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The Influence of Internal Communication on Employee Engagement in the Telecommunication Sector in the UAE

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Abstract:

Having effective internal communication facilitates information flow. This study is conducted to evaluate the impact of effective internal upward, downward and horizontal communication on employee engagement at Etisalat and DU. The mixed research method is applied. The online survey is used as the primary source of collecting data from 200 employees at Etisalat and DU. A semi-structured interview is used as a secondary method for collecting data from 6 interviewees from the HR management of Etisalat and DU. The qualitative data collected through the interview is analyzed through the use of an inductive approach. The collected quantitative data is analyzed using multivariate data analysis. It is found that effective internal downward communication is the first high variable that has a positive impact on employee engagement. It is also found that effective internal upward communication is the second highest variable that affects positively on employee engagement. Moreover, the effective internal horizontal communication is found to be the third highest variable that has a positive impact on employee engagement. The HR management of DU and Etisalat have to strengthen their internal communication strategy by enforcing effective two-way downward, upward and horizontal communication to facilitate the organizational flow of information.

Keywords: Internal upward, downward, horizontal communication, Employee Engagement

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Maintaining effective internal communication is very important for achieving the goals of the business. A variety of tactics are used in organizations to communicate with one another internally. Organizations can attain long-term goals more quickly when there is good internal communication. Organizations can better build their structure and culture thanks to internal communication. Employee engagement involves having clear expectations, developing a sense of contributing to the organization, a feeling of connection, and chances for advancement (Mbhele, 2016). Emirates Telecommunications Company (Etisalat) and Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (DU) form the UAE telecommunication sector. Etisalat was established in 1976 and it began its operations more than two decades. It is the first telecom company in the UAE. Etisalat offers a variety of services to its consumers (Etisalat, 2022). DU was established in 2005 to be the main competitor of Etisalat. The two companies are concerned with providing and supplying the UAE with telecommunication and internet services (DU, 2022).

1.2. Problem statement

The UAE telecommunication sector is confronting the issue of rising turnover rates, as well as a lack of young talent attraction. In the telecommunications industry, it is found that attracting and retaining young talent is a problem. Employee turnover is a major issue in the UAE telecommunication sector. A lot of employees leave work at Etisalat and Du telecommunication companies. The rate of employee turnover in the UAE telecommunication sector is 9.65%. This rate is regarded to be high. The

likelihood of employee turnover has an impact on performance (Maceda, 2018). Etisalat's biggest problems are identified to be employee motivation and retention. Employee motivation appears to be declining as the number of absences has increased. According to reports, Etisalat experiences a high percentage of employee turnover. 806 foreign employees and 8 Emirati employees departed the organization between 2014 and 2016 (Dajani, 2016).

Having effective internal communication in which the management lets communication to go downward from the top management to the subordinates and to go upward from the subordinates to the top management would motivate employees and make them more involved in their work. Additionally, having internal horizontal communication to which communication goes easily and smoothly among the same management level is regarded as effective ways of integrating the different departments and engaging the employees in the different departments of the organization (Meeli, 2011).

1.3. Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate the influence of upward communication on employee engagement at Etisalat and DU.
- To investigate the influence of downward communication on employee engagement at Etisalat and DU.
- To investigate the influence of horizontal communication on employee engagement at Etisalat and DU.

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The main research hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between upward communication and employee engagement.

H2: There is a positive relationship between downward communication and employee engagement.

H3: There is a positive relationship between horizontal communication and employee engagement.

1.5. Significance of the study

This research is important since it presents valuable information about the roles that effective communication plays in engaging employees in the workplace. It also introduces valuable information about the ways that organizations can adopt in having effective communication and better employee engagement. Moreover, it enriches the literature review with more valuable information about effective communication and its impacts on employee engagement. Furthermore, the findings of the study are expected to help telecommunication policymakers in developing effective communication policies that would help organizations increase the levels of employee engagement in the workplace.

1.6. Definition of variables

Downward communication: it refers to the transmission of messages and information from upper management to lower-level employees.

Upward communication: it refers to the sharing of important messages and information from lower-level employees to upper management.

Horizontal Communication: it is the transmission of information at the same lateral or the same management- level in the organization.

Employee engagement: it refers to the process by which the employee becomes more involved in the workplace enthusiastically.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theories of internal communication

This thesis depends on two major theories of internal communication. The two theories are strategic communication theory and formal communication theory.

2.1.1. Strategic communication theory

The strategic communication theory was developed by Steyn and Puth (2000). This theory demonstrates the strategies of internal communication that take place inside the organization. The theory also points out the material and the information that need to be communicated strategically in the organization (Sharbaji, 2021).

The theory points also out that management plays an essential role in forming communication strategies in the organization and in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of the employees in corporate communication. Many previous researchers have agreed with Steyn and Puth that the management is responsible for building effective strategic communication functions in the organization to ensure the smooth run of information in the organization. Well-trained communication practitioners have to be found in the organization to ensure an effective two-way communication system in the organization in which all parties can communicate and share information that is needed for carrying out the various tasks in the organization. Having

effective communication management in the organization would sustain in developing effective communication strategies that help in building effective relationships between the management and the employees (Mopeloa, 2015).

The different roles and responsibilities of the communication practitioners that have to be played in strategic communication are represented by levels in Steyn and Puth's model. All of the tasks work together as a unit to help the communication specialists practice strategic communication management. The model is only useful as a general framework for communicators. The procedures in the process of creating a communication strategy are listed in a consecutive order, but in reality, they don't always happen in that order. The communication specialists determine what needs to be done at a given time in light of the unusual conditions. Additionally, it should be kept in mind that developing the communication strategy is an ongoing process in which the plan is reviewed and modified regularly (Mopeloa, 2015).

The strategic communication model of Steyn and Puth is very beneficial for the organization in some ways. One way is that the model can help in aligning the communication plans and strategies with the corporate strategies that need to be applied in the organization. Another way is that the model can help in developing and building effective mutual and beneficial relationships with the organization and its stakeholders. A further way is that having effective communication strategies can help organizations in achieving their organizational goals (Wiggill, Naudé & Fourie, 2009).

2.1.2. Formal Communication Theory

Formal Communication Theory can be used to explain the formal communication types that are used within the organization. Formal communication is defined as the flow of messages between the management levels through officially approved channels. This method of communication is generally a pre-planned, systematic, and formal transmission of information through speech and writing, and it is clarified on organizational structure in many organizations. Within a hierarchical system of communication, formal communication takes three forms (Zehra & Kaneberg, 2016). An examination of top-down, down-up, and horizontal communication patterns is part of the formal theory of internal communication. Downward communication is one type. It is the exchange of information between managers and employees (Semren, 2017). Top management exchanges information with their follower through formal conferences, training sessions, or written documents in top-down communication (Zehra & Kaneberg, 2016). Upward communication is another type in which communication flows from employees to managers. Obtaining feedback or suggestions from employees or other stakeholders is part of upward internal communication. Companies and managers who encourage down-up communication gain a competitive advantage by receiving valuable advice that can aid in making better decisions(Callaway, 2017). Horizontal or lateral communication is the third form in which communication flows among individuals at the same management level (Semren, 2017). Horizontal communication suggests that organizational units may become more integrated and better equipped to share resources across departments. Horizontal communication promotes an open flow of information among employees at the same level (Callaway, 2017).

2.2. Employee Engagement Theories

The Role theory and William Kahn's theory are the two theories. Employee engagement can be explained and demonstrated using these two theories.

2.2.1. Role theory

The role theory is one important theory that can be used to explain and demonstrate the nature of employee engagement in the organization. According to the role theory, there are two important elements to be used as a base for employee engagement in the organization. The first element is the identification of the roles that the employees have to perform in the organization besides introducing employees to the roles that are expected to be carried out by them. The second element is the identification and introduction of the values or morals that the employees have to adopt and follow while working and performing their roles in the organization. The management of the organization can use the role theory in designing the roles of the employees in the organization whether in better or worse ways that will for sure have positive or negative influences on employee engagement. The development of the roles of the employees in the organization in better ways besides identifying the better values that they have to maintain will for sure have positive impacts on employee engagement in the organization. When the management is keen to praise and reward employees for carrying out their roles effectively and for participating in improving the performance of the employees, this will have positive impacts on employee engagement (Welbourne & Schlachter, 2014).

The role theory goes on to demonstrate that it is not easy to comprehend the concept of employee engagement alone. It is essential to connect it to the roles that the employees have to perform and their participation in achieving the organizational goals. The management also needs to take into consideration the development of effective role-based behaviors that the employees must be committed to in performing their roles at work. This would have better impacts on employee engagement and their participation in improving performance and increasing the productivity of the firm (Welbourne & Schlachter, 2014).

The role theory also demonstrated that there are two essential activities that the management of the organization has to consider for supporting employee engagement. One major activity for the management is to be involved in real and intellectual open conversation with the employees in all matters concerning the organization. Another major activity for the management is to motivate employees to have better behaviors and attitudes in carrying out their roles in the organization (Welbourne & Schlachter, 2014).

There are five primary roles identified by the role theory in which employees are most likely to be engaged in the organization. The employee's primary responsibilities and duties that are stated in the employee job description are outlined to be the first role of engaging the employee in the work. The career role is another essential role in which the worker engages in greater levels of workplace activity to advance their careers and professional growth in the organization. In the career role, the employee is expected to take part in tasks, activities, and training programs that can advance their abilities, knowledge, and life experiences. The team role is the third essential role of engaging employees at work. In the team role, the worker is expected to become more involved in the team's execution

of particular tasks and activities to meet predetermined objectives. It is expected that the employee assists and supports the team in completing specific actions and tasks that have been delegated and have the potential to increase the team's progress. The innovator is the fourth role. In this role, the employee becomes more focused on creating fresh concepts that can support ongoing development as well as introducing novel services or goods. The organizational role is the last role. In this role, the employee is expected to take a more active role in their work environments and to contribute to the advancement of the organization's objectives through increased efficiency and outcomes (Welbourne & Schlachter, 2014).

2.2.2. William Kahn's theory

One theory for describing employee engagement is William Kahn's theory. Kahn's theory was based on the employee engagement role theory (Weston, 2016). Khan defines engagement as devoting equal amounts of emotional, physical, and cognitive resources to one's work role. To maintain effective employee engagement, Khan developed three determinant factors. Psychological accessibility, psychological safety, and psychological significance are the three determinant factors. This means that the manager must give employees more useful work tasks, improve job safety and security, and assist employees. Employee engagement is increased by demonstrating the three determinant factors of psychological significance, safety, and availability. The level of employee engagement can be elevated by a variety of activities, such as engaging employees in ongoing open communication, motivating them, and offering them a safe and secure work environment (Young, 2018).

To explain the degree of employee engagement, William Kahn introduced the two terms of "personal engagement" and "personal disengagement." Employees become completely involved in their roles physically, intellectually, and emotionally and this is what is referred to as "personal engagement." On the other hand, the employees become strongly disengaged in carrying out their roles and less participative in the workplace and this is what is referred to as "personal disengagement." Employee personal engagement in the workplace rises as a result of increasing psychological commitment to the workplace. On the other hand, the lack of psychological commitment clarifies the reasons for increasing personal disengagement in the workplace (Abbas et al. 2014).

The employees' psychological engagement or disengagement with their primary roles and responsibilities at work is influenced by their self-in-role processes. In the worksite, employee engagement and disengagement are thought to be influenced by psychosocial factors. People may experience high levels of personal engagement as well as become actively involved in their duties on a physiological, perceptual, and spiritual level due to psychological factors. On the other hand, psychological factors may cause people to become highly disengaged from their personal lives as well as from performing their job duties (Rathee &. Sharma, 2020).

Employee engagement is significantly impacted by three different psychological issues. Meaningful work is the first psychological prerequisite. The staff will receive support more from job characteristics, role characteristics, and workplace relations in this situation. Employee safety makes up the second psychological factor. The worker presents a positive image of reducing risks in this circumstance. Because of their interpersonal connections and efficient management techniques, employees

can advance in status and career. Having access to one's resources is the final psychological requirement. It is necessary to perform the primary duty of the position without interruptions at work (Chatiza, Mubvundu & Chisango, 2021).

2.3. Relationship between internal communication and employee engagement

Vora and Patra (2017) found that internal communication has a significant effect on job satisfaction, according to the various factors of internal communication and employee engagement. Businesses are devoting more time and resources to internal communication tools and channels. Employees are more likely to communicate openly with one another and senior management as a result of providing the tools and channels of internal communication. Social media, the internet, intranets, emails, and instant messaging are found to be the most popular and widely used internal methods of communication. Organizations are having quick, real-time communication with their employees to improve the efficiency of communication flow. Effective internal communication also boosts motivation and a sense of belonging and involvement and leads to increasing productivity in the workplace. As a result, internal communication plays an essential role in supporting employee engagement.

Hayase (2009) found that internal communication factors and employee engagement factors have a positive relationship. Internal communication has been linked to commitment, discretionary effort, and meaningful work, all of which are factors in engagement. Employee engagement was also found to be linked to satisfaction with communication channels and combinations of channels.

Koc-Michalska (2017) evaluated the variables of internal communication that are expected to affect employee engagement. A qualitative approach is implemented in this study in collecting data through carrying out in-depth interviews from which 11 were conducted at De Vries Houtimport in the Netherlands and a further 12 were held at Allaman in Switzerland. The findings demonstrate that neither company possesses all of the classic internal communication components relating to the quality of information, outstanding openness, and effective upward communication. The Swiss company provided other more comprehensive range of communication factors whereas the Dutch company did not. Family businesses typically have internal communication weaknesses in terms of information and structure. However, both companies' employees appear to be engaged in their work because they naturally have information flow and quality particularly when the workplace culture is supportive. Earlier research on family businesses has found that the CEO has a significant impact on the company culture and internal communication. Every department in a company is intertwined with the CEO's vision and values (Koc-Michalska, 2017).

Sköld (2019) investigated how communication between supervisors and employees impacts worker engagement in manufacturing organizations. It is found that employee engagement is a mutual duty between the employee and the supervisor. It has also been demonstrated that effective supervisor-employee communication significantly affects employee engagement among shop floor workers in manufacturing organizations (Sköld, 2019).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Study Population and Sample

The study population of this study is the employees working at DU and Etisalat companies. The non-probability convenience sampling is applied in this study to collect the data from the available respondents. The population for this study is made up of junior and senior employees of both genders, of various nationalities, and of varying lengths of service, all of whom may have different perspectives on communication and engagement. The study's sample is drawn at random from each group. The information in this study is collected from 200 Etisalat and DU employees. Because their perspectives on communication and engagement may differ, the employees in the sample include both junior and senior employees. The planned population sample would participate in giving responses to the developed online survey that is sent to them through the HR managers of both Etisalat and DU companies. The responses collected from the respondents are expected to help in knowing the impacts that internal communication would have on employee engagement. Employees from the two companies, Etisalat and DU, are included in the research population to learn about their perspectives on the types of communication used in the workplace and their level of engagement. This population sample is selected they are working at Etisalat and DU and they are aware of the different practices that are taken in communicating with them and they would give the right responses to the survey questions that would help in configuring the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement.

3.2. Study instruments

Two research instruments are used in this study to collect primary and secondary data. The research instrument that is used for collecting the primary data is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is used in collecting data from the senior and junior employees working at both Etisalat and DU Companies. Using the online questionnaire would sustain the researcher in reaching more participants and in collecting data based on the opinions of the participants about the issue being studied. The questions in the questionnaire are close-ended to be easily answered by the participants and to save their time in answering the varied questions in the questionnaire. Using the questionnaire as the primary research instrument would help in finding more about the different variables of the study and in identifying the impact of internal upward, downward and horizontal communication on employee engagement at Etisalat and Du Companies.

A semi-structured interview is used as a secondary method for collecting data from 6 interviewees from the HR management of Etisalat and Du about the internal communication and the engagement of the employees. Three persons from the HRM of Etisalat and further three persons from the HRM of DU are interviewed to collect information about upward communication, downward communication and horizontal communication and their impact on employee engagement. The interview is used in collecting data from the HR management at both Etisalat and Du Companies. The interview is done face-to-face with the HRM to collect more in-depth data about internal communication and employee engagement. The questions in the interview are closed- and open-ended questions to collect more in-depth data that the questionnaire couldn't. Using the interview as the secondary research instrument would help in finding more in-depth information about the

variables of the study and in identifying the impact of upward, downward and horizontal internal communication on employee engagement at Etisalat and Du Companies.

3.3. Study Validity and Reliability

Before the main study, a pilot study is conducted in which a small population sample is invited to answer the developed survey. Twenty employees from Etisalat and Du have participated in the pilot study. The employees of the participants are not used in the research. The unit of analysis in this study is the individual participant. The pilot study strives to determine the methodology approaches to be used to improve the study's findings and eliminate any practical limits or flaws.

To ensure the validity of this study, both research instruments were sent to three specialized professors at Sharjah University. They are Dr. Ahmed Farouk: Head of the Public Relations Department at the College of Communication, Dr. Mohammed bin Musa: Associate Professor at the Public Relations Department at the College of Communication and Dr. Sharifa Al-Marzouqi: Assistant Professor the Public Relations Department at the College of Communication, and the director of Media Center at the University of Sharjah. Their advices have been taken into consideration and some modifications have been added to the questions of the research instruments.

In this study, Cronbach's alpha is used to test the reliability and the internal consistency of the research instrument to make sure that it is reliable for measuring the constructs of the study. Cronbach's alpha is applied to the results that are obtained from the pilot study. The results of Cronbach's alpha is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha Reliability

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Upward Communication	8	0.88
Downward Communication	6	0.90
Horizontal Communication	6	0.84
Employee Engagement	12	0.86

The results of Cronbach's alpha are shown in Table 1 to demonstrate that all constructs of the research instrument got a high score that ranges between 0.84 and 0.90. The construct of upward communication got a score of 0.88. The construct of downward communication got a score of 0.90. The construct of horizontal communication got a score of 0.84. Lastly, the construct of employee engagement got a score of 0.86. All the scores are above 0.70 which indicates that all constructs have the best determinant values and they have high levels of internal consistency and reliability.

4. Findings

4.1. Demographic details

Table 2: Sample Details

		Sample (n=200)	Sample (%)
Gender	Male	110	55%
	Female	90	45%
Nationality	Emirati	33	16.5%
	Arab	90	45%
	Non-Arab	77	38.5%
Age Group	< 23 years	12	6%
	23-33 (in Years)	39	19.5%
	34-44(in Years)	90	45%
	≥45 (in Years)	59	29.5%
Educational level	High School	15	7.5%
	Bachelor Degree	79	39.5%
	Master degree	74	37%
	PhD	32	16%

Educational background	Business	8	4%
	Law	11	5.5%
	Mass communication	27	13.5%
	Accounting	34	17%
	Marketing	36	18%
	Engineering	35	17.5%
	Project management	8	4%
	Information technology	11	5.5%
	Human resources	10	5%
	Others	20	10%
Length of working at the company	< 2 years	38	19%
	2 - 4 years	80	40%
	≥ 5 years	82	41%

The details of the research sample that participated in completing the survey are shown in Table 2. The male respondents represent 55% of the sample while female respondents represent 45%. The Emirati respondents represent 16.5% of the population sample, the Arab respondents represent 45% and the non-Arab respondents represent 38.5%. The respondents whose ages are less than 23 represent 6% of the sample, the respondents whose ages are between 23 and 33 represent 19.5%, the respondents whose ages are between 34 and 44 represent 45% of the sample and the respondents whose ages are 45 and above represent 29.5% of the sample.

4.2. Upward Communication

Table 3: Upward Communication

Statement	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
1 - I can provide quick feedback to my supervisor or manager concerning any request for particular explanations.	200	3.75	0.84
2 - I can discuss with my supervisor or manager what to change in the company.	200	3.75	0.92
3 - I can raise any query about my job to the management.	200	3.73	0.95
4 - I can request information from my supervisor or manager about different work issues.	200	3.68	1.01
5 - The management encourages employees to work better through upward communication.	200	3.68	1.03
6-Responding to my needs on time improves my participation and job performance.	200	3.67	1.02
7 - The management always motivates and appreciates employees for offering specific information.	200	3.67	1.09
8 - The management makes decisions based on our request for specific information.	200	3.59	1.09
(1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 neutral; 4 agree; 5 strongly agree)			

Table 3 shows the average of the responses to the eight statements that are intended to measure the construct of upward communication and what is being done by the management of Etisalat and DU in support of upward communication at their organizations. The mean indicates that all respondents fully agree that the management of Etisalat and DU are highly concerned with supporting the use of effective upward communication in their organizations.

4.3. Downward Communication

Table 4: Downward Communication

Statement	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
1 - The management pays attention to my views and ideas concerning the work.	200	3.77	0.97
2 - Communication with the top management motivates me.	200	3.71	0.99
3 - I can access essential information from my supervisor or manager easily.	200	3.71	0.99
4 - The easy flow of information from my supervisor or manager improves my participation and job performance.	200	3.70	1
5 - The management ensures that the employees have continuous access to essential information.	200	3.69	1.06
6 - My supervisor or manager informed me about the nature of my responsibilities and the tasks that I have to do.	200	3.65	1.1
(1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 neutral; 4 agree; 5 strongly agree)			

Table 4 shows the average of the responses to the six statements that are intended to measure the construct of downward communication and what is being done by the management of Etisalat and DU in support of downward communication at their organizations. The mean indicates that all respondents fully agree that the management of Etisalat and DU are highly concerned with supporting the use of effective downward communication in their organizations.

4.4. Horizontal Communication

Table 5: Horizontal Communication

Statement	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
1 - Employees are motivated to perform better when information is shared.	200	3.75	0.93
2 - When communicating with coworkers, I keep my language professional and polite.	200	3.72	1.03
3 - I always take my coworkers' suggestions into consideration.	200	3.72	1.03
4 - On critical issues, I usually share my knowledge with my coworkers.	200	3.68	1
5 - Discussions with my coworkers about job requirements help me perform better.	200	3.68	1.08
6 - I rely on my coworkers in my department for getting critical information.	200	3.64	1.04
(1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 neutral; 4 agree; 5 strongly agree)			

Table 5 shows the average of the responses to the six statements that are intended to measure the construct of horizontal communication and what is being done by the management of Etisalat and DU in support of horizontal communication at their organizations. The mean indicates that all respondents fully agree that the management of Etisalat and DU are highly concerned with supporting the use of effective horizontal communication in their organizations.

4.5. Employee engagement

Table 6: Employee engagement

Statement	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
1 - I am aware of my responsibilities at work.	200	3.77	0.9
2 - My coworkers and I are dedicated to producing high-quality work.	200	3.75	0.97
3 - I have had better chances to learn and grow at work over the last year.	200	3.74	0.98
4 - At work, I have a best friend.	200	3.74	1
5 - I have received praise or recognition for doing good work in the last seven days.	200	3.72	0.98
6 - I have the chance to do what I enjoy the most every day at work.	200	3.70	1.03
7 - The management has talked to me about my progress in the last six months.	200	3.70	1.03
8 - My ideas and suggestions seem to be valued at work.	200	3.70	1.07
9 - The management supports my professional growth.	200	3.69	1

10 - My company's mission or vision makes me feel important in my work.	200	3.69	1
11 - My manager or supervisor appears to be interested in me as a person.	200	3.67	1.04
12 - I have everything I need to do my job properly, including materials and equipment.	200	3.63	1.05
(1 strongly disagree; 2 disagree; 3 neutral; 4 agree; 5 strongly agree)			

Table 6 shows the average of the responses to the twelve statements that are intended to measure the construct of employee engagement and what is being done by the management of Etisalat and DU in support of employee engagement at their organizations. The mean indicates that all respondents fully agree that the management of Etisalat and DU are highly concerned with supporting employee engagement in their organizations.

4.6. Interview Results

Some important results could be reached from conducting the interview. In upward communication at both Etisalat and DU, the process of providing and receiving feedback between employees and supervisors is done very well. The employees can express their needs directly to their supervisors or managers in meetings, face-to-face interactions, telephone calls, WhatsApp and emails. The employees take part in the process of decision-making. The management is keen to respond to the needs of the employees on time to improve their participation and job performance. The employees communicate directly to their supervisors and HR department when they have inquiries about the nature of their job. The management keeps open communication with employees during the different stages of change management. The management gets instant feedback from the employees to ensure that everything is clear and understood.

In downward communication, the management ensures the flow of information in the organization through having a culture of open communication and transparency. The management always encourages employees to express their opinions and views about any matter in the organization. The management listens to the ideas of the employees and responds to their needs in order to motivate and satisfy them. The management always communicates the employees about the roles and it ensures that the employees can access essential information.

In horizontal communication, coworkers communicate with each other in respectful, polite and professional ways. The coworkers usually share knowledge in discussions about critical issues that needs participation form the different departments. The coworkers' suggestions are taken into consideration to high extent. The coworkers from the different departments communicate and share critical information that they are in need for.

In employee engagement, all needed resources and materials are provided for employees to do their jobs in the best ways. The management lets the employees to do their tasks in the way that they like provided they get good results. When the employees do good jobs, the management praises and recognizes their good efforts in order to keep them doing good work. The management is very interested in meeting the needs and concerns of the employees. The management supports career development and professional growth in the organization. The company's mission and vision make the employees feel important at their work. The employees are dedicated highly to the production of high-quality work. The management encourages employees to have good friendship relationships at work. The management keeps employees aware of their progress in work by carrying out regular performance evaluations.

4.7. Correlational Analysis

Table 7: The Mean, SD, and the correlation among the variables of upward communication, downward communication, horizontal communication, and employee engagement.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	UC	DC	HZ	EE
Upward Communication (UC)	3.70	0.99	1			
Downward Communication (DC)	3.71	1.00	0.349*	1		
Horizontal Communication (HZ)	3.70	1.00	0.350*	0.379**	1	
Employee Engagement (EE)	3.71	1.00	0.515**	0.585**	0.599**	1
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table 7 points out the mean, SD, and correlation among the independent variables of upward communication, downward communication, and horizontal communication, and the dependent variable of employee engagement. The mean used to point out the levels of respondents' agreement to each variable based on the five-point scale demonstrates that the respondents agree with each variable. The standard deviation is also used to demonstrate the statistical deviation of the variable from the center of the data. The standard deviation is mostly scored one which means that the deviation of the variable is located near the center and the data values tend to be close to the mean. The coefficient correlation is also

used to point out the correlation among the variables of the study. The coefficient correlation is between zero and +1 which indicates that there are positive correlations between each independent variable from upward communication, downward communication, and horizontal communication, and the dependent variable of employee engagement.

4.8. Regressions Analysis

Table 8: Testing the research hypotheses

Model	R	R Square	β	F	Significance	Hypothesis Testing
Influence of Upward Communication on employee engagement (H1)	0.350	0.123	0.350	6.819	0.01	H1 approved
Influence of Downward Communication on Employee Engagement (H2)	0.506	0.260	0.506	16.828	0.00	H2 approved
Influence of Horizontal Communication on employee engagement (H3)	0.349	0.119	0.349	6.650	0.02	H3 approved

Tests are applied to find out whether each hypothesis is approved and accepted or not approved. To test hypothesis number two, it is imperative to prove that there is a positive correlation between downward communication and employee engagement and it is also imperative to find that $p < 0.05$. It has been approved previously that there is a positive correlation between downward communication and employee engagement. Additionally, R squared which is intended to demonstrate the relationship between downward communication and employee engagement is found to be 0.260. This indicates that the dependent variable of employee engagement is correlated to the independent variable of downward communication by 26%. Moreover, downward communication (β=0.506) is ranked to be the first high-independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. This indicates that the increase in the level of downward communication by one unit will result in an increase in the level of employee engagement by 0.506 units.

In testing hypothesis number one, R squared which is intended to demonstrate the relationship between upward communication and employee engagement is found to be 0.123. This indicates that the dependent variable of employee engagement is correlated to the independent variable of upward communication by 12.3%. Moreover, upward communication (β=0.350) is ranked to be the second highest independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. This indicates that the increase in the level of upward communication by one unit will result in an increase in the level of employee engagement by 0.350 units.

In testing hypothesis number three, R squared which is intended to demonstrate the relationship between horizontal communication and employee engagement is found to be 0.119. This indicates that the dependent

variable of employee engagement is correlated to the independent variable of horizontal communication by 11.9%. Moreover, horizontal communication (β=0.349) is ranked to be the third high-independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. This indicates that the increase in the level of horizontal communication by one unit will result in an increase in the level of employee engagement by 0.349 units.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

This study is conducted to investigate the influence of effective internal communication from downward, upward, and horizontal on employee engagement at Etisalat and Du companies in the UAE. This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the findings of other previous studies.

5.1.1. Downward communication at DU and Etisalat

It is found that the internal downward communication is effective at DU and Etisalat and it has positive impacts on employee engagement. Downward communication is found to be the first high-independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. There is an easy flow of information from the supervisors and managers at DU and Etisalat. The easy flow of information from the management to the employees improves employees' participation and job performance. In downward communication, the employees can share their knowledge and information with various supervisors at various levels of management as demonstrated by Kalogiannidis (2020).

The management at both companies of DU and Etisalat pay more attention to the views and ideas concerning the work. The top management exchanges information with their followers to support top-down

communication as demonstrated by Zehra and Kaneberg (2016). Effective internal downward communication takes into consideration to use of clear and open communication with the employees so that the employees can easily understand what is needed to be accomplished in the organization as demonstrated by Pirjol and Radomir (2017).

The managers can provide directions, feedback, and critical information to employees in downward communication. This aids the employees in carrying out their roles and what is expected from them as well as achieving the desired results as demonstrated by Said and Said (2018).

The management of both DU and Etisalat ensures that the employees have continuous access to essential information. The employees at both companies can access essential information from their supervisors and managers easily. The flow of information from the management can help the employee in accessing the needed information and it also gives employees a sense of security and encourages greater participation and engagement in the work as demonstrated by Mbhele (2016).

5.1.2. Upward communication at DU and Etisalat

It is found that the internal upward communication is going well at DU and Etisalat and it has positive impacts on employee engagement at Etisalat and DU. Upward communication is found to be the second highest independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. The management of both DU and Etisalat are found to encourage employees to work better through upward communication. The employees at both companies can provide quick feedback to their supervisors or managers concerning any request for particular explanations. The employees can give feedback to their managers about the tasks and the roles that have

been performed or request more information about what is needed to be done further in their jobs as demonstrated by Pirjol and Radomir (2017).

The management at DU and Etisalat makes decisions based on the requests of the employees for particular information. Involving employees in the process of decision-making and taking their opinions into consideration increases the levels of employee engagement in the organization as demonstrated by Tran (2018). The management of both DU and Etisalat are found to motivate and appreciate employees for offering beneficial information that can help in the development of work. The employees can discuss with their supervisors or managers what to change in the company. Obtaining feedback or suggestions from employees is part of upward internal communication. Managers who encourage employees to provide their opinions and views about different issues can aid in making better decisions as demonstrated by Callaway (2017).

Overall, the employees at both DU and Etisalat communicate their thoughts and feelings about their jobs and other important problems at work through upward communication. This has a positive influence on their engagement and their abilities to complete tasks and to participate effectively in achieving the organizational goals as demonstrated by Kalogiannidis (2020).

5.1.3. Horizontal communication at DU and Etisalat

It is found that internal effective horizontal communication has positive impacts on employee engagement at Etisalat and DU. Horizontal communication is found to be the third high-independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. When coworkers communicate with each other, they keep their language professional and polite. Communication among coworkers is expected to take place formally and

clearly so that the coworkers can interpret information correctly and they can understand clearly what is needed to be done to reach the organizational goals as demonstrated by Pirjol and Radomir (2017). When coworkers communicate clearly and formally, this is expected to lead to the exchange of higher-quality information as demonstrated by Kalogiannidis (2020).

Discussions with coworkers about job requirements help coworkers at DU and Etisalat perform their jobs in better ways. In effective internal horizontal communication at DU and Etisalat, the coworkers are encouraged to work together to ensure that various tasks and responsibilities are completed successfully as demonstrated by Kalogiannidis (2020).

At DU and Etisalat, the coworkers always take their suggestions into consideration. Horizontal communication promotes an open flow and exchange of information among employees at the same level as demonstrated by Callaway (2017). It also enables social interaction between the employees from the same levels. It encourages teamwork to organize work and coordinate the different functions that have to be carried out in the workplace as demonstrated by Mbhele (2016).

The employees at DU and Etisalat rely on their coworkers in their departments to get critical information. Horizontal communication has helped coworkers in sharing critical information as demonstrated by Kalogiannidis (2020). The employees at DU and Etisalat are motivated to perform better when information is shared. Horizontal communication helps in forming stronger employee relationships where they can share important information concerning their work. In the long run, this boosts the employee's overall productivity and performance as demonstrated by Kalogiannidis (2020). In horizontal internal communication, the coworkers

can also interpret information correctly and they can understand clearly what is needed to be done to reach the organizational goals as demonstrated by Pirjol and Radomir (2017).

5.1.4. Employee engagement at DU and Etisalat

It is found that both DU and Etisalat have high levels of employee engagement. The employee engagement in both companies is positively influenced by the effective internal upward, downward and horizontal communication that are applied at both DU and Etisalat.

It is found that the employees at DU and Etisalat have everything from the materials and the equipment that they need to do their job properly which makes them highly engaged in the workplace. Providing the employees with the resources that they need to perform the primary duties of their jobs without interruptions at work is considered to be an essential factor for increasing the levels of employee engagement as demonstrated by Chatiza, Mubvundu and Chisango (2021).

It is also found that the employee at DU and Etisalat are always praised and recognized for doing good jobs at their workplace which motivates them to be highly engaged in their work. The level of employee engagement can be increased when the employees are motivated and rewarded for doing good jobs as demonstrated by Young (2018). The levels of employee engagement are found to be supported when the management is always found to praise and reward employees for their carrying out their roles effectively and for participating in improving the performance of the organization as demonstrated by Welbourne and Schlachter (2014).

5.2. Conclusion

This study is carried out to investigate the influence of effective internal upward, downward and horizontal communication on employee engagement at Etisalat and DU. Some major conclusions could be reached from carrying out this study. It is found that both DU and Etisalat have effective internal communication that has positively influenced employee engagement. The effective internal downward communication at DU and Etisalat is found to be the first high-independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. In effective internal downward communication, a lot of activities are found to be done in the two organizations to encourage employees to be engaged in the workplace. The management of DU and Etisalat make sure that there is an easy flow of information from the management to the employees to encourage their participation and improve job performance. The management also pays attention to the views and ideas of the employees concerning the work. Moreover, the supervisors and managers in both companies inform the employees about the nature of their responsibilities and the tasks that they have to do. All of these activities of internal downward communication that are done at DU and Etisalat have encouraged and supported employees to be engaged in the workplace.

The effective internal upward communication is found to be the second highest independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement at DU and Etisalat. In effective internal upward communication, a lot of activities are found to be done at DU and Etisalat to encourage employees to be engaged in the workplace. The employees can provide their supervisors and managers with quick feedback concerning any request for particular explanations. The employees can also ask for getting information from their supervisors or managers about different work issues. The employees

can raise any inquiries about the nature of their jobs to the management. The employees can discuss with their supervisors and managers what to change in the company. The management encourages employees to work better through upward communication. All of these activities of internal upward communication that are done at DU and Etisalat have encouraged and supported employees to be engaged in the workplace.

The effective internal horizontal communication at DU and Etisalat is found to be the third high-independent variable that has a high impact on employee engagement. In effective internal horizontal communication, a lot of activities are found to be done in the two organizations to encourage employees to be engaged in the workplace. The coworkers from the different departments communicate freely with one another and they keep their language professional and polite. Discussions with coworkers about job requirements help the employees in performing their jobs in better ways. The coworkers always take their suggestions into consideration in solving issues. The coworkers are motivated to perform better when information is shared. All of these activities of internal horizontal communication that are done at DU and Etisalat have encouraged and supported employees to be engaged in the workplace.

5.3. Recommendations

There are some recommendations for DU and Etisalat to enforce their internal communication to boost employee engagement. For improving upward communication, it is recommended that the management of DU and Etisalat focus more on motivating and appreciating employees for offering specific information. The management has also to consider responding to the needs of the employees on time to improve participation and job performance. The management has to make decisions based on specific

information obtained from the employees. For improving downward communication, it is recommended that the management of DU and Etisalat focus more on introducing the employees to their roles clearly and ensuring that the employees have continuous access to essential information. For improving horizontal communication, some recommendations are proposed. On critical issues, coworkers have to focus more on sharing knowledge and information to support engagement. For doing further future research, it is recommended to test the differences of the variables of age, gender, nationality, and job experience of the respondents in order to know more deeply about the views of different people about the impacts of effective internal communication on employee engagement.

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تأثير الاتصال الداخلي على الاندماج الوظيفي في قطاع الاتصالات في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

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ملخص البحث:

مما لا شك فيه، أن وجود اتصال داخلي فعال يضمن انتقال وتدفق المعلومات بشكل فعال من الإدارة إلى الموظفين والعكس صحيح. أجريت هذه الدراسة لبحث وتقييم تأثير الاتصال الداخلي الفعال التصاعدي، والتنازلي، والأفقي على الاندماج الوظيفي للموظفين في شركتي (اتصالات) و(دو). تم تطبيق طريقة البحث المختلطة في هذه الدراسة. تم استخدام الاستبيان عبر الإنترنت كمصدر أساسي لجمع البيانات من 200 موظف في (اتصالات) و(دو) وتم استخدام المقابلة شبه المنتظمة كطريقة ثانوية لجمع البيانات من 6 من المدراء في إدارة الموارد البشرية لدي (اتصالات) و(دو). تم تحليل البيانات الكمية التي تم جمعها من خلال المقابلة باستخدام المنهج الاستقرائي. تم تحليل البيانات النوعية التي تم جمعها باستخدام تحليل البيانات متعدد المتغيرات. لقد وجد أن الاتصال الفعال التنازلي هو المتغير الأعلى الأول الذي يؤثر بشكل إيجابي على اندماج الموظفين في شركتي (اتصالات) و(دو). لقد وجد أيضاً أن كلا من (اتصالات) و(دو) لديهما تواصل تصاعدي داخلي فعال وهو ثاني أعلى متغير يؤثر بشكل إيجابي على اندماج الموظفين. علاوة على ذلك، فقد وجد أن التواصل الأفقي الداخلي الفعال هو ثالث أعلى متغير له آثار إيجابية على اندماج الموظفين. يتعين على إدارات "اتصالات" و "دو" تعزيز إستراتيجية الاتصال الداخلي الخاصة بها من خلال ضمان الاتصال الفعال ثنائي الاتجاه إلى أسفل وإلى أعلى والأفقي لتسهيل تدفق المعلومات

الكلمات الدالة: الاتصال الداخلي التصاعدي والتنازلي والأفقي، الاندماج الوظيفي.

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