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Transparency and Accountability in Public Office of Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study evaluated the transparency and accountability in public office of Ebonyi state, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are to; examine the relationship between open communication and goal-setting and evaluate the relationship between taking responsibility and feedback in public office. The area of the study was Ebonyi State. The study made use of staff of both federal and state ministries in Ebonyi state. The population of the study was 288 senior staff of the same selected ministries. The whole population was used due to small number. The choice of these ministries was due to high number of staff. The study used the descriptive survey design approach. The primary source of data was the administration of questionnaire. Two hundred and fifty five (255) staff returned the questionnaire and accurately filled. Data was presented and analyzed by mean score and standard deviation using Sprint Likert Scale. The hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient (r). The findings indicated that Open communication had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting, r (95, n = 255), .517 < .781, p<.05) and Taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the feedback in public office r (95, n = 255),.385 < .768, p<.05). The study concluded that Open communication and taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting and feedback in public office. The study recommended among others that Open communication should be encouraged in government or public offices to improve engagement *as encouraging employees to express their thoughts and feelings openly can help them engage more.*

Keywords*: accountability, open communication, goal setting, taking responsibility, transparency.*

Introduction

Transparency and accountability are foundational principles in democratic governance, ensuring that government institutions are open, responsive, and accountable to the citizens they serve (Fox, 2017). In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of transparency and accountability within public office settings, driven by increased public scrutiny, demands for good governance, and efforts to combat corruption and inefficiency (Agwor, 2015). However, despite widespread acknowledgment of their significance, challenges persist in effectively implementing and maintaining these principles within public office environments. Both transparency and accountability certainly contribute to government legitimacy and thus strengthen democracy and rule of law. Transparency enables the citizens to see whether the government act according to the rules they are to obey and accountability operates both as prevention from breach of rules and misuse of power and as punishment when such misconduct occurs (Janderova, 2021). Therefore, the principles are closely connected and transparency is generally believed to be a necessary precondition for accountability

Accountability is a word most times refer to a conceptual umbrella which cut across various prominent concepts like equity, transparency, responsiveness, integrity, democracy, efficiency and responsibility (Enofe, Aigboduwa, Audu & Idemudia, 2015). Accountability is not just about the responsibility of public officers and the institutions to the people they support to serve but also includes willingness on the part of the office holder to submit to scrutiny at the appropriate office he/she is holding (Salako and Ajibade, 2019). Accountability as a concept has been further classified into the following; Individual Accountability, Managerial Accountability, Fiscal Accountability and Administrative Accountability (Adagbabiri, 2015).

The more transparent public administration is, the more the citizens can be informed about its activities and may have more room to form their own opinions and to participate in public life. Especially with the development of information technologies, transparency is becoming more and more discussed as provision of information to the public is simplified (Mabillard and Zumofen, 2021). This is also related to the increase in demands on the information made available, e.g. in terms of the amount of information, machine-readable format, remote access, etc. Provision of information on implementation of state policies, behavior of politicians and officials, decision-making on public issues, etc., is not a self-sufficient goal. It is necessary to create an environment where a specific individual needs to be held accountable and bear the negative consequences associated with the found misconduct (Salako and Ajibade, 2021). This emphasizes the importance of transparency and accountability for public offices, and hence the need for the study to look into this.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the issue of transparency and accountability among public office holders has long been a subject of concern and scrutiny. Despite various initiatives and reforms, there persists a notable absence of transparency and accountability within Nigerian public offices. Instances of corruption, embezzlement of public funds, and lack of adherence to due processes are not uncommon, casting a shadow over the integrity of governmental institutions. The opacity surrounding decision-making processes, financial transactions, and resource allocation further exacerbates the problem, fostering an environment where malpractice and impunity thrive. This pervasive lack of transparency and accountability undermines the public's trust in government and erodes the legitimacy of elected officials, hindering the nation's socio-economic development and democratic progress.

The consequences of the dearth of transparency and accountability in Nigerian public offices are profound and far-reaching. Firstly, it breeds a culture of corruption and impunity, where public officials act with impunity, knowing they are unlikely to face consequences for their actions. This leads to mismanagement of public resources, diversion of funds meant for essential services, and hindered progress in sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. Secondly, the lack of accountability fosters public disillusionment and cynicism, eroding the social contract between citizens and the government. As faith in the integrity of public institutions wanes, there is a corresponding decline in civic engagement, political participation, and adherence to the rule of law, further weakening the fabric of democracy.

Conversely, when there is genuine transparency and accountability within Nigerian public offices, the positive impact on governance and society at large is tangible. Transparent decision-making processes instill public confidence and trust in government institutions, fostering a conducive environment for economic growth, foreign investment, and sustainable development. Accountability mechanisms serve as deterrents to corruption and malfeasance, ensuring that public officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions. Moreover,

increased transparency allows for greater public scrutiny and participation in governance, empowering citizens to hold their representatives accountable and demand responsive and ethical leadership. Ultimately, a culture of transparency and accountability not only strengthens democratic principles but also promotes social justice, equality, and inclusive development in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the transparency and accountability in public office. Specifically, the objectives are to;

i. Examine the relationship between open communication and goal-setting in public office.
ii. Evaluate the relationship between taking responsibility and feedback in public office.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its relevance to multiple stakeholders. For citizens, it aims to enhance trust in government by examining the link between open communications, goal-setting, responsibility-taking, and feedback mechanisms, addressing concerns about transparency and accountability. Policymakers can use the findings to craft policies that improve governance practices, while public officials can benefit from insights into effective roles and responsiveness to citizen feedback. Academically, the study enriches research in public administration, political science, and organizational behavior. Overall, it's a crucial endeavor with implications for governance, citizen engagement, and academic inquiry.

Conceptual Review

Transparency

The transparency in public administration has a great impact in the process of public administration reform and promotes the level of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness, as main components of the concept of "good administration" (Jashari and Pepaj, 2018). Transparency means being open, communicative, and responsive. Based on this principle, it is the obligation of public authorities to make public all information related to the activity of administration, while on the other hand; interested parties should have equal access to data and information sources (Jashari and Pepaj, 2018). According to Omodero and Okafor (2016) transparency means sharing information and performing in an open and honest manner. They emphasized the importance of free access to information as a key element in promoting transparency, and information sort for must be timely, relevant, accurate and complete.

Open Communication

Communication is used to transfer information to their audience about the organizations' mission and vision, policies, and procedures, tasks and duties, and various activities within the company (Musheke and Phiri, 2021). Communication skills have an important role in public services because in providing services, service providers must of course be able to communicate their views and suggestions to service users properly and politely. The formation of good communication will not only give satisfaction to the public but will also lead to the efficiency of services carried out by the government (Rivai, Baharuddin, Syarifuddin, Seppa and Yusri, 2022).

Taking Responsibility

Taking responsibility within public office is a fundamental aspect of fostering transparency and accountability. It involves acknowledging one's actions, decisions, and their consequences, regardless of whether they lead to success or failure. In the context of governance, taking responsibility encompasses a range of behaviors, including admitting mistakes, addressing shortcomings, and being willing to be held accountable by stakeholders and the public. Calls for us to take responsibility come from multiple sources. They are to be found in the popular press (Macrae, 2016), in the academic literature (Callahan, 2013) and in public statements from corporations (Kent, 2009). Hood (2010) emphasizes the role of taking responsibility as a mechanism for promoting organizational learning and improvement within public offices. By acknowledging mistakes and learning from them, officials can identify areas for growth and implement necessary reforms to prevent similar issues from arising in the future (Hood, 2010).

Accountability

The concept of accountability refers to the legal and reporting framework, organizational structure, strategy, procedures and actions to help ensure that legal obligations with regard to their audit mandate and required reporting system of the government budget are met and also evaluate and follow up their own performance as well as the impact of their audit (Madumere and Okegbe, 2014). Accountability is a process where a person or group of people is required to present an account of their activities and the way in which they have or have not discharged their duties.By inference, a person is held accountable for not only his/her actions but also inactions. Accountability also implies that the regularity and the efficiency of the use of public funds, including their own actions and activities are in line with the constitution and the civil service rules (Ezeajughu, 2021).
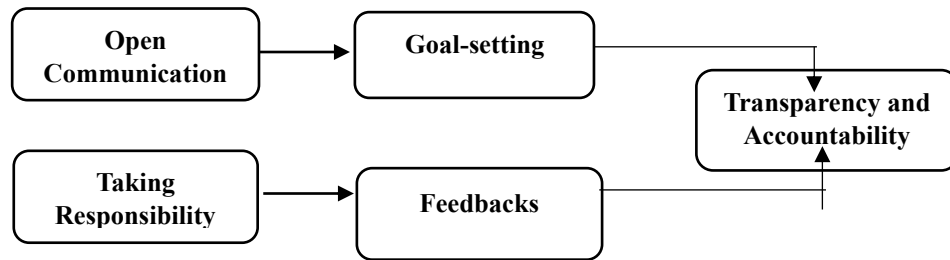
Goal-Setting

Goal-setting is a very popular concept in work planning and assessment, and it is useful as a fundamental component of organizational management in general (Ogbeiwi, 2018). Goal setting is a process by which goals are achieved, a process of identifying specific accomplishment to be made in a specific area with measurable outcomes, such as actions and timelines for achievement (Tech & Low, 2016). Further, goal setting is defined as a formal program of setting numerical or quantitative performance goals for individuals, groups and organizations, and all formal goal setting programs share the common objectives of increasing employee motivation and performance.

Feedback

Feedback in the workplace is an invaluable tool for growth, improvement, and fostering a culture of continuous learning. It serves as a compass, guiding individuals and teams towards greater effectiveness and success. Human resource managers utilize performance feedback to motivate employees to look for ways to improve their work processes and coordination and enhance employee efforts (Van Houten, Hill & Parsons, 2018). Feedback can have both negative and positive feedback as shown by various studies. Feedback involves the provision of information necessary for coaching, growth and provision of opportunities to enhance and develop experience and skills. In addition, Marthouret and Sofie (2016) observed that feedback influences employee performance positively. However, workers look for similar amount of constructive criticism and positive feedback for there to be an improvement in motivation and performance.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1   Linkages of Conceptual Variables

The conceptual framework illustrates the interconnected nature of these concepts and suggests that enhancing open communication and goal-setting can contribute to transparency and accountability within public office, while promoting a culture of taking responsibility and implementing effective feedback mechanisms further strengthens these principles. By examining the relationships between these factors, the study aims to provide insights into how they collectively influence transparency and accountability in public office settings, thereby informing policy development and governance practices.

Theoretical Framework

The study reviewed two relevant theories in relation to the objectives. However, the study is anchored on Principal-Agent Theory being the best theory that explains the possible tendencies of public office holders to want to dodge accountability and transparency in their service to the public.

The Principal Agent Theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976)

The principal-agent theory, conceived by economists Michael Jensen and William Meckling in their seminal work of 1976, elucidates the intricate dynamics of relationships where one party, the principal, delegates tasks to another party, the agent, to act on their behalf. It posits that inherent differences in interests, goals, and information between principals and agents create a potential for conflict and inefficiency, commonly known as the principal-agent problem. This theory has been foundational in various disciplines, including economics, political science, and organizational behavior, offering a framework to understand and address issues of accountability and transparency within hierarchical structures.

In public office, the principal-agent theory is particularly pertinent. Elected officials and bureaucrats serve as agents entrusted with representing the interests of the public, the principals. However, due to the complexities of governance, there exists a natural misalignment of incentives, leading to potential agency problems such as corruption, moral hazard, and opportunistic behavior. This theory underscores the importance of designing mechanisms to mitigate these risks, emphasizing the role of transparency, accountability, and incentive structures in aligning the actions of public officials with the public interest.

Moreover, the Principal-Agent Theory provides valuable insights into the design of effective governance mechanisms. Transparent communication and information disclosure are essential for reducing information asymmetry between principals and agents, enabling better decision-making and fostering trust. Furthermore, the theory underscores the significance of monitoring mechanisms and incentive structures in ensuring accountability for actions and outcomes. By applying the principles of the Principal-Agent Theory, studies on transparency and

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accountability in public office can analyze how governance mechanisms can be optimized to address agency problems and promote more effective and responsible governance practices, ultimately serving the interests of society as a whole.

Empirical Review

Open Communication and Goal-setting

Ogundajo, Oyedokun and Ajibade (2019) assessed the effect of accountability and transparency in financial reporting system of the Nigerian public service in Ogun State. Field survey research method was adopted, primary data obtained through the administration of structured questionnaire was used and the hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The target population of the study was the entire forty-nine (49) staff of the finance division of the three (3) selected local governments in Ogun State (Ikene, Iperu, and Shagamu) while 43 questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed. The finding of the study revealed that the financial reporting system of public offices in Ogun state is very weak due to lack of proper accountability and transparency. Majority of the offices lack reliable, relevant and material information which could be used to prepare quality financial reporting system. The study recommends that government should ensure financial report produces budgets assessed by the national assembly which is expected to be disclosed to the public.

Musheke and Phiri (2021) examined the effects of effective communications on organizational performance using the systems theory. A quantitative approach was used to describe and analyse data collected for the study from 88 respondents. A questionnaire was used to identify factors affecting effective communication based on systems theory. Descriptive analysis and Pearson's correlation were used to analyse the results. The results for H 1 showed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.642 which is statistically insignificant if the (sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05 indicating that there was no statistically significant relationship between management and channel of communication used. However, the results from H_2 indicated that there was a relationship between channel of communication used and effective communication with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.041 at (sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05. Lastly the correlation results from H_3 showed that effective communication has a positive effect on organizational performance at (sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05 indicating a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.012.

Rivai, Baharuddin, Syarifuddin, Seppa and Yusri (2022) examined the effect of the communication skills of civil servants in public service activities on community satisfaction. The study uses a quantitative method with a causality correlation approach. Communication skills as the dependent variable are measured using the Interpersonal communication skill scale. Community satisfaction in public services as an independent variable is measured using the Community Satisfaction Scale. Respondents in this study are Makassar people who often access or get public services. The data analysis technique used is simple regression analysis and descriptive statistics. The results showed that the communication skills of civil servants in public service activities had a significant effect on people's satisfaction. This finding shows that the communication ability of public service providers is an important thing that must be considered in public services. Therefore, in the future, material on communication skills needs to be integrated into training materials to increase the capacity of civil servants.

Mwalle and Shaju (2022) examined the effects of communication on an organizational performance. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to describe and analyze data collected for the study from 95 respondents. A questionnaire was used to identify factors affecting effective communication. Descriptive analysis and Pearson's correlation were used to analyze the results. The study found out that use of effective communication brings about

effective organizational performance. Thus, the study recommended that (i) the system of allowing every employee to get involved in communication process may make them feel they belong to the organization and are valued. (ii) Organizations should introduce a feedback mechanism in order to measure the success of effective communication system. (iii) Each person should take responsibility to assert when they don't understand or suggest when and how someone could communicate effectively.

Taking Responsibility and Feedback

Ojo, Adegbie and Ogunlade (2021) investigated the impact examined the effect of digitalization on transparency and accountability in Ogun State local government. The study adopted survey research design. The population for this study comprised of 869 workers in ICT and Account/finance department of the selected local government areas of Ogun State. The sample size of 274 Taro Yamani sampling formula and simple random sampling method was used in selecting the respondents for the study. The instrument for the study was validated and the reliability was 0.741 for the construct of integrity of information. The data for the study was analysed using multiple regression analysis. The study showed that digitalization has significant effect on integrity of information in Ogun State local government with Adj R^2 = 0.931; F-Stat $(4, 258)$ = 784.166" and p-value=0.000. p-value = 0.000 of the selected Ogun State local government. The study concluded that digitalization significantly affects transparency and accountability in Ogun State local government. It is however recommended that Ogun state government through its agencies should provide adequate digitalization measures towards the various e-transaction process for all information in the system and that financial service providers should also continuously upgrade their facilities to meet the changing demands of the customers.

Emmanson and Ajayi (2021) examined the effects of public sector reforms in entities and how the reforms promote accountability and transparency. The purpose is to examine public sector reforms between 2015 - 2020 that support transparency and accountability. The study focused on three specific proxies and their dimension of transparency and Accountability-Ease of doing business, Open Budget Initiative and Corruption Index using World Bank's Indicators and Transparency International Rankings. The study carried out a thematic survey and find that in the Nigeria context, several public sector reform initiatives have been implemented over the years covering all sectors and different levels. The reform measures vary depending on the priority of the political leadership, however, it all anchored on the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, social growth, innovation, and good governance. In the end it was discovered that some of the reforms initiatives yielded moderate result why other have little or no impact on transparency and accountability.

Ochieng (2022) evaluated the nexus between performance feedback system and employee performance (EP) in KEFRI. The researcher used descriptive research method. Moreover, unit of analysis was KEFRI Headquarters domiciled within Kiambu County, while unit of observation was one hundred and seventy-eight (178) members of staff working in seven divisions in KEFRI. Primary data was obtained by employing semi structured questionnaire. Moreover, qualitative data was then analyzed by employing thematic content analysis while quantitative data1was analyzed by employing descriptive and also inferential statistics with assistance of SPSS1version 22. Moreover, descriptive statistics included frequency distribution, percentages, standard deviation and means. The study employed regression and1correlation analysis to evaluate the link between performance feedback system and employee performance. The study discovered that performance feedback system has positive and significant effect on employee performance in KEFRI. The study also found that feedback

frequency has significant and positive influence on employee performance in KEFRI. The study established that performance feedback communication channels have statistically significant positive effect on employee performance. Moreover, feedback-based training has significant positive influence on the employee performance in KEFRI.

Cai, Gui, Mao, Wang, Hao, Fan and Tai (2023) investigated the effect of feedback on students' academic achievement in a technology-rich environment through a systematic and quantitative synthesis of the studies conducted over several decades. The study focused on three issues: (a) the effectiveness of feedback in enhancing learning performance; (b) possible factors (feedback characteristics and study features) associated with different studies that could have resulted in the inconsistent findings across the studies; and (c) how different types of feedback differed in their effect in enhancing academic achievement. Based on 182 effect sizes extracted from 61 studies, we found that, compared with no feedback condition, feedback had at least a medium effect (g = 0.44, 95%CI [0.324, 0.555]) in enhancing academic achievement, and the effect of explanation feedback was the strongest compared to other types of feedback. The study further revealed that the feedback in blended learning was more effective than that in online learning.

Gap in Knowledge

Despite the recognized significance of transparency and accountability in public office, there exists a notable gap in understanding the specific mechanisms that facilitate or hinder these principles. While previous research has acknowledged the importance of factors such as open communication, goal-setting, taking responsibility, and feedback mechanisms, there is limited empirical evidence on the interplay between these variables within public office settings. Existing studies often focus on isolated aspects of transparency and accountability or are confined to specific contexts, failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships among these factors. Consequently, there is a lack of clarity regarding how enhancing open communication and goal-setting, as well as improving responsibility-taking and feedback mechanisms, can collectively contribute to strengthening transparency and accountability in public office. Addressing this gap in knowledge is crucial for developing effective strategies and policies aimed at fostering transparency and accountability within governmental institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

    i.   What is the relationship between open communication and goal-setting in public office?

    ii.   What is the relationship between taking responsibility and feedback in public office?

Hypotheses

Open communication has relationship with the goal-setting in public office.

Taking responsibility has relationship with the feedback in public office.

Method

The area of the study was Ebonyi State. The study made use of staff of both federal and state ministries in Ebonyi state. The population of the study was 288 senior staff of the same selected

ministries. The whole population was used due to small number. The choice of these ministries was due to high number of staff. The study used the descriptive survey design approach. The primary source of data was the administration of questionnaire. Two hundred and fifty five (255) staff returned the questionnaire and accurately filled. That gave 89 percent response rate. The validity of the instrument was tested using content analysis and the result was good. The reliability was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). It gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.86 which was also good. Data was presented and analyzed by mean score (3.0 and above agreed while below 3.0 disagreed) and standard deviation using Sprint Likert Scale. The hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient (r) statistic tool.

Data Presentation

The relationship between open communication and goal-setting in public office.

Table 1 Responses on relationship between open communication and goal-setting in public office.

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 D	1 SD	∑FX	-X	SD	Decision
1	Communication mitigates conflicts and motivates employees	455 91 35.7	80 20 7.8	246 82 32.2	80 40 15.7	22 22 8.6	884 255 100%	3.46	1.342	Agree
2	The public relations is improved which ensure employee alignment with open communication	695 139 54.5	80 20 7.8	117 39 15.3	62 31 12.2	26 26 10.2	980 255 100%	3.84	1.444	Agree
3	Job satisfaction and loyalty increases with communication	570 114 44.7	80 20 7.8	201 67 26.3	52 26 10.2	28 28 11.0	931 255 100%	3.65	1.411	Agree
4	Building a culture of teamwork and trust are promoted which help in tracking process	615 123 48.2	196 49 19.2	99 33 12.9	52 26 10.2	24 24 9.4	986 255 100%	3.87	1.362	Agree
5	Regular face-to-face meetings promotes productivity and deepen employee engagement	745 149 58.4	148 37 14.5	66 22 8.6	52 26 10.2	21 21 8.2	1032 255 100%	4.05	1.351	Agree
	Total Grand mean and standard deviation							**3.774**	**1.382**	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1, 111 respondents out of 255 representing 43.5 percent agreed that Communication mitigates conflicts and motivates employees 3.46 and standard deviation of 1.342. The public relations is improved which ensure employee alignment with open communication 159 respondents representing 62.3 percent agreed with mean score of 3.84 and standard deviation of 1.444. Job satisfaction and loyalty increases with communication 134 respondents representing 52.5 percent agreed with mean score of 3.65 and standard deviation of 1.411. Building a culture of teamwork and trust are promoted which help in tracking process 172 respondents representing 67.4 percent agreed with mean score of 3.87 and 1.362. Regular face-to-face meetings promotes productivity and deepen employee engagement 186 respondents representing 72.9 percent agreed with a mean score of 4.05 and standard deviation 1.351.

The relationship between taking responsibility and feedback in public office

Table 2. Responses on relationship between taking responsibility and feedback in public office

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 D	1 SD	∑FX	-X	SD	Decision
1	Taking responsibility inspires confidence and prevents performance from off track.	530 106 41.6	240 60 23.5	54 18 7.1	90 45 17.6	26 26 10.2	940 255 100%	3.69	1.421	Agree
2	The constraints of others are liberated by taking responsibility and reduces becoming misaligned	580 116 45.5	296 87 34.1	57 19 7.5	26 13 5.1	20 20 7.8	979 255 100%	4.04	1.201	Agree
3	Accountability is increased by taking responsibility and reduces wasting valuable time	730 146 57.3	268 67 26.3	54 18 7.1	12 6 2.4	18 18 7.1	1082 255 100%	4.24	1.148	Agree
4	Taking responsibility helps to learn and builds someone's sense of being valued	640 128 50.2	328 82 32.2	39 13 5.1	36 18 7.1	12 14 5.5	1055 255 100%	4.15	1.146	Agree
5	Creating a sense of purpose is ensured by taking responsibility and reinforces positive habits.	415 83 32.5	428 107 42.0	39 13 5.1	70 35 13.7	17 17 6.7	969 255 100%	3.80	1.221	Agree
	Total Grand mean and standard deviation							3.984	1.2274	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2., 161 respondents out of 255 representing 65.1 percent agreed that Taking responsibility inspires confidence and prevents performance from off track 3.69 and standard deviation of 1.421. The constraints of others are liberated by taking responsibility and reduces becoming misaligned 203 respondents representing 79.6 percent agreed with mean score of 4.04 and standard deviation of 1.201. Accountability is increased by taking responsibility and reduces wasting valuable time 213 respondents representing 83.6 percent agreed with mean score of 4.24 and standard deviation of 1.148. Taking responsibility helps to learn and builds someone's sense of being valued 210 respondents representing 82.4 percent agreed with mean score of 4.15 and 1.146. Creating a sense of purpose is ensured by taking responsibility and reinforces positive habits 190 respondents representing 74.5 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.80 and standard deviation 1.221.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Open communication has relationship with the goal-setting in public office.

Correlations		Communication mitigates conflicts and motivates employees	The public relations is improved which ensure employee alignment with open communication	Job satisfaction and loyalty increases with communication	Building a culture of teamwork and trust are promoted which help in tracking process	Regular face-to-face meetings promotes productivity and deepen employee engagement
Communication mitigates conflicts and motivates employees	Pearson Correlation	1	.623**	.695**	.570**	.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
The public relations is improved which ensure employee alignment with open communication	Pearson Correlation	.623**	1	.763**	.698**	.781**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
Job satisfaction and loyalty increases with communication	Pearson Correlation	.695**	.763**	1	.717**	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
Building a culture of teamwork and trust are promoted which help in tracking process	Pearson Correlation	.570**	.698**	.717**	1	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
Regular face-to-face meetings promotes productivity and deepen employee engagement	Pearson Correlation	.514**	.781**	.657**	.703**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	255	255	255	255	255

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

Table 3. showed the Pearson correlation matrix on **Open communication and the goal-setting in public office** showing the correlation coefficients, significant values and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows $.517 < .781$. This value indicates that correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) and implies that **Open communication had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting in public office.** ($r = .517 < .781$). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of $r = .000$ with at alpha level for a two-tailed test ($r = .517 < .781$, $p < .05$).

Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the null hypothesis if the computed r is less than the tabulated r otherwise rejects the null hypothesis.

Decision

Since the computed ($r = .517 < .781$) was greater than the table value of .000, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that **Open communication had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting in public office** as reported in the probability value of ($r = .517 < .781$, $p < .05$).

Hypotheses Two: Taking responsibility has relationship with the feedback in public office

Correlations

		Taking responsibility inspires confidence and prevents performance from off track.	The constraints of others are liberated by taking responsibility and reduces becoming misaligned	Accountability is increased by taking responsibility and reduces wasting valuable time	Taking responsibility helps to learn and builds someone's sense of being valued	Creating a sense of purpose is ensured by taking responsibility and reinforces positive habits.
Taking responsibility inspires confidence and prevents performance from off track.	Pearson Correlation	1	.580**	.385**	.553**	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
The constraints of others are liberated by taking responsibility and reduces becoming misaligned	Pearson Correlation	.580**	1	.649**	.768**	.561**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
Accountability is increased by taking responsibility and reduces wasting valuable time	Pearson Correlation	.385**	.649**	1	.721**	.478**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
Taking responsibility helps to learn and builds someone's sense of being valued	Pearson Correlation	.553**	.768**	.721**	1	.626**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255
Creating a sense of purpose is ensured by taking responsibility and reinforces positive habits.	Pearson Correlation	.497**	.561**	.478**	.626**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	255	255	255	255	255

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

Table 4. showed the Pearson correlation matrix on **taking responsibility and feedback in public office** showing the correlation coefficients, significant values and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows .385 < .768. This value indicates that correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) and implies that **taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the feedback in public office** ($r = .385 < .768$). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of $r = .000$ with at alpha level for a two-tailed test ($r = .385 < .768$, $p < .05$).

Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the null hypothesis if the computed r is less than the tabulated r otherwise reject the null hypothesis.

Decision

Since the computed ($r = .385 < .768$) is greater than the table value of .000, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that **taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the feedback in public office** as reported in the probability value of ($r = .385 < .768$, $p < .05$).

Discussion of Findings

Open communication had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting in public office

From the result of the hypothesis one, the computed ($r = .517 < .781$) was greater than the table value of .000, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that Open communication had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting in public office as reported in the

probability value of (r= .517 < .781, p<.05). In the support of the result from the literature, Mush eke and Phiri (2021) examined the effects of effective communications on organizational performance using the systems theory. The results for H 1 showed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.642 which is statistically insignificant if the (sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05 indicating that there was no statistically significant relationship between management and channel of communication used. However, the results from H_2 indicated that there was a relationship between channel of communication used and effective communication with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.041 at (sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05. Lastly the correlation results from H_3 showed that effective communication has a positive effect on organizational performance at (sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05 indicating a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.012.

Taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the feedback in public office.

From the result of the hypothesis two, the computed (r = .385 < .768) was greater than the table value of .000, we concluded that taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the feedback in public office as reported in the probability value of (r= .385 < .768, p<.05). In the support of the result from the literature, Ojo, Adegbie and Ogunlade (2021) examined the effect of digitalization on transparency and accountability in Ogun State local government. The study showed that digitalization has significant effect on integrity of information in Ogun State local government with Adj R2 = 0.931; F-Stat (4, 258) = 784.166" and p-value=0.000. p-value = 0.000 of the selected Ogun State local government. The study concluded that digitalization significantly affects transparency and accountability in Ogun State local government. Emmanson and Ajayi (2021) examined the effects of public sector reforms in entities and how the reforms promote accountability and transparency. However, it all anchored on the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, social growth, innovation, and good governance. In the end it was discovered that some of the reforms initiatives yielded moderate result why other have little or no impact on transparency and accountability.

Summary of Findings

Open communication had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting in public office r (95, n = 255), .517 < .781, p<.05).

Taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the feedback in public office r (95, n = 255),.385 < .768, p<.05).

Conclusion

The study concluded that Open communication and taking responsibility had significant positive relationship with the goal-setting and feedback in public office. The better transparent public administration is, the more the citizens can be informed about its activities and may have more room to form their own opinions and to participate in public life. Especially with the development of information technologies, transparency is becoming more and more discussed as provision of information to the public is simplified. This is also related to the increase in demands on the information made available, e.g. in terms of the amount of information, machine-readable format, and remote access, etc.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

Open communication should be encouraged in government or public offices to improve engagement as encouraging employees to express their thoughts and feelings openly can help them engage more.

For effective honest and ethical conduct towards others, there is need of taking responsibility to enhance accounting for financial discrepancies, conduct toward employees, financial mismanagement, or losing shareholder confidence.

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