

Workplace Internal Communication and Corporate Performance: Evidence from Selected Manufacturing Firms in Benin City, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focused on workplace internal communication and corporate performance in beverages manufacturing companies in Benin City, Nigeria. The study investigated how poor listening, premature evaluation, use of technical jargon, and information overload relate to corporate performance. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire administered to the respondents. The population of this study consisted of 280 persons being employees of the three beverages manufacturing companies (Coca-Cola, Seven-Up (7up) and Guinness Nigeria Plc); in Benin City, Nigeria. Using Taro Yamane's sampling size determination formula, a sample size of 161 respondents was established. To accommodate attrition, extra 39 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, bringing the total number of participants engaged in the study to 200. This sample size was proportionately allocated to each participating organization based on their respective workforce contributions to the overall population. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure appropriate representation across the organizations. The instrument's validity was confirmed through expert reviews from five industry professionals and academics, ensuring content and face validity. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach alpha coefficient test. All variables recorded values above 0.70. Regression analysis was used for hypotheses testing. Findings revealed that poor listening, premature evaluation of information, use of technical jargon, and information overload were all significantly and negatively related to corporate performance. The study concluded that these communication barriers have meaningful implications for corporate performance and recommended that organizations eliminate such obstacles while encouraging employees to avoid poor listening and premature information evaluation.

Keywords: Corporate Performance, Internal Communication, Poor Listening, Premature Evaluation, Use of Technical Jargon, Information Overload

Introduction

Effective workplace communication is acknowledged as a fundamental driver of performance, productivity, innovation, employee engagement and customer satisfaction (Kimonyo, 2024). Organizations that prioritize strategic communication enjoy better employee morale and improved operational results (Men, 2014). In today's knowledge-driven environment, communication functions not only as an information tool but also as a means for building relationships, resolving conflicts, and managing change. Across Africa, workplace communication is shifting with increased digital adoption and remote work, although many organizations still struggle with limited technology access, weak communication structures, and cultural barriers, all of which contribute to reducing agility and efficiency (Ojera & Okoth, 2014). Despite its recognized importance, communication is often underemphasized in strategic management, especially in developing economies like Nigeria. Literature suggests that miscommunication contributes to weak employee engagement and reduced productivity while the absence of

clear communication policies, low digitization and poor technology hinders information flow and collaboration (Bale & Pillay, 2021; Amin et al., 2022). Inadequate feedback systems, misinformation, and unclear reporting lines too have been linked to poor employee performance, low motivation, and weak corporate performance (Akinnubi, 2010; Amin et al., 2022).

As Nigeria's economy grows more competitive and service-oriented, effective workplace communication has become increasingly essential to team performance and organizational functioning, prompting extensive global research on its dynamics. Achieving effective and efficient internal communications therefore in the beverage manufacturing organizations is highly imperative as the sector thrives on teamwork, scheduling and inter-departmental collaboration. This study therefore examined the relationship between communication barriers and corporate performance. Specifically, the study assessed how poor listening, premature evaluation of information, use of technical language and information overload relates to corporate performance. The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the relationship between poor listening and corporate performance?
- ii. How does premature evaluation of information relate to corporate performance?
- iii. What is the relationship between use of technical jargons and corporate performance?
- iv. How does information overload relate to corporate performance?

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Human Relations Theory, developed in the 1930s as an alternative to classical management theories, emphasizing the importance of satisfying employee needs to enhance organizational performance (Adegbuyi, Akinyele, & Akinyele, 2015). The theory gained prominence through the Hawthorne Studies conducted by Mayo, Roethlisberger, and Dickson (1924-1933), which demonstrated that attention to workers' social needs improves productivity. The human relations approach stresses recognizing employee needs and fostering supportive environments that enable employees to maximize their abilities. The theory explains how strong communications can drive both individual and organizational performance; and highlights the importance of informal communication networks in achieving organizational goals and business outcomes (Adegbuyi et al., 2015).

Corporate Performance

Corporate performance refers to how well an organization meets its goals and objectives by comparing actual results with expected outcomes. The balance-score-card framework assesses performance outcomes in terms of financial results (e.g. profits, return on investment), product market performance (e.g., sales, market share), learning and growth, and shareholder returns. It captures metrics like effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and reliability (Kaplan & Norton, 2006).

Understanding Organizational Communication

Keyton (2011) posits that communication is the process of sharing information in a way that leads to mutual understanding and includes both formal and informal channels through which messages are exchanged. It supports resource coordination, administrative efficiency, conflict management, and team cohesion (Salvation, 2019). Lutgen-Sandvik (2010) argued that poor communication leads to inefficiencies, dissatisfaction, and conflict. As a two-way process it involves feedback, knowledge sharing, enhances organizational image and credibility, and contributes to overall performance (Adegbuyi et al., 2015).

The Link between Workplace Internal Communication and Corporate Performance

Some studies have shown the connection between workplace communication and corporate performance. Men and Yue (2019) demonstrated that transparent leadership communication fosters trust and commitment, leading to better employee performance and improved company profitability. Karanges et al. (2020) confirmed that effective

internal communication directly contributes to organizational success by strengthening employee alignment with corporate goals, thus driving higher business performance. This study examined how barriers such as poor listening, premature evaluation of information, use of technical jargon and information overload are associated with corporate performance.

Poor Listening and Corporate Performance

Poor listening occurs when a receiver shows low interest or attention, often due to perceptual or psychological biases, distractions, poor timing, defensiveness, or closed-mindedness. These factors encourage premature evaluation of information. Research consistently shows that poor listening negatively affects corporate performance (Gearhart & Bodie, 2016). Bravely Inc. (2024) reported that companies that train leaders in active listening achieve up to 30% higher employee engagement and productivity. These highlight that fostering a culture of attentive listening can be instrumental in driving organizational success.

Premature Evaluation of Information and Corporate Performance

Premature evaluation which is forming conclusions before fully understanding a message have been shown to disrupt decision-making, weaken workplace cohesion, cause poor judgments and operational setbacks. Shonubi and Akintaro (2022) report that leaders who judge information too quickly often create planning inefficiencies and employee dissatisfaction, underscoring the need for deliberate communication to support strong corporate performance. In South Africa, Naidoo and Singh (2021) found that financial managers who rushed conclusions made poor resource decisions that harmed performance. Kohl and Schuster (2020), studying IT firms in Germany, discovered decisions based on incomplete data increased project failures and client's complaints.

Use of Technical Jargon and Corporate Performance

The use of technical jargon is a major barrier to effective communication because it often leads to misunderstandings. This happens when receivers interpret words differently, struggle with language, or come from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Poor timing, inattentiveness, unclear messaging channels, and the use of unfamiliar abbreviations also contribute to confusion, ultimately lowering productivity. In Zambia, Musheke and Phiri (2021) found that weak feedback systems and unclear communication reduced efficiency and employee performance. Glyptis et al. (2020), studying UK organizations, reported that communication barriers hinder transformational leadership by reducing employee engagement and limiting leaders' ability to motivate teams. Similarly, Wang et al. (2021) showed that unclear expectations significantly harm task performance and job satisfaction, while in multinational teams, cultural and linguistic differences slow project delivery (Chin, 2022).

Information Overload and Corporate Performance

Information overload is when excessive information hampers effective decision-making and is becoming an increasing challenge in digital workplaces. It occurs when individuals receive more information than they can process within a short time, causing important details to be lost. For instance, a manager delivering too many facts at once risks ineffective communication. This overload disrupts information flow, reduces employee output, and weakens corporate performance (Igbinsosa & Osawonyi, 2012). Leavitt and Cho (2023) reported that constant information influx leads to cognitive errors and workplace disengagement. Studies also link information excess to stress, decision fatigue, and poor prioritization. Eppler and Mengis (2020) observed that excessive emails and redundant meetings reduced focus and strategic thinking in knowledge-intensive firms, while Leavitt and Cho (2023) again noted higher error rates and burnout among overloaded employees.

Empirical Review

Bery, Otieno, Waiganjo, and Njeru (2015) examined communication in Kenya's horticultural sector and found that effective information exchange strengthens operational efficiency and improves overall performance. Their study concluded that communication is a major driver of organizational success. Oyetunde and Oladejo (2012)

explored communication approaches at the Nigerian Bottling Company in Ilorin and confirmed a strong relationship between communication practices and organizational efficiency. They emphasized the value of clear intentions before communicating, understanding the work environment, planning messages, and using the right tone. The study also highlighted the importance of active listening, feedback, and follow-up, noting that these practices support employee development and contribute to better organizational performance. Asamu (2014), in a study on selected organizations in Lagos, Nigeria, investigated how communication influences workers' performance. Using data from 120 respondents, the study found a strong relationship between effective communication and employee productivity, performance, and commitment. The study recommended that management maintain regular communication with employees to strengthen workplace relationships and improve overall output. Kibe (2014) examined communication strategies within the Kenya Ports Authority and found that open-door communication, team collaboration, and a well-structured communication system significantly enhance organizational performance. The above review suggests that communication contributes to performance where properly harnessed. It is noticeable that the studies reviewed are mostly of foreign origin and from organizations in different sectors. This study therefore focused on three beverage organizations and investigated how poor listening, premature evaluation of information, use of technical jargon, and information overload relate to corporate performance in the Nigerian setting. Stemming from the above, the following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

H1: Poor listening does not significantly relate to corporate performance

H2: There is no significant relationship between premature evaluation of information and corporate performance

H3: Using technical jargon does not significantly relate to corporate performance

H4: There is no significant relationship between information overload and corporate performance

Materials and Methods

The study adopted cross sectional research design, which was executed by conducting a survey. An appropriately structured questionnaire was used to obtain information from the respondents. The population of this study were employees of three beverage manufacturing companies namely Coca-Cola, Seven-Up (7up) and Guinness Nigeria PLC; all operating in Benin City, Nigeria. The population of all three organizations at the time of the study stood at 280 employees. Using Yamane (1968) formula a sample size value of 161 was obtained from the population for use as sample size for the study. Extra 39 copies of the instrument were added to the sample size to cater for possible attrition and improperly filled copies of the questionnaire that may arise upon administration as is common with surveys. A total sample size value of 200 was therefore used and proportionately distributed to the employees of each of the bottling companies based on their contribution to the total population. The stratified sampling technique was applied to achieve the appropriate and adequate representation of the various cadres across the sampled organizations.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was assured by using content and face validity. This was assured by five experts in industry and academics. For the reliability of the instrument, we conducted a pilot study and engaged Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient test which yielded alpha values lying between 0.72 - 0.88 for all the variables. Specifically, the alpha values obtained are: poor listening ($\alpha = 0.82$); premature evaluation ($\alpha = 0.72$); use of technical jargon ($\alpha = 0.76$); information overload ($\alpha = 0.81$); and corporate performance ($\alpha = 0.88$). The alpha values were all greater than the 0.7 threshold signifying a reliable research instrument (Nunnally, 1978).

Data Analysis

The data passed the various diagnostics tests such as normality, homoscedasticity, outliers and multicollinearity. The predictors in the regression model have VIFs less than 5 and tolerance scores above 0.2. The hypotheses were tested with multiple regression analysis at 5% level of significance with the aid of SPSS V20. The value (p) was

used to take decision on the hypotheses. Where p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 then the null hypothesis is rejected and where p-value is greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis is retained.

Model Specification

The functional regression model is given as:

$$CP = f(WIC) \text{-----} 1$$

$$\text{Whereas } WIC = PL, PE, TJ, IO, \text{-----} 2$$

Then:

$$CP = f(PL, PE, TJ, IO) \text{-----} 3$$

The econometric form of the research model is given as:

$$CP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PL + \beta_2 PE + \beta_3 TJ + \beta_4 IO + \epsilon_t \text{-----} 4$$

Where:

CP = corporate performance made up of the following items: $CPI_1 - CPI_8$

PL = poor listening made up of the following items: $PLI_1 - PLI_4$

PE = premature evaluation made up of the following items: $PEI_1 - PEI_4$

TJ = technical jargon made up of the following items: $TJI_1 - TJI_4$

IO = information overload made up of the following items: $IOI_1 - IOI_4$

WIC = workplace internal communication

ϵ_t = error term

β_0 = intercept of model constant

$\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = are the regression coefficients.

Results and Discussions

The study had a response rate of 82.5% as only 165 copies of the questionnaire administered were properly completed and found usable. An attrition rate of 17.5% was recorded stemming from respondents' attitude. A mean performance index was applied on the data and summarized and is presented below.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Poor listening	165	1	5	3.71	.87
Premature evaluation	165	1	5	3.86	.92
Use of technical jargon	165	1	5	4.02	.94
Information overload	165	1	5	3.97	.98
Corporate performance	165	1	5	3.22	.86

Fieldwork, (2024)

Table 1 above presents the descriptive statistics for the sampled variables. The sample size (N) for all the variables is 165. All variables were measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). "Using technical jargon recorded the highest mean (M = 4.02, SD = 0.94), indicating it was the most perceived communication barrier among respondents. Poor listening had the lowest mean value (M = 3.71, SD = 0.87), although still relatively high, suggesting it remains a significant concern. Overall, all communication barriers showed relatively high mean values. Corporate performance however had a lower mean score (M = 3.22, SD = 0.86), suggesting that overall perceptions of performance were only moderate in the organization.

Hypothesis Testing

For the inferential analysis, multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses at a 5% level of significance. This choice was based on the usefulness of regression analysis to help understand relationships and predict the extent

to which a change in an independent variable influences a change in the dependent variable. The analysis was done with the aid of the SPSS V20 software.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Results Predicting Corporate Performance

Model Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	1.210	0.280		4.72	0.000
PL	-0.210	0.080	-0.220	-2.63	0.010
PE	-0.150	0.070	-0.180	-2.14	0.034
TJ	-0.300	0.090	-0.290	-3.33	0.001
IO	-0.270	0.085	-0.250	-3.18	0.002
Model Summary					
Statistic	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-statistic	Sig. (p-value)
Value	0.682	0.465	0.453	39.52	0.000

Constant = (PL, PE, TJ, IO); Dep Var: = CP

Fieldwork, (2024)

Interpretation of Results

A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine how poor listening, premature evaluation, the use of technical jargon and information overload were related to corporate performance. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(4,160) = (39.52, p < .001)$ and explained approximately 46.5% of the variance in corporate performance, $R = .682, R^2 = .465,$ and adjusted $R^2 = .453$. All four null hypotheses were not supported by the study findings. Individually, all predictors had significant negative relations with corporate performance. Poor listening was significantly and negatively ($\beta = -0.22, t(160) = -2.63, p = .010$) related to corporate performance; premature evaluation also showed a significant and negative association ($\beta = -0.18, t(160) = -2.14, p = .034$ with corporate performance); using technical jargon had significant negative relations ($\beta = -0.29, t(160) = -3.33, p = .001$) to corporate performance; while information overload too was also significantly and negatively related ($\beta = -0.25, t(160) = -3.18, p = .002$) to corporate performance. These results suggest that the internal communication variables studied were negatively and significantly related to corporate performance.

Discussion of Findings

With respect to hypothesis one the results showed that poor listening had significant negative relations to corporate performance. This finding supports the idea that ineffective listening disrupts understanding, weakens relationships, and ultimately diminishes organizational effectiveness. Prior studies have consistently highlighted the consequences of poor listening. For example, Wolvin (2010) confirmed that organizations with poor listening cultures experience higher turnover rates and reduced productivity. Kluger and Itzchakov (2022) found that when managers do not listen actively, employees experience reduced trust and satisfaction, which ultimately affects performance. This study aligns with literature underscoring the critical role of effective listening for corporate success.

For hypothesis two the results showed that premature evaluation was also found to be negatively associated with corporate performance. This is supported by Morin and Delorme (2022) who reported that Canadian leaders who evaluated strategies too early without diverse team input faced higher turnover and more conflict. A cross-cultural study by Lee and Zhang (2023) further established that pressure to make snap judgments reduced innovation and slowed long-term performance growth in both South Korean and U.S. organizations.

Regarding hypothesis three, the findings showed that using technical jargon had the strongest negative association with corporate performance. This result highlights that overly complex language creates barriers between employees, impeding knowledge sharing and collaboration. In the fast-paced beverages production environment, technical jargon between engineers and floor staff may cause costly delays. The excessive use of technical language alienates non-expert employees and weakens internal communication systems. Bullock and Bisbey (2025) study affirms that unclear communication, often caused by jargon, contributes to operational errors and low employee morale. Zhang and Venkatesh (2013) affirm that clarity in communication strongly predicted team performance. The finding from this hypothesis emphasizes the need for simplicity and clarity in organizational messaging to support corporate performance outcomes.

Concerning hypothesis four on information overload and performance, the results show that information overload was found to have a significant negative relationship with corporate performance. This suggests that excessive information hampers employees' ability to process important messages and can contribute to stress and/or poor decision-making. Laker (2015) identified that interruptions and overwhelming volumes of information reduce employees' cognitive capacities and slow organizational processes, lower job satisfaction and reduced performance. Merlo and Hawamdeh (2022) in a multi-country study found that large data volumes slow decision-making, heighten emotional burnout, and lower productivity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that workplace internal communication inefficiencies are negatively and significantly related to corporate performance. The study findings reinforce the critical importance of promoting clear, empathetic, and streamlined communication practices within organizations to enhance productivity, employee satisfaction, and organizational success. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. The sampled beverage organizations should develop and implement active listening training programs to strengthen employees' listening competencies and foster better interpersonal understanding. Implementing mandatory active listening workshops would positively improve communication effectiveness in the organizations.
- ii. Supervisors and team leaders should be encouraged to avoid premature evaluations during conversations by being patient and practicing reflective listening techniques.
- iii. Organizations should prioritize using simple, clear, and jargon-free language in communication to ensure that messages are easily understood across all departments and employee levels. Developing a glossary of terms for cross departmental use would be immensely beneficial.
- iv. Managers should regulate information flow by filtering non-essential communications and prioritizing critical updates to minimize the risk of information overload. The introduction of periodic communication audits would support communication effectiveness.

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