



## Business Communication Practices and Employee Productivity: A Study of Selected Companies in the Nigerian Food and Beverages Industry

JOY ERIMIFE, OBOROGHENERURU FAGBULE  
ROSALINE DANIA OMOYEBAGBE  
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

**Abstract.** The study investigated the effects of business communication practices on employee productivity in selected food and beverage companies in Benin City, Nigeria. It specifically focused on the relationships among lateral, downward, upward, and external communication practices and employee productivity. Utilizing a cross-sectional research design, the study surveyed the entire staff of the selected companies, distributing 365 questionnaires, all of which were deemed usable. Stratified random sampling was employed to select respondents. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique via SPSS Version 24. Findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between lateral, downward, and upward communication practices and employee productivity. However, external communication practice did not show a positive correlation with productivity. The study recommends, amongst others, that companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry enhance lateral communication, strengthen downward practices, foster upward communication, and improve external communication with clients, suppliers, and stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Business communication practices; Employee productivity; Food and Beverages Industry; Nigeria

### 1. Introduction

Communication is an integral part of the organisational process as the flow of communication up and down the organisational hierarchy has its effects on efficiency, decision making and morale of organisations (Musheke & Phiri, 2021). Thus, effective communication is regarded as an integral part

of today's successful business organisations and communication continues to be the hub of all business organisations (Ndlela & Madsbu, 2022). All organisations, both private and public entities rely on some form of communication to send their messages across to their target audience, or inform their target audience of the mission and vision of their entity (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022). Employee mostly hypes performance at the work place when effective communication is at its ultimate for instance, when the information about an organisation's policies and procedures are at its optimum level with openness and accuracy; and also, when the information provided is adequate, factual and has good feedback (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012).

The employees constitute the workforce of any organisation, thereby representing an indispensable component of the entire entity. Ajalie, Ofuonybuzor, Tsoho and Auwal (2017) stated that an organisation is only as good as the workforce that runs the organisation. In essence, when employees are motivated, their morale tends to soar, leading to heightened performance and increased productivity. Consequently, this uplifted state substantially enhances the overall organisational performance level. To achieve such elevated productivity and bolster the organisation's performance, managers must consistently strive to find means of keeping their employees motivated. This introduces a fresh perspective on examining communication within the business or organisational context.

Despite the growing body of research examining this connection and its implications for employee productivity, a distinct gap persists, particularly within the specific context of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. The current

literature primarily focuses on global or Western organisational settings, overlooking the unique cultural and organisational dynamics intrinsic to the Nigerian business landscape, especially within the Food and Beverages sector. Neglecting cultural nuances, contextual factors, and the viewpoints of employees, the research lacks a nuanced exploration of communication practices' influence, hindering a comprehensive understanding of how these practices impact individual and collective productivity. Addressing these gaps is crucial for tailoring effective strategies and fostering a more contextually relevant understanding of the interplay between business communication practices and employee productivity in Nigerian Food and Beverages companies.

This study, therefore, sought to examine the impact of business communication practices on the employee productivity of some selected Nigerian Food and Beverages companies located in Benin City. Specifically, the study aimed at determining the relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies; examining the relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies; ascertaining the relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies; and investigating the relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Concept of Employee Productivity

Employee productivity describes the mental and emotional commitment that workers make to their company and its success as a whole. Paul and Sharma (2022) defined productivity at work as the harnessing of organisational members' selves to their work roles. Individuals must engage and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while performing their jobs in order to be productive. A Hewitt Associates study on employee engagement from 2008 to 2010 defined productivity as the number of workers who speak well of the company, show a desire to continue being productive members, and continuously aim to go above and beyond the organisation's minimum requirements. In addition to being devoted to their profession, truly productive individuals are also passionate about it. Because they

are engaged, productive employees are more profitable, focused, enjoy their work, and are less likely to quit (Gupta & Chowdhury, 2018). Employees that are productive demonstrate a sincere interest in the organisation's future and are prepared to make extra efforts to further it.

According to Glen (2014), the manufacturing industry is a dynamic one that faces new difficulties every year. The author pointed out that almost all media outlets regularly cover labor disputes between employers and employees, industrial unit closures, and labor force reductions brought on by the recession and other economic issues. Low pay, excessive employee turnover, unfavorable working conditions, subpar performance, and low productivity have so damaged the reputation of manufacturing industries (Obara, 2022). Productivity is the quantity of work completed in a specific length of time using a variety of production elements, including labor, capital, land, technology, and entrepreneurship. It illustrates the relationship between inputs and outputs and increases as output rises while input rises proportionately less. It also happens when fewer inputs are used to produce an equivalent quantity of output (ILO, 2005). According to Bhatti and Qureshi (2007), productivity can be viewed as a performance metric that includes both efficacy and efficiency. The ratio of output or production capacity of employees inside a company is another way to define productivity. It represents the connection between the number of inputs and the final products of a well-defined process. An organisation's performance, survival, and expansion are significantly influenced by the productivity of its employees.

### 2.2 Measures of Employee Productivity

Productivity measurements, which are frequently expressed in terms of output per unit of input, are quantitative indicators used to evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of labor processes (Charnes et al., 1978). These metrics, which offer information on performance and areas for development, can be used at several levels, such as individual, team, departmental, and corporate. For instance:

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** These are quantifiable, precise measurements connected to company objectives (Parmenter, 2015). KPIs for employee productivity can include things like project completion rates, customer satisfaction ratings, and revenue per employee.

**Time Management Techniques:** These are strategies and tools designed to maximize how workers divide their time between tasks and responsibilities (Lakein, 1973). Individuals can improve time use and prioritize

work by using strategies like the Eisenhower Matrix, the Pomodoro Technique, and time tracking software.

**The Balanced Scorecard:** This is a strategic performance management tool that assesses organisational performance by taking into account both financial and non-financial variables (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). When used to measure employee productivity, it ensures a comprehensive approach by coordinating team and individual efforts with overarching organisational goals.

**Objective Key Results (OKRs):** These are a framework for setting goals that helps organisations define and track objectives and their outcomes (Doerr, 2018). When applied to employee productivity, OKRs align individual and team goals with overarching organisational goals, strengthening a results-driven culture.

**Employee Engagement Surveys:** These measure the emotional commitment and involvement of employees in their work (Saks, 2006). High levels of engagement are often correlated with increased productivity.

Although there are many different productivity measures available, it can be difficult to choose metrics that accurately reflect an organisation's goals. Putting too much emphasis on some indicators can have unexpected consequences. Technology integration, such as project management tools and automation software, has changed the way productivity is measured; real-time data and analytics offer more accurate insights (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Modern approaches to productivity measurement emphasize a human-centric approach, considering employee well-being, work-life balance, and job satisfaction as essential components (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Productivity measures shouldn't be static; instead, a balanced and flexible approach that balances organisational goals with employee engagement and well-being.

## 2.3 Concept of Communication

Numerous academics have attempted to provide a clear definition for communication. The Latin word *communis*, according to the Association of Perioperative Practice, is where communication first appeared. Lunenberg (2010) concurs that the Latin word *communis* is the origin of the word communication. On the other hand, he claims that it implies "common," implying that the source and the recipient must have a shared understanding of the message being given. Most people think of communication as an exchange that takes place in a social setting. A sender, or source, and a recipient are typically involved in communication. The interlocutors exchange cues in this situation.

According to Fatimayin (2018), these cues could be gestural, visual (photographic), or vocal. The basic idea behind communication is the use of codes that are made using the eyes, body, or voice. There is always a process where someone starts a meaning intent that is then transferred to the interlocutor (receiver), regardless of how it is done. According to Daniel (2013), the communication process is said to have completed when the sender (source) receives feedback, which is the result of the receiver reacting to the signal by starting a new circle of meaning exchange.

### 2.3.1 Basic Forms of Communication

There are three primary forms of communication: Written Communication, Oral Communication, and Non-Verbal Communication:

**Written Communication:** This involves the dissemination of information within an organisation through the use of emails, letters, memos, policy manuals, notices, books, and so forth. Tangible type of documentary proof that may be used as a reference in the future. Guarantees that the information is accurate and consistent for the whole audience. Benefits include efficient delivery of complex information and mass communication. Lack of instant response and modulations for efficient message delivery are among the drawbacks. Combining written and spoken communication improves effectiveness.

**Oral Communication:** This involves verbal and visual information transfer, such as speeches, presentations, conversations, etc. A quick and straightforward approach that allows for instant message delivery. Allows instant feedback and two-way contact. Adds a personal touch while enabling the message to be delivered with the appropriate pitch and tone. Saves time and effort because it is less formal and time-consuming. The possibility of misunderstandings and the requirement for excellent communication skills are among the drawbacks. Excellent for direct relationship building and immediate communication.

**Non-Verbal Communication:** This involves using one's appearance, body language, and facial expressions to convey ideas without using words. Physical distance, kinetic behavior, oculesis, chronemics, haptics, paralanguage, and paralinguistics are some of the categories. By using behavioral and visual signals to transmit messages, nonverbal communication is essential for increasing communication's overall efficacy.

### 2.3.2 Business Communication Practices

Business communication, therefore, firms is referred to as the sharing of ideas and information both within

and across organisations. A crucial component of corporate operations, it entails using a variety of communication channels, including social media, video conferencing, emails, phone calls, and meetings, to help information and ideas move between diverse stakeholders. Building and maintaining connections, advancing the company's reputation and brand, working and coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, and making well-informed decisions are just a few of the many business goals that may be accomplished with effective business communication.

The exact tactics, procedures, and policies that businesses employ to control and encourage the exchange of ideas and information both within and between various stakeholders are referred to as business communication practices. Establishing clear routes and procedures for communication, teaching staff members effective communication techniques, and utilizing technology to promote communication are a few examples of these approaches. Industry, size, culture, and corporate objectives are some of the variables that may impact business communication techniques, which vary based on the particular requirements and environment of an organisation. To find areas for development and make sure they can successfully communicate with and meet the needs of their stakeholders, it is critical for firms to periodically evaluate and analyze their corporate communication methods.

### **2.3.2.1 Lateral Business Communication Practice**

The conveyance of messages at the same lateral or comparable level within an organisation is known as horizontal communication, sometimes referred to as lateral communication. Team members, other teams, and employees at the same or comparable level all experience this. According to Ofuani and Ofuani (2014), horizontal communication occurs between individuals on the same or comparable organisational levels and is utilized to increase understanding and speed up information flow. Because interactive electronic communication technologies like e-mail and phone messages make it possible to create virtual teams of employees who collaborate even when they are in different places and learning communities, the use of horizontal communication is growing (Osinbanjo & Akintan, 2001).

The performance of employees is greatly impacted by lateral communication. Interactions between workers at the same level inside the company are made possible by this communication method, which boosts output. Teamwork is encouraged via lateral communication, which improves worker coordination and performance results. Consequently, this underscores the importance

of lateral communication in driving positive improvements in employee performance. This leads to the first hypothesis of the study:

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.*

### **2.3.2.2 Downward Business Communication Practice**

When messages flow from a higher-level employee to a lower-level employee within an organisation, this is known as downward communication; in other words, conversations begin at the top and work their way down to the bottom (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Information flow from upper management to lower-level personnel is referred to as downward communication. Downward communication is used to postulate instructions and directions and to assign work accordingly. Additionally, it aims to provide feedback on prior performance, identify issues that require attention at different levels, and inform employees on employment processes and policies (Robbins et al, 2009).

According to Robbins et al. (2009), an organisation's effectiveness may depend on downward communication. Employees can better accomplish their responsibilities by understanding what their bosses expect of them through downward communication. Employee performance and execution of their various jobs are improved by timely information provided by efficient communication systems. It's also critical that workers are able to get orders from superiors, which will increase their productivity. Thus, the second hypothesis of this study is stated as:

*H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.*

### **2.3.2.3 Upward Business Communication Practice**

In order to become a high-performance organisation, organisations must have both effective upward and downward communication. Upward communication is defined as the process by which information moves from lower levels to the upper levels of a hierarchy in an organisation (Okoye, 2004). It is clear that this type of communication has grown in popularity while the formal form of communication is currently less common. It is argued that upward communication keeps managers alert in carrying out their duties and

also informs them of the intended actions of their subordinates. Through upward communication, superiors are able to learn about their subordinates' opinions about their work, their coworkers, and the organisation as a whole, which helps them find productive employees and improves organisational performance (Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

It is believed that upward communication is crucial to an organisation's success. A company may fail to achieve its aims and objectives if there is a lack of upward communication. According to Tubbs and Moss (2008), grassroots information has the power to make or break an organisation's ability to survive. The significance of upward communication is summed up by the authors in their study as providing management with the knowledge they need to make decisions and assisting staff in reducing workplace stress and obstacles. Furthermore, upward communication serves as a barometer for successful downward communication and raises employees' awareness of engagement. According to a study by Greenberg and Baron (2008), organisations must encourage upward communication and guarantee their overall quality. Accordingly, the third hypothesis of this study was proposed thus:

*H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.*

### 2.3.2.4 External Business Communication Practice

The dissemination of information and engagement with the immediate environmental elements—such as creditors, suppliers, and customers—are the focus of external communication. How well internal communication is managed will determine how effective this is. According to Johannessen et al. (2014), external communication is associated with controlling the flow of information or controlling communication to meet the needs of external stakeholders. Internal and external communication grows when the pace of exchange is high, and communication interpretation is useful when project complexity is low. According to Engwall (2002, cited in Johanssen et al., 2014), the primary causes of project failure are poor leadership (coordination, planning, and technical solutions), resistance from key players, a lack of resources, shifting goals, and project communications that indicate the complexity and pace of a project change in response to shifting social needs. As a project grows in size and complexity,

communication is becoming increasingly important (Johannessen et al., 2014). In order to deal with systematic dependence, larger projects require additional coordinating systems. Developing mutual understanding, exchanging information, coordinating actions, influencing, and socializing are all essential components of communication.

Thus, this study hypothesized that:

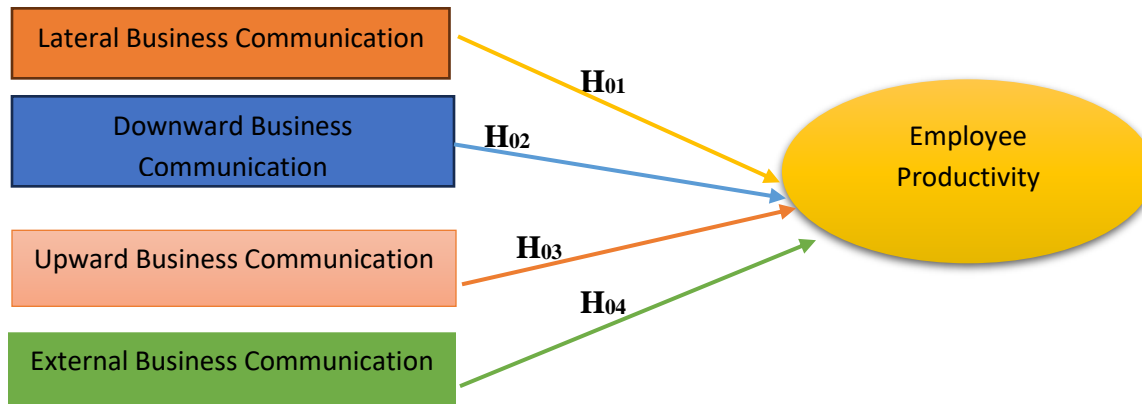
*H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.*

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

A number of important theoretical perspectives from organisational communication, psychology, and management theories are incorporated into the theoretical framework for comprehending the relationship between communication and employee performance. This study, however, relies upon the social exchange theory and organisational culture theory.

**Social Exchange Theory:** According to social exchange theory, founded on the reciprocity principle, people want to maximize benefits and reduce costs in their interactions and relationships. In the workplace context, employees view communication with colleagues and superiors as social transactions. Employees view open, encouraging, and informed communication as a valuable resource (reward) that improves their motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. On the other hand, poor or inefficient communication comes at a price and results in discontent, disengagement, and decreased performance.

**Organisational Culture Theory:** Organisational culture theory highlights how communication shapes organisational norms, values, and practices. A culture of open communication, which is defined by transparency, trust, and inclusivity, creates a positive work environment that supports high employee performance. When leaders are approachable, communication channels are accessible, and employees feel empowered to express their opinions and concerns, organisational culture can act as a catalyst for productivity improvement. On the other hand, organisations with hierarchical structures, communication barriers, or punitive feedback mechanisms may see lower employee engagement and productivity as a result of their stifling work culture.



**Figure 1:** Business Communication Practices and Employees Productivity  
**Source:** Researchers' Conceptualisation (2023)

### 2.5 Empirical Review

Igbokwe (2024) examined how communication strategies (open-door policy, team meetings, digital platforms) impact employee productivity. The study highlighted leadership's role in fostering open communication and feedback. Findings suggest that inclusive, transparent communication boosts motivation, performance, and satisfaction. The author emphasizes effective communication as crucial for workplace productivity and organisational success.

Kalogiannidis (2020) conducted a study to look into how business communication impacts employee performance. Data from 110 participants who worked for several Greek banking organisations was used to conceptualize communication into horizontal, downward, and upward forms and assess their impact on employee performance. Effective communication has a significant impact on employee performance in any company organisation, according to the study. Companies are urged to keep information flowing well throughout the company in order to enhance employee performance and long-term commercial profitability.

Ali (2016) studied communication's impact on employee performance in Somali non-profits, focusing on Help Leads to Hope (HLH). Using SPSS for descriptive and correlation analysis, he found that downward and peer communication positively influenced performance, while weak upward communication hindered employee improvement.

Atambo and Momanyi (2016) studied the impact of internal communication on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) in South Nyanza Region. They examined downward, upward, and horizontal communication using a stratified random sample of 30% of 256 employees. Findings showed that downward communication improved performance by ensuring timely information. The study concluded that effective communication enhances employee performance and recommended strengthening communication systems for better efficiency.

Shounubi and Akintaro (2016) investigated the relationship between effective communication and organisational performance based on a number of empirical research on communication and organisational performance. The results confirmed that effective organisational performance and communication strategies work in tandem. Additionally, they examined fifty-seven non-empirical works. The key elements of organisational communication were inferred from earlier empirical and non-empirical research.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a cross-sectional research design. A structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to gather data from respondents without manipulating the variables. This design aligns with Cooper's (2003) assertion that survey research is effective for understanding and predicting population characteristics, allowing respondents to express their feelings and attitudes anonymously.

**3.2 Population and Sampling**

The population consisted of employees from twelve selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City, identified for having the highest employee counts in the sector. A total of 365 employees were surveyed using a stratified random sampling technique. The sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n= Sample size;

N= population size;

e = percentage level of significance; and

N = 4141

$$n = \frac{4141}{1 + 4141 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4141}{1 + 4141 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{4141}{1 + 10.3525}$$

$$n = \frac{4141}{11.3525}$$

= 364.7654

Approximately = 365.

This method ensured a representative sample from the population, with proportions determined for each organisation as shown in Table 1.1 below:

**Table 1.1** Sampling Distribution of the Study

S/N	Organisation	Top Level		Middle Level		Low Level		Total Number of Employees to be Sampled
1.	CWAY Group	12 / 584 * 51 = 1	1	101 / 584 * 51 = 9	9	471 / 584 * 51 = 41	41	51
2.	Nigerian Breweries	21 / 349 * 30 = 2	2	97 / 349 * 30 = 8	8	231 / 349 * 30 = 20	20	30
3.	Seven Up Bottling Company	23 / 452 * 39 = 2	2	88 / 452 * 39 = 9	9	341 / 452 * 39 =	28	39
4.	Nigerian Bottling Company	22 / 512 * 45 = 2	2	69 / 512 * 45 = 6	6	421 / 512 * 45 = 37	37	45
5.	Okomu Oil Palm Company Nigeria PLC	18 / 303 * 26 = 2	2	57 / 303 * 26 = 5	5	228 / 303 * 26 = 19	19	26
6.	Presco Nigeria PLC	20 / 903 * 80 = 2	2	316 / 903 * 80 = 34	34	567 / 903 * 80 = 44	44	80
7.	Freedom Beverages Ltd.	9 / 92 * 8 = 1	1	24 / 92 * 8 = 2	2	59 / 92 * 8 = 5	5	8
8.	Guinness Nigeria PLC	31 / 228 * 20 =	4	79 / 228 * 20 =	8	118 / 228 * 20 =	8	20
9.	Crown Flour Mills Limited	12 / 170 * 14 = 2	2	46 / 170 * 14 = 4	4	112 / 170 * 14 = 8	8	14
10.	Lit Group Limited	8 / 93 * 8 = 1	1	22 / 93 * 8 = 2	2	63 / 93 * 8 = 5	5	8
11.	Nadia Bakery	3 / 49 * 8 = 1	1	13 / 49 * 8 = 2	2	33 / 49 * 8 = 5	5	8
12.	Notre Dame International Company	18 / 406 * 36 = 2	2	44 / 406 * 36 = 4	4	344 / 406 * 36 = 30	30	36
	Total		17		84		264	365

*Source: Researchers' Computation (2023)*

**3.3 Model Specification**

The study adopted Loveman's (1988) model, developing a multiple regression model to analyse the relationship between business communication practices (independent variable) and employee productivity (dependent variable).

The model is expressed as:

$$EMPPRO = \beta_0 + \beta_1LBCP + \beta_2DBCP + \beta_3UBCP + \beta_4EBCP + \epsilon$$

Where:

EMPPRO = Employee Productivity  
 LBCP = Lateral Business Communication Practice  
 DBCP = Downward Business Communication Practice  
 UBCP = Upward Business Communication Practice  
 EBCP = External Business Communication Practice  
 ε= Error term

The apriori expectation suggested a positive relationship between business communication practices and employee productivity.

**3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument**

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor and experts in Management Sciences. Their feedback was incorporated to enhance clarity and relevance, ensuring the instrument effectively measured the intended variables.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed through a pilot study involving 20 respondents. The Cronbach’s Alpha values for each construct exceeded 0.6, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

**3.5 Method of Data Analysis**

Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequency distributions and means, while inferential statistics involved Multiple Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient to explore relationships between variables. The analyses were conducted using SPSS version 20 at a 5% significance level.

**4. Results**

**4.1 Description of Respondents’ Socio-Demographics**

This section contains a descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic data drawn from the sampled respondents. The socio-demographic variables include gender, age, educational qualification, job experience, marital status and job designation of the respondents. In conducting the field survey, 365 copies of questionnaire were distributed, retrieved and found usable. This shows that 100 per cent collection rate was achieved as all copies distributed were also found usable and this was used in the analysis of the responses gotten.

**Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

S/N	Categories	Frequency	
		No.	%
1.	Gender		
	Male	218	59.7
	Female	147	40.3
	Total	365	100
2.	Age		
	Below 20 years	16	4.4
	21-30 years	108	29.6
	31-40years	154	42.2
	41-50years	67	18.4
	51years and above	20	5.5
	Total	365	100
3.	Highest Educational Qualification		
	SSCE/GCE/NECO/NABTEB	41	11.2
	OND/NCE	34	9.3
	HND/B.Sc.	228	62.5
	MBA/M.Sc./Ph.D.	58	15.9
	Others	4	1.1
	Total	365	100
4.	Job Experience		
	0-5 years	237	64.9
	5-10 years	116	31.8
	Above 10 years	12	3.3
	Total	365	100

5.	Marital Status		
	Single	194	53.2
	Married	162	44.4
	Divorced	9	2.5
	Widowed	-	-
	Total	365	100
6.	Job Designation		
	Contract	176	48.2
	Permanent	164	44.9
	Adhoc/Other	25	6.8
	Total	365	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

#### 4.2 Correlation Analysis

Bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients were conducted on the data for all the variables in the study. Table 4.4 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients among research variables.

Table 4.2: Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Research Variables

Variable	EMPPRO	LBCP	DBCP	UBCP	EXBCP
Employee Productivity (EMPPRO) Pearson Correlation	1				
Sig. (2-tailed)					
N	365				
Lateral Business Communication Practice (LBCP) Pearson Correlation	.693	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
N	365	365			
Downward Business Communication Practice (DBCP) Pearson Correlation	.356	.358	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
N	365	365	365		
Upward Business Communication Practice (UBCP) Pearson Correlation	.799	.682	.324	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
N	365	365	365	365	
External Business Communication Practice (EXBCP) Pearson Correlation	.313	.400	.712	.364	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
N	365	365	365	365	365

. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2 shows that employee productivity in the Nigerian food and beverages industry is positively and significantly related to business communication practices. Lateral Business Communication Practice (LBCP) demonstrates a significant positive correlation with all other variables. It has a strong positive correlation with UBCP [ $r = 0.682, p < 0.01$ ] and a moderately strong positive correlation with EMPPRO [ $r = 0.693, p < 0.01$ ]. Downward Business Communication Practice (DBCP) shows a moderate positive correlation with LBCP [ $r = 0.358, p < 0.01$ ], UBCP [ $r = 0.324, p < 0.01$ ], and a weaker positive correlation with EMPPRO [ $r = 0.356, p < 0.01$ ] and EXBCP [ $r = 0.364, p < 0.01$ ]. Upward Business Communication Practice (UBCP) demonstrated strong positive correlations with EMPPRO [ $r = 0.799, p < 0.01$ ] and LBCP [ $r = 0.682, p < 0.01$ ]. It also exhibits moderate positive correlations with DBCP [ $r = 0.324, p < 0.01$ ] and EXBCP [ $r = 0.364, p < 0.01$ ]. External Business Communication Practice (EXBCP) shows moderate positive correlations with LBCP [ $r = 0.400, p < 0.01$ ], DBCP [ $r = 0.712, p < 0.01$ ], UBCP [ $r = 0.364, p < 0.01$ ], and a weaker positive correlation with EMPPRO [ $r = 0.313, p < 0.01$ ].

#### 4.3 Results of Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was performed to show the relationship between business communication practices and employee productivity. Below are tables representing the output of the regression analysis.

Table 4.3: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.831 <sup>a</sup>	.690	.687	2.44149	1.984

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Lateral Business Communication Practice, Downward Business Communication Practice, Upward Business Communication Practice, External Business Communication Practice
- b. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) stood at a value of 0.690, which indicates that 69.0 percent of all the systematic variations in the dependent variable (employee productivity) are accounted for by the independent variables (lateral business communication practice, downward business communication practice, upward business communication practice, external business communication practice) in this model. The adjusted coefficient of determinant ( $R^2$ ) stood at 0.687 which shows that the data fits the model. The value of the Durbin–Watson (d) statistic was 1.984 and it was less than 2, hence, there is evidence of positive autocorrelation. This indicates that successive error terms are positively correlated.

Table 4.4: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4776.786	4	1194.197	200.339	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2145.915	360	5.961		
	Total	6922.701	364			

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Lateral Business Communication Practice, Downward Business Communication Practice, Upward Business Communication Practice, External Business Communication Practice

From table 4.4 above, The F-Stat was at a value of 200.339 with a P-value less than 0.05. This showed that business communication practices is a significant variable for employee productivity in the selected food and beverages companies in Benin City.

**4.4 Test of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses were tested with the p-value (Sig.) in the regression result. Where the p-values are greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) are not rejected. And where the p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) are dismissed. The results of the interpretations presented below.

Table 4.5: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.192	.738		.260	.795
	Lateral Business Communication Practices	.281	.042	.273	6.620	.000
	Downward Business Communication Practices	.157	.044	.150	3.559	.000
	Upward Business Communication Practices	.674	.045	.609	15.02	.000
	External Business Communication Practices	-.121	.042	-.124	-2.897	.004

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

**Hypothesis 1**

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Table 4.5 above showed the regression coefficients, t and P-value corresponding to the effect of lateral business communication practices on employee productivity in the selected food and beverages companies in Benin City. The P-value in the regression result is 0.000 which is lower than 0.015. Hence, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is rejected, which

states that there is no significant relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This shows that the study suggested that there is a significant positive relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

**Hypothesis 2**

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the

employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Table 4.5 above also showed the regression coefficients, t and P-value corresponding to the effect of downward business communication practice on employee productivity in the selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. The P-value corresponding to the coefficient associated with the impact of performance bonuses on employee's performance in the regression result is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) that states that there is no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This is a proposition that there is a significant positive relationship between no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

### Hypothesis 3

$H_{03}$ : There is no significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

The P-value conforming to the effect of upward business communication practice on employee productivity in selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City in the regression result is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 as indicated in Table 4.5 above. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) that states that there is no significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This denotes that there is a positive and significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

### Hypothesis 4

$H_{04}$ : There is no significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

The P-value matching the effect of external business communication practice on the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City in the regression result is 0.004, which is lower than 0.05 as shown in Table 4.5 above. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) that

states that there is no significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This infers that there is negative and significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that lateral business communication practices is significantly and positively correlated with productivity of the employees in the selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This is in line with Wang's (2005) study, which found that collaborative communication among peers foster streamlined collaboration, quicker problem-solving, and a more cohesive working environment. This is because when employees share information, ideas, and feedback with their peers or colleagues, lateral communication leads to streamlined collaboration, quicker problem-solving, and a more cohesive working environment, which in turn leads to increased productivity within the organization.

Additionally, the study found a strong positive relationship between the productivity of employees of the selected Nigerian food and beverage companies in Benin City and downward business communication practices. This may be due to the fact that when managers or superiors give their subordinates clear instructions, goals, and necessary information, it results in a well-informed workforce which may foster increased productivity. This finding is consistent with studies by Rajhans (2012) and Otoo et al. (2023), which found that management's clear directives, goals, and information contribute to clear instructions, shared goals, and an informed workforce, which in turn increases productivity levels.

The study also found that the productivity of employees at the selected Nigerian food and beverages enterprises in Benin City is positively and significantly correlated with upward business communication practices. This may be so because, when employees have a way to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns, it promotes inclusivity, increases employee engagement, and gives management insightful information. This could, in turn, leads to increased productivity within the organization. This result is consistent with Tumbare's (2009) investigation of internal communication at Lilongwe City Assembly, which found that giving employees a way to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns upwards promotes

inclusivity and engagement by increasing productivity.

Lastly, the study found a negative and significant relationship between the productivity of employees at the selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City and their external business communication practices. This negative relationship may be due to the fact that extensive external communication, including interactions with partners and stakeholders, can divert employees from their primary job responsibilities. Additionally, handling external interactions requires unique abilities and mental strain, which may result in higher cognitive load, exhaustion, and decreased performance. Furthermore, meeting the requests of external parties may conflict with internal goals, putting stress on staff members who are trying to strike a balance between these conflicting demands. This is consistent with research by Ainobushoborzi (2013), who found that prolonged engagement in external communication can divert workers, which may result in higher cognitive load, exhaustion, and worse performance.

However, the findings of this study may have been influenced by the demographic variables of respondents.

The data revealed that the majority of the respondents were males. Gender distribution might affect communication choices, as prior research by Wang (2005) and O'Neill (2011) implied. For instance, O'Neill (2011) discovered that female leaders favoured face-to-face communication, highlighting the possible impact of gender on communication channel preferences. Notable trends were also found in the respondents' demographic breakdown, especially with regard to the distribution of ages. A wide range of responders from various age groups were represented, according to the report. Thus, the distribution across different age groups is important because it sheds light on possible differences in respondents' communication preferences and styles. When thinking about successful communication strategies, it becomes essential to understand the age demographics. Studies by Hayase (2009) and Liu (2010) highlighted how age affects communication channel preferences. As a result, this demographic trait provides a useful lens through which organizations may customize their communication strategies and make sure they successfully connect with the range of age groups represented in the sample. For example, younger workers might choose digital methods of communication, but elderly workers might favour in-person encounters.

A variety of respondents were captured by analyzing the respondents' educational backgrounds.

Communication preferences and comprehension can be influenced by educational background. Tumbare's (2009) research underscored the significance of evaluating communication efficacy based on educational credentials.

It is noteworthy to mention that employment experience can influence communication expectations and practices. Additional sociodemographic analysis of the respondents revealed the length of time they had worked for their individual organizations. Asamu's (2014) research highlights the connection between employees' dedication and output and good communication.

The study further explored respondents' marital status with respect to communication preference. According to Robbins and Judge (2009), a person's communication preferences and patterns might be influenced by their marital status. For example, married people may have different objectives and communication demands than single people. For example, married people may place more importance on work-life balance issues, whereas single people may prioritize social contacts at work.

The analysis conducted also revealed that the contractual terms of the respondents' job could to a large extent influence their communication preferences. The distribution of job designations, such as contract basis and permanent staff, thus introduces another layer of complexity. Different job roles often come with distinct communication needs and expectations. Shockley-Zalabak (2015a) previously emphasized the role of communication in shaping organisational culture, particularly in diverse job designations.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined the relationship between business communication practices and employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. Specifically, it assessed the relationship between lateral business communication practice, downward business communication practice, upward business communication practice, external business communication practice and employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City should promote and facilitate internal lateral communication channels. They can accomplish this by

putting in place systems or tactics that encourage cooperative communication between colleagues and various departments. To increase collaboration and productivity, this may entail the utilization of cross-functional projects, team-building activities, or common communication tools.

It is necessary for certain Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City to improve their downward communication strategies by making sure that management communicates with staff members in a clear, open, and consistent manner. They can accomplish this by consistently sharing information about objectives, plans, and performance reviews to promote understanding and cooperation among employees, which will increase their output.

Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City should establish an atmosphere that values and promotes upward communication. Putting in place systems that let staff members communicate their thoughts, worries, and criticism to their managers can help achieve this. An open-door policy or frequent feedback sessions are necessary to guarantee that workers' opinions are respected and heard, which could improve morale and productivity.

Lastly, organisations in the Nigerian food and beverages industry must strengthen and expand their external communication strategies with customers, vendors, and stakeholders. These organisations should optimize lines of communication and guarantee their efficacy, responsiveness, and transparency. This is because effective external communication can enhance the company's relationships and reputation, which in turn can indirectly affect staff productivity.

### 7. Limitation of the Study

This study offers insightful information about the relationship between staff productivity and company communication methods in the Nigerian food and beverage industry, but it's vital to recognize that there are certain limitations. First, the size and representativeness of the sample are the study's limitations. The results may not accurately reflect the diversity within the industry as a whole because they are specific to a subset of Nigerian food and beverage businesses in Benin City. Results may also be difficult to extrapolate to different businesses or geographical areas. Benin City's particular geographic setting and the distinctive features of the food and beverage sector may restrict the results' wider applicability. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of the study records a moment in time of the relationship. The study's capacity to prove causation may be limited if

long-term patterns or changes over time are not adequately recorded. Furthermore, bias may be introduced due to the dependence on self-reported data from survey replies. Instead of reflecting their true experiences, respondents could give responses that match anticipated expectations. Last but not least, the study did not specifically account for outside variables that could affect worker productivity, including organizational culture, industry-specific trends, and economic situations.

### 8. Suggestion for Further Studies

Based on the limitations of this study, the researchers therefore recommend that future research should be extended to include similar companies in other states in Nigeria at large. Future research should attempt to examine the relationship between business communication practices and organisational resilience both in the private and public sectors in Nigeria and other countries around the world. These studies can also conduct comparative analyses across different sectors within the Nigerian economy to explore how various communication practices impact employee productivity in contrasting industries. They can also undertake a longitudinal study to observe the sustained impact of communication practices on employee productivity over an extended period.

### 9. Ethical Consideration

To safeguard the rights and dignity of each respondent participating in the survey process, the study complied with ethical standards. This included getting participants' informed consent, protecting the privacy of their answers, and giving them the option to withdraw at any moment.

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