

EFFECT OF COMMUNICATION ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONGST ACADEMIC STAFF OF UNIVERSITIES IN EKITI STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the effect communication has on employee engagement amongst academic staff of universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. To achieve this aim, three specific objectives were formulated – to examine the effect of superior-subordinate communication on employee engagement; to assess the effect of quality of information on employee engagement and; to investigate the reliability of information on employee engagement. Adopting the quantitative research approach, the study made use of a cross-sectional research design and a sample of 384 academic staff of universities in Ekiti State which were selected using the simple random sampling technique. Generating a response rate of approximately 72%, data was collected using a structured and close-ended electronic questionnaire and analysed using both descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and inferential statistics (both simple and multiple linear regression). Findings from the study showed that superior-subordinate communication has no statistically significant effect on employee engagement ($\beta = 0.015$, $p = 0.578 > 0.05$) amongst academic staff of universities in Ekiti State. It was also discovered that both quality of information ($\beta = 0.202$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and reliability of information ($\beta = -0.137$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) had statistically significant effects on employee engagement. The study then concluded that communication has a significant positive effect on employee engagement amongst academic staff of universities in Ekiti State ($\beta = 0.097$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and recommends that management of these institutions should ensure that the information being passed across in the universities is reliable and of high quality as such induces the engagement of these academic staff.

Keywords: Communication, employee engagement, superior-subordinate, quality of information, reliability of information.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is crucial in promoting employee engagement in academic institutions (Musheke & Phiri, 2021; Wang, 2011). Employee engagement is defined as the level of commitment and enthusiasm that an employee has towards their job and the organisation, which drives them to go beyond their required job duties (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees are known to be more productive, creative, and committed to their work, resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational performance (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Also, employees who are engaged with their jobs are seen to show commitment, experience meaningfulness at work, and exhibit discretionary efforts in the discharge of their duties. In academic institutions, employee engagement is particularly important, given the role that academic staff play in shaping the future of the institution through their research, teaching, and community service (Azmy, 2019).

Ekiti State is a state in Nigeria that prides itself as the fountain of knowledge proliferated by a number of higher institutions of which four are universities. These universities include: Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD), Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science, and Technology (BOUESTI), Ekiti State University (EKSU), and Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE). As an acclaimed citadel of knowledge, Ekiti State has made significant strides in attracting and retaining top academic talent in the country. However, in recent years, there have been concerns about employee engagement levels amongst academic staff at some universities in this state where strike actions and high employee turnover have seemed to be the order of the day (Oluwole, 2022). This may be due to a range of factors, including a lack of clear communication channels between management and staff, perceived unfairness in the reward and recognition system, and a lack of opportunities for career development (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Research has shown that effective communication is one of the key drivers of employee engagement in academic institutions (Azmy, 2019). In particular, communication practices that promote openness, transparency, and trust have been found to positively influence employee engagement levels (Krishnan & Wesley, 2013; Wang, 2011). Conversely, communication barriers such as a lack of clarity, inadequate feedback, and poor listening skills can lead to disengaged employees (Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

Given the importance of employee engagement in academic institutions, it is imperative that the managements of universities in Ekiti State take steps to understand the communication factors such as superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, reliability of communication amongst others, that drive employee engagement and develop strategies to improve them. Sadly, there seems to be a scantiness of studies that address the effect communication has on the engagement of employees amongst academic staff in universities in Ekiti State. It is therefore against this backdrop that this study aims to investigate the effect of communication on employee engagement levels amongst academic staff in universities in Ekiti State. By identifying the communication practices that promote employee engagement, the study will provide insights for the managements of universities in the state on how to enhance communication and employee engagement in their respective institutions.

1.1. Research Questions

The research questions this study aim to answer are as follows:

- (i) What is the effect of superior-subordinate communication on employee engagement amongst academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
- (ii) How does quality of information affect the employee engagement of academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
- (iii) In what way does reliability of information affect the employee engagement of academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

1.2. Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of communication of employee

engagement amongst academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria while the specific objectives include:

- (i) to examine the effect of superior-subordinate communication on employee engagement amongst academic staff in the universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
- (ii) to analyse how quality of information affects the employee engagement of academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
- (iii) to evaluate how reliability of information affects the employee engagement of academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

The study's hypotheses include the following:

H₀₁: Superior-subordinate communication has no effect on employee engagement amongst academic staff in the universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: Quality of information does not affect employee engagement of academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

H₀₃: Reliability of information does not have an effect on the employee engagement of academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Communication

Generally, communication is seen as the sending and receiving of information from the sender to the receiver. However, in the literature, there seems to be a more in-depth understanding given by scholars to this term. According to O'Hair, Wiemann, Mullin, and Teven (2018), communication can be conceptualised as the process of sharing information, ideas, and opinions between individuals or groups in order to convey meaning and understanding. In the words of Balakrishnan and Masthan (2013), communication is defined based on how it functions in practice, referring to the sharing of both formal and informal information between management and employees within the organization. Owusu-Boateng and Jeduah (2014) conceptualised it as the process through which a more intimate understanding is created between employees in an organisation which induces motivation for better productivity. This definition shows the essentiality of communication to improved productivity or performance on the job. Gupta and Sharma (2018) corroborated the preceding by asserting that effective communication is essential for promoting positive relationships, building trust, and fostering engagement among employees in the workplace. Consequent upon the foregoing, communication can be conceptualised as the exchange of necessary information at the right time between all members of an organisation for the ultimate purpose of higher performance and productivity in the organisation.

2.1.1. Superior-Subordinate Communication

Superior-subordinate communication is the exchange of information and feedback between a supervisor and a subordinate within an organizational hierarchy (Zhang, Waldman, Han, & Li, 2015). This type of communication is important for effective management and leadership, as it allows for clear expectations, feedback, and support between supervisors and subordinates (Khan, Rao, Usman, & Afzal, 2017). It is regarded as the most important communication link in an organisation (Bakar & Mustaffa, 2008). According to Steele and Plenty (2015), superior-subordinate communication entails the interactions between administrative executives and their subordinates, and how composed they are when working to attain individual and organisational objectives. Superior-subordinate communication, hence, can be seen as the most important communication occurring between superiors and their subordinates for the execution of given tasks in the organisation.

Effective superior-subordinate communication has been shown to have a positive impact on employee job satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Khan et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2015). This is because clear communication between supervisors and subordinates can help to reduce ambiguity and misunderstandings, leading to greater clarity and direction in the workplace. Moreover, superior-subordinate communication can help to build trust and positive relationships between managers and employees (Khan et al., 2017).

Conversely, poor superior-subordinate communication can have negative effects on employee outcomes. For example, research has found that communication barriers between supervisors and subordinates can lead to decreased job satisfaction, trust, and performance (Norouzinia, Aghabarari, Shiri, Karimi, & Samami, 2016). Therefore, it is important for organisations to prioritize effective superior-subordinate communication in order to promote positive employee outcomes and organisational success.

2.1.2. Quality of Information

Quality of information refers to the degree to which information is accurate, complete, timely, relevant, and understandable (Valverde-Berrococo, Fernandez-Sanchez, Dominguez, & Sosa-Diaz, 2021). According to Balakrishnan and Masthan (2013), quality of information reflects how pleased employees are with the way management communicate the sources adopted in communicating, the rewards received, and clear understanding of organisational goals and job requirements. From these definitions, quality of information can be referred to as the timely, accurate, complete, easy-to-understand information provided by the management to their employees, and how pleased employees are with such communication process.

In order for information to be useful, it must meet certain standards of quality, such as being free from errors, up-to-date, and relevant to the task or decision at hand. The quality of information can impact organisational decision-making and performance. Research has shown that high-quality information can lead to more accurate and effective decision-making, while low-quality information can lead to errors and poor outcomes (Abumandil & Hassan, 2016; Farooq, Zia-Ud-Din, Iram, & Nadeem, 2018).

Moreover, the quality of information can impact employee job satisfaction and engagement. For example, employees may become disengaged or frustrated when they receive incomplete or inaccurate information, leading to decreased motivation and productivity (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important for organisations to prioritize the quality of information that is shared with employees in order to promote positive outcomes. Organisations can improve the quality of information by implementing processes and systems for data collection, verification, and analysis (Abumandil & Hassan, 2016). Additionally, organisations can prioritize training and development for employees to improve their skills in data analysis and interpretation, as well as communication and collaboration (Farooq et al., 2018).

2.1.3. Reliability of Information

Reliability of information refers to the degree to which information can be trusted to be accurate and consistent over time (Akhtar, Syed, Husnain, & Naseer, 2019). Vedder and Wachbroit (2003) opined that reliability of information simply means information that can be trusted. In order for information to be reliable, it must be based on credible sources, be free from errors or biases, and be consistent with other information on the same topic (Maqbool et al., 2018). Hence, reliability of information can be seen as the degree to which an information can be trusted based on its source and its quality.

The reliability of information can have significant impacts on organizational decision-making, performance, and employee trust. Research has shown that decision-making based on unreliable information can lead to errors and poor outcomes (Watson, & Wu, 2022; Salloum, Al-Emran, & Shaalan, 2018). Additionally, employees may become less trusting of their organization when they receive unreliable information, leading to decreased motivation and engagement (Akhtar et al., 2019). Organisations can improve the reliability of information by implementing processes for fact-checking, verifying data sources, and ensuring consistency across different sources of information (Watson & Wu, 2022). Additionally, organisations can prioritize training and development for employees to improve their skills in data analysis and interpretation, as well as critical thinking and evaluation of information sources (Salloum et al., 2018).

2.2. Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is one of the vital components to the success of an organisation, hence, it has garnered serious attention in the literature. Employee engagement is seen as the level of commitment, motivation, and satisfaction that employees have towards their work and their organization (Saks, 2019). Engaged employees are highly invested in their work, take pride in their organization, and are willing to go above and beyond what is expected of them in order to contribute to the success of the organization. It is a multifaceted concept that refers to enthusiastic, vivacious, persistent, goal-oriented, and emotionally bright people who use their personal qualities as well as their cognitive and affective assessments of their work and organizational contexts to guide their task performance in the direction of achieving the organizational objectives (Marin, 2021).

According to Vance (2006), employee engagement has to do with the degree to which

employees are committed to something or someone in their organisation, the hard work they give, and how long they stay with such organisation due to such commitment. It is seen as the intellectual and emotional commitment of employees to their organisation and its overall success (Balakrishnan & Masthan, 2013). Based on the foregoing, employee engagement can be conceptualised as the commitment employees bequeath to their organisation, the meaningfulness they experience at their work, and the discretionary efforts they exert in the actualisation of their organisational objectives.

Hence, according to this study, employee engagement is a composite whole of three things – employee commitment, meaningfulness at work, and discretionary efforts. Commitment entails the degree to which employees feel connected to and involved with their work, their colleagues, and their organization as a whole. Meaningfulness at work refers to the sense of purpose and fulfilment that employees derive from their work. Discretionary efforts refers to the extra effort and initiative that employees voluntarily put into their work beyond what is expected or required of them.

Research has shown that employee engagement is positively related to a number of important outcomes, including job performance, job satisfaction, and employee retention (Afsar, Shahjehan, & Javed, 2018; Bockerman & Ilmakunnas, 2018). Engaged employees are more likely to perform at a high level, feel satisfied with their work, and stay with their organization for a longer period of time. Factors that contribute to employee engagement include a supportive work environment, opportunities for growth and development, and effective communication between employees and their managers (Saks, 2019). Additionally, employees who feel that their work is meaningful and aligned with their personal values are more likely to be engaged in their work (Bockerman & Ilmakunnas, 2018).

2.3. Communication and Employee Engagement

Several studies have evaluated the effect communication has on the engagement of employees in an organisation. One of which is that of Jaupi and Llaci (2015) who conducted a study on the effect of communication satisfaction and demographic variables on employee engagement in universities in Saudi Arabia. The study found that internal communication positively impacted employee engagement and that the frequency and quality of communication were important factors in determining engagement levels. Also, Osborne and Hammoud (2017) conducted a qualitative study on effective employee engagement in the workplace using business leaders in Jackson, Mississippi as target population. The study found out amongst others, that communication is pivotal to creating a bond between leaders and employees which can further stimulate more engagement from employees.

Moreover, Institute for Employment Studies (IES) (2018) conducted a study on employee engagement in higher education sectors. The study found that communication was a key driver of engagement and that open and transparent communication between management and employees was important for creating a positive work environment. Idowu (2018) conducted an empirical study on the impact effective communication and compensation management has on employee engagement in some selected financial institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria. The

study found out that effective communication has significant positive effect on employee engagement, and further stated that employee engagement is highly instrumental to employee performance in an organisation. This preceding finding is corroborated by that of Wolor, Dania, Suherdi, Nurkin, & Ardiansyah (2022) who conducted a study centred on employee communication and employee engagement subsequent to the COVID-19 era. According to them, it was discovered that employee performance is directly affected by communication.

The studies above showed that communication positively affects employee engagement which in turn increases performance of employees in the organisation. However, no study was able to examine how communication affects employee engagement in the universities located in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

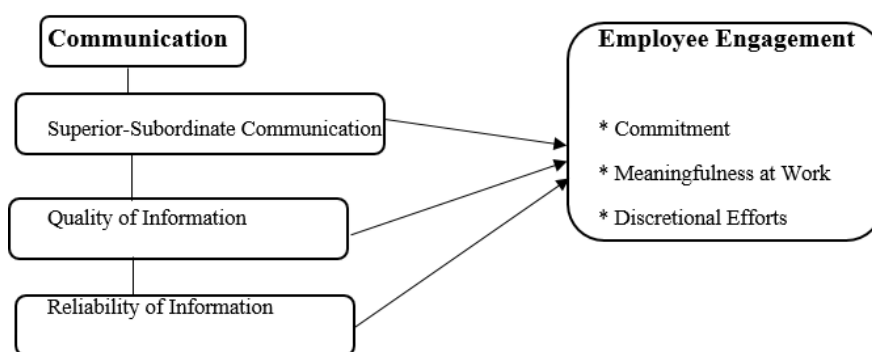


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researchers' Conceptualisation (2023)

Figure 1 provides a diagrammatic display of the conceptualisation of the study. As seen in Figure 1, communication is measured by three parameters – superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, and reliability of information while the dependent variable, employee engagement is also measured by three parameters – commitment, meaningfulness at work, and discretionary efforts. The study's conceptual framework validates the three specific objectives formulated by the study, which are to: examine the effect of superior-subordinate communication on employee engagement, assess how quality of information affects employee engagement, and evaluate the effect of reliability of information on employee engagement.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

2.5.1. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) which was propounded by an American sociologist, George Homans in the 1950s is a useful framework to understand the relationship between communication and employee engagement. SET suggests that social relationships are based on the exchange of resources between individuals, and that individuals engage in social

interactions when they perceive a positive balance of benefits over costs (Blau, 1964). In the context of communication and employee engagement, this means that employees are more likely to engage in positive behaviours, such as high levels of job performance and organizational citizenship behaviours, when they perceive that the communication they receive from their supervisors or colleagues is beneficial to them.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

This study utilised a descriptive cross-sectional research design and employed the quantitative research method in achieving its objectives. The study population comprises all academic staff in the four universities in Ekiti State. In generating the sample size, Cochran's (1963) formula was used. This formula was used because there was a lack of data showing the total population for the four universities – ABUAD, EKSU, FUYOYE, and BOUESTI – located in the state. By making use of this formula, the sample size generated for this study was 384 academic staff of the four universities in Ekiti State. This can be expressed mathematically below:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

$$e = 0.05$$

$$p = 0.5$$

$$q = 1 - p$$

$$= 0.5$$

$$Z = 1.96$$

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

$$n = 384$$

In selecting the members of the sample, simple random sampling technique was used where every member of the universe was given an equal chance of being selected. Data was collected via the use of a close-ended and structured electronic questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered to an equal number of sample from each of the four sampling frames. That is, the questionnaire was administered to 96 academic staff each from the four universities.

The questionnaire comprised 32 items split into three sections – Sections A, B, and C. Section A dealt with the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, Section B dealt with the independent variable, Communication while Section C dealt with the dependent variable, Employee Engagement. Measuring scales for the parameters of Communication were adapted from Balakrishnan and Masthan (2013) while that of employee engagement were adapted from Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) and Spreitzer (1996).

Collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) for the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and inferential statistics (Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multiple linear regression analysis) for testing the study's hypotheses. This was done via the aid of the SPSS version 20.0 software.

4.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents data on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, with the number of individuals and percentages for each category. The first variable is gender, with 162 (58.7%) males and 114 (41.3%) females in the group.

The second variable is age, with 66 (23.9%) individuals aged between 31-40 years, and 210 (76.1%) individuals aged 41 and above. The third variable is marital status, with 247 (89.5%) individuals married, 25 (9.1%) single, and 4 (1.4%) widowed.

The fourth variable is the highest educational qualification, with 13 (4.7%) individuals having a B.Sc., 130 (47.1%) individuals having an M.Sc., and 133 (48.2%) individuals having a Ph.D. The fifth variable is religion, with 271 (98.2%) individuals being Christians, 2 (0.7%) individuals being Muslims, and 3 (1.1%) individuals following other religions. The sixth variable is ethnicity, with 242 (87.7%) individuals being Yoruba, 14 (5.1%) individuals being Igbo, and 20 (7.2%) individuals belonging to other ethnic groups.

The seventh variable is academic cadre, with 10 (3.6%) individuals being graduate assistants, 48 (17.4%) individuals being assistant lecturers, 29 (10.5%) being in the cadre of lecturer II, 59 (21.4%) being in the cadre of lecturer I, 44 (15.9%) being senior lecturers, 61 (22.1%) being readers, and 25 (9.1%) individuals being professors.

The last variable is salary range, with 2 (0.7%) individuals earning below N75,000, 5 (1.8%) individuals earning between N100,001 – N125,000, and 269 (97.5%) individuals earning above N125,000. Overall, this table provides a summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of the study's respondents.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Male	162	58.7
Female	114	41.3
Age		
Under 21 Years	0	0.0
21 – 30 Years	0	0.0
31 – 40 Years	66	23.9
41 and Above	210	76.1
Marital Status		
Single	25	9.1
Married	247	89.5
Divorced		
Widowed	4	1.4

Highest Educational Qualification		
B.Sc.	13	4.7
M.Sc.	130	47.1
Ph.D.	133	48.2
Religion		
Christianity	271	98.2
Islam	2	0.7
Traditional	0	0.0
Others	3	1.1
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	242	87.7
Igbo	14	5.1
Hausa	0	0.0
Others	20	7.2
Academic Cadre		
Graduate Assistant	10	3.6
Assistant Lecturer	48	17.4
Lecturer II	29	10.5
Lecturer I	59	21.4
Senior Lecturer	44	15.9
Reader	61	22.1
Professor	25	9.1
Salary Range		
Below N75,000	2	0.7
N75,000 – N100,000	0	0.0
N100,001 – N125,000	5	1.8
Above N125,0000	269	97.5
Total	276	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2023)

4.1. Normality Test

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for four variables: Superior-Subordinate Communication, Quality of Information, Reliability of Communication, and Employee Engagement. To determine if the data for each variable is normally distributed, one can examine the skewness and kurtosis values. In a normal distribution, the skewness should be between -2 and +2 while the Kurtosis should be between -7 and +7 (Bryne, 2010). As shown in Table 2, all variables follow this criterion, hence, the data can be said to be normally distributed.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Superior-Subordinate Communication	276	1.50	5.00	3.8379	.79586	-.985	.147	.986	.292
Quality of Information	276	1.00	4.75	3.2264	.85381	-.422	.147	-.370	.292
Reliability of Communication	276	1.00	5.00	3.5589	.78272	-.842	.147	1.440	.292
Employee Engagement	276	2.92	4.50	3.6718	.30945	-.090	.147	.091	.292
Valid N (listwise)	276								

Source: Researchers’ Computation (2023)

Figure 2 showed that the data follows a normal distribution since it has bell-shaped look. Also, Figure 3 showed that the data followed a normal distribution due to the dotted lines follow the normality line. Based on the data obeying all these normality assumptions, it can therefore be concluded that the data follows a normal distribution. Hence, parametric tests can further be used to analyse the data.

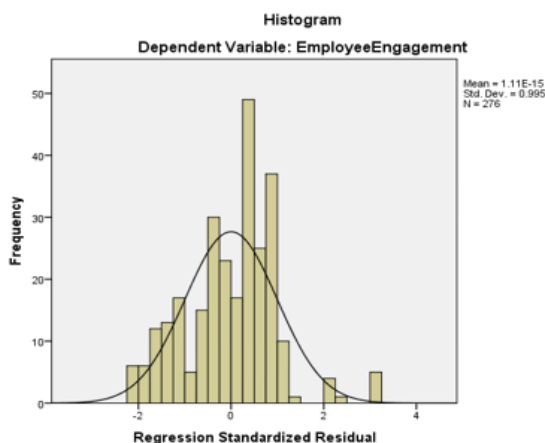


Figure 2: Histogram

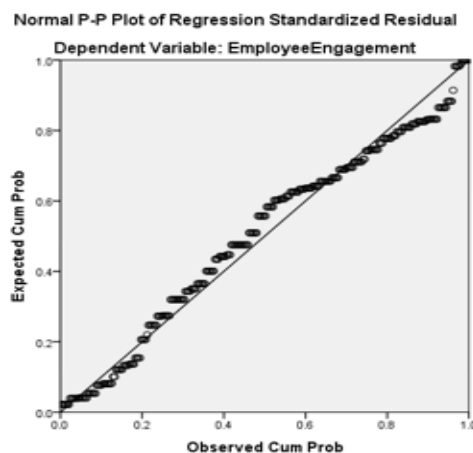


Figure 3: Normal P-P Plot

Source: Researchers’ Computation (2023)

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

It is pertinent to reiterate that three hypotheses were formulated for this study, and in testing these hypotheses, multiple linear regression specifically OLS is used.

In Table 3, the correlation coefficient (R) between the dependent variable (employee

engagement) and the predictor variables is 0.411. The coefficient of determination (R Square) indicates that the predictors explain 16.9% of the variance in employee engagement. The adjusted R Square, which takes into account the number of predictors in the model, is 0.160. This suggests that the predictors have some ability to explain the variance in employee engagement, but there may be other factors that are not captured by the model.

Table 4 which is the ANOVA table shows that the regression model has an F-value of 18.458 and a p-value of .000 [F (3, 275 = 18.458, p<0.05)]. This means that the model is statistically significant and the predictors have a significant impact on employee engagement.

Table 5 presents the results of a regression analysis where the dependent variable is Employee Engagement, and the independent variables are Superior-Subordinate Communication, Quality of Information, and Reliability of Communication. As seen in the table, the Tolerance values and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) are seen to be at least 0.1 and within the range of 1 – 10 respectively. Hence, it can be said that there exists no multicollinearity. As a result, the statistical inferences to be made from the data is deemed reliable. To test the study’s hypotheses, as seen in Table 5, Superior-subordinate communication has no statistically significant effect on employee engagement among staff in the selected universities in Ekiti State ($\beta = 0.015$, $p = 0.578 > 0.05$). With regards to the second hypothesis, it is seen that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This is because the p-value is lesser than the significance level of 0.05. Hence, quality of information has a statistically significant effect on employee engagement ($\beta = 0.202$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

Finally, concerning the third hypothesis, it was seen that reliability of communication has a statistically significant effect on employee engagement ($\beta = -0.137$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

In Table 6, the broad objective of this study was tested. As shown in the table, communication was seen to have a statistically significant positive effect on employee engagement ($\beta = 0.097$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

Table 3: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.411 ^a	.169	.160	.28361
a. Predictors: (Constant), Reliability of Communication, Superior- Subordinate Communication, Quality of Information				
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement				

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	4.454	3	1.485	18.458	.000 ^b
	Residual	21.879	272	.080		
	Total	26.333	275			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Reliability of Communication, Superior-Subordinate Communication, Quality of Information						

Table 5: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	3.450	.092		37.473	.000		
1 Superior-Subordinate Communication	.015	.027	.039	.556	.578	.627	1.596
1 Quality of Information	.202	.029	.558	6.939	.000	.473	2.115
1 Reliability of Communication	-.137	.032	-.347	-4.236	.000	.455	2.197

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

Table 6: Broad Objective Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.330	.094		35.279	.000
1 Communication	.097	.026	.218	3.695	.000

Source: Researchers' Computation (2023)

4.3. Discussion

From the results shown above, it was seen that superior-subordinate communication has no significant effect on employee engagement. This means that the kind of communication that exists between superior and subordinate within the university system of Ekiti State does not determine the level of employee engagement. In other words, the communication flow between senior and junior academic staff does not determine whether these staff would get more engaged with their jobs or not. If communication between superior and subordinate does not improve employee engagement, then, this may mean there is dissatisfaction with such communication. This finding is in tandem with that of Milanovic, Matic, and Golubovic (2021) who, in their study, revealed the dissatisfaction of employees with their supervisor communication and personal feedback discourages their engagement with their jobs. However, this finding negates that of Skold (2019) who showed that superior-subordinate communication had a significant effect on employee engagement among shop floor workers of a manufacturing organisations. The disparity in finding could be because of the target respondents and selected study area.

Secondly, it was discovered by this study that the quality of information has a significant effect on employee engagement. This finding implies that academic staff of universities in Ekiti State value information that is accurate, complete, timely, relevant, and understandable, and the dissemination of such information only makes them more engaged in their job responsibilities.

When quality of information disseminated to these staff is high, it increases their happiness and satisfaction on their jobs which in turn positively affects their engagement. The assertion of Mukherji, Uniyal, and Karmakar (2021) that, amongst other factors, employee engagement is premised upon dependability corroborates this finding. The dissemination of information of high quality, implies that such information can be depended on, which in turn induces more employee engagement.

Thirdly, the study found out that reliability of information has a significant effect on employee engagement. The implication of this result is that academic staff of universities in Ekiti State can only get engaged to the degree the information being passed across is reliable. This result aligns with that of Frare and Beuren (2020) who revealed that information reliability or credibility moderates the relationship between job insecurity and employee engagement. This means that if information disseminated is reliable, employees are more likely to feel more engaged in their work, even if they have concerns about job insecurity.

Finally, the study revealed that communication has a significant positive effect on employee engagement. This finding shows that the way communication occurs in universities in Ekiti State determines the level of engagement of academic staff. The better the communication, the better the employee engagement, and vice versa. This finding is in consonance with those of Balakrishnan and Masthan (2013); Kaur and Jain (2020); Miheso and Mukanzi (2020); Pongton and Suntrayuth (2019) who all revealed that communication positively impacts employee engagement in an organisation.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings generated by this study, it can therefore be concluded that communication has a significant positive effect on employee engagement of academic staff of universities in Ekiti State. This means that effective communication is key to driving high level engagement from employees in the universities. Hence, for the management of these universities to stimulate more engagement from their academic staff, they are expected to:

- (i) ensure that the information being disseminated within their respective institutions is of high quality.
- (ii) make sure that the information being passed across from top to bottom of the institution's hierarchy is reliable and credible.
- (iii) pay huge attention to the communication flow within their respective institutions.

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