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# EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN ACCESS BANK PLC, MAKURDI -NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT
*Effective organizational communication remains a critical driver of employee performance, particularly in service-oriented industries such as banking. This study examined the effect of organizational communication on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from all 107 staff across the bank's branches in Makurdi using structured questionnaires. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis at a 5% level of significance. The findings reveal that organizational communication has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance. The study concludes that effective communication enhances employees' efficiency and quality of service delivery. It is recommended that management sustains and strengthens existing communication channels to maintain and improve performance outcomes.*
**Keywords:** *Organizational Communication, Employee Performance, Upward Communication, Downward Communication, Horizontal Communication*

## 1. INTRODUCTION
Employees are central to the achievement of organizational goals, particularly in the banking sector where service delivery, accuracy, and customer satisfaction are critical. Employee performance reflects how well individuals execute assigned duties efficiently and in line with organizational standards. One of the most important factors influencing performance is organizational communication, which enables employees to understand expectations, receive feedback, and coordinate tasks (Rajhans & Chhabra, 2024).

Communication and employees' performance have become an issue of great concern by researchers' world wide. On a global scale, Duarte and Silva (2024) in Portugal, reported a positive effect of internal communication on employee performance in the hospitality industry. In China, Wang, Feng, Wang and Li (2025) demonstrated that inclusive leadership communication indirectly improves job performance through enhanced leader–member exchange and organizational identification. In Nigeria, Dike and Ahia (2025), Igbokwe (2024) and Ohanyere and Odebeatu (2024) found that effective communication strategies significantly enhance employee productivity, quality of service, and efficiency in both public and private organizations, including banks.

In service-driven industries such as banking, where efficiency, accuracy, and customer satisfaction are paramount, communication plays a particularly critical role in determining organizational success. The Nigerian banking industry has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, driven by globalization, technological innovation, regulatory reforms, and heightened competition. These changes have created a dynamic environment where banks must continuously adapt to new policies, digital platforms, and customer expectations. Effective communication between management and employees becomes indispensable (Dike & Ahia, 2025).

In Nigerian banks, including Access Bank Plc, employees operate in complex environments characterized by regulatory pressures, technological change, and intense competition. Ineffective communication can lead to errors, low morale, and reduced productivity. Although prior studies have examined communication and performance, limited empirical research has focused on banks in Makurdi. This study therefore investigates the effect of upward communication, downward communication and upward communication on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

This section review both conceptual and empirical literature as well as the theory.

### 2.1 Employee Performance

Employee performance is the outcome produced by the employees in the organization in discharging their responsibilities (Suci et al., 2021). Employee performance is the result of ability, effort and perception of task from the employees (Ohanyere & Odebeatu, 2024). Dialoke and Wabara (2017) defined employee performance as a measure of how well individuals carry out tasks assigned to them.

Employee performance is a metric that indicates how well employees adhere to both explicit and implicit standards, objectives, and priorities and shows the way employees complete their assigned work and perform required responsibilities (Omar *et al.*, 2020). The performance of employees is not only an important criterion that reflects the results of business operations, but also an important standard for the work results. It is thus the extent to which employees effectively and efficiently carry out assigned duties to achieve organizational objectives.

#### 2.1.1 Measures of Employee Performance

Many organizations have used different metrics to measure employee performance. The measures of employee performance include quality of work or service, and employee efficiency (Ohanyere

& Odebeatu, 2024; Alabi *et al.*, 2022). These measures of employee performance are used in this study because of their relation to the organization in focus.

Quality of Work: Quality of work is the process by which employees carry out work to meet clients' expectations (Fahmi, 2024). Quality of work also refers to the standard of work delivered by employees in an organization (Trejo, 2021). It shows that employees can meet all deadline requirements, meet completion expectations and present accurate information (Zawawi, Khalid, Jamil, & Halim, 2023). Accuracy is an indicator of quality of work that shows whether the work done by an employee is free from errors. In this study, quality of work is defined as employees' ability to deliver error-free outputs, meet required standards, and provide satisfactory service outcomes.

Employee Efficiency: Employee efficiency refers to the ratio of an employee's actual time to perform work against the time needed to complete it (Jerab, 2024). It is the extent to which employees can complete assigned tasks within the expected time frame while making optimal use of available resources (Lin *et al.*, 2021). Employee efficiency therefore means employees perceived ability to meet deadlines, manage workload effectively, and accomplish tasks with minimal waste of time and resources.

### 2.2 Concept of Communication

The concept of communication is derived from the Latin word (Communis), which means "to share". This means sharing would enable one to partake and co-operate hence it is a social activity (Spaho, 2021). Organizational communication encompasses both formal and informal channels through which information flows within organizations, ranging from top-down directives, feedback mechanisms, team collaboration, to interpersonal interactions (Carter & Gehrau, 2024). Communication within an organization flows from management to employees, from employees to management and across functional levels, which give rise to downward communication, upward communication and horizontal communication (Duarte & Vítor, 2023). Effective communication enhances organizational relationships and minimizes strikes and lockouts. Organizational purposes and goals are sometimes defeated when communication is not effective (Tambunan, Absah & Siahaan, 2023). Organizational communication is the extent to which information, instructions, feedback, and ideas are effectively exchanged among employees and management within an organization through formal and informal channels.

#### 2.2.1 Dimensions of Organizational Communication

The dimensions of organizational communication available in literature include upward communication, downward communication and horizontal communication (Abushammala, Al-Shobaki, El-Talla & Hamdan, 2024; Onifade *et al*. 2019). The up, down, and across process is called three-dimensional communication, which constitutes a set of independent variables used in this study.

Upward Communication: Upward communication is communication from subordinates to their superiors in the organization (Stavro, 2020). The message is transmitted from bottom to top along the hierarchy. This usually happens when subordinates request opinions from their superiors. It is a type of communications that triggers decision from the top management (Stavro, 2020). In this case, superiors and subordinates could work cohesively to produce better results and attain

excellent performance. It is employees perceived opportunity to express opinions, make suggestions, report issues, and participate in decision-making.

Downward communication: Downward communication is communication from superiors to subordinates in the organization (Spaho, 2021). The message is transmitted from top to bottom along the hierarchy. Superiors normally share information with their lower-level employees (Ong, *et al* 2023). Downward communication is defined as the extent to which management communicates organizational goals, policies, instructions, expectations, and feedback to employees.

Horizontal Communication: Horizontal Communication is employee communication across the same level in the organization. In this dimension of organizational communication, the message is transmitted along a similar level within an organization (Ohanyere & Odebeatu, 2024). It usually produces a higher quality of information exchange as it occurs directly between employees working at the same level, and it helps in developing stronger relationship for employees in both similar department and different departments. It is employees perceived ease of interaction, teamwork, and cooperation with colleagues at the same level.

**2.3 Review of Empirical Literature**

Bolarinwa and Olorunfemi (2019) in their study on organizational communication and employee performance found that there is a significant relationship between upward communication and employee service quality. Downward communication provides feedback for employees to evaluate their performance (Owusu & Arboh, 2022). Yates and Orlikowski (2022) found a positive and significant relationship between downward communication and employee quality service in deposit money banks. Ohanyere and Odebeatu (2024) reported an insignificant effect of upward communication on employee performance.

Hee, Quin, Kowang and Fei (2019) confirmed that downward communication had a significant impact on employee communication. A study by Ali (2016) also found that downward communication had significant and positive association with employee performance. Horizontal communication enables the managers working at the same level to exchange information and co-ordinate their activities without referring all matters to the higher level of management, thus enhances employee performance which collectively speeds up organizational performance.

Yates and Orlikowski (2022) revealed that horizontal communication had no significant relationship with employee performance of money banks. Ohanyere and Odebeatu (2024) investigated the relationship between organizational communications and employee performance in Nigeria bottling company, Nigeria and found that communication patterns and structure had a positive relationship between with contextual and operational performance. Zemichael, Mberia and Ndavula (2022) discovered that there was a significant positive relationship between communication structure and employee performance. Nwata, *et al* (2021) examined the relationship between organisational communication and employee performance in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt, Nigeria and reported a significant effect of organisational communication dimensions (upward, downward and horizontal communication) on employee performance.

### 2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Human Relations Theory, which was propounded by Mayo (1933), following his seminal Hawthorne Studies conducted between 1924 and 1932 at the Western Electric Company in the United States. The theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction, participation, and effective communication in improving employee performance. The theory explains that when employees are well informed, involved, and supported through effective communication, their motivation and performance improve. According to Mayo (1933), when employees feel valued, informed, and involved in organizational processes through effective communication, their sense of belonging increases, which in turn improves motivation, commitment, and job performance.

The Human Relations Theory is particularly relevant to this study on organizational communication and employee performance because communication serves as the primary mechanism through which social interaction and employee involvement occur within organizations. In the context of this study, upward communication enables employees to express feedback, concerns, and suggestions to management, thereby fostering participation and recognition. Downward communication ensures that employees clearly understand organizational goals, expectations, and policies, while horizontal communication enhances cooperation, teamwork, and coordination among employees at the same level.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

A survey design was adopted for this study. The survey design involves collecting and analyzing data to answer questions concerning the status of the subject of study. The survey design was adopted because it allows the researcher to obtain first-hand information directly from respondents regarding organizational communication practices and their influence on employee performance without manipulating the study environment. The population of the study is made up of 107 staff of Access Bank Plc branches (Wurukum, High Level and North Bank) in Makurdi Metropolis. All categories of staff (management, senior and junior) constitute the study population. The inclusion of all categories of staff (management, senior, and junior staff) in Access Bank Plc branches in Makurdi was justified because organizational communication occurs across hierarchical levels, and its effect on employee performance is experienced differently depending on employees' organizational positions. The study used a census approach where all members of the target population were included in the study sample. The decision to adopt a census approach, involving all 107 staff members, was further justified by the relatively small and manageable population size. Primary data for this study were gathered directly from the respondents through questionnaire administration. The study used descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Frequency tables, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation and regression were used for analysis while hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were analysed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

### Model Specification

Employee performance was measured using indicators of quality of work and employee efficiency, while organizational communication was measured along the dimensions of upward, downward, and horizontal communication. The functional relationship between the variables is stated as:

EP=f(OC)

Where:

EP= Employee Performance
OC= Organizational Communication
Expanding the function to reflect the specific dimensions of organizational communication, the econometric model is specified as:

$EP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 UC_i + \beta_2 DC_i + \beta_3 HC + \varepsilon_i$
Where:
$EP_i$ = Employee Performance
$UC_i$ = Upward Communication
$DC_i$ = Downward Communication
$HC_i$ = Horizontal Communication
$\beta_0$ = Intercept (constant term)
$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$= Regression coefficients measuring the effect of each independent variable on employee performance.
$\varepsilon$= Error term capturing the influence of other factors not included in the model

**A Priori Expectations**
Based on theory and prior empirical studies, the coefficients of the independent variables are expected to be positive, implying that improvements in organizational communication will lead to improved employee performance:
$\beta_1 > 0$, $\beta_2 > 0$, $\beta_3 > 0$

This implies that effective upward, downward, and horizontal communication are expected to have a positive effect on employee performance.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
This part presents the results and discusses the findings.

### 4.1 Result
In section, data collected using the questionnaire instrument are presented and analysed to test the hypotheses and draw conclusions

**Table 1: Regression Model**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** | **t** | **Sig.** |
| (Constant) | .401 | 2.142 | | 5.045 | .000 |
| Upward Comm. | .587 | .052 | .686 | 1.678 | .009 |
| Downward Comm. | .687 | .055 | .549 | 2.670 | .000 |
| Horizontal Comm. | .715 | .058 | .714 | 3.264 | .000 |
| $R^2$ = .585 | | | | | |
| Adj. $R^2$= .577 | | | | | |
| F= 49.802 | | | | | |
| Sig. = .000 | | | | | |

**Source: Author's** Computation (2025 using SPSS version 25.
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The result in Table 1 showed that the coefficient of determination was .585. It explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable (employee performance) is explained by the predictor variables (upward communication, downward communication, horizontal communication). The significance value (.000) is less than 0.05, indicating that the model was statistically significant, and fit in measuring the variables. The results of the regression coefficients show that taking all factors constant at zero a unit increase in upward communication will lead to 0.587 increase in employee performance; a unit change in downward communication will lead to a 0.687 increase in employee performance, while a unit change in horizontal communication will result to 0.715 increase in employee performance. The result further shows that horizontal communication has a more significant effect on employee performance at Access Bank Plc, Makurdi.

The effect of upward communication on employee performance was measured by the calculated p-value = 0.009 at a significance level (α) of 0.05. Since the computed p-value is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05 (*p-value* 0.009 < 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate accepted. This implies upward communication has a significant effect on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi. To test the strength of the effect of downward communication on employee performance (p-value = 0.000 < 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypotheses accepted. Therefore, the result implies that downward communication has a significant effect on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi. The test of hypothesis three indicates that the calculated p-value is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05 (*p-value* 0.000< 0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypotheses accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that horizontal communication has a significant effect on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi.

**4.2 Discussion of Findings**

The study found that upward communication had significant effect on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi. The study agrees with Bolarinwa and Olorunfemi (2019) whose study found a positive significant relationship between upward communication and employee quality service. The findings failed to agree with previous findings by Ohanyere and Odebeatu (2024) whose study revealed that there is no significant effect of upward communication on employee performance. The result in respect to hypothesis two revealed that downward communication had positive and significant effect on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi. The outcome is consistent with Hee, Quin, Kowang, Husin and Ping (2019) whose study established that downward communication had a significant impact towards employee communication. Also, in support of the result Nwata, *et al* (2021) and Ali (2016) found a positive association between downward communication and employee performance.

The study further established a positive and significant effect of horizontal communication on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi. This means that the bank can increase the performance of its employees when employees are allowed to share and communicate freely to themselves on the same level and roles. The finding agrees with Hee *et al.*, (2019) who found that horizontal communication had a significant impact toward employee communication. Yates and Orlikowski (2022) however, reported that horizontal communication had no significant relationship with employee performance.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication in organizations is vital for the performance of employees. Although, most organizations lack effective communication. The study examined the effects of upward communication, downward communication and horizontal communication on employee performance in Access Bank Plc, Makurdi. Findings indicated that upward communication has positive significant effect on employee performance in Access Bank Plc; downward communication also has a positive significant effect on the performance of employees in Access Bank Plc and horizontal communication has a positive significant effect on employee performance in Access Bank Plc. The study concludes that effective communication enables staff to understand the organization's goals and how they are involved in delivering them.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the management of Access Bank Plc should institutionalize structured feedback mechanisms that allow employees to freely express ideas, concerns, and suggestions. This can be achieved through regular staff meetings, suggestion platforms, and open-door policies. Management should ensure that organizational goals, policies, and performance expectations are communicated clearly, consistently, and timely to employees. Teamwork and collaboration among employees at the same level across departments should be encouraged. This can be facilitated by team-based work structures, interdepartmental meetings, and collaborative platforms.

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