

IMPACT OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of business communication on organizational performance in Nigerian companies. In business, message is conveyed through various channels of communication, including internet, print (publication), radio, television, etc. Whether or not significant change(s) results in the performance of an organization as a result of business communication is yet to be empirically established. This study, therefore, was carried out to investigate the relationship between business communication and organizational performance in Nigeria (a less developed economy) using a contextualized and literature based research instrument to measure the application of the investigated "constructs". Using the survey method, the study obtained sample data from 100 small and large manufacturing and service companies operating in Lagos State of Nigeria. The research instrument showed encouraging evidence of reliability and validity. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, percentages and t- test analysis. The study found that effective business communication is emphasized to a reasonable extent in the surveyed Nigerian companies. However, the 'level of emphasize' is a question of degree. It was also found that the extent of practices of effective business communication, were related to the category of business (service versus manufacturing) and its size. The research findings are limited to some extent by the confounding effect of variations within and between industry types of firm and industry sectors, and the use of respondents' own-assessments of performance. The established research beyond the usual context of developed western economies, and thereby, potentially contains some lessons for practitioners and researchers in other developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

One of the uniqueness of the human person is the ability to objectify his thoughts and ideas through language. With the social evolution of language, especially speech language, man was able to widen the gap between him and the rest of the animal kingdom. Thus, language can be seen as a system of sounds, symbols and words for purposes of communication.

Communication touches every aspect of human activity. Business communication is any communication used to promote a product, service or organization, with the objective of making sale. In business communication, messages are conveyed through various channels of communication, including internet, print (publication), radio, television, outdoor, and word of mouth.

There are scholarly arguments pertaining to the effectiveness of business communication in developing economies, including Nigeria. For example, the effectiveness of business communication in developing countries has attracted some criticisms with respect to such constraining factors as noise (e.g. fears, worry, lack of trust, racial and tribal discrimination, cultural and religious discrimination, undefined areas of responsibility, negative future expectation, concrete distractions, bad environment, corruption, and general behaviour towards marketing, amongst others). However, some scholars have argued that these constraints do not detract from the implementation of business communication and that communication should be of benefit to all the companies world over, including developing countries such as Nigeria. In an organization, the manager has to read, speak, write, listen, observe and supervise, and these are all media of communication. He uses letters, and memos for written communication. Business firms must send information about their goods and services to customers and

consumers. This they do via advertising, publicity, personal selling and other sales promotional techniques. Hence any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or effective state is regarded as communication. However, the effectiveness of communication differs from one firm to another.

Therefore, it may be stated that business communication may be beneficial for some businesses, while it may not be for others as a result of variations in the environment, practices, noise, contexts and cultures amongst others influencing factors.

Based on the above perception, this paper is using a contextualized and literature based research instrument to measure the application of the investigated constructs for an understanding of the impact of business communication on organizational performance in Nigerian companies (a less developed economy).

This approach recognizes the difficulty and complexity associated with changing environment and increasing complexity of the 21st century workplace (Blalock, 2005). The paper starts with a critical look at the current literature on business communication and goes on to propose three hypotheses based on key constructs of finding the level of emphasis in effective business communication the relationship between business size and practice of effective business communication and the relationship between the extent of practices of effective communication and achievement of organizational goals and objective. This paper then investigated each of the three Hypotheses in turn, linking it to the Nigerian environment and outcomes established.

The major objective of this research is to provide knowledge regarding the effectiveness of business communication in Nigerian companies, and its significance to performance. Flowing from this central purpose, are the following specific objectives of the study:- to determine the extent to which Nigerian companies emphasize effective business communication, to determine the relative effectiveness of Nigerian companies in achieving their set goals and objectives via effective business communication, to determine the reliability of the research measures used in this research, To make managerial and policy recommendations for improved understanding and practice of effective communication in Nigerian companies, and To suggest cognate areas for future research. The following hypotheses stated in the null form were formulated and tested in order to achieve the objectives of the study: H₁: Effective Business Communication is not emphasized in the surveyed Nigerian companies. H₂: The extent of practices of effective business communication is not related to the category of business and its size. H₃: The level or extent of practices of effective business communication does not affect the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

However, the hypotheses proposed in this paper integrate theories and constructs from business communication to incorporate both individual and social perspectives on organizational performance in Nigerian companies. Hypothesis one focuses on the level of emphasis on effective business communication in the surveyed companies. Recognizing all the while that when communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist, and individual uncoordinated activities return in an organization. Likewise, according to Kotler, (2006), communication is the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind consumers – directly or indirectly about the products and brands they sell. In a sense, communication represents the “voice” of the brand and it is a means by which it can establish a dialogue and build relationships with consumers. Robert Kent, former dean of Harvard business school put it, “in business, communication is everything”. And research spanning several decades has consistently ranked communication skills as crucial for managers. This proposition is supported by extant literature.

This study will not only find out the relationship between effective business communications, with evidence from Nigeria, but also add to the previous literature.

This paper begins with a short literature review to define where the paper aims at contributing to the literature. It then moves on to describe the study and the selection of the organizations that were included under data and methodology. The findings from the study are further analyzed in the results section and followed by the implications for theory and practice, as described in the concluding comments

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication has been widely accepted by scholars and academics as the lifeblood of an organization, because communication is needed for exchanging information, exchanging opinions, making plans and proposals, reaching agreement, executing decisions, sending and fulfilling orders and conducting sales (Blalock, 2005; Alyssa, 2006; Kotler, 2006; amongst others). When communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist, and individual uncoordinated activities return in an organization. So, communication in an organization is as

vital as the blood of life. According to Kotler, (2006), communication is the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind consumers – directly or indirectly – about the products and brands that they sell. In a sense, communication represents the “voice” of the brand and is a means by which it can establish a dialogue and build relationships with consumers. Blalock (2005) posits that good communication matters because business organizations are made up of people, and as Robert Kent, former dean of Harvard Business School puts it, “In business, communication is everything”. Research spanning several decades has consistently ranked communication skills as crucial for managers. Managers spend 75 to 80 percent of their time engaged in some form of written or oral communication. Although, often termed as ‘soft’ skill, communication in business organizations provide the critical link between core functions. According to Blalock (2005), three reasons why good communication is important to individuals and their organizations are: 1. Ineffective communication is very expensive. The ability to communicate was rated as the most important factor in making a manager “promotable” by subscribers to Harvard Business Review. 2. The changing environment and increasing complexity of the 21st century workplace make communication even more important. The collaboration that allows organizations to capitalize on the creative potential of a diverse workforce depends on communication. 3. The world’s economy is becoming increasingly globalized. By the end of the 20th century, 80% of U.S. products were competing in international markets. The direct investment of foreign-based companies in the U.S grew from \$9trillion in 1966 to more than \$300trillion in 2002. Many product assume to be Americans’, are made overseas while many brands thought to be international are made in the United States.

According to the management study guide (1998 – 2001), business communication involves constant flow of information. Feedback is an integral part of business communication. Organizations these days are very large and they involve a large number of people. There are various levels of hierarchy in an organization. The greater the number of levels, the more difficult is the job of managing the organization. Communication here plays a very important role in the process of directing and controlling the people in the organization. There should be effective communication between superiors and subordinates in the organization, between organizations and the society at large, between management and trade unions, etc. Communication is essential for the success and growth of an organization. Therefore, communication gaps should not be allowed to occur in any organization.

Business communication is goal-oriented (Management study guide, 1998 – 2001). The rules, regulations, and policies of a company have to be communicated to the people within and outside the organization. Business communication is regulated by certain rules and norms. In early times, business communication was limited to paper work, telephone calls, etc., but now, with the advent of technology, we have cell phones, video conferencing, emails, satellite communications, etc. to support business communication. Effective business communication helps in building the goodwill of an organization. Hence, it is necessary that you think before you communicate, be an active listener, be focused on your audience; and in your response, be brief and be gone.

Basically, business communication encompasses a huge body of knowledge, and could be internal or external. Internal communication includes communication of corporate vision, strategies, plans, corporate culture, shared values, and guiding principles, employee motivation, cross-pollination of ideas, etc. While external communication includes branding, marketing, advertising, selling, customer relations, public relations, media relations, business negotiations, etc. Whatever form it takes, the objective remain the same, i.e. to create a business value. Furthermore, business communication can be of two types – oral communication, and written communication. An oral communication can be formal or informal. Generally, business communication is a formal means of communication. It includes meetings, interviews, group discussions, speeches, etc. An example of informal communication would be the grapevine. Written means of business communication includes agenda, reports, manuals, etc.

The World Business Culture, (Internet) in analyzing Nigerian communication styles reports that Nigeria has over 300 ethnic groups each of which has its own language or dialect. In such a language-diverse country, English has come to be seen as the unifying language and although the dominant indigenous languages of the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba tribes continue to enjoy wide usage, they are not universally understood. Prospective investors should, therefore, have no problem conducting business in the English Language throughout Nigeria and certainly all senior governmental figures and business leaders will be fairly fluent in the language. Nigerians like to use language in a fairly flowery fashion and will often address you with great courtesy and overt signs of respect. The desire to show respect to people is shown in Nigerians’ use of titles, and honorifics. People will often be addressed as uncle, auntie, chief, mazi, doctor, etc. rather than by the use of first names. Do not be surprised to hear yourself being addressed as ‘sir’ or ‘boss’. Business conversations will often veer towards the personal, and you may be asked questions about family, hobbies and other interest within business

meetings. This is an important segment of the meeting and should be treated as such. Life is not as overly personal but rather as a signal of warmth and friendship. Handshaking is very important. It is usual to exchange long, lingering handshakes with everybody you meet. Do not be in too much of a rush to have your hand released, just relax. When the hand is finally released, it could be done with finger tapping to indicate familiarity and comradeship. Basically, the essence of this style of communication in Nigeria is to create a relationship of love and trust, and this make the customers/clients feel comfortable and encouraged to do business.

According to the World of Business Communication (internet), every business aims to gain profit and in whatever type of business you may be, the bottom line is that you must earn something from it. No businessperson desires to make losses as this may lead to non-sustainability and eventual close down/liquidation.

According to Alyssa (2006), the ability to communicate, and communicate well is one of the biggest factors in business success. You could be an excellent designer, but if you are unable to promote your services and communicate effectively with clients and colleagues, your potential is limited. The principal areas where communication is essential include: pitching potential clients; clients meeting; consumer service; face-to-face networking; and marketing your business.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from the survey of 100 small and large manufacturing and service companies operating in Lagos, Nigeria. In order to evaluate the research problems in this study, a descriptive quantitative survey research design was considered appropriate. However, it has been argued that the overall success of data generation and satisfactory response in any research effort is a function of efficient and effective administration and implementation of a survey research. However the efficient and effective administration and implementation of a survey research pertains to such issues as questionnaire design and layout, survey piloting and pre-notification and post-survey follow-up reminders (Harris and Ogbonna, 2001). These issues guided the present research.

The sample used for this study was a convenience sample and the use of convenience sampling has been found relevant in previous studies (Hall and Lockshin, 2000). The questions in the research instrument were adapted from extant literature (Kotler, 2006; Blalock, 2005; Alyssa, 2006; amongst others). These works were adapted and refined following the research guidelines of Wright and Kearn (1998) for replicating existing marketing or business constructs.

The questionnaire used for data collection was pre-tested on a group within the research population in order to reinforce its final administration. However, it must be stated that although the judgment of content validity is subjective, the procedures used in the present research are in accordance with extant research practice (Churchill, 1995). During the pre-test, a series of personal interviews were carried out involving relevant academics and professionals in business. As a result of these interviews, certain items were removed from the questionnaire due to the lack of conceptual relevance.

The data for the present study were obtained through a questionnaire administered on a convenience sample of 500 respondents from 100 small and large (manufacturing and service) companies operating in Lagos State of Nigeria. The questionnaires with completion instructions were hand-delivered to respondents. Confidentiality was assured, and incentive for participating in the research (by making the report of the research available to the respondents if they so desired) was promised. The use of incentive has been found to be an excellent method for encouraging participation in this kind of research (Daves, 1999), especially in a developing country such as Nigeria.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A consisted of 29 items dealing with business communication and performance measurement. In order to measure the extent to which the sampled Nigerian companies had embraced effective business communication, respondents were asked to indicate (on a five-point Likert scale) their degrees of agreement or disagreement with statements pertaining to dimensions of effective business communication. Specifically, respondents were asked to indicate the extents to which they agree with statements pertaining to the above issues (effective business communication) ranging from "very high extent" (5) to "no extent at all" (1). Section B of the research instrument measured the demographic profile of respondents with respect to title, address, e-mail, phone number, category of industry of respondent's company, type of business measured by number of employees in respondent's organization, educational qualification, professional qualification, working experience, age and gender.

Of the 500 copies of questionnaire administered to the relevant respondents, 484 copies were found useable for the present study, resulting in an effective response rate of 96.8 percent. Responses to sections A and B were analyzed using a variety of statistical techniques ranging from univariate analysis to multivariate. The use of a five-scale questionnaire (i.e. from very high extent (5) to “no extent at all” (1) in the present research followed research procedures from extant literature. Also, the use of subjective self-reporting scales in research (as used in the present study) had proven reliable in many situations (Deshpande and Farley, 2004). In the present research, predictive validity was addressed via zero-order correlation coefficient (not reported here). The Cronbach and reliability coefficients tested the reliability. The coefficient α value exceeded 0.70, suggesting adequate reliability (Cronbach, 1947). The findings from the research are presented as Table I – VI. The values corresponding to the codes they contain are defined.

RESULTS

In order to accomplish the purpose of the research study the following key to research variables are designed and used in tables I-VI to enable the researcher collect information relating to business communication strategies.

Key to research variables used in Tables I – VI.

A1	Exchanging information
A2	Making plans and proposal
A3	Reaching agreement
A4	Exchanging opinions
A5	Executing decisions
A6	Sending and fulfilling orders
A7	Conducting sales
A8	Provide feedback
A9	Encouraging two-way communication
A10	Boost morale
A11	Increase efficiency
A12	Help in solving problems
A13	Help in accomplishing tasks
A14	Improving teamwork
A15	Frequent and systematic measurement of employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction.
A16	Consider medium of communication
B1	Improved job satisfaction
B2	Safety
B3	Productivity of business
B4	Profitability of its business
B5	Decrease in grievances
B6	Public credibility
B7	Improved sales volume
B8	Operational efficiency
B9	Public goodwill
B10	Staff motivation
B11	Corporate image
B12	Staff training
B13	Achievement of organizational goals
B14	Achievement of customer satisfaction

Table I shows the descriptive statistics of the degree of practice of effective business communication activities by the surveyed companies. From the mean values in Table 1, it can be seen that all the variables (A1 – A16) witnessed encouraging degree of practice, with “exchanging information” (A1) having the highest extent of practice. There is a general consensus in extant literature that an organization which practice constant exchange of information (both with internal and external customers) in the practice of effective business communication will enjoy to a reasonable extent, public credibility, a decrease in grievance level, operational efficiency, public goodwill, staff motivation, improved job satisfaction (Alyssa, 2006; Blalock, 2005; among others).

From the results in Table 1, effective business communication is emphasized and practiced to a reasonable extent in the surveyed Nigerian companies. However, it should be noted that the emphasis on, or practice of

effective business communication in any organization, sector, industry or country is a question of degree (Pearson, 1993).

Table I - **Descriptive statistics of the degree of practice of effective business communication (n = 484)**

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
A1	5.682	0.9124	-0.2327	-0.2333
A2	5.424	0.5432	-0.3114	-1.124
A3	5.552	0.5346	-0.8832	-0.2631
A4	5.571	0.5424	-0.3114	-1.123
A5	5.063	0.7915	-0.2753	-0.9612
A6	5.121	0.7961	-0.2146	-1.364
A7	5.084	0.7271	-1.283	-1.183
A8	5.082	0.8534	-0.3942	-0.7903
A9	5.143	0.3736	-0.2433	-1.170
A10	5.033	0.2242	-2.386	-1.171
A11	5.582	0.9511	-0.2824	-0.3831
A12	5.193	0.8331	-0.1914	0.0324
A13	5.084	0.7323	-1.276	-1.173
A14	5.212	0.8214	-0.4024	-0.3913
A15	5.556	0.5731	-0.8814	-0.2632
A16	5.071	0.8142	-0.2416	-0.8414

Source: Field survey, 2010.

This table shows the full result of the descriptive statistics of the degree of practice of effective business communication activities by the surveyed companies in Nigeria.

Table II - **Descriptive statistics of the performance measure of effective business communication (n = 484)**

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
B1	5.012	0.9921	-0.02221	-2.034
B2	4.814	0.9234	-0.5331	-0.5024
B3	4.832	0.9112	-0.0522	-1.963
B4	4.861	0.8926	-0.4014	-0.2723
B5	4.823	0.9234	-0.3153	-0.3535
B6	4.802	0.9515	-0.3914	-0.1642
B7	4.851	0.8912	-0.2626	-0.4813
B8	4.864	0.8816	-0.4012	-1.036
B9	4.834	0.8814	-0.3031	-0.2945
B10	4.902	0.8923	-0.2126	-0.8836
B11	4.831	0.9223	-0.5343	-0.5023
B12	4.803	0.9224	-0.3714	-0.1415
B13	5.091	0.8915	-0.6123	-0.4948
B14	4.911	0.8811	-0.5941	-0.3434

Source: Field survey, 2010

This table shows the full result of descriptive statistics of the performance measure of effective business communication activities by the surveyed companies in Nigeria.

The sign of an organization that truly practice effective business communication is exhibited by the degree to which the other communication variables such as exchanging opinion, encouragement of two-way communication, providing feedback, consideration of medium of communication, amongst others, support effective business communication and contribute to improved job satisfaction, profitability and public credibility. Table I, however, shows that “Boost Morale” (i.e. A10) was the least emphasized effective business communication issue in the surveyed Nigerian companies (Mean Value – 5.033). This can be explained because some Nigerian companies emphasize effective business communication but not with the intent to boost morale,

but rather to achieve increased efficiency and profitability of business, amongst others reasons. This finding is in agreement with other research findings in extant literature.

This paper has helped in building the goodwill of organizational goals and objectives through creation of business values. From table II. B1 – B14 shows the descriptive statistics related to performance measure. The mean values seem to suggest that effective business communication practices in Nigerian companies are related to organizational performance (i.e. improved job satisfaction, improved productivity, improved profitability, improved sales volume, operational efficiency, public goodwill, staff motivation, high corporate image, achievement of organizational goals, customer satisfaction, among others). From table II, the most achieved performance measure is B13 (i.e. achievement of organizational goals) with mean value of 5.091. The mean value suggest that, to a reasonable extent, effective communication will aid the achievement of organizational goals (such as improved job satisfaction, productivity of business, profitability of business, public credibility, improved sales volume, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, amongst others).

Table III also shows the correlation coefficients between effective business communication practices (A1 – A14 and B1 – B14) with performance measures and category of business (X2) and the size of business (X3). This is supported by the research hyponesis II which attempt to investigate “the extent of practices of effective business communication is not related to the category of business and its size”. From the findings,

		X2	X3
		Correlation coefficients	
Table III Correlation of effective business communication practices (A1 – A16), Business communication performance measures (B1 – B14) and category of business (X2) and size of business (X3)	A1	0.0824	0.0482
	A2	0.0641	0.0563
	A3	0.0872	0.0642
	A4	0.0501	0.0294
	A5	0.0563	0.1241
	A6	0.0631	0.0793
	A7	0.0601	0.0523
	A8	0.0512	0.0612
	A9	0.0485	0.0734
	A10	0.0912	0.0752
	A11	0.0664	0.0526
	A12	0.0381	0.0764
	A13	0.0542	0.0817
	A14	0.0573	0.0613
	A15	0.6741	0.1352
	A16	0.6264	0.0564
	B1	0.7912	0.0523
	B2	0.6642	0.0791
	B3	0.0654	0.0696
	B4	0.0512	0.0301
	B5	0.2281	0.0524
	B6	0.0991	0.0562
	B7	0.7043	0.0803
	B8	0.0474	0.0251
	B9	0.6362	0.0586
	B10	0.0564	0.0474
	B11	0.5441	0.0412
	B12	0.1116	0.0583
	B13	0.0972	0.0564
	B14	0.0992	0.0731

Table III shows the results for the correlation of effective business communication practices (A1-A16) business communication performance measures (B1-b14) and category of business (x2) and type a business (x3) of the surveyed companies in Nigeria.

Note: *p > 0.05; **p > 0.01

Some of the correlation coefficients are indicate significance at 5 percent levels or higher respectively. The significant correlation coefficients in table III seem to suggest that effective business communication practices

in Nigerian companies and performance are related to the category of business (i.e. service or manufacturing) and to type of business (i.e. whether micro, small, medium, or large-scale). This conclusion is tentative and may elicit further empirical effort for a more generalizable conclusion.

Table IV: KMO and Barlett's test results (factors analysis) for the effective business communication practice measure.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling adequacy	0.9402
Barlett's test of sphericity	
Approximate X^2	19,388.201
Df	1126
Significance	.000

Table IV shows the KMO and Barlett's test (factor analysis) for the effective business communication practice measure. The values in table IV seem to suggest that this measure of effective business communication activities is suitable for factor analysis (Stewart, 1981).

TEST OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Research hypothesis I

With the generation from the mean value in table 1 which shows the full result of the descriptive statistics of the performance measure of effective business communication activities by the surveyed companies in Nigeria, the first hypothesis in the study was put to test for veracity the hypothesis states that.

Ho: Effective business communication is not emphasized on the surveyed Nigerian companies.

From the mean column in table I it can be seen that all the variable (A1 –A16) witnessed encouraging degree of practice, between 5.033 – 5.682 respectively, experiencing average support for the researchable questions. This suggests that effective business communication is emphasized and practiced to a reasonable extent in the surveyed Nigerian companies. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted.

Likewise, in that test analysis (not recorded here), for the first hypothesis tested at 5 percent level of significance, the t score value = 4.683 and the t table value = 1.96. Since the t score value of 4.683 exceeds the t table value of 1.96 values, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Hence effective business communication is emphasized in the surveyed Nigerian companies.

Research Hypothesis II

The second hypothesis states that:

Ho: the extent of practices of effective business communication is not related to the category of business and its size.

With the generation from the correlation coefficients values (X2 andX3) in table III, which shows the result for the correlation coefficients effective business communication practices (A1-A16), business communication performance measures (B1 – B14) and category of business (X2) and type of business (X3) of the surveyed companies in Nigeria. Based on the result of the correlation coefficients it suggests that to a reasonable extent the practice of effective business communication is related to the category of business and its size.

Research Hypothesis III

The third hypothesis states that:

Ho: The level or extent of practices of effective business communication does not affect achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

With the generation from the mean value in table II, B1 – B14 which shows the result of the descriptive statistics related to performance measure, the most achieved performance measure is B13 (i.e. achievement of organizational goals) with mean value of 5.091. This suggests that to a reasonable extent, effective communication will aid the achievement of organizational goals.

Likewise, in the t-test analysis (not recorded here, for this hypothesis, tested at 5 percent level of significance, the t-score value = 6.893 and the t score value of 6.893 exceeds the t value = 1.96. Since the t-score value of 6.893 exceeds the table value of 1.96, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis

was accepted. Hence it can be concluded that the level or extent of practices of effective business communication does affect the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Thus, it can be said that effective business communication aid improved organizational performance.

Table V- Relationship between effective business communication and performance

		Perceived organizational performance
Effective business communication	Pearson correlation	.456
	Sig (2-tailed)	.0000
	N	484

(Source: Field survey, 2010.)

The table V shows a significant correlation between effective business communication and performance ($r = 0.456$, $p < .01$). This finding is similar with findings from extant literature, which states that there is a significant positive relationship between effective business communication and performance (Blalock, 2005, Alyssa, 2006).

Table V- Demographic statistics of respondents

VARIABLES		PERCENTAGE %
1. Title of respondents (X1)		
- CEO/MD/Chairman		9.6
- Manager		32.4
- Officer		44.8
- Supervisor		1.6
- Secretary		6.8
- Others		4.4
- No response		0.4
2. Category of Business (X2)		
Service		49.2
Manufacturing		48.0
No responses		2.8
3. Type of Business (X3)		
1 – 9		16.7
10 – 99		32.9
100 – 499		18.9
500 and above		28.3
No response		3.2
4. Working experience (X4)		
01 – 5 years		25.0
06 – 30 years		59.6
31 – 55 years		15.4
55 – above		-
5. Gender (X5)		
Male		74.3
Female		25.7
No response		-
6. Educational qualification (X6)		
B.Sc/HND		72.4
Masters		4.2
Doctorate		0.6
PGD		11.0
NCE/OND		6.2
Others		3.2
No response		2.4
7. Marital status (X7)		
Single		51.2
Married		46.8
No response		2.0

(Source: Field survey, 2010.)

Table V shows the demographic statistics of the respondents with respect to title, category of industry of respondent's company, type of business measured by number of employees in respondent's organization, working experience, gender, educational qualification and marital status. Respondents' working experience (X4) ranged from 1 to 55 years, while respondents' ages ranged from 27 to 61 years (not reported here). Generally the demographic profiles of the respondents seem to suggest that the research sample represents a rich data set with regard to age, working experience, type of industry, category of company, and academic and professional qualifications.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS,

This research has empirically, examined the incidence of business communication practices in Nigerian companies using the adapted and modified business communication construct measure, it has been found that Nigeria companies generally emphasize effective business communication issues, and that, the extent of practices of effective business communication, were related to the category of business (service versus manufacturing) and its size. The study also found that the extent to which companies practice effective business communication, affected to a reasonable extent, the level at which the companies achieved encouraging job satisfaction, sales turnover, reduction in cost, profitability, growth in customer/client base, customer/client satisfaction, improved market share, improved personnel/staff satisfaction, improved level of social responsibility, improved level of goods/services quality, improved level of sales volume, achievement of short- and long-term goals, satisfaction with company's business practices (with regard to attention to customers/clients, competitors, and gathering, using and responding to relevant information pertaining to customers/clients and competitors) and finally 'satisfaction with overall company performance in its business operations'.

In conclusion, results from the study firmly suggest that business communication generally affects organizational performance to a reasonable extent in Nigerian companies. These results may be useful to both academics and business practitioners with interest in the Nigerian economy. The business communication scales used in this research in conjunction with the associated results there from, should enable corporate managers in Nigeria to identify their strategic strengths and weaknesses, and the relevant areas that needs managerial attention.

It is suggested that future research replicates this study in other developing economies, in order to enhance the understanding of the practical application of business communication in such economies. Future research may also adopt a comparative perspective by conducting empirical studies using sector-specific and industry-specific samples.

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