

DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFESSIONAL FACTORS AS PREDICTORS OF COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION AMONG NIGERIA NATIONAL PARKS' EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

The study was on demographic and professional factors as predictors of communication satisfaction of Nigeria National Parks' employees. It was conducted in the seven national parks in Nigeria. Data collection was through questionnaire administration. The questionnaire consisted of demographic factors of gender, age, and educational qualification; professional information such as work location, department, and work experience; and communication satisfaction items. Data was collected from 231 employees randomly selected from the estimated total number of employees (2000) in all the parks representing 11.6% of the total population. Data were presented descriptively and analysed with Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression. Results indicated that the employees were satisfied with 4 items of communication satisfaction questionnaire (CSQ). There was significant relationship between education, department and work experience of the employees with communication satisfaction. Furthermore, education and department had the most significant relationships with communication satisfaction facets. Gender and education were the predictors of communication satisfaction with education being the strongest predictor. Efforts are required in improving communication satisfaction of the

employees for enhancing operational and management efficiency of the organization since every individual within the organization is important to the fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives.

Keywords: Communication, satisfaction, employees, Nigeria, national parks

Introduction

Communication is the bedrock of any organization success. In protected areas management in particular, communication, whether internal or external, is the 'lifeblood' of effectiveness of any conservation agency. The success or otherwise of any conservation agency is predicated on how a conservation agency reaches out to its stakeholders. According to Engin and Akgöz (2013), in order for the organizations to stand strong, to make a difference and to succeed, they must manage the communicational processes strategically. Greenbaum et al (1998) stated that communication is of fundamental importance in the operation of all organisations, and knowledge of the efficiency of the general communication system is vital to achieve high levels of organisational effectiveness. Communication, in particular internal communication, is critical to an organization's success and effectiveness (Redding, 1977; Ruch and Goodman, 1983; Snyder and Morris, 1984; Weick, 1987; Hargie et al., 2002). It has also been shown that organisational success is tied to effective communication (Jones, 2006). Effective communication promotes organisational cohesion and effectiveness (Hargie and Tourish, 2000). Lack of effective communication and information exchange exacerbates uncertainty and increases alienation among employees (Hargie and Tourish, 2000). According to Jones (2006), if an organisation's employees are unhappy or dissatisfied, it is likely that overall organisational effectiveness suffers. Research supports a link between communication satisfaction and important organizational outcomes (Byrne and LeMay, 2006). Downs and Hain (1982) along with others (Downs *et al.*, 1988) demonstrated that communication has an impact on productivity (Byrne and LeMay, 2006). Gregson (1990) found a significant negative relationship between communication satisfaction regarding information from and about the organization and turnover intentions, and satisfaction in the communication of job related information (e.g., expectations, performance) and turnover intentions. Lack of an active and adequate communication system may lead to doubts about the reliability of the organizational procedures (Gok et al 2013).

Several definitions of communication satisfaction have been put forward by various researchers. Communication satisfaction according to Bakanauskiene et al (2010) defines the employees' satisfaction of communication within their organisations. According to Thayer (1969),

communication satisfaction is the personal satisfaction a person experiences when communicating successfully. Redding (1978) reported that communication satisfaction was used to refer to the overall degree of satisfaction an employee perceives in the total communication environment. Downs and Hazen's (1977) and Downs' (1990) define the term as an individual's satisfaction with various aspects of communication in the organization, including organizational information, personal feedback, job information, supervisor communication, communication climate, horizontal communication, media quality, subordinate communication, top management communication, and interdepartmental communication. However, literature indicate that positive employee work attitudes are associated with favourable work outcomes such as higher performance, reduced stress, involvement in organisational citizenship behaviours, and reduced withdrawal cognitions. The most significant resource of an organisation is the human capital. Wright (1995) argued that public-relations managers' appears to spend time attending to relationships with external publics at the expense of employees. A key stakeholder often overlooked, or taken for granted, by organisations are employees (Jones, 2006). Employees constitute a public that is as important as any other (Gilbert, 1975) and no organisational relationships are as important as those with employees (Cutlip et al., 1985, cited in Wright, 1995).

Communication satisfaction has received considerable attention in the past decades; however, there is paucity of research on communication satisfaction among employees of nature conservation and biodiversity management organisations, particularly, Nigeria National Parks. The study aims at investigating the relationship between communication satisfaction and demographic (gender, age, education) and professional factors (work location, department, and work experience) of the employees of Nigeria National Park Service (NNPS) and to identify the impediments to the flow of information within the organisation and its agencies. According to Ramirez (2012), not only is it important for managers and employees to understand the importance of communication, but also to develop a key understanding of strategies that foster quality communication, which impacts the success of any organization. On the basis of the above considerations, we hypothesized that (1) demographic and professional factors would be positively and significantly related to communication satisfaction, (2) demographic and professional factors would be positively and significantly related to facets of communication satisfaction (3) demographic and professional factors are good predictors of communication satisfaction.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the seven National Parks in Nigeria. The parks were Chad Basin National Park (CBNP), Cross River National Park (CRNP), Gashaka Gumti National Park (GGNP), Kainji Lake National Park (KLNP), Kamuku National Park (KNP), Okomu National Park (OKNP), and Old Oyo National Park (OONP). These parks are located in the various ecological zones of the country (Ogunjinmi, 2007). Hunting and other human activities that affect biodiversity are forbidden in the parks. The national parks cover about 22,592km² (i.e. about 2.5%) of the country. National Parks are assets of the Federal Government and the agency responsible for their management is the National Parks Service, an agency of the Federal Ministry of Environment (Marguba, 2002).

In this study, the instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of demographic factors of gender, age, and educational qualification; professional information such as work location, department, and work experience; and communication satisfaction items. Communication satisfaction was determined by using Cerveny and Villegas (2004) modified version of Downs/ Hazen communication satisfaction questionnaire. The internal consistency reliability of communication satisfaction was ascertained using the Cronbach-Alpha procedure and reliability co-efficient was 0.82 while that of communication facets were 0.75 for general organizational perspective, 0.80 for organizational integration, 0.78 for personal feedback, 0.83 for supervisory communication (relation with superior), 0.77 for horizontal informal communication, 0.84 subordinate communication (relation with subordinate), 0.81 for media quality and 0.85 for communication climate. The study population consisted of individuals employed with any of Nigeria National Parks. List of employees was obtained from each of the parks, at the time of this study, the total number of employees combined from all the parks was estimated to be 2000 individuals from which 231 (representing 11.6%) of the population) were randomly selected for the study. About 300 questionnaires were distributed from where 231 were returned, amounting to 77% response rate.

Measurement and analysis

Gender was measured as male=1, female=2, age was measured in years, education was measured as secondary =1, tertiary= 2, work location was measured as northern =1, southern= 2, department was as park protection and conservation= 1, others= 2, while work experience was measured by actual years spent on the job. Communication satisfaction was measured using the Cerveny and Villegas (2004) modified form of Downs /Hazen communication satisfaction questionnaire. The statistical and analytical tools that were employed included both the descriptive and

inferential types. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, median/mode, and standard deviations, were used to order and describe data. The inferential statistical tools employed were Pearson's Correlations and multiple-linear regression analysis.

Results and Discussion

Demographic and professional characteristics of respondents were presented in Table 1. Majority of them (88.7%) were male, 77.1% were in the age range of 21-40 years, while 55.0% had secondary education. Ogunjinmi et al (2008) also found that majority of the rangers (77.5%) in Yankari Game Reserve, Bauchi were within the age range of 40 years and below, 93.8% male, 68.8% had secondary education. Also, White (2008) reported 50% of Virginia SWCD employees to possess Bachelor's degree. Majority (50.6%) of the respondents were working in the Southern part of the country where their parks are located. In addition, 71.4% were in Park Protection and Conservation while majority of the employees fell within 0-5 and 6-10 years of experience with the median of 8.0 years. Although majority of the respondents' worked in the south, the northern part of the country has more parks (4 parks) than the south (3 parks). Also, majority being in Park Protection and Conservation was not surprising. This is because the core mandate of the parks is protection and conservation and thus requires more staff than all other departments. In terms of work experience, Ogunjinmi et al (2008) also reported 61.2% of the rangers in Yankari Game Reserve with 10 years and below experience. The mean length of employment reported by Carr and Eagles (2004) for the employees in Parks Canada was 16.25 years with 25.8% of the employees surveyed that had worked for less than 10 years and 24.8% that had worked for Parks Canada for over 25 years.

Table 1: Demographic and professional factors of respondents (N = 231)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Median/Mode
Demographic			
Gender			
Male	205	88.7	Male
Female	26	11.3	
Age (years)			
21 – 40	178	77.1	35.0
41 – 60	53	22.9	
Education			
Secondary	127	55.0	Secondary
Tertiary	104	45.0	
Work location			
Northern part	114	49.4	Southern
Southern part	117	50.6	
Department			
Park protection and conservation	165	71.4	Park Protection and Conservation
Others	66	28.6	
Work experience			
0-5	76	32.9	8.0
6-10	87	37.7	
11-15	35	15.2	
16-20	19	8.2	
Greater than 20	14	6.0	

Table 2 shows the communication satisfaction of park employees. The means of communication satisfaction items range from 1.82 to 3.02. Out of 21 items on communication satisfaction scale, the employees were satisfied with 4 items. They were satisfied with extent to which supervisors know and understand the problems faced by workers ($\bar{x} = 2.62$, $sd = 0.93$), extent to which the people in the organization have great ability as communicators ($\bar{x} = 2.89$, $sd = 0.58$), extent to which my supervisor trusts me ($\bar{x} = 3.02$, $sd = 0.64$), and extent to which the amount of supervision given me is about right ($\bar{x} = 2.68$, $sd = 0.62$). This was an indication that communication satisfaction was low and communication within the organization was also inadequate. Items of communication satisfied with were related to supervisor and co-worker communication. This might be because the immediate supervisors and co-workers were having the same communication experience and environment, an indication that the flow of information from the top hierarchy of management to their immediate supervisors is also inadequate.

Table 2: Communication satisfaction of Nigeria National Parks' Staff (N = 231)

Statements	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (sd)
Information about my progress in my job	2.06	0.88
Information about company policies and goals.	1.98	0.85
Information about how I am being judged	1.95	0.77
Recognition for my efforts	1.82	0.92
Information about department policies and goals	2.19	0.77
Information about the requirements of my job	2.34	0.83
Information on how problems in my job are being handled	2.00	0.76
Extent to which my supervisors know and understand the problems faced by workers	2.62	0.93
Extent to which company communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals	2.00	0.74
Extent to which my supervisor listens and pays attention to me	2.46	0.70
Extent to which the people in my organisation have great ability as communicators	2.89	0.58
Extent to which my supervisor offers guidance for solving job related problems	2.48	0.68
Extent to which the company's communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it	2.08	0.97
Extent to which my supervisor trusts me	3.02	0.64
Extent to which I receive the information needed to do my job	2.25	0.81
Extent to which conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels	2.09	0.81
Extent to which communication with other employees is accurate and free-flowing	2.37	0.98
Extent to which the amount of supervision given me is about right	2.68	0.62
Extent to which the attitudes toward communication in the company are basically healthy	2.06	0.71
Extent to which the informal communication is active and accurate	2.11	0.74
Extent to which the amount of communication in the company is about right	2.16	0.78

Tests of correlation showed that education was the only demographic variable that was positively and significantly related to communication satisfaction ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.05$) while the professional variables were department that had negative and significant relationship and work experience with positive and significant relationship (Table 3). Ramirez (2012) observed no significant relationships between gender, age, work location, employment length and communication satisfaction. Alanezi (2011) also reported no significant relationship between years of experience and communication satisfaction. Relationships between communication satisfaction facets and demographic and professional factors are presented in

Table 4. Among demographic variables, gender was positively and significantly related to relation with subordinate ($r = 0.26, p < 0.01$), age with corporate information ($r = 0.15, p < 0.05$), and personal feedback ($r = 0.17, p < 0.05$) while education was positively and significantly related to communication climate ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$), supervisory communication ($r = 0.34, p < 0.01$), organizational integration ($r = 0.35, P < 0.01$), corporate information ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$), co-worker communication ($r = 0.24, p < 0.01$), personal feedback ($r = 0.50, p < 0.01$) and media quality ($r = 0.30, p < 0.01$).

For professional variables, work location had negative and significant relationships with corporate information ($r = -0.24, p < 0.01$), co-worker communication ($r = -0.25, p < 0.01$), personal feedback ($r = -0.25, p < 0.01$) and media quality ($r = -0.21, p < 0.01$). Furthermore, department had negative and significant relationships with communication climate ($r = -0.29, p < 0.01$), supervisory communication ($r = -0.20, p < 0.01$), corporate information ($r = -0.22, p < 0.01$), personal feedback ($r = -0.25, p < 0.01$), and media quality ($r = -0.22, p < 0.01$) while it had positive and significant relationships with relation with subordinate ($r = 0.15, p < 0.05$). In addition, work experience had positive and significant relationships with three facets of communication satisfaction: supervisory communication ($r = 0.17, p < 0.05$), organizational integration ($r = 0.14, p < 0.05$) and personal feedback ($r = 0.19, p < 0.01$). Table 5 showed the predictors of communication satisfaction among demographic and professional variables. Among demographic variables, gender ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.01$) and education ($\beta = 0.43, p < 0.01$) were the predictors of communication satisfaction. However, none of the professional variables was a predictor of communication satisfaction. Jones (2006) also reported that employees' genders were significantly related to all communication satisfaction dimensions.

The results above were indications that demographic and professional factors have significant relationships with communication satisfaction. Of all the demographic and professional factors, education and department had the greatest relationships with communication facets. The relationship of education with communication satisfaction exemplifies the importance of education in communication satisfaction, probably because the more educated an employee, the more information required from the organization. The reason the department have an overbearing influence on communication satisfaction facets might also be due to the fact that majority of the employee were in protection and conservation department, a department with trust of the mandate of the parks. It could mean that since they are involved in day to day management of park resources, more information is needed in performing their tasks.

Table 3: Relationship between communication satisfaction and demographic and professional factors

Variable	Correlation (r)
Demographic	
Gender	0.03
Age	0.12
Education	0.43**
Professional	
Work location	-0.11
Department	-0.21**
Work experience	0.14*

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 4: Relationship between communication satisfaction questionnaire (CSQ) facets and demographic and professional factors

CSQ facets	Correlation (r)					
	Demographic factors			Professional factors		
	Gender	Age	Education	Work location	Department	Experience
Communication climate	-0.01	0.06	0.42**	-0.01	-0.29**	0.11
Supervisory communication	0.04	0.11	0.34**	-0.11	-0.20**	0.17*
Organisational integration	0.01	0.13	0.35	0.05	-0.11	0.14*
Relation with subordinate	0.26**	-0.07	-0.07	0.30	0.15*	-0.04
Corporate information	-0.03	0.15*	0.42**	-0.24**	-0.22**	0.12
C0-worker communication	0.05	0.03	0.24**	-0.19**	-0.11	0.03
Personal feedback	-0.04	0.17*	0.50**	-0.25**	-0.25**	0.19**
Media quality	0.02	0.13	0.30**	-0.21**	-0.22**	0.10

*P<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 5: Results of regression of communication satisfaction on personal factors of respondents

Variables	β (t values)
Demographic	
Gender	0.22 (3.28)**
Age	0.07 (0.88)
Education	0.43 (6.55)**
Professional	
Work location	-0.09 (-1.42)
Department	-0.09 (-1.39)
Work experience	0.01 (0.13)
R	= 0.48
R ²	= 0.23
R ² (adj)	= 0.21
ΔR^2	= 0.23
Standard Error	= 9.83
df	= 230

**p<0.01.

Conclusion

The study showed that communication satisfaction of national parks' employees was very low. They were satisfied with 4 items of communication satisfaction. Also, there was significant relationship between education, department and work experience of the employees with communication satisfaction. Furthermore, education and department had the most significant relationships with communication satisfaction facets. In addition, gender and education were the predictors of communication satisfaction with education being the strongest predictor. The study has brought to the fore the importance of demographic and professional factors in communication satisfaction and the need for improvement in internal communication within Nigeria National Park Service and the parks under its management. This is with the view of enhancing operational and management efficiency of the organization since every individual within the organization is important to the fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives.

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