in Crutech is downward communication that is a communication from the top (superior) to bottom (subordinates). The study also revealed that the majority of respondents said that they were not satisfied with the prevalent communication climate and agreed it to be unsatisfactory (75%). The study recommends that to maintain a favourable communication climate and enhance job performance in tertiary institutions, all patterns of communication (upward communication) that is a communication from the subordinates to the superiors; (downward communication), that is a communication from the superiors to the subordinate; (horizontal communication), that is communication among people in the same organisation and (informal communication), otherwise known as grapevine, that is communication founded on rumours and informal networks. The study also recommends that the management of Crutech should improve on the existing communication practice and involve employees in the decision-making process by organising communication training exercise for employees in order to create an effective and efficient communication atmosphere that contribute to the attainment of organisational goals.

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**Keywords:** Organisation, Communication climate, Employee, Job performance, and the Cross River University of Technology.

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's age, information is becoming a vital asset of an organisation (Higson & Waltho, 2010). Eadie (2009) observed that useful and timely information is the lifeblood of employees that is decisive for employees to make an important choices in organising their activities and executing tasks. Employees should communicate the right information at the right time using the right medium in order to execute their tasks (Crown, 2013). Therefore, information is a resource and is part of the communication process (Madden 2000). According to Tayo and Olamigoke (2006), no interaction between people is possible without one form of communication or the other. And there is no way the performance of employees could be enhanced without communication or interactions with one another.

Communication is one of the most dominant and important functions in an organisation (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Employees are the force that moves a company towards the achievement of its goals and objectives and it is only through communication that "companies goals and objectives are delivered to it employees". Communication flow is essential for an organisation which desires to improve its performance. (Akarika, 2020).

Communication is an expression of thoughts, feelings, ideas, messages from the sender to the receiver through verbal, non-verbal, written and non-written forms. Communication can be defined as a process by which a person, group, or organisation transmits some type of information to another person, group, or organisation (Greenberg & Baran, 2015).

Communication is the information given by a business to its customers, customers can either be internal; employees and stakeholders; it could be external; agencies, channels partners; media; government; industry; bodies and institutes; educational and general public (Riel and Fombran, 2012).

The success of any organisation depends on the efficiency and the effectiveness of its communication system and the nature of the independent relationships. (Akarika, Umoren and Ikon 2021). According to Akarika, Umoren & Ikon (2021:116) failure to communicate with employees lead to misunderstanding, false rumours and confusion as it is in any organisation. Therefore, a two-way channel of communication is essential to give workers an opportunity to ask questions about the organisation or to make suggestions to the management.

The determinant factor for the success of the organisation is the quality of relationships that exist among employees and its environments. The emotional atmosphere that prevails in the organisation is influenced by the organisational climate (Akarika et al. 2021).

Akarika (2021:67) sees organisational communication as the willingness of the employers and employees to make efforts and to take actions towards organisational objectives. Accordingly, good communication with employees may improve workers morale; make it easier for management to organise products effectively; make the company a better place to work and thereby more attractive to more productive employees; reduce employee's

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absenteeism; help to reduce the possibility of unionization, and lessen the possibility of a strike. Communication is a bond that ties people together in an organisation, in business and in organisational life. (Akarika, 2021).

According to Balyan (2012) when an organisation experiences poor employees' performance as a result of poor and ineffective organisational communication, it begins to observe certain problems such as job decrease, employee job dissatisfaction, increase in emotional challenges, reduction in employees jobs involvement, absence of willingness to work hard among others. The benefits of effective organisational communication flow according to Akarika (2020) include; increase in organisational performance, boosting employees: morale, encouraging team communication networks, enhancing productivity and help reduce diversity.

Based on the aforementioned what is the organisational communication climate pattern prevalent in the Cross River University of Technology? What influence has communication climate on employee job performance? Answers to these questions and more provide the justification for the study.

### 1.1 Brief History of Cross River University of Technology

The Cross River University of Technology began operation in September 2002. Established by Cross River State Bill No. 9 recently amended as Bill No. 6 of 2004. The institution is a merger of three former tertiary institutions (the Polytechnic, Calabar; the College of Education, Akamkpa and the Ibrahim Babangida College of Agriculture, Owonum, Obubra owned by the Cross River State Government. Academic activities commenced in the University in the 2002/2003 academic session and the first set of 347 students graduated on November 18, 2006.

#### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine the influence of organisational communication climate on job performance in Cross River University of Technology (Crutech).

The specific objectives will be guided by the following:

- 1. To find out what pattern of communication flow exist in Crutech
- 2. To examine the influence of communication climate on employee job performance in Crutech.
- 3. To determine how employees of Crutech perceive the communication climate.
- 4. To identify (if any) possible factors that influence communication climate in Crutech.

#### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's organisation, organisational communication has become an important factor for the overall functioning and success of an organisation (Rajhans, 2012). Without organisational communication, organisational excellence and performance would not exist and the various parts of an organisation would not be bonded together for common goals.

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According to Stephen (cited in Nebo et al. 2015, p. 132) "organisational communication is a crucial factor in directing and mobilizing the workforce towards the accomplishment of the organisational goals. In any organisation, according to Richmond, McCroskey and McCroskey (2005), information flows through formal and informal communication patterns. Communication climate has a role to play in effective communication and employee performance. Communication climate refers to the environment in which communication occurs. According to Pace (as cited in Nordin et al; 2014, p.104). "Communication climate conceptually consists of employees perceptions of the information flow and the climate in which the communication occurs". Communication climate can be seen either as an open or closed climate. In an open climate, information flows freely, but it is blocked in a closed communication climate (Nordin, 2014).

In the words of Nwata, Umoh and Amah (2016), integrated organisational communication is needed for sustainable employees performance to be achieved because the inadequacy in organisational communication leads to poor employee performance. According to the Research Team, Development of Accountability System for Performance Government (cited in Hikmah, 2015, p.105), "performance is the degree of effectiveness and efficacy in producing the intended products".

Research on communication with the workplace can be traced to the 1990s (Carriere and Bourque, 2009). Organisational communication is a process that enables groups and parties to learn from each other through developing and manufacturing a viable relationship (Robson, Skarmeas, and Spyropoulou, 2006, p.585). Abugre (2011, p.7) sees organisational communication as a process by which language is used to create different kinds of social structures, such as relationships, teams and networks. Nwagbare & Uduma (2016) note that the communication climate that exists in an organisation is vital in determining the extent to which employees will understand, appreciate and identify with organisational goals. Organisational success depends on the level of trust and honesty that develop through ongoing communicative experience among employees (Akarika et al. 2021).

According to Redding cited in (Akarika, Umoren & Ikon 2021:116) the climate of an organisation is more important than the skills or communication techniques to create an effective organisation. The practice of modern personnel management is directed towards providing conditions under which employees work enthusiastically and effectively, and contribute to the success of the organisation. This involves concern for effective and adequate two-way communication, employee concern, motivation and job satisfaction. The organisational communication climate according to Pace and Faules (2013) cited in Akarika, Iwok & Ikon, (2021) is a combination of the perception of communication events, human behaviour, members responses to other members, expectation, interpersonal conflicts and opportunities for growth of the organisation.

According to Sauerman and Cohen (2008) to achieve performance the organisation should function effectively under the goals of the organisation. Furthermore, the organisation must have good employee performance by carrying out its task in a reliable manner. According to Rajhams (2012) to manage the present performance of employees and to motivate them towards better performance, efficient communication practices are needed in all organisations. Organisational communication covers the exchange of information, ideas and

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views within and without an organisation (Locker & Kaczmark, 2010). Organisational communication is diverse in nature, it involves communication with internal stakeholders within the organisation, as well as external stakeholders outside the organisation. Organisational communication determines how communication climate is perceived throughout the organisation. Organisational communication can affect employee motivation depending on the work environment (Simamora, Marsellinus & Hartono, 2016). Most employees need a favourable communication climate to perform optimally at their jobs. Communication climate levels within the workplace have a direct impact on employee job performance and productivity. Employee performance indicates the effectiveness of an employee's specific actions that contribute to attaining organisational goals. It is defined as the way to perform job tasks according to the presented job description (Simamora, 2013, Iqbal, Ijaz, Latif & Mushtaq, 2015).

#### 2.1 Review of Empirical Studies

The study reviewed a work carried out by Akarika, Iwok and Ikon (2021) on organisational communication climate and employee job commitment in Ibom Air. The study had as its objectives to assess the communication climate existing in Ibom Air and its impact on employees' job commitment, determine employees perceptions of organisational communication climate and employees job commitment and identify the possible factors that influence organisational communication climate and ways to manage them. The research technique used for the study was a survey. The study which was anchored on modern organisation theory found out that the majority of respondents (63%) agreed that the prevalent communication flow pattern is downward communication and all respondents (100%) agreed that organisational communication climate influences employee job commitment. The study also revealed that (75%) of respondents said that they were not satisfied with the present organisational climate in the organisation. The study recommends that the management of Ibom Air should involve their employees in the decision-making process of the organisation in order to enhance job commitment.

The study further reviewed another study by Akarika, Umoren and Ikon, (2021) on employee communication practice and communication climate of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The major objective of the study was to assess employees' perception of employee communication as it affects organisational communication climate in the institutions. The study adopted the survey research design, with questionnaires and personal interviews as research instruments. The study which relied on Watzlawick's interactional view of communication and Herzberg's motivator-Hygiene theory found out that the majority of respondents (79%) perceived communication climate in the organisation as cordial, thus having a positive impact on organisational climate (63%). The study recommended that to maintain effective employees communication and a dynamic communication climate supportive of industrial harmony in tertiary institutions, a communication audit should be carried out periodically in order to evaluate current employee communication behaviours and practices of employees and management.

The study also reviewed a work by Mohammed (2013) on communication climate and organisational performances. The study adopted a descriptive case study approach to examine the importance of communication climate in organising works activities in an organisation.

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Six dichotomies of interaction were used to measure defensive or supportive communication climate practices in organising job-related activities. The result indicated that there is a significant perception difference between employees of two public organisations. Hospital KB, award wrong organisation proved to practice a more positive supportive communication climate compared to Hospital AS. The study also revealed that the six interaction dichotomy had a significant perception difference. Based on results of stepwise multiple regressions indicated the communication dimension in trust, subordinate intervention, openness in downward communication, and supportiveness contribute 52 percent to communication climate.

The reviewed studies are related to the present study in the area of organisational communication, organisational communication climate and job performance. Thus, the reviewed studies throw an insight into the nature of organisational communication climate and job performance in Cross River State University of Science and Technology.

#### 3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the following theories: Modern organisational theory and McGregor's theory X and theory Y

Modern organisation theory describes organisations as an open social system that interacts with the environments to survive. The modern organisation theory was not originally a business theory but was proposed during the 1940s. Modern organisation theory is divided into two major types system theory and contingency theory.

Modern organisation theory sees modern organisations as a system of mutually dependent variables, involving the individual, his personality structure in the organisation. According to the proponents of the theory, there is a congruence between the individual expectation and those of the organisation. The theory advocates for a system approach where the organisation is seen as a unit with highly integrated and independent units. The organisational system is divided into two types: open systems and closed systems. The open system interacts with their environment, while closed systems hold no interaction with their environment. In this regard, organisations recognize both formal and informal communication structures and systems.

McGregor's theories X and Y showcase the dichotomy about the assumptions managers make about the workers. The basic negative assumptions about employees are as follows: (1) Assumes that an average person has an internal dislike for work and will avoid it if they can. (ii) employees are lazy, untrustworthy and incapable of assuming responsibilities. (iii) they must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment among other assumptions. The basic positive assumptions of McGregor's theory X and Y are as follows:

- (i) Works is as natural as play or rest if the conditions are favourable
- (ii) Employees are not only trustworthy and capable of assuming responsibility but also have high levels of motivation.
- (iii)People will exercise self-direction and self-control to achieve organisational objectives when they are committed.

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Therefore, relating the organisational communication climate and employee's job performance rightly situates itself in this context. An organisation that operates an open system is likely to have a favourable communication climate than an organisation that operates a closed system. A favourable communication climate enhances employees job performance, thus the relevance of these theories to the present study.

#### 4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was employed for this research work. The population is made up of employees (academic and non-teaching) of Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), totalling 1,000 (https://crutech.ng.edu.) spread across all campuses of the institution. Using the sample size determination table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) cited in Ndonima, Henbamton & Amoika 2021) a sample size of 278 was gotten for this study.

Table i: Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population

Population size	Sample size	
1,000,000 - above	384	
500,000	381	
100,000	383	
50,000	381	
10,000	370	
5,000	357	
3,000	341	
2,000	322	
1,000	278	

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970): Educational and Psychological Measurement

As indicated in table i, the population falls within 1,000, therefore 278 was considered an appropriate sample size for the study based on the statistical workings of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The researcher adopted a census sample technique to administer questionnaires to respondents for the study. Out of 278 copies of the questionnaire administered to respondents, 250 copies of the questionnaires was found useable for the study. The data were analysed using simple percentages and tables.

#### 5.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents** 

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Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	103	41
Female	147	59
Total	250	100

Table 1 is a summary of the gender distribution of respondents. The majority of respondents 147 (59%) were female. This implies that the bulk of respondents was female.

**Table 2: Job Cadre of Respondents** 

Job cadre	Frequency	Percentage
Management cadre	43	17
Middle cadre	107	43
Lower cadre	100	40
Total	250	100

Table 2 shows that majority of respondents 107, 100 (207) representing 43%, 40% (83%) of respondents were from the middle and lower cadre respectively.

Table 3: Patterns of Communication flow that exist in Crutech

Patterns of communication	Frequency	Percentage
flow		
Upward communication	30	12
Downward communication	120	48
Horizontal communication	55	22
Grapevine communication	45	18
Total	250	100

Data gathered and presented in Table 3 shows the pattern of communication flow in Crutech. The majority of respondents 120 (48%) agreed that the prevalent communication flow pattern in Crutech is a downward communication. That is communication from the top (superior) to bottom (subordinates). This implies that there is little upward communication, that is communication from the bottom (subordinate) to the top (superior) as depicted by 12% of respondents' responses.

**Table 4: Extent of Influence of Communication Climate on Employees Job Performance in Crutech** 

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Option	Frequency	Percentage
A very large extent	120	48
A large extent	70	28
Undecided or neutral	5	2
A little extent	30	12
A very little extent	25	10
Total	250	100

Table 4 clearly shows the extent of influence of communication climate on employee job performance in Crutech. The majority of respondents 120 (48%) were of the opinion that the extent of influence is a very large extent. This means that the prevalent communication climate in Crutech greatly influences job performance negatively.

**Table 5: Employees Perception of the Prevalent Communication Climate in Crutech** 

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfactory	40	16
Satisfactory	56	22
Undecided or neutral	4	2
Unsatisfactory	100	40
Very unsatisfactory	50	20
Total	250	100

Table 5 captures vividly employees' perception of the prevalent communication climate in Crutech. The majority of respondents (100) 40% perceived the prevalent communication climate to be unsatisfactory. This implies that respondents were not satisfied with the communication climate.

**Table 6: Factors that Influence the Communication Climate in Crutech** 

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Bureaucracy in public service	35	14
Organisational culture	10	4
Style of leadership	30	12
Ineffective communication	25	10
Lack of trust/openness in	25	10
downward communication		

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Subordinates non-	20	8
participation in decision		
making		
All of the above	105	42
Total	250	100

Table 6 shows that 105 respondents representing 42% agreed that bureaucracy in public service, organisational culture, style of leadership, ineffective communication, lack of trust/openness in downward communication, lack of participation in decision making by subordinates are the likely factors that influence the communication climate in Crutech.

#### 6.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1 captures the gender distribution of respondents. The majority of respondents 147 (59%) were female. Data gathered and presented in table 2 shows that majority of respondents 107, 100 (207) representing 43%, 40% (83%) were from the middle and lower cadre respectively. This implies that respondents were assigned job roles in the institution and as such could determine the level of job performance. On the pattern of communication flow in Crutech, the majority of respondents 120 (48%) agreed that the prevalent communication flow pattern in Crutech is downward communication. That is communication from the top (superior) to bottom (subordinates). This implies that there is little upward communication, that is communication from the bottom (subordinates) to the top (superior) as depicted by 12% of respondents. The findings of this study corroborate with Akarika, Iwok and Ikon (2021) who found out in their study on organisational communication climate and employee job commitment in Ibom Air that majority of respondents (63%) agreed that the prevalent communication flow pattern in the organisation is a downward communication. According to Nwata et al. (2016), integrated organisational communication is needed for sustainable employee performance to be achieved because the inadequacy in organisational communication leads to poor employee performance.

Concerning the influence of organisational climate on employee job performance in Crutech, table 4 clearly shows the extent of influence. The majority of respondents 120 (48%) were of the opinion that the extent of influence is a very large extent. This means that the prevalent communication climate in Crutech greatly influences job performance negatively.

The findings of the study agree with Rajhams (2012) who notes that to manage the present performance of employees and to motivate them towards better performance, efficient communication practices are needed in all organisations. According to Baljam (2012) when an organisation experiences poor employees performance as a result of poor and inefficient organisational communication, it begins to observe certain problems such as job decrease, employee job dissatisfaction, increase in emotional challenges, reduction in employees job involvement and absence of willingness to work hard. Without organisational communication, organisational excellence and performance would not be bonded together for communication goals. Similarly, Nwagbara et al. (2016) note that the communication climate that exists in an organisation is vital in determining the extent to which employees will

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understand, appreciate and identify with organisational goals. The findings of this study further agree with the study by Akarika et al (2021) whose respondents (100%) agreed that organisational communication climate influences employee job commitment.

Regarding the perception of employees of Crutech on the prevalent communication climate, table 5 shows that majority of respondents 100 (40%) perceived the prevalent communication climate to be unsatisfactory. This means that respondents were not satisfied with communication climate in Crutech. The finding of this study further agrees with the study by Akarika et al. (2021) whose study revealed that (75%) of respondents said they were not satisfied with the present organisational climate in Ibom Air. The findings also disagree with the findings of the study by Akarika, Umoren & Ikon (2021) whose study found out that the majority of respondents (79%) perceived communication climate in the organisation to be cordial, that having a positive impact on organisational climate as depicted by (63%) of respondents. According to the notion by these authors, organisational communication determines how communication climate is perceived throughout the organisation. Most employees need a favourable communication climate to perform optimally at their jobs.

According to Akarika (2020), the benefits of effective organisational communication flow include: increase in organisational performance, boosting employee's morale, encouraging team communication networks, enhancing productivity and helping reduce diversity. The findings support McGregor's theory X and Y basic positive assumption (i) which says that work is as natural as play or rest if the condition is favourable.

On factors that influence communication climate in Crutech, table 6 captures it all. The majority of respondents 105 (42%) were of the opinion that the following factors influence communication climate in the institution. The factors are; bureaucracy in public service, organisational culture, style of leadership, ineffective communication, lack of trust/openness in downward communication and lack of participation in the decision-making process by subordinates. The findings of the study corroborate the recommendation by Mohammed (2013) who based on results of his study indicated that communication dimension in trust, subordinate interaction, openness in downward communication, and supportiveness contribute 52 percent to communication climate.

#### 7.0 CONCLUSION

Organisational communication climate levels within the workplace have a direct impact on employee job performance and productivity. Thus, the study concludes that employees need a favourable organisational communication climate to enhance their job performance in order to contribute to the achievement of organisational goals and objectives.

### 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In lieu of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered to enhance a favourable organisational communication climate and job performance in Crutech.

1. To maintain a favourable communication climate and enhance job performance in tertiary institutions, all patterns of communication (upward communication) that is a communication from the subordinates to the superiors; (downward communication),

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- that is a communication from the superiors to the subordinate; (horizontal communication), that is communication among people in the same organisation and (informal communication), otherwise known as grapevine, that is communication founded on rumours and informal networks.
- 2. The management of Crutech should improve on the existing communication practice and involve employees in the decision-making process by organizing communication training exercise for employees in order to create an effective and efficient communication atmosphere that contribute to the attainment of organisational goals.

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