EXPLORING COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS AT M.S. DE LARA CONSTRUCTION & TRADING: AN INTERVIEW-BASED STUDY

Anne Coleen Buensuceso, Karyl Baetiong, Alliyah Bianca Manalaysay,James Raiden Galang and Ryza Alcantara

Bulacan State University, College of Engineering, MacArthur Highway, City of Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines, 3000

ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the communication dynamics at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading and shows how communication plays a vital role in every institution. It will determine the means of communication, "workplace" culture, barriers, and the institution's communication model.

The communication dynamics were determined using observation and interview methods, which allowed researchers to learn about the institution's communication culture. The researchers applied thematic analysis to examine, interpret, and categorize participants' responses in this study. It enables the researchers to know the varied factors involved in the communication dynamics at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading.

The study's findings demonstrated that communication at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading reveals a healthy workplace environment and effective communication amidst communication barriers.

Overall, this study provides insight into how communication works and the flow of communication in an institution. Additionally, the study finds and links the communication practices of M.S. DE LARA Trading & Construction to the Shannon-Weaver communication model. By evaluating the institution's communication patterns with this communication model, the research contributes to our understanding of fundamental principles that regulate communication in organizational contexts.

Keywords: Communication Dynamics, Institution, Culture, Workplace Communication, Barriers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is a cornerstone of success in the dynamic construction industry. The significance of effective communication inside a construction group is becoming apparent as building projects increase in complexity and size. Effective communication in a business setting improves employees' attitudes and actions toward the organization, boosts motivation, and promotes unity in attaining the organization's goals. (Gokalp et al., 2021).

Communication is crucial for efficient human cooperation and a functional workplace. Workplace communication encompasses interpersonal communication in collaborative settings and other forms of workplace social engagement. Understanding the intricacies of workplace communication is essential for promoting well-being and job satisfaction. It includes discussing, conversing, debating, sending, and acquiring feedback in various daily work settings (Valo & Mikkola, 2019).

Furthermore, communication at work includes verbal and nonverbal interactions between employees, managers, and groups within the organization. These connections tremendously

impact the organization's culture, productivity, and collaboration. Gender, cultural background, hierarchy, and personal communication preferences significantly influence communication dynamics (Martin, 2024).

Communicating can be difficult due to several factors, including addressing diverse objectives across many mediums. As a result, organizations face several communication challenges (Martinuzzi, 2023).

Moreover, language proficiency is required to exchange information, feelings, and messages efficiently. Language barriers in working environments, prompted by employees speaking different languages, can impede communication. Multiple individuals feel anxious when they do not comprehend distinctive terminology during conversations, demonstrating that communication barriers establish disruptions in the workplace. (Jelani & Nordin, 2019).

Environmental barriers in the workplace have the potential to affect an organization's performance adversely. The need for fast-paced work that may impair employees' critical thinking, a struggle for time and attention between different people, and the simultaneous flow of varying information might lead to difficulties (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020).

Pope (2023) asserted that hierarchies are necessary in organizations, as they may trigger conflict amongst workers with varying positions. Subordinates might be reluctant to displease their superiors, while those in positions of authority might opt to refuse communications from their subordinates. Establishing a hierarchical culture in an organization can result in precise standards and formidable management. Most companies have managers to ensure that employees carry out their jobs properly. (Indeed, 2024).

Workplace communication is crucial in today's fast-paced work environment, significantly influenced by technology and digitalization. Despite this, common conflicts continue to arise among employees (Sharma, 2023). Opposing views often impede effective communication in our society today. Modern technology can exacerbate this problem, making it harder to comprehend each other (Erlangga et al., 2020). Choosing the appropriate communication channels for organizational communication can be challenging. Using improper communication technology might lead to delayed responses and data loss (Baldikov, 2024).

Additionally, cultural factors significantly influence the efficacy of communication. Cultural norms, which impact how people convey and comprehend information, rely on cultural habits, beliefs, and practices. Cultural differences may improve or hinder the efficacy of communication (Glassdoor Team, 2021). Every workplace has a distinct culture, management style, and employees with varying identities. Good workplace dynamics arise when employees appreciate one another despite their disparities. (Rastrullo, 2023).

This study aims to examine M.S. De Lara Construction Company's communication styles. Known for its dedication to innovation, sustainability, and project excellence, M.S. De Lara Construction Company is an established construction company in Hagonoy, Bulacan. This research paper will determine the techniques, technology, and cultural elements that foster their successful communication.

The primary objective of this study is to determine the communication dynamics at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading. Specifically, it addresses the following: (1) the means of communication, (2) workplace culture, (3) communication barriers, and (4) the model of communication at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research design. Qualitative research explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems (Lekawel et al., 2023). It gathers participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior (Gokalp et al., 2021). This study will determine the communication dynamics at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading and elaborate on the institution's culture and how it communicates. The researchers will use observations and interviews for qualitative interpretation.

In this study, the researchers applied purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is commonly employed in qualitative research to select pertinent cases relevant to the subject of study (McGovern, 2021). It produces more accurate results as it involves selecting interviewees strategically. It will enable the researchers to produce accurate data and information.

The research paper's interview participants were chosen based on specific criteria:
1. An employee at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading;
2. The participant must have more than five (5) years of experience in the company and;
3. Participants must have a superior-subordinate relationship.

The researcher will obtain the necessary information for the study paper through interviews and observations. The observations and interviews will determine the communication dynamics at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading. The purpose of employing observation and interview methods is to allow the researchers to learn about the institution's communication culture.

The researchers conducted five independent semi-structured interviews with the participants. The researchers asked the participants about their hometown, culture, and experience as a part of the organization to identify if there are cultural variations and how they affect their lives. To identify their communication challenges, the researchers identified any problems and misunderstandings in the institution and how to overcome them. The organization examined communication and attitudes between employees, superiors, and others. In addition, the people they have interacted with about the organization were also viewed and analyzed. They utilized thematic analysis to examine the responses of the interviewees.

Furthermore, the researchers wrote a letter requesting the M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading owner to conduct a study. Once approval is received, interview participants receive a brief explanation of the interview process. The researchers allocated vigorous time, effort, and cooperation in creating the interview questions to serve their intended participants. The interview process includes receiving advanced questions before the actual interview date. Participants have the time to react, and answer given questions; in line with that, the researchers guarantee the privacy of the participant's answers and data. The interviewers transcribed the information into a voice recording after the interview. The information given is summarized and highlighted. The concluded data will be answered and shown in the results and discussion. Alongside essential information, the researchers used secondary assets such as published distributed articles and written works to help the overview results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1 Means of Communication

Based on the gathered data, (1) medium and (2) hierarchical relationship determines the institution's means of communication. The participants ascertained this in their remarks.

Medium. Reierson (2023) states that choosing the appropriate communication medium is critical for successful communication. The medium used to deliver a message can significantly influence how it is received, comprehended, and acted. Numerous communication channels include papers, emails, videos, audio recordings, films, television, phone calls, slide decks, and meetings. Participant 4 mentioned, "There are face-to-face meetings sometimes with just chat or calls," and Participant 2 stated, "On the site, we will have a meeting with our superiors to explain how the projects will happen.".

Hierarchical Relationship. In the interview conducted, Participant 4 stated, "It is okay because, when it comes to work, there is nothing personal. When it comes to work, for eight hours, they follow what I want, but after that, they are like friends." Participant 1 also said, "Our superiors treat us well, so we understand it immediately when they teach us what to do.". Respect is required in a professional setting to foster a healthy environment. Everyone in the organization, regardless of position, must be aware of the value of respecting and recognizing one another's accomplishments, skills, and attributes (Deer, 2023).

3.2 Workplace Culture

Upon obtaining information, the researchers identified that the place of origin contributes to the workplace culture at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading, as stated by the participants.

Place of Origin. Participant 2 mentioned, "I came from Kalibo before I moved to work here in Hagonoy. At first, I was not used to speaking straight Tagalog, but I got used to it as time passed. I have also been working here for about five years." Culture significantly impacts language, cuisine, and social norms globally. It also significantly affects an organization's mission, values, and ideals (Bloznalis, 2023).

3.3 Communication Barriers

In line with the data collected, the researchers identified the following communication barriers: (1) language barriers, (2) environmental barriers, and (3) personal barriers.

Language Barriers. Differences in language used and the delivery of messages may affect communication effectiveness. According to Buarqoub (2019), semantic or language barriers occur when a sender and the receiver attempt to communicate in a language, they need to be fully proficient in when many words have multiple meanings. The communication system could have flaws or obstructions that keep the message from getting to its intended recipient. They may give rise to misconceptions that result in frustration. Participant 2 stated, "I used to struggle because there were words I did not understand. However, now, I am not used to it anymore." In connection with that, Participant 4 stated, "At first, some people had difficulty understanding other words, but as time passed, they probably got used to it."

Environmental Barriers. According to Beaver (2024), communication noise makes it difficult to focus and causes people to miss valuable information or instructions. Participant 1 stated, "When it is noisy, sometimes someone is drilling, someone is constructing, we cannot hear each other.". Participant 4 pointed out the same thing, stating, "As we are right next to the river, the wind is strong, and we are close to the market, so the noise increases, and sometimes we cannot hear each other."

Personal Barriers. According to Kapur (2020), personal barriers are distinctive to both the sender and the recipient. These obstacles hinder effective communication throughout the process. When these obstacles overwhelm senders or recipients, they make it impossible for them to carry

out the communication process efficiently. A few of these obstacles are the people's past experiences, feelings, attitudes, and actions that hinder communication. Participant 4 stated, "As for our Superior, of course, it is their drawing. When I have something, I do not know, I ask them what it is. How is this? Like that, I will have an idea because I am not perfect for things like that."

3.4 Model of Communication

The researchers observed the communication process at the M.S. DE LARA Construction and Trading project site. The Shannon-Weaver model emphasizes the sender, message, channel, receiver, noise, and feedback. Formal vertical and horizontal communication is vital in the communication culture of the M.S. De Lara Construction Company. On the other hand, issues with noise, obstacles, and feedback loops point to areas that could be improved. Implementing communication training and encouraging open feedback can improve the total efficacy of communication inside the organization.

Sender. The General Foreman and Construction Worker initiate communication. Clear communication channels are established from top management to the workforce—emphasis on conveying project goals, timelines, and expectations.

Encoder. Construction professionals often communicate information using technical language and jargon. Messages focus on project updates, safety guidelines, and task assignments. It highlights how important clarity is in conveying complex information. Asking for help is a standard message in the field.

Channel. Face-to-face communication is emphasized, especially during project meetings and briefings. Regular site visits and inspections that provide feedback are essential to communication.

Decoder. Employees at various levels decode messages differently based on their roles. A shared understanding of construction terminology aids effective communication.

Receiver. Constructive feedback is encouraged to ensure effective two-way communication. Challenges in receiving feedback include hierarchical and noise barriers and a desire for more open feedback channels to improve communication processes.

M.S. DE LARA Trading & Construction experienced communication difficulties at the project site. Noise interrupts the message. Construction sites near marketplaces and rivers face challenges in communication due to high environmental noise. Heavy machinery, market activities, and river sounds contribute to the difficulty in conveying information. Misinterpreting technical jargon needs to be clarified for team members. Different management levels send mixed messages, which confuses them.

Further addressing communication barriers, communicating concerns at the top can be hindered by hierarchical barriers. Linguistic and cultural challenges in a diverse workforce affect the effectiveness of communication. Employees needing more communication skills have a more challenging time articulating concepts.

4. CONCLUSION

Upon reviewing and assessing the study's findings, the researchers conclude that M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading executes the Shannon-Weaver communication model. This model depicts the complex dynamics of the organization's communication process, which uses a variety of channels, such as face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and discussions. They also communicate through various methods, including in-person meetings, phone calls, and conversations. The researchers determined that the cultural variety in their work differs based on where they came

from and how they adapted to the changes. Furthermore, the company uses a hierarchical system characterized by distinct levels of authority and responsibility, where its employees maintain a conducive and harmonious work environment regardless of dealing with various workplace barriers, such as environmental issues, language barriers, and personal barriers to employment.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the researchers suggest that M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading will hold seminars or orientations to help its workers improve their communication and language skills. The researchers strongly advise future researchers to study and explore strategies and methods to assist the company with the problems and barriers they are encountering. Moreover, establishing transparent feedback channels is crucial for identifying communication challenges and improving organizational processes. M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading should create platforms where employees feel comfortable providing feedback on communication practices, including suggestions for improvement.

6. LIMITATIONS

This research explored the communication dynamics at M.S. DE LARA Construction & Trading. The researchers encountered limitations that potentially affected the study's results. Five (5) participants were selected to participate; in that case, the results are based only on the participants' subjectivity, experiences, and insights.

REFERENCES

[1] Baldikov, N. (2024, February 14). The 14 Most Common Communication Challenges Within Modern Companies And Tips On How To Overcome Them - Brosix. BROSIX.

[2] Beaver, K. (2024, February 23). The types of noise in communication. Soundproof Cow.

[3] Bloznalis, S. (2023, November 21). Workplace Culture: What Is it and Why Is it Important in 2023? Workman.

[4] Buarqoub, I. (2019). Language barriers to effective communication.

[5] Deer, M. (2023, March 2). The Importance of Respect in the Workplace. CPD Online College.

[6] Erlangga, A., Muctar, Sunarsi, Widodo, & Salam. (2020). The Challenges of Organizational Communication in the Digital Era. Solid State Technology, 63(4), 2.

[7] Glassdoor Team. (2021, June 29). The Effect of Culture in Communication. Glassdoor.

[8] Gokalp, S., Akbasli, S. & Dis, O. (2021). Communication Barriers in the Context of School-Parent Cooperation. European Journal of Educational Management. 4(2), 83-96.

[9] Jelani F., & Nordin, N. (2019, June). Barriers to Effective Communication at the Workplace. International Journal of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics, 3(2), 9.

[10] Indeed. (2024). What Is Hierarchy Culture in the Workplace?

[11] Kapur, R. (2020, December). Understanding Personal Barriers within the Course of Communication. ResearchGate.

[12] Martin, V. (2024, February 8). Navigating Workplace Communication Dynamics. Medium.

[13] Martinuzzi, B. (2023, July 28). The Most Common Workplace Communication Challenges and How to Overcome Them. Business Class: Trends and Insights | American Express.

[14] Pope, A. (2023, September 26). 5 deadly communication barriers and how to solve them. Time Doctor Blog.

[15] Rastrullo, Z. (2023, March 31). Understanding workplace dynamics and their impact on your organization. Outsource Accelerator.

[16] Reierson, K. (2023, June 1). Effective Communication: Medium Matters. Medium.

[17] Sharma, D. (2023, November 6). 9 Workplace Communication Problems: How Can Managers Beat Them? - Risely. Risely.

[18] Valo, M., & Mikkola, L. (2019, November 14). Workplace Communication [Ebook]. Routledge.

[19] Yusof A., & Rahmat, N. (2020). COMMUNICATION BARRIERS AT THE WORKPLACE: A CASE STUDY. European Journal of Education Studies, 7(10).