

RETHINKING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE OUTPUT IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR IN CAMEROON: A CASE STUDY OF AMOUR MEZAM COMPANY LTD, BAMENDA

Paul N. ANIMBOM¹

¹Senior Lecturer, The University of Bamenda, Cameroon
Corresponding author: Paul N. Animbom; e-mail: panimbom@gmail.com

Abstract

Verbal and non-verbal communication is omnipresent in all areas of human interaction. Considered the capacity to enable the exchange of information from one continuum to another, communication is seen to be vital and can either foster or hinder the effective day-to-day functioning of every organisation. Using Amour Mezam Company (Bamenda), this paper looks at internal communication within a transportation company. Specifically, the study examines the communication systems available in Amour Mezam Company Limited and measures employee performance as a result of effective communication. A sample of 50 respondents was randomly selected and interviews were used to collect the data. The mean and correlation statistical methods were used in the analysis. From the results, a combination of various communication systems such as top-down, horizontal, and bottom-up, is frequently used with face-to-face interactions emerging as the most exploited channel. From the study, it is recommended that, employee performance can also be enhanced if bottlenecks in the communication systems are either removed or kept at their least. Particularly, information distortions caused by omissions and exaggerations must be addressed both by management and employees in order to improve communication clarity as this leads to improved output.

Keywords: *Internal communication, effective communication, employee output, organisation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication has been an indispensable tool in setting up, running and sustaining an organisation. It is central to the success/growth or failure of any human endeavour. Considering that, no human being engages voluntarily in a communicative act geared towards failure, its success depends on its effectiveness. Within an organisation, communication is considered by Sethi and Seth (2009) as the lifeblood (SETHI & SETH, 2009). Its potentiality both within and outside the organisation moves beyond the training of employees with sound and efficient

communication skills to better manage the challenges and needs faced by organisations and to look at issues surrounding internal communication amongst workers. It is in this light that Zarembo (2005) purports that communication is a core component of organisational effectiveness. This places communication at the centre of any activity in the organisation (ZAREMBO, 2005).

Organisational communication represents the forms and channels of communication amongst members of an organisation. It can be formal or informal and flow in various directions while making use of various media. Considered to be the means through which humans send and receive information via channels such as newsletters, face-to-face interactions, the internet, video conferences, notice boards, suggestion boxes, reports and formal presentations, open forums, and wikis (YATES, 2006), communication is seen in an organisation as the medium 'par excellence' where information is exchanged between the management and the employees. It goes beyond the one-way (linear) communication process practised in most settings (SHANNON & WEAVER, 1949), to adopt a more two-way (interactional and transactional) process wherein, the sender ensures that the receiver has effectively gotten the message and understood its content (SCHRAMM, 1954; BARNLUND, 1970). In this light, effective and efficient communication positively influences job satisfaction and efficiency of an employee and enhances productivity.

For any organisation to achieve its global goals, the management has the responsibility to communicate the organisational strategies to their employees. This communication must be effective and efficient to guarantee the attainment of

long-term objectives or goals. Modern management is immeasurable and seeks to give a comprehensive thought to between management and employees. Communication is the exchange and provision of information, instruction, direction, command, and opinion between employees and management, with the ultimate objective of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of both the organisation and its employees. If coordination has to take its place as an essential tool in carrying out activities of an organisation, good and effective communication must be its grounded justifications, since efficient coordination leads to high performance and high productivity.

The situation in a transportation company is even more vital as the lives of third parties (passengers) are put into play. The question that this paper seeks to address is, how can internal communication facilitate/hinder a positive output from employees in a transportation company? It further seeks to know if effective communication, in essence, has a causal relationship with employee performance. Using the case of Amour Mezam company, particularly the Bamenda branches as examples, this paper is based on the principles of effective communication and organisational management to illustrate the intricacies embedded in the information chain.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The underpinnings of internal communication in organisations rely on the theoretical notions drawn principally from organisational communication and effective communication. In every communication act, the horizons of expectations are vital for such an act to be successful. This implies the setting in which the communication act is taking place, the persons involved in the communication act, and the context of the communication activities are as important as the message being communicated. Workers in a given organisation are therefore expected to get to an area of commonality, wherein they can effectively communicate. This brings into play, the necessity to understand the basic principles of effective communication by the parties concerned.

Communication, considered as the act of coding and decoding of messages by a sender and a

receiver with the possibility of feedback, is a key component of every organisation. The parties involved have to understand the reason for the communication. Communication can be for instructing, informing, convincing, conveying, persuading, requesting, warning, reassuring, asking, and stating. Some of the key elements to consider when pursuing effective communication within a transportation company are trustworthiness, effectual speaking skills, active listening, non-judgment, and no assumptions.

In organisations, the communication process is influenced by many internal and external constraints from the organisation and its subsystems. In this light, the conditions under which organisations communicate best when confronting their environment coupled with internal contingencies such as management level and level of communication training, do impact effective communication. In effect, organisational communication encompasses many aspects ranging from formal and informal internal communication practices to externally directed communications such as media, public and inter-organisational relations. It includes top-down (downward), bottom-up (upward), and horizontal communication methods. Managers must consider appropriate communication methods with their subordinates to ensure efficiency in the organisation.

In organisational communication research, some main components of the systems theory like wholeness, hierarchy, and feedback, have been identified to inform how effective communication leads to employee productivity. In systems theory, the whole determines the character and functions of parts (WAWERU, 2002). Wholeness refers to the interdependence of the various elements that constitute the system. This means that individual parts of a system contribute to the existence of the organisation. Referring to Miller, the concept of an organisational structure indicates that the relations within an organism are systematised by order of hierarchy rules. In this regard, components of the main systems are designed into subsystems, making up the whole system, which itself operates within a larger environment. Miller opined that feedback enables decision-makers in the organisation to strategise to be on top of issues thereby building network

relationships (MILLER, 2009). According to Salem, the systems theory operates from primary principles of inter-relatedness and interdependence, and it can be said that the same basic principles form the basis from which communication audit occurs (SALEM, 1999).

Three organisational communication theoretical perspectives are taken into consideration: phenomenological, socio-psychological and socio-cultural. The phenomenological tradition of communication theory considers communication as a dialogue and experience of otherness. This implies, that workers understand their organisation better by directly and consciously engaging in it, pondering its meaning, interpreting that meaning through language to define and express it, and continually reconstructing the interpretation in the light of new experiences. Dialogue in this theory is considered primordial as it offers workers the possibility to exchange information and experiences with co-workers. This opens them to the experiences of others in order to inspire them.

On the other hand, the socio-psychological underpinnings of communication theory hold that communication is an expression, interaction, and influence rooted in human psychological processes. This implies, that one person's intention is there to impact another person's intention. This provides a transition to a more sociocultural perspective wherein; meaning is considered comprehensive only when there is interaction. This seems to be the backbone of the communication process in Amour Mezam Company Limited, which though with a hierarchical structure, sees the various sections functioning as a whole and all the staff communicating and working towards a common goal.

Socio-culturalists believe meaning in communication is derived when the parties concerned interact in discourse and socially construct what they jointly perceive to be real and correct. This is fundamental, especially in an African setting where man is considered a societal being. In the same way, Mead holds that since speech is how people interact, people develop their sense of self through communication (MEAD, 1934). Indeed, without language - which arose because humans exist in society - there would be no thought. It is equally in a like manner that

Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen have described conversational interaction as a "coordinated management of meaning" in which people not only co-construct a social world but are, in turn, shaped by that world (PEARCE & CRONEN, 1980). Success is therefore a collective achievement or co-construction. It is on this backdrop that this paper sets out to evaluate the internal communication systems at the Amour Mezam company and their effects on employee output.

3. AMOUR MEZAM COMPANY LTD

Amour Mezam Co Ltd is a transport company based in Bamenda. It provides a variety of services amongst which transportation (human and goods) and mail services. Its customers vary from first-time users to frequent users. Amour Mezam Co. Ltd founded by Mr Ngoula Jean, popularly known as Pa Amour, operates on some major highways from Bamenda to Yaoundé; Bamenda to Douala, and Bamenda South West (Buea and Limbe). Before the outbreak of the Anglophone crisis, the company also operated routes like Bamenda-Kumbo-Nkambe, Bamenda-Belo-Fundong, and Bamenda-Wum. On the 1st of October 1997, Amour Mezam Express became Amour Mezam Co. Ltd with a capital of about 50 000 000FCFA under the Certification Number-TPPRR: RC.BDA.2013B.320, with Mr Ngoula Jean as the acting Director General. The company was awarded a certificate of merit in 2000 and nominated as the best Anglophone Travelling Agency on the 20th of May 2007 (Company Archives, 2020).

Due to the growth and development of the company, Mr Ngoula Jean (Pa Amour) named Bamenda as the headquarters with much centralized administrative functions as illustrated below. There are currently two branches in Bamenda: the main office/headquarter in Mile 2 Nkwen and the Mile 4 Nkwen branch. The company has stood the test of time, surviving major economic and political crises which many of other competing transportation companies could not. Ranging from the Savannah Express to Guarantee Express (which have suffered from economic and managerial crises) or Psalms 23, Avenue stop express, Samurai express, and Patience Express (which have collapsed due to

the Anglophone crisis), Amour Mezam seems to be standing tall. These are achievements that push one to investigate the mechanisms used by the company to obtain growth.



Fig. 1. Amour Mezam Company, Ltd Signpost at the Entrance of the Main branch, Bamenda ©author, 2022



Fig. 3. Buses stationed at the loading tarmac ©author, 2022



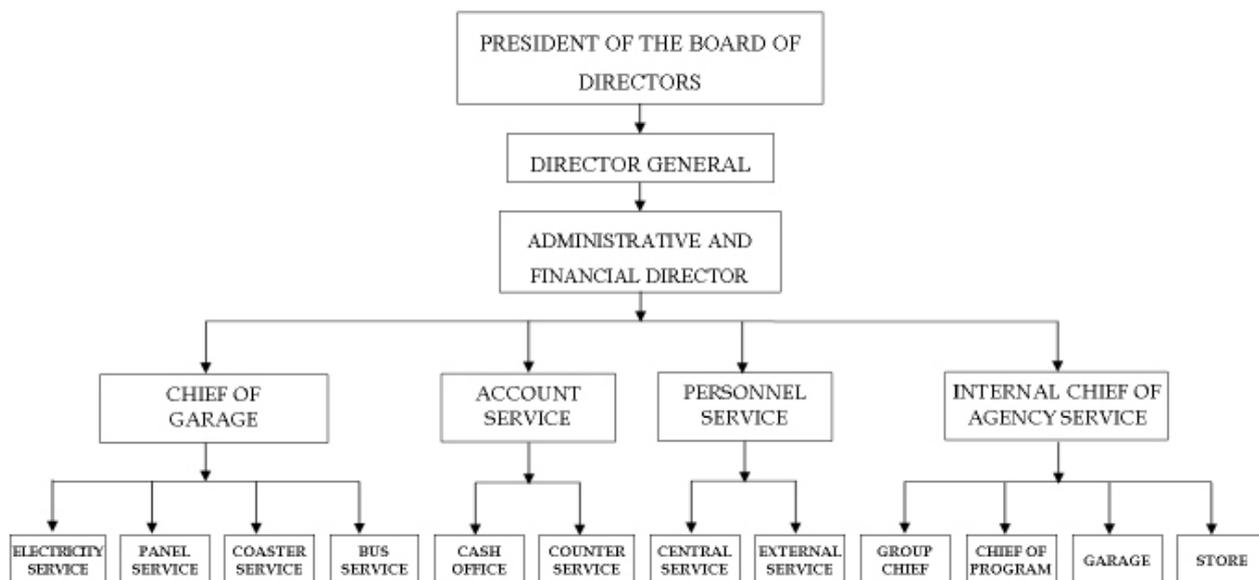
Fig. 2. Administrative Block, Amour Mezam Company Ltd. Headquarter, Bamenda ©author, 2022



Fig. 4. Ticketing counter ©author, 2022

The Organizational Structure of Amour Mezam Company Ltd

The chart indicates the company's structure (departments or services) which has subsections and each subsection has its functions or tasks assigned to it (Figure 4).



Source: Amour Mezam Company Ltd

Fig. 4. The Organigram of Amour Mezam Company Limited

One can notice that the company is well structured with each department having specific functions to execute. It is also noted that Amour Mezam implements the hierarchical administrative system. Each administrator is answerable to his/her immediate boss and information flows in that same order to and from the president of the board of directors. Some four important departments oversee the day-to-day functioning of the company.

- a) **The Internal Chief of Agency Department** is made up of the Group Chief who is in charge of all those who load the vehicles; the Chief of Programme takes care of programming all the vehicles in the head office, and the Storekeeper is in charge of the goods to be sent and the goods received.
- b) **The Personnel Department** is made up of the Central and External Services which are in charge of the management of the personnel files within the headquarters and all the other branches of the company. The Central Service also carries out recruitment.
- c) **The Accounting Department** comprises the Cash Office and Counter service. The cash service controls the inflow and outflow of cash in the company and the Counter Service takes care of the sales of travel tickets.
- d) The **Chief of Garage Department** is made up of Electrical Service which takes care of electrification of vehicles; the Panel beating which repairs damaged vehicles; and the Coaster and Bus Service which is in charge of Mechanical Works.

Data Procurement Procedure

The staff of the two branches in Bamenda was considered in the study. Three different categories were involved: the administrative staff, the drivers, and the loaders. However, considering that it was not possible to administer questionnaires to everybody, a multi-stage (cluster and random) sampling was considered. According to the Company’s 2017 Annual Report, (much has not changed since then), Amour Mezam Company Ltd had about 395 workers. Cluster sampling allowed me to select participants from each staff category. Thereafter, a random sampling was made in the clusters to select a total of 50 employees from the Bamenda branches.

Quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires and administered to employees with the help of a research assistant. This data enabled an understanding of the participant’s perception of the effectiveness of the level of communication within Amour Mezam Co. Ltd.

Data Analysis

The data were coded and classified into various groups for the production of statistical tables following the inferential statistics format for presentation. The frequency and percentage tables were used for the descriptive statistics. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation describes the relations between variables. This paper looks at the influence of internal communication on employee performance at the Amour Mezam Company Ltd. Here the connection or relationship was tested by the correlation coefficient which is the numerical representation of the strength and direction of the relationship using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation module. Here, a correlation coefficient (r) test value was between -1.0 and +1.0.

4. RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A demographic characteristic of the data was obtained as seen in tables 1 to 3 and figures 1 to 3 respectively.

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents’ Sex

Respondents’ Sex			
		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Male	37	74.0
	Female	13	26.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1 reveals that there were more male respondents than females. This shows that the activities of Amour Mezam Company Ltd, such as driving, loading and offloading, and garage services are more male-inclined than female. The female is mostly assigned duties in the mails and ticketing services.

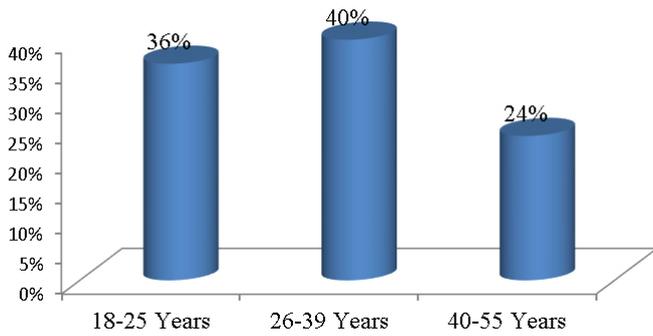


Fig. 5. Percentage of Respondents' Age
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

It can be seen in figure 5 that 20 (40%) out of the 50 respondents were aged between 26 and 39, followed by 18 (36%) aged between 18 and 25, while 12 (24%) out of the 50 respondents fall within the age bracket of 40-55. This age distribution shows that the majority of respondents were of ages ranging between from 26 to 39, which is considered the active age required for hard labour such as loading, off-loading, mechanical work, and driving long distances.

Table 2. Academic Qualification of Respondents

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	FSLC	12	24.0
	G.C.E O Level	20	40.0
	G.C.E A Level	11	22.0
	HND	7	14.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

As seen in Table 2, out of 50 respondents, the majority of them had the G.C.E Ordinary level certificate represented by 20 (40%), followed by those who have the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) represented by 12 (24%). While 11 (22%) of the respondents are holders of the G.C.E Advanced level certificate, the remaining 7 (14%), were holders of the HND certificate.

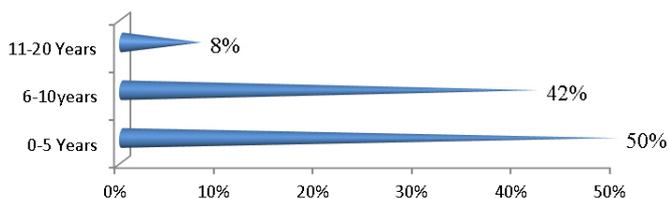


Fig. 6. Respondents' Working Experience in Amour Mezam Co. Ltd
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

As revealed in figure 6, out of 50 respondents, half had between 0-5 years of working experience, 21 (42%) had 6-10 years of experience and 4 (8%) had 11-20 years of working experience. This distribution concerning the working experience represents an indication that the majority of the employees of Amour Mezam have been with the company for 0-5 years.

Table 3. Respondents Department within the Company

		Frequency	Per cent
Valid	Accounting	3	6.0
	Ticket Sales Service	9	18.0
	Driver Service	11	22.0
	Mail Service	7	14.0
	Store Service	4	8.0
	Loading Service	13	26.0
	Garage Service	3	6.0
	Total	50	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

From table 3, it is noted that most of the respondents 13, representing 26% were of the loading service, followed by 11 respondents who were drivers, representing 22%. 9 out of the 50 respondents were of the ticket sales department, representing 18%; 7 respondents were under the mail service department, representing 14%; 4(8%) were of the stores department, and the accounting and garage service departments were 3 each representing 6% each.

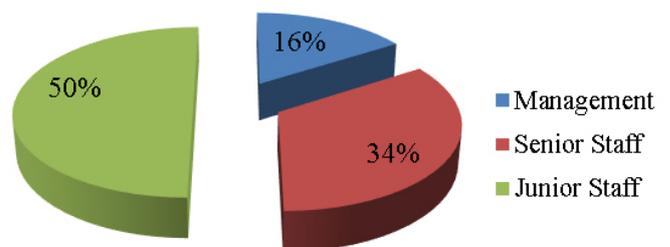


Fig. 7. Staff Category
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

It is revealed in figure 7 that 25 (50%) out of the 50 respondents were junior staff of Amour Mezam Company Limited, followed by 17 (34%) who were senior staff and 8 (16%) of the respondents were management staff of the company in the Bamenda branches.

Internal Communication System in Amour Mezam Company Limited

One of the key questions asked to the respondents was to indicate the communication systems used within the Amour Mezam Company Ltd. to pass across the information. After examining their responses, the systems were categorised (Figure 8).

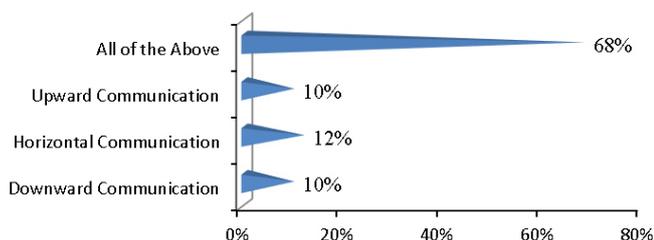


Fig. 8. Internal Communication Systems
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Sixty-eight (68%) of the sampled population indicated that the company makes use of all three communication systems, that is, upward (bottom-top), horizontal, and the downward (top-bottom) communication. 6 (12%) of the respondents said the company uses just the horizontal system of communication and an equal proportion of 5 (10%) of shared the opinion that the company uses just the downward and upward communication systems. It can be deduced from this that, Amour Mezam Company limited makes use of all three communication systems to enable the flow of information within the company, though at varying levels.

Sources and Usefulness of Communication Channels

Sources of communication sampled included face-to-face, telephone, written (memos), and email/internet (Table 4).

Table 4. Channels of Communication

Forms	Channels	Frequency of Communication			
		1	2	3	4
Face-to-Face	% within CWS	76%	28%	20%	8%
	% within CWCW	94%	68%	0%	0%
Telephone	% within CWS	28%	28%	8%	8%
	% within CWCW	68%	72%	0%	0%
Written (memos)	% within CWS	20%	8%	26%	4%
	% within CWCW	0%	0%	0%	0%
Email/internet	% within CWS	8%	8%	0%	8%
	% within CWCW	0%	0%	0%	0%

CWS – Communication with Supervisors; CWCW– Communication with Co-workers

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The results indicate that 76% of the employees who participated in the study said they frequently communicate with their boss through face-to-face communication, and 94% indicated they mostly communicate with co-workers using face-to-face communication as well. Concerning telephone communication, 28% of the respondents indicated they use this channel to communicate

with supervisors, while 72% indicated they communicate with co-workers through the telephone. In addition, 26% of the employees who participated in the study accepted that they communicate with their supervisors using written memos, while none of the respondents accepted using this channel to communicate with fellow co-workers. Furthermore, just 8% of

the respondents said they communicate with their supervisors through e-mail or the internet, while none accepted using this channel to communicate with various co-workers.

A cross-tabulation of the results indicates that the majority of the respondents (68%) use face-to-face and telephone mediums to communicate with co-workers, while just 28% use both mediums for communication with supervisors in the office. Also, 20% of the employees of Amour Mezam who participated in the study indicated they use both face-to-face and written memos when it concerns communication with supervisors and none agreed to have used both face-to-face and written memos in communicating with co-workers. In addition, it is also revealed that only 8% of the respondents use face-to-face and e-mail to communicate with supervisors and none of them accepted to have used both face-to-face and e-mail in communicating with co-workers. Much more, 8% of the employees of Amour Mezam Company limited who participated in the study said they use both written memos and telephone to communicate with supervisors but have not used these two mediums in communicating with co-workers, and 8% also indicated they use both written memos and e-mail to communicate with supervisors only. Details as shown in table 4 also indicate that employees prefer more verbal or direct forms of communication with their colleagues and superiors at the workplace than nonverbal or indirect forms. Those who prefer the direct forms of communication are less likely to adopt indirect communication (written memos and email) media at the workplace. Preference is given to face-to-face and telephone communication than to written memos and emails although in dealing with supervisors, employees also engage in written memos and internet communication.

The likely implication according for employees who prefer face-to-face communication with their supervisors is that such employees can receive accurate, clear, concise, correct, as well as complete information from their direct superior (Table 4). Also, they will be able to easily ask for clarifications where they do not understand or have doubts. It is also possible that communication, in this case, will be two-way. This will likely improve the clarity of the message and minimize errors

(EISENBERGER & STINGLHAMBER, 2011), thus, enhancing effective communication. Employees will also feel more valued in this case if they can freely communicate during face-to-face interactions with direct superiors and leading to increased job satisfaction. Two-way communication potentially indicates that employees are involved in decision-making, and this ensures commitment to achieving the targets set out by the decisions taken (PUTH, 2002).

The Effectiveness of Communication Systems within Amour Mezam Co. Ltd

In any communication scheme, the most important thing is not just to know the type of medium used. The effectiveness of the communication itself is vital. In this regard, it was necessary to equally evaluate how effective the media used for communication at Amour Mezam was. Three main ways of communication were highlighted: top-down, horizontal, and bottom-up (Table 5).

Table 5. Effectiveness of Communication Systems

	N	SA	A	D	N	SD
Top-down Communication						
Top management in this organisation freely exchanges information and opinions with junior staff	50	24	21	2	3	0
Top management is providing you with the kind of information you want and need	50	37	12	1	0	0
The directives that come from top management are clear and consistent	50	16	25	4	5	0
Horizontal Communication						
Communication from other departments is detailed and accurate	50	24	22	2	2	0

Your job is not delayed because you get the information you need from co-workers on time	50	19	25	3	3	0
The information you receive from other departments is consistently reliable	50	22	21	5	2	0
Bottom-up Communication						
Most of the information sent by junior staff is detailed and accurate	50	24	22	1	3	0
Feedback to top management is usually timely and consistent	50	24	21	5	0	0
Requests from junior staff are always clear and accurate	50	24	21	2	3	0

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Concerning the top-down communication method, the majority of the sampled population (24 for strongly agree and 21 for agree) out of 50 employees who participated in the study agreed that top management freely exchanges information and opinions with junior staff while just 3 disagreed and 2 remained neutral. This shows that employees are satisfied with the way top management freely communicates with them. Also, out of 50 respondents, a majority (37 for strongly agree and 12 for agree) shared the opinion that top management provides the right information they need to carry out their duties. In addition, 41 (16 strongly agree and 25 agree) out of the 50 employees who participated in the study accepted that the directives that come from top management are clear and consistent and this enables them to understand what they have to do in their various responsibilities, 5 respondents disagreed to this assertion while 4 remained neutral. In a nutshell, the responses indicate that

top-down communication has been effective within Amour Mezam Company Limited.

With regards to the horizontal communication within Amour Mezam Company Limited, table 5 also reveals that 46 (24 for strongly agree and 22 for agree) accepted that information from other departments is detailed. Also, 44 (19 strongly agreed and 25 for agreed) of the 50 respondents testified that their job is not usually delayed because they get the information they need from their co-workers on time. Again, out of 50 respondents, 43 (22 strongly agreed and 21 agreed) said the information they receive from other departments is consistently reliable. Considering these responses, it can be concluded that communication between departments (horizontal communication) of Amour Mezam Company Limited is very effective.

As for the effectiveness of bottom-top communication, the study also revealed that 46 respondents (24 for strongly agree and 22 for agree) out of 50 shared the opinion that most of the information from subordinates to hierarchy is usually detailed and accurate. In addition, most respondents (24 for strongly agree and 21 for agree) said feedback from junior employees to top management is usually timely and consistent which enables good decisions to be made by the top management. Also, most of the respondents (24 for strongly agree and 21 for agree) shared the opinion that request from subordinates is always clear and accurate, enabling management to provide the right responses to the request. This leads to the conclusion that this means of communication is equally effective.

Employee Performance within Amour Mezam Company Limited

As indicated in the topic of this paper, this study is interested in employee output. The focus is on the role which effective internal communication plays in order to ensure positive employee output (Table 6).

Table 6. Employee Performance

Options	SA	A	N	D	SD
I can meet my target periodically	19	18	12	1	0
I can provide the best customer care	27	18	4	1	0

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

To ascertain if this seemingly satisfactory level of communication has a direct relationship with employee performance, it is worth taking a look at the link between them.

The Relationship between Effective Communication and Employee Performance

Communication is seen as a medium through which employees can pass out their grievances, regarding poor wages, working conditions, employee performance, and also the way in which the management responds to these issues. The level of interaction in the

sociocultural communication perspective between employees and employers through various means such as top-down, horizontal or bottom-up, verbal or non-verbal, creates a working condition for effective performance in any organisation. To find the correlation between effective communication and employee performance, all the items of communication were reduced to three composite variables, top-down, horizontal, and bottom-up communications respectively while the items for performance were reduced to a single performance variable (Table 7).

Table 7. Partial Correlation of Effective Communication and Employee Performance in Amour Mezam Company Limited

Effective Communication	Top-down Communication	Horizontal Communication	Bottom-up Communication	Performance
Top-down Communication	1.000			
Horizontal Communication	.872**	1.000		
Bottom-up communication	.928**	.891**	1.000	
Performance	.629**	.627**	.645**	1.000
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The results show a strong positive and significant relationship between effective top-down communication and employee performance at Amour Mezam Company Limited. The correlation statistics ($r = .629, p < 0.001$) shows that top-down communication can explain 62.9% of the variations in employee performance. This is an indication of a strong positive relationship between effective communication and performance. The results on effective horizontal communication ($r = 0.627, p < 1\%$) also show that when its effectiveness between workers at the same level increases, their performance will also increase to a higher extent. This implies the relationship between horizontal communication and employee performance was a strong positive and significant one. On the aspect of effective bottom-up communication, the results show that there is a strong positive and significant

relationship between bottom-top communication and employee performance. The correlation statistic ($r = .645, p < 0.001$) shows that this means of communication can explain 64.5% of the variations in employee performance.

5. DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the findings of the study indicate that all three systems of internal communication: top-down, horizontal, and bottom-up, exist within the Amour Mezam Company Limited. It is also revealed that the employees prefer more verbal or direct channels of communication with their colleagues and superiors at the workplace than nonverbal or indirect forms. Those who prefer the direct channels (face-to-face and telephone) of communication are less likely to adopt indirect

communication (written memos and email) media at the workplace. The study also found that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between top-down, horizontal, and bottom-top communication systems and employees' performance in Amour Mezam Company Limited. This implies that as the effectiveness of these three systems of communication increases, employee performance increases in the same manner. These findings are in line with those of Femi, which found that a relationship exists between effective communication and workers' performance, productivity, and commitment (FEMI, 2014).

Also, there is a noticeable impact of horizontal communication which has a positive and statistically significant coefficient at a 1% level with a value of 0.221. This means, that a unit per cent increase in the effectiveness of horizontal communication will lead to an increase in employee performance by 0.221 per cent. In addition, the bottom-up communication has a 0.315 coefficient of determination which is statistically significant at a 1% level. Therefore, a unit per cent increase in the level of this communication will cause employee performance to increase by 0.315 per cent.

In a nutshell, the study reveals that internal communication in terms of top-down, horizontal, and bottom-up communication systems can determine up to 39.5% of the variations in employee performance. This is in line with the findings of Wang Yan who, in a similar study, discovered from a regression analysis that social-emotional-oriented communication between subordinates and superiors represents a positive predictor of affective commitment, and the perceived quantity of organisational strategic information and vertical interaction with management; and that work-oriented communication is a strong positive predictor of affective commitment and normative commitment (WANG, 2011). However, the results failed to prove the effects of horizontal social-emotional-oriented communication. Wang Yan's study concluded that, in Chinese governmental organisations, vertical communication and communication regarding work-related topics help to make employees want to stay with and contribute to the employing organisation; and

the better social-emotional-oriented communication the employees have with superiors, the better work-oriented communication they have at work.

For an effective employee output, therefore, distortions and omissions in the information flow between and among departments must be either eliminated or kept to the least possible. Unnecessary competitions and showmanship between and within departments must also be avoided. This does not imply departments that are performing well must not be appraised, while those not doing so well cautioned, but it rather implies that it must be done for the overall organisational gain. Consequently, adequacy and accuracy of information are essential components of effective internal communication which eventually lead to efficiency, productivity, and output growth. Organisations such as Amour Mezam Company Limited should endeavour to make available, all information that is needed or wanted by the workers. This can be rendered possible through top-down, horizontal, and/or bottom-up communication mechanisms.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to investigate the effects of internal communication on employee performance using Amour Mezam Company Ltd. as a case study. Specifically, it examined the communication systems, measured the performance of employees, identified the most useful channels of communication from the employees' points of view, and identified barriers and breakdowns in the communication systems of the company. It also looked at the relationship between effective internal communication and employee performance. Based on the data analyses, the paper shows that the communication methods frequently used include face-to-face, telephone, written memos, email/internet, and grapevines, with the most useful method being the face-to-face communication. Amour Mezam Company Ltd.'s employees also largely perform well as showcased in the resilience which has made them stand the storm hitting the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon since 2016. They have been bruised but not crushed, partly because of

the devotion of the workers and partly because of the effective communication process that exists between the management and the workers.

In a drive to achieve effective communication, various employees' performance indicators like meeting targets periodically and providing the best customer care are found to correlate with varying measures of effective internal communication. The results proved the significance of ensuring communication flows downwardly, horizontally, and upwardly with a lot of consistency, accuracy, concreteness, and completeness in the performance of employees in Amour Mezam Company Ltd, Bamenda branches. This does not in any way, purport that, there are no bottlenecks or trouble-faites. However, these parasites are overshadowed by the constant zeal of the majority of workers and parties involved, to ensure that the company grows and provides the safety of passengers to and from various destinations. This is the prime objective of the transportation company and everything seems to buttress the fact that, they are driving towards this goal.

Recommendations

The correlation found between the measures of effective internal communication and employee performance shows that there should be improved efforts to ensure that information provided by management is clear and understandable. Management can also adopt other methods of communication such as notice boards since most of the workers at least have a First School Leaving Certificate and can read. In addition, new media like WhatsApp should also be encouraged as a means of communication.

Management should think of involving the subordinates in the formulation of policies and decision-making which can also reinforce a feeling of belonging amongst employees and in return, boost their commitment to the implementation of the decisions taken in order to achieve set goals and objectives. Management must avoid communication overload because it reduces clarity in communication. Even though open and candid communication is encouraged, it is recommended that such communications come with courtesy and consideration, and without undermining the worker. Timely

delivery of information will also reduce time pressure on employees which more often, than not reduces efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, and output. When information is delivered on time, it gives room for clarity to be sought in order to ensure concreteness and correctness.

References

- BARNLUND, D. (1970) *A transactional model of communication*. In: K. K. Sereno & C. D. Mortensen (Eds.), *Foundations of communication theory*. New York: Harper, pp. 83-102.
- EISENBERGER, R., & STINGLHAMBER, F. (2011) *Perceived organizational support: Fostering enthusiastic and productive employees*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/12318-000.
- FEMI, F. (2014) The Impact of Communication on Workers' Performance in Selected Organisations in Lagos State, Nigeria, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(8): 75-82.
- MEAD, G. H. (1934) *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- MILLER, K. (2009) *Organizational communication: approaches and processes*, 5th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- PEARCE, W. B. & CRONEN, V. (1980) *Communication, action, and meaning*. New York: Praeger.
- PUTH, G. (2002) *The Communicating Leader, the Key to Strategic Alignment*, 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- SALEM, P.J. (1999) The changes and challenges for organizational communication in the next century. In: P. Salem (Ed.), *Organizational communication and change*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, pp.3-27.
- SCHRAMM, W. (1954) How communication works. In: W. Schramm (Ed.), *The process and effects of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 3-26.
- SETHI, D. & SETH, M. (2009) Interpersonal Communication: Lifeblood of an organization. *The IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, III(3&4), pp.32-40.
- SHANNON, C. & WEAVER, W. (1949) *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- WANG, Y. (2011) The Role of Communication in Enhancing Employees' Organizational Commitment: Exploring the Relationship between Social-emotional-oriented Communication, Work-oriented Communication and Organizational Commitment in China, Masters Thesis, Upsala.
- WAWERU, S. N. (2002) *Secondary School Administration*. Nairobi: Kenyatta University Press.
- YATES, K., (2006) Internal communication effectiveness enhances bottom-line results, *Journal of Organizational Excellence*, 25(3), pp.71-79.
- ZAREMBA, A.J. (2005) *Organizational Communication*. Third Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.