UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS OF BULACAN STATE UNIVERSITY-MAIN CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT
Communication is the backbone of any academic institution. It enables collaboration, productivity, and innovation. This study explores the communication culture within the College of Arts and Letters (CAL) at Bulacan State University Campus. The goal is to understand the dynamics shaping communication practices, barriers, and strategies among administrators and faculty. Communication is crucial in educational settings, as it affects organizational unity, teaching quality, and student outcomes. Using communication theories and practices, the study uncovers the mechanisms driving communication interactions within CAL.

Communication practices in modern educational settings are undergoing significant changes. As new technologies emerge and global competition increases, administrators and faculty face evolving challenges. This study examines communication within the CAL organization, exploring how administrators and faculty navigate these changes and use communication strategies to foster positive working relationships and improve instructional quality.

The research takes a careful and thorough approach, using both numbers and stories to understand the communication culture within CAL. By surveying administrators and faculty, the study explores their views on communication practices, challenges, and strategies. Additionally, in-depth interviews and group discussions provide valuable insights into the real-life experiences and perspectives of key people involved, deepening our understanding of the communication dynamics at play.

The study reveals a diverse and interactive communication environment within CAL, marked by open discussions, information exchange, and collaborative problem-solving. However, the research also identifies common obstacles to effective communication, ranging from noise and poor feedback to insufficient communication channels and psychological barriers. Additionally, the study examines faculty perspectives on job performance, leadership capabilities, and communication dynamics with management, providing valuable insights into the relationship between individual attitudes and the organizational communication culture.

Building on what we've learned, this study suggests ways to improve communication practices within CAL. From specialized training programs to optimizing communication channels and promoting a culture of open communication and collaboration, these recommendations provide a path to cultivating a cohesive, inclusive, and effective communication environment in the college. By exploring the communication culture at CAL, this research lays the foundation for nurturing a thriving academic community that supports learning, innovation, and growth.

Keywords: Communication Culture, Communication Barriers, Communication Strategies, Organizational Communication, Faculty Perceptions, Leadership Communication, Training Programs, Open Communication, Collaboration, and Feedback Mechanisms

1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on communication practices, barriers, and strategies within the College of Arts and Letters at Bulacan State University. In this paper, the critical role of effective communication in educational settings, highlighting its impact on relationships, productivity, and the overall quality of education is emphasized. This study also conducted a comprehensive exploration of how administrators and faculty members utilize communication strategies to overcome barriers and foster harmonious working relationships, aiming to enhance the quality of instruction and create a conducive learning environment. Since communication styles and practices in organizations have changed radically over the last century, administrators do not solely perform all work practices, sales initiatives, or output ideas. Instead, the administration involves employees in decision-making and explicitly solicits ideas, thus, making communication very effective in today's place of work. In addition, employees also face some challenges in communication because of changes in the world today.

Some of the challenges may be increased use of technology, increased global competition, restructured management, increased quality emphasis and customer focus, and increased focus on legal and ethical problems (Livingstone, 2010, p.5).

One way of facing these challenges is learning about the different effective communication skills. Knowledge of such can lead to habits that will diminish and or lessen misunderstandings and improve the morale of the staff.

These challenges, which can be in the form of communication barriers, can greatly impact the employees and benefactors. People in an institution undeniably desire to communicate effectively but miss appreciation of the communication barriers to be faced. Because of these barriers, there is ample opportunity for something to go wrong in any communication.

The principal barriers to effective communication are noise, poor feedback, selection of inappropriate media, a wrong mental attitude, insufficient or lack of attention to work selection, delay in message transmittal, physical separation of the sender and receiver, and lack of empathy or a good relationship between the sender and receiver (Acker, 2011, p.79).

Any of the mentioned barriers could be an existing practice from one institution to another. In addition, these communication barriers are problems that beset our educational system.

The proponents, as present affiliates of a university, directly experienced and observed the communication problems. There were instances that the received information and instructions of the faculty were different from the intentions of the administration.

Mutua (2014) suggests that competent administrators' awareness of the barriers can be a key to learning to cope with these challenges. This serves as the initial inspiration for this paper. Identification of communication practices and the barriers to effective communication, effective relationships, and efficient work will serve as the starting point for identifying communication strategies to address these barriers.

The identification of the strategies will serve as a basis on which to conduct workshops or training experiences in developing better communication skills that are tailored to the common needs of an institution. Furthermore, the paper hypothesizes that the communication practices existing in any organization have a relationship with their prevalent communication barriers. The solutions will be in the form of an enhancement program on communication.

2. METHODS

A descriptive research design involving quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection was utilized in the main inquiry of the paper. The paper is mainly descriptive because it intends to describe obtained information concerning the common communication practices and barriers, and communication strategies between the Administrators and faculty members, results will be used in the proposed enhancement program in communication (Lauer, 2006).

In the case of this paper, the variables were observed in their natural setting. For the quantitative data gathering, an adapted survey questionnaire was used. The mentioned instruments and techniques were used to identify the communication practices, barriers, and strategies among the administrators and faculty members of the College of Arts and Letters.

Population and Sample of the Study

Out of the total population of faculty, fifty percent (50%) were selected as representatives from each targeted unit. For validity, the employment status and years in service were considered as factors in the selection of faculty respondents. Faculty respondents should have rendered one (1) year and above in service.

The same was applied to the administrators. At least 50% of the total population of administrators were considered administrator-respondents. The administrator-respondents should also have rendered 1 year and above in service.

Both administrators and faculty were asked to answer the communication barriers questionnaire and another set of questions to describe the communication strategies they employed to solve barriers in communication. The items were adapted from related studies.

Research Instrument

The main data-gathering instrument of the paper is the questionnaire.

The paper utilized two sets of questionnaires to identify its queries. The first describes the existing communication practices, barriers, and strategies from the perspective of the administrators. The second set focuses on the evaluation of communication strategies used by the administrators as perceived by the faculty members.

The questionnaires are adapted questionnaires from three studies: Organization Communication Survey by People Pulse; The Effects of Hierarchal Structures and Complex Policies on Organization Communication by Youssouf in 2013; and also, in the study by Hayasse in 2009, which is Internal Communication in Organizations and Employee Engagement.

The locale of the previous studies is industry-based. However, the researchers thoroughly analyzed the content of the above-mentioned studies and considered the contents as highly relevant to the paper, regardless of the locale of the mentioned studies. Moreover, since the adapted questionnaire was validated by experts, their inputs and comments on the suitability of the instrument were validated in terms of the applicability of the questionnaire items. In addition, the above-mentioned studies are relevant because all of them pertain to the communication flow between a superior and a subordinate which is the technical relationship between an administrator and a faculty member.

The construction of the research instrument involved selecting the questionnaire items from the three studies which satisfies the description of the specific problem of the study. Second, the researchers considered changing terminologies from managers to administrators/superiors, and employees to faculty members/teachers. Other terminologies remained. The extent of utilization

was described through the frequency of usage based on a 5-point Likert scale interpreted as: always, frequently, occasionally, seldom, and never.

Another set of questionnaires was used to describe the perception of teachers on the effectiveness of the creative strategies used by administrators in solving communication barriers. The perception of the effectiveness of the communication strategies in addressing the barriers was described using a 5-point Likert scale interpreted as very effective, effective, satisfactory, ineffective, or very ineffective.

The adapted questionnaire and interview schedule questions underwent expert validation by experts in the Organizational Communication field. The proponents considered the following as validators: Dr. Susan Melon-Galvez and Prof. Estrella F. Fajardo. Both are faculty members of Bulacan State University.

Data Gathering Procedure

The first step for data gathering was to secure permission from the dean of the college. The respondents were assured that the gathered information would be treated with utmost care and confidentiality. A week was given to the respondents to answer the data-gathering tool. After the gathering of data, they were tallied, summarized, and interpreted.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

For the data analysis and interpretation, communication practices, and communication barriers existing in the organization were determined by using frequency counts, mean, and Likert scale.

Scale	Range	Descriptive Interpretations
5	4.6-5.00	Always
4	3.6-4.5	Very Often
3	2.6-3.5	Sometimes
2	1.6-2.5	Seldom
1	1-1.5	Never

The frequency, mean, and Five-point Likert scale were used to evaluate the administrators' usage of communication strategies as perceived by the faculty members.

Point	Range	Description Interpretation
5	4.6-5.00	Very Effective
4	3.6-4.5	Effective
3	2.6-3.5	Satisfactory
2	1.6-2.5	Ineffective
1	1-1.5	Very ineffective

The paper assumed that if the weighted mean falls between 1 to 2.5, there was indeed a need for an enhancement of the communication program in the College of Arts and Letters. This

would lead the paper to draft a proposal targeting the development of the communication program in the institution of the respondents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents detailed findings on the common communication barriers that teachers and administrators often face. It explores how these barriers impact the effectiveness of their communication. The study also discusses the perceptions of faculty members regarding the effectiveness of communication strategies in addressing these barriers. The findings offer valuable insights into the communication dynamics within the College of Arts and Letters, emphasizing the need for proactive strategies to overcome communication barriers and enhance overall communication practices.

Communication Practices

The research conducted in the College of Arts and Letters (CAL) reveals a strong communication culture within the institution. Top leadership effectively shares information and faculty members feel comfortable providing feedback, fostering an open dialogue that promotes organizational unity. Most faculty members express ease in communicating their sentiments to the management, which is seen as beneficial for the overall cohesion of the college. Instructions from the top management are generally perceived as clear, enhancing understanding and alignment across the faculty. However, while there is a general sense that queries are accommodated, a small number of faculty members feel that communication could be more transparent. Regular college meetings serve as platforms for information dissemination, but sensitive matters are sometimes discussed with limited details provided. The college effectively shares information about semestral tasks, which helps faculty members perform their duties successfully. Faculty members frequently communicate informally with each other, which aligns with the information provided and fosters a collaborative atmosphere. While some faculty members perceive bias in how other colleges or campuses interpret communication, group meetings are considered informative and valuable. Overall, the college promotes open communication, though with moderate success, among faculty members and between different colleges and campuses. Despite management's significant role in disseminating information, faculty members prefer email over face-to-face communication for exchanging information.

Communication Barriers

The research examines the communication obstacles within the College of Arts and Letters (CAL). The findings suggest that the Dean, Program Heads, and other immediate supervisors are approachable, encouraging open dialogue among faculty members. Most faculty feel comfortable sharing new information, even if it's unfavorable or challenging, indicating a supportive leadership style that values their input. Supervisors are attentive and responsive to faculty concerns, creating an environment where faculty feel acknowledged and respected. Faculty members express ease in sharing their opinions and feelings about management styles, demonstrating a culture of openness and free exchange of ideas. There is an acknowledgment of the validity of using dialects in meetings, even though some may have differing views on this practice within the college. The majority also strongly prefer using English as the language for written communication, reflecting a standardized communication approach at CAL. Additionally, respondents agree that their direct supervisors are skilled in both formal and informal language styles, further enabling efficient

communication within the college. These findings highlight the significance of supportive leadership and effective communication strategies in cultivating a collaborative and productive work environment at CAL.

Semantic Barriers

The findings from this section suggest there is notable variability in the clarity and consistency of directives from top management within the College of Arts and Letters (CAL). The data indicates that while some employees perceive directives from top management as sometimes clear and consistent, others view them as very often clear and consistent. Interestingly, a smaller percentage of respondents see these directives as either seldom or always clear and consistent. This variability highlights potential challenges in effective communication from top management to faculty within CAL. Additionally, the results underscore the importance of communication among peers, as a significant portion of information received from co-workers is perceived as detailed and accurate. The findings suggest that faculty members heavily rely on each other to share information within the college. While most perceive the received information as often detailed and accurate, a smaller but notable percentage view it as always detailed and accurate. This indicates room for improvement in ensuring consistent and accurate information exchange among faculty members. Overall, these results highlight the need for strategies to enhance the clarity, consistency, and accuracy of directives from top management, as well as to foster effective communication channels between faculty members.

Psychological Barriers

The study on the psychological barrier shed light on how faculty members in the College of Arts and Letters (CAL) perceive their job performance, leadership skills, and communication with management. A significant majority of the respondents expressed high confidence in their job performance, with 57.1% reporting they feel this way "very often" and 28.6% reporting they feel this way "always". This suggests a consistent sense of confidence among the faculty. Similarly, most respondents viewed their immediate supervisors as competent, with 57.1% reporting "very often" and 28.6% reporting "always". This indicates a prevailing confidence in the leadership within CAL. Furthermore, the findings suggest that most faculty members feel comfortable sharing information, as evidenced by 42.9% reporting they feel this way "very often" and 28.6% reporting "always" in response to the relevant survey question. Regarding management's efforts to motivate and challenge faculty. Here is the rewritten content: The majority of respondents, 57.1%, report very often receiving important information. Additionally, most are satisfied with management's communication efforts, as 71.4% say management very often updates employees. However, faculty confidence in the influence of their views varies, suggesting a need to further examine faculty perceptions. While a high frequency of sharing important information is reported, a smaller percentage sometimes engages in this behavior, indicating potential areas for improvement in disseminating information. Opinions on truthful communication within CAL are fairly distributed, with 42.9% reporting both "sometimes" and "very often", while only 14.3% report "always". Similarly, perceptions of sincerity and truthfulness from middle management are high, with 57.1% reporting "very often". Regarding promptness of information receipt, most respondents feel they receive required information promptly to perform their jobs with 57.1% reporting very often. The College of Arts and Letters (CAL) seems to have a generally positive perception of job performance, leadership competence, and management communication, but there

are areas for further improvement in faculty satisfaction and effectiveness. The communication strategies within CAL show varying degrees of use and effectiveness. While internet access appears limited, training classes are well-received, indicating a proactive approach to skill development. Meetings with middle management and pre-shift information sessions are also valued for information exchange, although phone-in hotlines are less frequently utilized. Co-faculty members serve as a prominent communication channel, while face-to-face interactions remain preferred. Overall, there's a diverse mix of communication methods employed within CAL, highlighting opportunities for optimizing strategies to enhance information exchange.

4. CONCLUSION

The study of communication in the College of Arts and Letters (CAL) at Bulacan State University-Main Campus found both strengths and areas needing improvement. Effective communication is crucial for organizational unity, better teaching, and a positive learning environment. While there is open discussion, information sharing, and collaborative problem-solving, issues like noise, poor feedback, and lacking communication channels still present challenges to effective communication within CAL.

Faculty members share insightful perceptions about their job performance, leadership abilities, and communication with management. While most feel confident in their work and see their supervisors as capable, there are opportunities to improve communication channels and promote a culture of open collaboration.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance communication practices within CAL:

1. Implementing Targeted Training Programs: Develop and run training programs to help faculty and administrators improve their communication skills. This includes learning active listening, giving constructive feedback, and resolving conflicts effectively.
2. Optimizing Communication Channels: Evaluate the existing communication methods within CAL and find ways to make them better. This could involve using digital tools, improving email communication, and having more in-person interactions. Ensure that these channels are easy to access, reliable, and encourage open discussion.
3. Fostering a Culture of Open Communication: Promote a culture where faculty and administrators feel comfortable sharing ideas, concerns, and feedback openly. Create opportunities for dialogue, such as town hall meetings, focus groups, and collaborative projects. This will help build a more collaborative environment within CAL.
4. Strengthening Leadership Communication: It is crucial to provide training and development opportunities for administrators to enhance their communication skills. This can help build trust and transparency among faculty members. Encourage administrators to actively seek feedback, communicate clearly and consistently, and address communication barriers proactively.
5. Monitor and Evaluate Communication Practices: Establish mechanisms like regular surveys, feedback mechanisms, and performance evaluations. Use data-driven insights to identify areas for improvement and track progress over time.

CAL can build a communication culture that supports teamwork, new ideas, and organizational success. By encouraging open discussions, improving communication methods, and strengthening leadership communication, CAL can become a vibrant and inclusive academic community dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and service.

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