The Role of Internal Communication on Service Delivery: (The Case of Batu Town Municipality) Batu Town, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of internal communication on service delivery in Batu town municipality and to come up with remedial solutions in order to improve the current practices. The effect played by internal communications in an organization is tangible as an effective tool in service delivery. To this end, descriptive design and mixed research approach were applied. Both primary and secondary sources of data were collected using questionnaires, interview and document analysis. Primary data were collected from 50 employees and 6 management part of town whereas secondary data were collected from reports and manuals of the municipality/town. These collected data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics and narration to come up with valid and reliable conclusions. The finding of the study shows that respondents had awareness of the importance of internal communication to build service delivery in the area. In study area, respondents had understood the role of internal communication through training, personal preference of internal communication channels, and message from work place colleagues were mechanism used. But respondents' awareness on importance by training given for the staff on internal communication had no trends of continuity. Major role of internal communication systems that could be used to promote service delivery under the study area like hiring, staff training, supervision and monitoring and evaluation. The municipal /office had no more problem of employee engagement in communication. The role of internal communication were hindered by factors like absence of inter departmental co-operation, managerial interference poor, language barriers, but poor internal communication channel is the main factor affecting internal communication. Identifying factors hinders internal communication, the researcher recommends continues training that focus on practice of internal communication.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The effect played by internal communications in an organization is tangible as an effective tool in service delivery. Every aspect of organization requires a good communication network. It is regarded as the foundation upon which organization of business is built. In this case, the major executive function is to develop and maintain an effective system of communication of an organization in managing successful performance managements in service delivery. Communication also serves as link between various parts of an organization. However, it is not exaggeration to say that communication is the means by which organized activities is unified fit oriented organization, the transfer of information from one individual to another is absolute essential (Low Kean, 2016).

According to Dodd (2004), Communication is a resource of delivering messages from one to another. Through communication, people share their ideas, feelings, thoughts and emotions. Man carries out his needs and also helps others by knowing each other's and life will pass with same zeal. Internal communication takes place between employees or departments across all levels or divisions of an organization context.

Internal communication is a lot more than people taking to one another; however, it is the life blood of any organization. In organizational environment, success in management depends on an organizational ability to effectively manage adverse work force and there is a need to recognize the importance of communication in general and internal communication in particular in service delivery.(Frost,1997)

In general, good internal communication can provide the information they need to do their jobs effectively, provide people with clear standards and expectations for their work, give people feedback on their own performance. Allow them to take the pulse of the organization and understand its overall situation. On the basis of this study attempted to investigate the role of internal communication on service delivery in the case of Batu Town Municipality which is located in East Shewa Oromia, Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Internal communication can be divided as an opportunity to enthusiasm employees and provide them with reasons to promote the organization by involving employees in the organization vision and paving the right qualifiers or messages, educating them on the brand and the organization directions better and providing proof for the messages, their level of satisfaction is improved. Internal communication needs to encourage employees to take personal approach and apply creativity while promoting the vision. Every organization has its own culture and patterns on the basis of which they conduct their functions and activities (Frost, 1997).

Many researchers including (Frost, 1997) concluded that effective internal communication increases the efficiency of service delivery and productivity of any business organization. Other researches also illustrated that effectual and well organized communication positively relates to

the service delivery, job satisfaction, performance and positive attitude of the employees. In this research, study attempts to assess the role of internal communication on service delivery in Batu town municipality.

The study will address the following questions:

- What are the roles of internal communication on service delivery?

- Is there any relationship between communication and employee engagement?

- What are the extents of employee understanding about service delivery?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of internal communication on service deliver in Batu town municipality

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify the role of internal communication on   service delivery

- To find out the relation between communication and service delivery

- To assessing the extent of employee understanding   about service delivery within the study organization

1.4 Significance of the Study

On the basis of this assertion this study has the following significance; this study helps to the target office in particular and service delivery organizations in general to know the role of internal communication for enhancing service delivery performance. It creates awareness about how communication and internal communication alleviate service delivery. Furthermore, the study serves as a basis for other researcher who has interest to conduct further study on this topic or related issues.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Geographically, the study would be undertaken in Batu town municipality with a lot of variables that researchers focused on the role of internal communication on service delivery. Generally, this study was delimited to the role of internal communication on service delivery case of Batu town municipality.

2. Review of Related Literature

This section seeks to identify internal communications in contemporary literacy practice related to the key issues. The purpose is to support the capacity of internal communication practitioners will need to effectively do their jobs and for further research, in order to provide a framework for the analysis.

2.1 Internal Communication

Internal communication is one of the most important things you can do to make sure that your organization runs smoothly and effectively. Good internal communication will flourish if employees create an organizational climate of openness that is conducive to the free flow of information in all directions (fletcher, 1999)

2.2 The Role of Communication

There are different interrelated issues that an organization needs to address in promoting internal communication. The first, involves the organizational climate and culture. The other is about the organization has be a place where open communication is accepted and encouraged. The organization established clear definitions of what needs to be communicated and by whom. If you assume that everyone always needs to know about absolutely everything, the staff would spend all its time merely receiving and passing on information. There need to be guidelines about what and how information gets passed. The last issue is that of the systems that the organization creates to get its work done and to enable internal communication. Are they structured to encourage communication in all directions, or to discourage or channel it in particular ways.(callen,etal 1992)

2.2.1 Commitment and Engagement

One of the most commonly cited aspects of the internal communications function is that of development of employee commitment, involvement and participation in support of achieving business goals (Arnott, 1987; Welsh & Jackson, 2007; Barrett, 2002). This is important as organizational success is relying on employee support (Therkelsen & Fiebich, 2003) and employees who are committed to the organization personally identifiable are concerned about its future and loyal to it.

Welch and Jackson (2007) see non-task internal communication as having "a role to play in developing employee commitment and trust" (L'Etang, 2008) points to a positive communication environment and communication linkages between a building consensus. The existence of positive relationships in organizations is the requirement for the participation of employees. These depend on two-way participative communications (Stroh & Jaatinen, 2001).

2.2.2 Communication in Managerial

According to Doorlery(2007) managerial communication is applied inter- disciplinary field which focus on language and behavior within an organization   context. It also focuses on the individual managers as a unit of analysis, internal communication across various contexts such as of interpersonal, group, and organizational in some instances to mediate when it is required it includes all relevant forms and channels of internal communication that managers may select in order to accomplish their purposes including written, oral, and nonverbal and mediation.

2.3 System to Improve Service Delivery Performance

Just about every organization sets up systems of different kinds to make it easier or more effective to complete some parts of its task. Internal communication can be stifled by your organization

systems, or it can be promoted and strengthened through both existing system and new one created to enhance service delivery performance. Some ways that systems that can be used to promote service delivery performance and strength internal communication (Brain, 2006)

2.3.1 Hiring

You may already have a plan for hiring staff members. It can easily include making clear to all applications for every job in the organization that communication is absolutely necessary to what goes on in the organization and that openness is part of the organizational culture. The hiring plan can also include searching for peoples with the quality that fosters openness communication.(Ibid)

2.3.2 Staff Training

As with hiring, organization may already have a staff training plan or program. The organization can adapt it for promoting internal communication by adding or enhancing training in the communication needs of the organization and the individuals.

2.3.3 Supervision

The form that supervision takes in an organization can easily either foster or stifle internal communication. If the supervisor is seen as intrusive and punitive (like looking over peoples shoulder and trying to catch them doing something wrong),internal communication particularly service delivery performance among supervisors and supervises probably won't benefit(Brain,2006).

2.4 Ways of Monitoring Internal Communication

There are different ways of monitoring internal communication in an organization.corner,J.1994, lists some ways of monitoring internal communication.

• Checking staff satisfaction on the level, speed and inclusiveness of the information and other communication and communication they receive.

• Ask for feedback at the end of staff meeting, either on the meeting itself, on the decision making process or anything else of concern. You could also on a regular basis devote all or part of the staff meeting to a review of internal communication procedures and how well they are working.

• Try to determine whether internal problems over the period of time you are assessing have decreased I frequency or severity compared to the previous period.

• Make internal communication a topic at whatever staff retreats or evaluation sessions you hold to look at the organization as a whole.

2.5 Staff Communication Internally

According to corner,(1994) managers should take responsibility to ensure that employees feel free to exchange information in a timely and accurate manner and they should be encourage to reward employees behavior that promote healthy internal communication relationship both within and outside of the organization, staying with management tasks as well as staff when communicating.

Internal communication from senior managers to their employees plays a vital role in the maintaining and nurturing a company service delivery performance. In service setting internal communication tools for marketing are especially important because they are help to create powerful images and a sense of credibility confidence and reassurance.

2.6 Service Excellence

Service excellence should be the mission of service delivery organization, so that employees should develop an understanding of what the factors are that lead to service excellence and how they can be an aligned. Managing quality is a difficult and complex problem in service delivery organization; it also needs to encounter the problems of performance through a high level of interaction (Brownell, 1992).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive research design has been used because of the study describes the state of affairs as exist without altering the reality. For conducting this study, mixed research approach i.e. qualitative and quantitative methods would be applied. The qualitative method focuses on exploring the attitude and behaviors of managements and employees with regard to day to day effect of internal communication on service delivery within the organization. A quantitative methods deal with analyzing the degree to which internal communication play role on service delivery in office.

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The target populations of the study were employees and management body Batu town municipality. The total populations of the study area were 54 which were one (1) senior administrator known as mayor, one middle level administrators known as head of the office of mayor, the six process owner /supervisors and the remaining were experts with different level of works and experiences. Hence, the total population size for this study was all managers and experts. In general, 54 population size, which was few in number influenced to employs **census** methods of sample which considers every element (all units) of the population. But all 50 questionnaires were returned to the researcher.

3.3 Source of Data

In order to achieve the objective of the study already stated, during data collection, the researcher want to keep in mind two types of data viz., primary and secondary. The *primary data* were collected from study area (Batu town municipality). The *secondary data* had been collected from different place which contribute for success of the result of the study.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

In this **descriptive type of research**, the researcher obtained primary data through: (i) interview method, (ii) through questionnaires

Questionnaire: The questionnaire was designed and has been disseminated to respondents. Most

questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended questions and contain different parts like demographic characteristics of the respondents; however, opportunities were given to the respondents to say more through open ended questions.

Interview Method: Another method employed to collect primary data in this research was interview method. This method had been used through personal interviews and key informant interview was conducted to collect primary data. With regard to this primary data collection instrument, semi-structured interview was conducted with the heads.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Data obtained from the respondents through questionnaire and interviews were analyzed by using both qualitative and quantitative analysis method. The data were interpreted using descriptive statistical tools such as table, likert scale, frequency and percentage would be used to identify the organization significantly related with internal communication's effect on service delivery

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the result of data analysis according to research methodology in chapter three, table, likert scale, percentile and frequencies were used to analyze the results.

4.2 Analysis and Discussion of the Data Collected From Questionnaire

Table 1. Perception of employees on the role of internal communication on service delivery

No	Items	Scale of measurement									
		Agree		S/Agree		uncertain		disagree		S/disagreed	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Communication play a key role in service delivery performance	5	10	40	80	5	10	-		-	-
2	Internal communication under taken by employees is an important task in building service delivery performance	50	100	-	-	-	-	-		-	-

Source: Own Census Survey, 2019.

As observed from table 1, **item 1**, respondents were asked whether communication plays a key role in service delivery of an organization or not, 5(10%) of the respondents said agree, 40(80%) of respond strongly agree whereas few 5(10%) of the respondents indicate uncertain. From this, it was possible to conclude that most respondents were aware of the importance of internal

communication on service delivery in study area.

Concerning **item2**, 50(100%) of the respondents agreed that internal communication under taken by employees was an important task in building service delivery in the Batu town municipality. That means employees were effectively undertaken internal communication in their municipal and also aware of that internal communication serve as an instrument to build service delivery performance of employees. From the above two items and responses of respondents one can generalized that respondents of the organization under study in particular and employees were better understood the importance of communication and internal communication that facilitates service delivery of an organization /municipal.

Table 2. Understanding of Service Delivery Performance

No	Item	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
1	How often do staff members receive internal communication training in your organization	Weekly	-	-
		Monthly	-	-
		Quarterly	-	-
		Annually	13	26%
		Never	37	74%
2	What was the most personal preference of Internal communication channels in your organization?	Verbal	9	18%
		Non-verbal	-	-
		Notice board	28	56%
		Telephone	13	26%
3	How did well do you understand message from your work place colleagues?	Poor	-	-
		Good	23	46%
		Fair	14	28
		very good	13	26%
		Excellent	-	-

Source: Own census Survey: 2019.

As observed from **table 2**, **item 1**, majority of the respondents, 74% of them said training on internal communication were not given to them whereas 26% of them responded that training were given annually concerning internal communication. However, they added that even though training is important, the management did not gave due attention. Regarding the personal preference of internal communication channels, 56%of the respondents said notice board as preferred communication channel,18% of the them prefer verbal communication channel, where as 26% of the prefer telephone as personal preference of internal communication. Concerning how well employees understand messages from their co-workers, 46% of the responded as well/good and 26% of them said very good/well which means there well understands among co-workers in the transmission of messages. From this it's concluded as lack of training given for employees in internal communication would be observed. Furthermore, different employees preference different communication channels and also there was well understanding between workers in the organization under study. In addition, during interview with key informant, awareness of employees was weak especially on the role of internal communication on service delivery because of insufficient training provided by town municipality.

As indicated in Table **3**; most of the employees, 52% agreed that there was very high internal communication monitoring system, 10% employees agree that low and 10% employees agreed medium. Therefore; we conclude that most of respondents said that monitoring of internal communication was strong that majority of respondents shares the idea.

Table 3. Internal communication monitoring system

What is the degree of monitoring of internal communication of the office?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	1o	20
Very high	26	52
Medium	10	20
Low	4	8
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100

Sources: Own Census Survey: 2019.

On the part of management during interview time, benefit from ongoing evaluations of internal communication practices, two way communication practices and timely, consistent and effective

methods of communication that satisfy employees and management.

Table 4. Role of internal communication on service delivery

Major role of internal Communication on service delivery	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hiring activity	8	16
Staff training	7	14
Supervision	12	24
Monitoring and Evaluation	23	46
Total	50	100

Sources: Own Census Survey: 2019.

As table 4, shows that most of the respondent that is, 46% of the respondents said that monitoring and evaluation, 14% respondent said staff training, and 24% respondent said supervision.

Generally, from the above table, majority of respondents (managers and employees) (almost more than 50% of the total population) said that in the study area, the role of internal communication was more reflected on monitoring and evaluation activity. This did not mean that other areas roles of internal communicational on service deliver activity were not ignored.

As table**5** shows that most of the respondent that is 66 % of the total respondent said that they have been engaged in organizational communication in service delivery, and the remaining, 34 % of the respondents were also said they were not engaged in organizational communication, so most of the respondents were engaged in organizational communicational in service delivery.

Table 5. Communication and Employee Engagement

Was there employee engagement in organizational communication?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	33	66
No	17	34
Total	50	100

Sources: Own Census: 2019.

As information collected through interview from management part of municipal, employee engagement in their affairs had no more problems that all members participate at level if it was necessary.

Table 6. Factor affecting internal communication

No	Item	Scale of measurement									
		Agree		S/Agree		Uncertain		Disagreed		S/disagreed	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Poor Internal communication channel.	18	36	22	44	10	20	-	-	-	
2	Absence of inter departmental co-operation.			40	80	10	20	-	-	-	
3	Managerial interference	20	40	25	50	5	10				
4	Language barriers							40	80	10	20

Source: Own Census Survey: 2019.

As show in **table 6**, item **1**, 36% and 44% of the respondents responded as strongly agree as poor internal communication channel as the main factor affecting internal communication. Whereas the remaining, 20% of them responded that they were unsure about whether poor internal communication channel affects service delivery performance or not. Regarding poor inter departmental co-operation all most all respondents shows their agreement, internal communication directly affect by it. Regarding managerial interference 50% of the respondents responded strongly agree, 10% of them answer uncertain and the remaining. Concerning language barriers almost all respondents, 80% of them disagree about language barriers as affecting factor. Therefore it is possible to conclude that poor internal communication channel, absence of inter departmental co-operation and managerial interference were some of the major factors affecting internal communication. However, language barriers were not an affecting factor of internal communication in the organization under study. During interview with key informants, the heads of the municipal they proofed information achieved from employees through questionnaires'.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Summary

This section deals with summary, conclusion and recommendation. In this section, summary should be made based on the major findings of the study. Depending on the finding of the research, possible recommendations were also made.

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of internal communication on service delivery in Batu town Municipality and to come up with remedial solutions in order to improve the current practices.

For conducting this study, descriptive research design and mixed research approach i.e. qualitative and quantitative approach were applied. In order to find responses to basic questions, the following procedures were undertaken that pertinent to data collection tools such as questionnaire and interview. Respondents were selected from the organization under study that was capable to give information pertinent to the research. Furthermore, different related literatures were reviewed to make the research more complete.   In general, the researcher committed and devoted to assess all the necessary information to this study.

In order to understand respondent's perception, respondents were asked whether communication plays a key role in service delivery of an organization, majority of them that is, 80% of the respondents said strongly agree.   From this it was possible conclude that most respondents were aware of the importance of communication on service deliver. 100% of the respondents agreed that internal communication under taken by employees was an important task in building service delivery in the municipal. Related to monitoring of internal communication, 20% respondents said high and 52% of said very high.

In the study area respondents were asked the major role of internal communication, majority of respondents (46 %) said that role of internal communication was more reflected on monitoring and evaluation activity. In addition, most of the respondents were engaged in organizational communicational in service delivery.

5.2 Conclusions

Depending on the analysis of the result made, the following major conclusion was made.

From the study, researcher concluded employees were effectively undertaken internal communication in their organization and also aware of the importance of internal communication facilitate service delivery of municipal. Respondents also had awareness of the importance of internal communication to build service delivery in the area. The researcher had checked information collected by interview with management that members of office had awareness and understanding, but not similar to all

To make of service delivery effective understanding on the role of internal communication through training, personal preference of internal communication channels, and message from work place colleagues were mechanism used. But respondents' awareness on importance by training given for the staff on internal communication had no trends of continuity. In addition, to meet the target of internal communication on service delivery, there are different ways of monitoring of internal communication in an organization (corner J, 1994). With respect to this, there was a very high degree monitoring of internal communication in organization. The researcher also understood the major role of internal communication systems that can be used to promote service delivery performance under the study area like hiring, staff training, supervision and monitoring and Evaluation. But from respondents response monitoring and evaluation was the major role played by internal communication in the municipal. In the study area, the municipal had no more problem of employee engagement in communication.

In the study area the role of internal communication in effective service delivery were hindered by many factors like absence of inter departmental co-operation, managerial interference poor, language barriers, but poor internal communication channel was the main factor affecting internal communication.

5.3 Recommendation

On the basis of this assertion and conclusion made based on the finding of the research the following point were recommended.

➢ It is crucial to encourage effective internal communication on the positive influence on service delivery throughout hierarchy of organization

➢ Employees should receive continues training that focuses on practice of internal communication.

➢ Employees and administrators' should be able to focus on internal communication to be effective, to solve problems and to delivery service to customer.

➢ Management should take actions to reduce possible factors that retard internal communication which ultimately affects service delivery performance of employees.

➢ Furthermore the researchers of this study should recommend further study should be conducted on this title or related topic that role of internal communication on service delivery organization.

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