

INFLUENCE OF HUMAN DISPOSITION ON CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION COMMUNICATION: A STUDY SELECTED FOOD AND BEVERAGE COMPANIES IN NIGERIA

Kuforiji, A. A.¹; Ofobruku, S. A.²; Fajana, S³

Olabisi Onabanjo University¹

Edwin Clark University²

University of Lagos³

ABSTRACT

Change implementation communication issues was investigated from human disposition perspectives during change implementation to deepen insight on drivers of success. Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. Three hundred and ninety-two respondents were obtained from selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State. The respondent employees were the unit of analysis and a questionnaire was adopted with validity and reliability established. An econometric model was developed and the assumption tested. The findings revealed that employee commitment, attitude, and trust are drivers in communicating change initiative and success.

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Attitude, Change Implementation, Communication, Commitment, Involvement, Trust.

Article History:

Received: 19 Aug 2020

Accepted: 25 Oct 2020

Published Online: 02 Dec 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Change implementation communication is vital in eliciting human dispositions towards organizational change and the human tendency or inclination to adopt or accept new initiatives. This perspective was shared by Husain (2013) that communicating change is indispensable to human buy-in. The importance of communication during intended change has been studied and a convergence among practitioners (Isaacs, 2019) and academicians exist that engaging workers, involving worker and enabling trust are key determinant of successful change implementation. McKay, Kuntz, and Näswall (2013) assert that workers' attitude, engagement, trust, involvement, and commitment, communication focused areas which organizations should address during change. However, the emotional and linguistic differences between the sender and receiver's mind-set during change implementation communication process remain a hindrance to acceptance and human disposition to change (Saleem & Naveed, 2017). Okpu and Kpako (2018) opine that poorly managed communication in an organisation accounted for more than half of the reasons organisations do not reach their intended goals, therefore how to ensure adequate employee engagement through effective change communication is scant. The objective of this paper is to investigate the effects of human dispositions on change implementation communication in organisations. To this end, the effect of human dispositions (employee commitment, attitude, trust, involvement and engagement) on change implementation communication of selected food and beverages companies in Lagos State, Nigeria is determined.

This study seeks to answer the below question:

- i. What effect does corporate communication have on employee commitment, attitude, trust, involvement and engagement?

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Communication means exchange of information and the transmission of meaning, which makes understanding of the communicator's intended motive a primary objective (Thomas, 2014). The implication therein is that change implementation communication is ineffective if meaning is not made out of it. Visagie (2010) argued that organisational change communication depends on how the communication process is viewed by the receiver. The communication process does not only involve the exchange of messages, but also the creation of new perspectives on the reality within the interactions between the sender and the receiver(s) of the message (Invernizzi et al., 2012). Change implementation communication enables humans to align and reconfigure their inherent mind-set and character to change initiatives. Several scholars have agreed that lack of communication ultimately results in an unclear purpose of the change program (Minja, 2011). Muller (2006) believed that many people resist change due to emotional stress and misunderstanding on the need for change. The extent to which employees' insight is emotionally enhanced enables opportunity to contribute to change and the depth, nature and scope of

communicating change-related information. The general accessibility of change information promotes employees' involvement, trust and participation in proposed change initiative and stimulates support for successful implementation (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, & Konopaske, 2012; Kotter, 1996). However, Sadri and Sadri (2014) warned that change communication must be focused, rather than being broad-brush, in order to reduce resistance to change, encourages teamwork and emphasizes bottom up communication approach for successful change implementation. Claiborne, Auerbach, Lawrence and Schudrich (2013) postulated that successful change implementation can be achieved when change initiative preparation by the leadership begins in a systematic manner using strategic placement of resources and extensive communication. Okpu and Kpako (2018) however, opine that to achieve change implementation success, publicly communicating on-going success stories about the change initiatives engenders employee continuous support for change and creates positive perceptions towards the organizational change. In light of the diverse observations, Aina (2002) refereed profuse communication strategy by the leadership; whereby conventional media are employed to celebrate the gradual, steady and then landmark achievements. Isaacs (2019) agreed that publicly communicating the change initiative progress is a good strategy for overcoming distrust and diminishing negative employee attitudes to change efforts.

2.1 Concept of Human Disposition

Human disposition within context and construct refers to the mind and character (total being) of beings with which employees resume at work, comprising of the hand, head and heart. Composition of human attributes brought into an organisation compliments other factors of production to achieve the organisation's objectives. These dispositions include attitude, trust, engagement, commitment and involvement of the people in an organization which are vital in the achievement of organisation's change implementation objective (Brinkschröder, 2014). To effectively maximise these human 'total being' during change implementation, employees' potentials must be communicated effectively. Employee attitude denotes thinking or feeling about something (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014) shaped by the way and manner the leader communicates the organization's initiative in order for the employee to either accept or reject the initiative. Though the employee would not outrightly reject the initiative, the element to passively or impassively resist the initiative is dependent on the mode of communication the leader adopts. Employees' predisposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards organisational change initiative is a function of how the change is communicated (Saleem & Naveed, 2017). Rubin, Oehler and Adair (2013) assert that majority of organisational change efforts fail to meet the expected objectives because the needed focus on how employees think, feel and behave during these changing periods are omitted by employers without considering the essentiality of maintaining high employee engagement in successfully achieving the change initiative and other corporate goals. Nevertheless, Rubin, et al. (2013) defined employee engagement as both an emotional state and a behavioural reaction to a given work and the work environment. An engaged employee puts significantly more discretionary efforts "doing whatever it takes" to complete the tasks, leading to a positive business results. An engaged employees speaks positively, stays committed and strives to make extra efforts in ensuring that the organization meets its goals and objectives.

Commitment is complex, continuous and determines how employees discover ways of enhancing their work-life (Robinson, 2015). Employee's commitment to the organization is usually a function and reflected in an employee's level of attachment to the implementation of new work rules, policies, programs, budgets and technology (Makumbe, 2016). Aliyu, Solomon, Isaac, and Bridget (2017) and Maxwell and Steele (2003) defined commitment as an exchange relationship in which individuals positively attach themselves to the organization in return for certain rewards from the organization. Shin, Taylor, and Seo (2012) and Falkenburg and Schyns (2007) defined employee commitment as a "force" (mind-set) that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative. Lawal, Taiwo, Agwu, Adegbuyi, and Omotayo (2016) interpreted employee's level of psychological resilience as an element of commitment which Kariuki and Ombui (2014) Battistellia, Montania, Odoardib, Vandenberghec, and Picci (2014), Stallworth (2004) Sow, Anthony, and Berete (2016) and Khodaparasti, Absalan, and Khodavandegar (2013) also agreed with.

White and Bryson (2013) defined employee involvement as means, structures, and processes through which employees make contributions that relate directly to given tasks. This often takes the form of interface and interplay between management and staff (Mathieu, Gilson, & Rubby, 2006). Most employees see such as offering two-way communication, giving them a voice. The interface allows employee participation in work-related changes which is evident in brainstorming, quality circles, or problem-solving groups. Participatory activities give individuals increased scope to contribute to problem-solving and management of change, hence deepening the interest in the work and increasing self-esteem, while team roles supported by skill development. Iddagoda, Opatha, and Gunawardana (2015) described employee involvement as that actual behaviour whereby employees actively engage in activities relevant to both the implementation of organizational change and achievement of objectives. Shih, Shaw, Fu, and Cheng (2013) assert that complaints about organizational change majorly come from employees who are poorly involved and consequently resist change (Mathieu et al., 2006).

Trust is a psychological state comprising acceptance and less feeling of vulnerability based on positive expectations (D'Ortenzio, 2012) resulting from past positive mutual interactions (Pytlík Zillig & Kimbrough, 2016). According to Rodrigues and Veloso (2013) trust is willingness to engage in risk-taking with another party. Trust is defined as a perception, beliefs, attributions firm belief in the reliability held by one individual toward another based on the observation of other's behaviour (Iwai & Azevedo, 2016). Krot and Lewicka (2012) and Reina, Reina, and Hudnut (2017) defined trust in organization as the

global evaluation of an organization's trustworthiness as perceived by the employee with three broad types, which are trust in organization (employee-organization) (Saruhan, 2013), trust in supervisor (employee-supervisor) (Bayraktar and Girgin (2017) and trust in co-worker (employee-employee). Hyman (2016) and Boohene and Williams (2012) buttressed the concept of employee trust by pointing out that trust between management and employees is a dominant factor that influences the sense of belonging in the organisation and leads to distinctive positive attitudes, cooperation and enhanced performance.

Elements of Kotter's (1996) eight-Step model include create the guiding coalition, develop a vision and strategy, and communicate the change vision. These relate to employee commitment, employee engagement, employee involvement and communication. The theory not only emphasizes short-term wins through engagement and involvement of the employees in engendering commitment, but also includes the ability to essentially communicate the change vision to the employees towards attaining change implementation success. Kotter's (1996) eight-Step model's stand on the essentiality of effective vision communication was followed up by Visagie (2010) who pointed out that the way a communication processed is viewed by the receiver is a function of the effectiveness of the communication. This was on the conviction that communication is not just the exchanges of messages but also the creation of new perspectives within the interaction process between the communicator and the receiver(s). The empirical discuss on communicating with humans during organisational change implementation is enormous and diverse as attitude affects every aspect of a person's life. Yaqoob and Azeem (2017) found that including employees in decision making through employee engagement increases work happiness, improves attitudes, improves overall organisational performance and prevents resistance to change. Development of plans and employee involvement in the change initiative has shown to have prominent effect on successful change implementation (Iddagoda et al., 2015). Khan, Raza, and George (2017) posited that including employees in decision making through employee engagement increases work happiness, improves attitudes, and improves overall organisational performance and prevents resistance to change. In the same vein, the works of (Elnaga & Imran, 2014; Markos & Sridevi, 2010) found that increase sense of self-worth and contribution to the overall good of the organisation improves employee's attitude and increases job satisfaction.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study explored the systems theory propounded by Von Bertalanffy (1950) who theorizes the complex nature of organisations and society. A system is made up of an interrelated and interdependent conglomeration of different parts that are either natural or man-made. The system theory was adopted for this study. Oriarewo, Ofobruku, & Tor, (2019) avowed that organisations in a nation depict a complete system that has interconnected fragments with a single objective. This being the case, any flaw in one segment will absolutely upset the whole system. Expounding further, Oriarewo et al. (2019) argued that the subsystems objectives must be in harmony in order to achieve the overall nations' objectives of the entire organisations. The thrust of this study asserted that effective implementation of organisational change can be achieved in food and beverages companies, if there is a rigorous consideration of human factors (Employee Trust, Employee Involvement, Employee Engagement, Employee Attitude and Employee Commitment) perspective during change implementation strategy. The system theory was considered for this research as it has been used to explore the associations existing between the different actors in the change implementation space (Babatunde et al., 2017). Inability to manage employee's attitude, their engagement levels, earn employee trust by gaining high level of commitment and ensuring employee involvement during organisational change implementation through effective communication leads to change implementation failure. Therefore, this paper evaluates the effect of employee attitude, employee engagement, employee trust, employee commitment and employee involvement on communication during organisational change implementation in the selected food and beverages companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for this study using a validated questionnaire of 6-point Likert scale structured as strongly agree (6), agree (5), partially agree (4), disagree (3), partially disagree (2), strongly disagree (1) which included questions on (1) respondents' demographic details, (2) employee's attitude, (3) employee engagement, (4) employee trust, (5) employee commitment, (6) employee involvement, (7) communication. The respondents were randomly selected and questionnaire administered to management and staff of four selected manufacturing companies in Food and Beverages. Questionnaire used by Aduama (2016) for employee attitude, Esty and Gewirtz (2012) for employee engagement, Meintjes (2016) for employee trust, Aliyu, Solomon, Isaac, and Bridget, (2017) for employee commitment, Shah (2009) for employee involvement and Luoma (2015) for communication were adopted and adapted respectively to solve the research hypothesis which is: Human factor dimensions (attitude, engagement, trust, involvement, commitment) have no significant effect on corporate communication in the selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

3.1 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

With the population of four thousand eight hundred and thirty-four (4834) employees of four (4) stratified randomly selected food and beverage companies from one hundred and eighty-five (185) food and beverage companies registered with Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, three hundred and fifty six (356) sample size was determined with the use of Krejcie

and Morgan (1970) table, addition of 10% non-response rate was included to arrive at three hundred and ninety two (392) sample size. Simple random sampling approach was used to select individual respondents in the study so that all elements of the population were represented.

3.2 Validity and Reliability

The pilot study was conducted to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument by subjecting it to a constructive criticism. The CVI formula was employed in order to get expert's judgment about the constructs and questions' relevance to the study (Polit, Beck, & Owen, 2007). With the use of CVI formula, a value of 0.91 was obtained, which indicated that the instrument was highly valid. The results from the analysis showed a KMO of all the variables which had 0.726 and 0.962 range. The internal consistency method was utilized to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the instrument was above 0.70. This showed that the research instrument was reliable.

3.3 Model Specification

CO = f (EA, EE, EC, EI, ET)

$$CO = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EA + \beta_2 EE + \beta_3 EC + \beta_4 EI + \beta_5 ET + \mu_i \dots \dots \dots \text{Eqn (1)}$$

Where:

CO = Communication
EA = Employee Attitude
EE = Employee Engagement
EC = Employee Commitment
EI = Employee Involvement
ET = Employee Trust

3.4 A priori Expectation

It is expected that employee's attitude, employee's engagement, employee's commitment, employee involvement and employee trust should positively affect communication effectiveness, hence the parameters of employee's attitude, employee's engagement, employee's commitment, employee involvement and employee trust should have a positive sign. The a priori expectation thus states that $\beta_i \neq 0$, $p \leq 0.05$; H0 1 will be rejected otherwise accepted in light of communication and human factors. Ethical principles governing research works in areas of non-manipulation and falsification of data were respected, respondents' decision to participate at will and the respect for their human dignity were obeyed.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the demographics, 60% of the respondents were management cadre and 40% lower level staff, 85% male managers and lower level staff and 15% female and 100% educated. More than 60% have worked in these organisation for more than 15 years and 10% five years and below. The crux of the paper was to query the individual and joint effect of human factors on communication and Table 1 provided the regression output for each of the variables to communication.

Table 1.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Effects of Human Factor Dimensions on Communication of selected Food and Beverage Companies in Lagos State

N	Model	B	Sig.	T	Anova	R	Adjusted R ²	F (df)
376	(Constant)	0.475	0.036	2.103	0.000	0.698	0.477	49.492 (7, 365)
	Employee Involvement	0.007	0.893	0.135				
	Employee Engagement	0.118	0.092	1.689				
	Employee Commitment	0.139	0.014	2.456				
	Employee Attitude	0.178	0.005	2.856				
	Employee Trust	0.256	0.000	4.498				

Predictors: (Constant), Employee Trust, Employee Involvement, Employee Engagement, Employee Attitude, Employee Commitment

Dependent Variable: Communication

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 revealed the multiple regression analysis result for the effect of human factors (employee involvement, employee engagement, employee commitment, and employee trust) on communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results indicated that employee commitment ($\beta = 0.139$, $t = 2.456$, $p < 0.05$), employee attitude ($\beta = 0.178$, $t = 2.856$, $p < 0.05$) and employee trust ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 4.498$, $p < 0.05$) have positive and significant effect on communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria while employee involvement ($\beta = 0.007$, $t = 0.135$, $p > 0.05$) has no significant effect on communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

= 0.135, $p > 0.05$) and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.118$, $t = 1.689$, $p > 0.05$) have positive and insignificant effect on communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State. The R value 0.698 indicates that human factors have a strong and positive relationship with communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The coefficient of determination ($\text{Adj } R^2 = 0.477$) indicates that human factors is responsible for about 47.7% of the changes that occurs in communication of the selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State while the remaining 52.3% changes that occurs in communication is as a result of others factors not captured in the model. The multiple regression model is thus expressed as:

$$\text{CO} = 0.475 + 0.139\text{EC} + 0.179\text{EA} + 0.256\text{ET} \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation i}$$

Where:

CO = Communication

EC = Employee Commitment

EA = Employee Attitude

ET = Employee Trust

The regression model shows that when human factors are at a constant zero, communication would be 0.475 implying that without human factors, communication of the selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria would be positive. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that when employee commitment, employee attitude and employee trust are changed by one unit, communication will be positively affected by an increase of 0.139, 0.179 and 0.256 respectively. The results suggest that employee commitment, employee attitude and employee trust are important determinants of communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The overall result shows a high statistical significance ($F_{(7,365)} = 49.492$, $p < 0.05$) which leads to the rejection of the hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) which states that human factors have no significant effect on communication of Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria was rejected.

5. DISCUSSION

The hypothesis set out to investigate the effect of human factors on communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results revealed that employee commitment ($\beta = 0.139$, $t = 2.456$, $p < 0.05$), employee attitude ($\beta = 0.178$, $t = 2.856$, $p < 0.05$) and employee trust ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 4.498$, $p < 0.05$) have positive and significant effect on communication of selected Food and Beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria, while employee involvement ($\beta = 0.007$, $t = 0.135$, $p > 0.05$) and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.118$, $t = 1.689$, $p > 0.05$) have positive but insignificant effect on communication of selected food and beverage companies in Lagos State.

The findings support those of Shin et al. (2012) who explained that the organisation's human resource attitude and behavioural reactions play a vital role in either the success or failure of any change initiative, as employees' change related attitudes have a relationship with how their work is being carried out after the communication within the organisation. Attitude is said to be consonant with the employee's commitment as a force (attitudinal mind-set) that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of organisation's communication and change initiative (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). The findings are in line with several authors (Hassan, Obasan, & Abass, 2016; Puth & van der Walt, 2012) who explained that employee attitude is a critical element in achieving good organisational climate and organisational goals through successful change implementation. This is because organisational change has an important personal dimension with an emotional experience, which points to the crucial role of employees' perceptual and attitudinal characteristics in either the failure or success of change implementation. Employees who are hesitant about organisational changes display negative attitudes because they perceive the change as intrusive and a disruption of routines and their social relationships because organisational change comes with increased work load and a rise in employee stress level (Claiborne et al., 2013; Yilmaz & Kiliçoğlu, 2013) resulting from routine deviation and the need for employees to adjust to the new work relationships and dynamics that come with the introduction of the new organisational strategic goals. According to Kazimoto (2016), employee engagement actively supports effective communication which is induced by the leadership team, has an organisational purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort and energy, with both attitudinal and behavioural components.

The finding also supports Brown, McHardy, McNabb and Taylor (2011) who established that employee attitude and employee commitment had positive influence on employee participation level which was catalysed through effective communication modes. Similarly, Okpu and Kpakol (2018) indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between employee engagement, line managers' supervisory role and communication measured as employee voice. In the same vein, Husain (2013) discovered that community spirit builds employee trust, motivates employees (employee engagement), employee commitment, employee participation, reduces uncertainty (reduced employee anxiety) and job security. Feedback had direct relationship on communication which also have direct positive relationship with change implementation success. In congruence with the findings of this study, Sergeeva (2018) indicated that lack of trust, poor employees attitude about the company goals and corporate culture have direct interaction with the internal communication process. In agreement with the findings of this study, Okpu and Kpakol (2018) found a strong positive association between job engagement (employee engagement), quality circle (workplace climate), job design, line managers' supervisory role and employee voice. Singh

(2018) indicated that employee engagement and communication is a contributing factor to organisation's performance while employee involvement was found as a key factor in decision-making to achieve strategy implementation success. Likewise, Men (2015) indicated that employee engagement has positive significant relationship with quality employee-organisation relationships (i.e., employee trust, control mutuality, commitment, and satisfaction) and positive internal reputation.

Also, Men (2015) further identified authentic leadership to have a significant positive effect on the nurturing of an organisation's transparent communication and positive employee relational outcomes. Malik and Haroon (2018) found that there is significant effect of perceived organisational communication scores on organisational performance scores. In accordance with the findings of this study, Ringim and Bello (2013) introduced the idea that effective communication takes the form of training, motivation, reward, education and employee empowerment which are significantly related to organisation performance. Ertürk (2008) demonstrated that positive relationship exist between managerial communication, employee participation and supervisory trust in ensuring a successful transition. In the same perspective, Ahmad et al.(2017) enumerated communication, trust in management and organisational commitment as three main factors for successful change implementation.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the effect of human factor dimensions (employee commitment, attitude, trust, involvement and engagement) on corporate communication of selected food and beverages companies in Lagos State, Nigeria, using survey research design. The multiple regression analysis revealed that employee commitment, employee attitude and employee trust significantly affect communication. Based on the findings, this study concluded that human factors with particular reference to employee involvement, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee attitude and employee trust should be given special attention in organisational communication. Effective communication is a major factor in a change process. It helps employees get engaged in the change process as well make them aware of the vision and objectives related to the change. It also helps organisations to persuade employees that the status quo is no longer satisfactory and motivates them to support the new state. Thus, in order to implement change successfully and maximize the productivity of persons involved in the change process, communication should be viewed by organisations as a key lever during change. This study therefore recommends that managers should develop emotional intelligence skills which will improve their ability to intelligently respond to their team-members/direct reports' negative feelings. Using specific communication skills to generate positive emotions, employee involvement and engagement, there will be enhanced communication skills by paying attention to the human factor dimensions (employee commitment, attitude, trust, involvement and engagement) as important determinants of communication in change implementation success in the selected food and beverage companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

6.1 Limitations

The study had some limitations which can be viewed in line with the sequences used in carrying out the study. The use of primary data can be subjective since its analysis is based on the opinions of individuals which can change overtime. However, the review of extent literature helped to buttress this subjective opinion. This study concentrated only on the food and beverages companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. Further studies should incorporate other sectors of Nigeria economy as this would enable a better sample representation across sectors so that the result can be generalized.

6.2 Area for further research

The issues identified from this study for further research:

1. It is suggested that this study should be replicated in other sectors of the economy to either confirm or refute the findings of this study.
2. It is also suggested that this study can be extended to other West Africa countries in order to generalise the findings of this study.

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