ENHANCING COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS WITHIN ROCKAVILLA REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: A STUDY BASED ON INTERVIEWS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the communication dynamics among Civil Engineers employed at Rockavilla Realty and Development Corporation (RRDC). The study discovers the culture of communication and the challenges and flow of communication within the workplace.

The researchers selected the participants through purposive sampling. This research paper utilizes a thematic analysis of transcripts from the semi-structured interview. The data collected from the 3 participants underwent analysis, coding, and interpretation, resulting in the identification of its themes.

The result of the study showed that the communication culture's significant features at RRDC were positive attitude, flexible work schedule, and reliability. The findings also showed that the flow of communication at RRDC combines upward, downward, and horizontal communication. The feedback loop, which exists in negative and positive ways, was also determined. Researchers also conducted further investigations into the communication challenges faced in the field, which reveals conflict management and miscommunication as two of the challenges faced.

This study's findings demonstrated the capability of civil engineer employees to communicate effectively despite recognizable and inevitable differences, which serve as indicators of success in work within the institution. The study discovered the significant features that unite every worker with varying cultural backgrounds, values, and beliefs, improving daily interaction and increasing productivity at the RRDC.

Generally, this study offers essential insights into how Civil Engineers strive and prevail in the field, whether in construction or an office setting, through practical, dynamic, and inclusive communication where fundamental growth and skill improvement are also attained and assessed.

Keywords: Communication, Construction, Culture, Workplace, Civil Engineers, Field.

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective interpersonal communication among individuals is critical for sustaining a healthy and productive work environment (Mikkola & Valo, 2020). Conversing and exchanging information and ideas with fellow workers effectively are crucial aspects or skills within the workplace. Moreover, accuracy also depends on the value of communication and interaction among an organization's employees. A recent Harvard Business Review report proves this as they figured out and concluded that employees directly and automatically refer to communication when facing problems that are generally unclear. Though it is not typically the issue in every circumstance, employees frequently consider communication the first thing to consider when looking at organizational challenges. It implies that there will always be a close relationship between workplace culture and employee communication. Hence, an organization must build a solid relational foundation through appropriate mediums incorporated with dynamic styles.

However, instances of varying cultures, beliefs, values, norms, and practices would be impossible not to occur. Diversity is flourishing, and its abundance will always be a significant part of everyone's life. Some might differ regarding their traditions and practices, some might have distinct religious beliefs, and some might have contrasting values and norms. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2024), there are more than 182 ethnolinguistic groups, including Tagalog and Bisaya, which are increasingly ample in the country, with 26% and 14.3% of the population, respectively. Stanford Medicine (2019) also claimed that an estimated 88.5% of Filipinos are Christians, where 79.5% are Roman Catholic, and 9% are from other Christian groups, including Seventh Day Adventists, United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), United Methodists, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, and more. Therefore, the diversity in the workplace in terms of different aspects is evident and is, consequently, where the challenges emerge and might suggest alteration or adaptation.

Engineering communication is one of the industry's most complex and highly desirable competencies. A study by Zakaria and Masduki (2020) reveals that many engineering graduates today encounter challenges adapting to the professional environment, particularly workplace communication skills in civil engineering. Their reliance on academic credentials is substantial, and they need to recognize the criticality of proficient personnel with technical expertise and exceptional soft skill competencies, particularly in communication. Following this study in 2022, Zakaria and Masduki asserted that communication is one of the most essential components that affects a construction project's success. However, prior research revealed that poor communication, especially among engineering graduates with different cultural and educational backgrounds, values, and beliefs, often happens in civil engineering, resulting in project failures. Hence, further study about these and other workplace communication aspects was conducted through this research on the chosen organization— Rockavilla Realty and Development Corporation (RRDC).

Entrepreneur Rodolfo C. Kalalang and his close associate Egmidio B. Ong, a Filipino-Chinese merchant from Bacolod, founded the RDDC. Before its inception in 1989, Kalalang was actively involved in a real estate venture called Rocka Village I in Guiguinto, Bulacan. Following the endeavor's success, as mentioned earlier, he embarked on a new business venture in the real estate industry with his colleagues Ong and Romie A. Cortez, establishing Rockavilla Realty. Their objective to establish a safe and secure community persists despite enduring numerous economic boom-and-bust cycles, leading to other local companies' closures. The corporation persevered as it recovered from the crisis due to the persistent need for housing. The company's employees have been crucial to the company's success during the past three decades. Young Kalalang said in an interview, "If one ensures the well-being and welfare of the individuals, they will reciprocate by ensuring the success and prosperity of the organization" (Remo, 2019, para. 20).

This study employed a qualitative research design. The data from the five participants was obtained via a semi-structured interview, which utilized an interview schedule as its tool.

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the communication dynamics at Rockavilla Realty and Development Corporation. Specifically, the study addresses the following concerns: (1) the culture of communication in the field of civil engineering; (2) challenges in communication faced in a civil engineering environment; and (3) the flow of communication in the workplace of civil engineers.

The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of communication within the construction industry and facilitate the development of dynamic and cohesive workplaces.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Concept of Communication in the Field of Engineering

According to Heather (2023), construction communication involves sharing information, ideas, and directions among different entities involved in a building project. In the construction industry, professionals must possess strong communication skills, encompassing verbal, written, and visual abilities – crucial for understanding the reasons, methods, and appropriate timing for utilizing these communication techniques (Wilkinson, 2021). According to Olanrewaju (2017), effective communication improves productivity on construction sites and facilitates the critical sharing of information among workers, which is crucial for project success. Moreover, numerous academics assert that communication is crucial for the success of projects (Zulch, 2014).

Furthermore, as stated by Project Management Institute (2013), firms ought to build a robust communication management system to ensure precise dissemination and sharing of information. This system is essential for project management, enabling efficient planning, dissemination, and retrieval of project information among participants. Adequate and prompt communication guarantees that all individuals agree with project goals. This also facilitates a comprehensive comprehension of individual roles and responsibilities, enhancing collaborative efficiency (Heather, 2023). Communication is crucial in the construction business, as it plays a vital role in successfully implementing projects. Project managers in this industry dedicate a significant amount of their time, around 90%, to talking with project participants (Čulo & Skendrović, 2010). In addition, maintaining sufficient communication among all individuals involved is crucial to achieving project success (Sinesilassie et al., 2018). Thus, as per Masduki and Zacaria (2020), a job in engineering relies heavily on communication abilities.

Engineering Cultures and Workplace Communication

Understanding the impact of engineering cultures on workplace communication is crucial for improving collaboration and productivity, particularly within construction companies. The communication style in these contexts involves a combination of collective norms, values, and beliefs. Research by Naoum (2016) highlights the influence of various factors, including culture, on labor productivity on construction sites. Shahzad, Iqbal, and Gulzar (2013) added that a strong culture within the organization could increase the employees' commitment to achieving the organization's goals with a familiar path. Personal beliefs differ from organizational values when an employee enters the organization. In a strong culture, employees are on the typical path toward achieving organizational goals, allowing employees to grow. Furthermore, Bakas, Kostis, and Petrakis (2020) emphasized that the connection between culture and economic outcomes is not a new question. Hence, understanding the distinct communication culture within construction companies needs to be examined as it directly impacts labor productivity.

Building on this perspective, further insights into the dynamics of communication cultures within construction companies are crucial. The study by Nguyen and Watanabe (2017) investigates the influence of project organizational culture on construction project performance. The findings suggest that project outcomes are substantially impacted by the organizational culture prevalent in construction companies.

Moreover, according to Jagannath (2016), value clarification, a philosophical relativist approach, is a prevalent ethical practice in the workplace. It emphasizes that self-awareness regarding one's emotions, beliefs, and value systems is more crucial than holding specific beliefs. Thus, individuals contemplate alternative modes of thought and behavior. One develops one's values through personal initiative and such conduct. Supporting this, Brunhaver, Lutz, & Canney, 2021 added that the importance of having autonomy and control over one's thoughts, actions, and feelings includes self-direction and stimulation. Since spirituality and engineering education or practice are separately compartmentalized in the lives of individuals except for occasional discussions in ethics classes or service-learning projects, as affirmed by Salami (2019), Brunhaver, Lutz, & Canney, 2021 expounded that the value dimensions, such as conservation or the importance of following rules, resisting change, and preserving the past include conformity, security, and tradition and self-transcendence or the importance of protecting others and the natural environment includes universalism (concern, tolerance) and benevolence (dependability, caring) are greatly needed in communicating within the workplace.

Bridging the understanding of the dynamics of workplace cultures within engineering firms, Anderson et al. (2010) brought attention to the diverse cultural landscapes existing across these organizations. Despite this diversity, their research revealed a shared perspective among engineers on the significance of clear communication in their work. This common emphasis on effective communication suggests a universal theme among engineers, regardless of the variations in workplace cultures. This shared emphasis aligns with Garon's (2012) emphasis on the pivotal role of managers in fostering a culture of open communication within the workplace. His findings highlight that managers are critical in shaping communication dynamics within engineering teams. The acknowledgment of clear communication as the foremost skill by engineers further emphasizes the substantial impact that managerial emphasis on open communication can have on the overall communication culture within engineering organizations (Garon, 2012). This connection underscores the need for a comprehensive exploration into the specific elements of workplace cultures that influence communication practices and how managerial actions contribute to shaping these dynamics.

Challenges in Communication Faced in Civil Engineering Environment
In the construction industry, a variety of obstacles occur. Ineffective communication is an additional prevalent concern within the construction sector, as it can result in significant setbacks, errors during work activities, critical injuries, and even loss of life (Faller, 2023). Corporations are frequently in such a rush to convey information to their personnel that they need to pay more attention to the efficacy of the message (Obonadhuze et al., 2021). Consistent with the aforementioned, Masduki M. and Zakaria N. (2020) emphasize the critical nature of recognizing the widespread problem of communication breakdowns in civil engineering environments. It underscores the critical importance that civil engineering students proactively cultivate and attain proficiency in practical oral communication abilities prior to their professional entry, acknowledging their fundamental significance in guaranteeing favorable project results.

Moreover, according to Farrell (2023), inadequate communication on the construction site may arise from individuals being unable to perceive one another's voices. The noise disrupts and distorts the intended significance of the message's content (Obonadhuze et al., 2021). Dizzying machinery, traffic noise, and a multitude of employees conversing simultaneously are all factors that can contribute to hearing impairments, misunderstandings, and miscommunications (Faller, 2023). As

a result, the feedback indicates degradation, incorrect decoding, and disintegration (Obonadhuze et al., 2021).

Furthermore, according to Olanrewaju (2017), an individual's attitude significantly impacts human connections, affecting workers' morale and potentially causing communication problems on construction sites. Consequently, fear of communication is considered a contributing cause of poor communication in the construction business (Rahman & Gamil, 2019). Mainiero and Jones (2012) examined workplace romance and developed a communication ethics approach to tackle potential concerns with sexual harassment. The study emphasizes the broader importance of ethical communication practices but primarily focuses on workplace social interactions.

Flow of Communication in the Workplace of Civil Engineers

In engineering, communication involves transmitting information from a sender to a receiver, who interprets it and provides feedback. (Zulch, 2014; Talukhaba, Mutunga, and Miruka, 2011; Norouzi et al., 2015). The essence of this process is in the information itself, which initiates the connection between the sender and recipient (Kliem, 2007). Moreover, this communication pattern holds comparable importance in the construction business, where efficient communication among project participants is essential (Coughlan & Macredie, 2002). Therefore, project planning plays a crucial role in the engineering industry. It encompasses several aspects, such as project management, task and action lists, deadlines for completion, ways of distributing information, and the individuals who receive shared information (Dinsmore & Cabanis-Brewin, 2014).

Obonadhuze et al. (2021) posit that communication initiation occurs when the sender encodes their thoughts or ideas into a comprehensible language for the recipient. The communication is transmitted via a suitable medium to reach the intended recipient. Disruptions or commotion during the message's transmission may compromise its quality or meaning. According to Dinsmore and Cabanis-Brewin (2014), project managers must establish accurate communication terms, determine the intended recipients, and employ comprehensible language for interpretation. The response or feedback signifies the extent to which the recipient understood or implemented the suggestions or concepts in the communication (Obonadhuze et al., 2021). Likewise, Jones (2024) underscores various elements contributing to enhanced construction communication. These include establishing a well-defined communication hierarchy, selecting the appropriate method of communication for each message, and actively engaging in listening. Jones (2024) emphasizes the significance of comprehending and efficiently processing messages.

In addition, communication is established and maintained with the intended recipients via a pre-established channel during the construction phase (Obonadhuze et al., 2021). Upward communication pertains to utilizing authorized channels, including written and verbal means, for communication between management subordinates and other personnel. By disseminating information to personnel in an efficient manner, the accomplishment of project objectives is ensured. Horizontal (lateral) communications are acceptable for cultivating favorable professional relationships among equivalent-level colleagues or managers (Obonadhuze et al., 2021).

Consequently, embarking on an exploration of hierarchical culture in engineering worksites, a study by Jordan, Lee, and Yang (2016) focuses on communication-efficient distributed statistical inference, which can be applied to hierarchical communication structures within construction companies. Furthermore, their research offers significant contributions by examining the possible hierarchies present in the communication patterns of civil engineers operating within a construction organization and the efficiency of communication.

3. METHODOLOGY

Methods and Techniques Used

The researchers utilized qualitative methods in their study. Qualitative research entails gathering and examining non-numerical data to comprehensively understand concepts, opinions, or experiences and provide new research ideas (Bhandari, 2020). In particular, the study applied a descriptive research design. Its execution is predominately explanatory in comprehensively describing the research topic (Busayo Longe, 2020).

Furthermore, as this study aimed to explore communication dynamics at RDDC, the researchers employed a descriptive research approach. This design facilitates researchers' precise and accurate collection of pertinent data to gain insight into communication dynamics.

Respondents of the Study

Three civil engineers employed by RDDC comprised the study participants. The researchers selected the participants through purposive sampling. Hassan (2024) defines it as a non-probability sampling method to choose individuals or groups that satisfy specified criteria pertinent to the research purpose. In this study, the sole criterion established by the researcher was a civil engineer employed at the RDDC.

Instrument of the Study

The researchers obtained the necessary data using a semi-structured interview. By integrating aspects of structured and unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews offer an expanded and more intricate dimension using open-ended questions (George, 2022). Furthermore, the researchers devised an interview schedule consisting of predetermined questions as the primary tool for the study. The predetermined questions consist of queries aligned with the study's objectives.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers carried out a direct, in-person format interview. The participants were interviewed separately, taking into account their availability. The duration of the interview ranges from approximately forty minutes to one hour. The audio recording was meticulously collected and transcribed to acquire the essential information for researching the dynamic communication in the work environment of RDDC.

In addition, the obtained data undergoes a thematic analysis. The data are subjected to careful examination by the researcher in order to discern recurring patterns of meaning, concepts, and subjects (Caulfield, 2023). The researchers from the transcribed texts encode a pattern-revealing data set. A singular theme was subsequently derived from the merged codes and subjected to analysis and interpretation.

Research Ethics

The researchers took measures to protect the rights and decorum of the participants and preserve the study's integrity. The participants were provided information regarding the interview process, including the study's objectives. In addition, the researchers ensure that the interview timetables accommodate the participants' availability. The participant's personal information was kept confidential unless specified for disclosure.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Culture of Communication in the Field of Civil Engineering

In light of the data collected, the researchers identified the following features of the communication culture at RDDC: (1) positive attitude, (2) flexible work schedule, and (3) reliability.

Positive attitude. It transcends straightforward enjoyment and a smile. It is an entity that surpasses superficial joy and exerts a profound impact. An individual with a positive attitude is calmer and more fulfilled at work, according to Forseth (2023). As Participant 1 put it, "I am working and still learning. That is what most of my former bosses here told me." The statement is further substantiated by Participant 1, who said, "Even though we were working under the heat of the sun, we still found time to enjoy ourselves and cope with the stress." The findings suggest that maintaining a positive attitude in communication is an effective means of achieving communication goals and enhancing interpersonal relationships.

Flexible Work Schedule. Employees are given the choice to accomplish activities at their preferred time of peak productivity. A flexible work schedule can enhance a company's employees' physical and mental well-being. By mitigating the probability of exhaustion, personnel can effectively regulate their stress levels and diminish the risk of experiencing burnout (Editorial Team, 2022). Participant 1 supported the assertion by stating, "Since we also prioritize their health, we are not strict with their work time. When it is too hot, we wait till the ray of sun is not too hot for our skin." The outcome implies that they adhere to a high-context culture due to the absence of time restrictions

Reliability. One attribute that businesses desire in an employee is reliability. Ariella (2023) defines reliability as the ability to perform tasks accurately and independently without supervision and adapt quickly to find solutions. According to Participant 3, "When they were given a task, I saw that they were dedicated to finishing it on time. Reason why, bigger projects were given to those we think based on the assessment were reliable enough." Participant 2 backed this up by stating, "It was instilled in me that money does not come first, but being reliable as well as diligent is a way to enjoy things while working." The results demonstrate that successful communication, utilizing verbal and non-verbal cues, exhibited reliability, reflecting a solid work ethic.

Flow of Communication in the Workplace of Civil Engineers

Based on the data gathered by the researchers from the interview, the flow of communication in the workplace of civil engineers is (1) a downward flow of communication and (2) horizontal communication. Additionally, a positive and negative feedback loop was also discovered.

1. Downward flow of communication. A means of transferring tasks and information from superiors to subordinates. This function facilitates the transmission of organization policies, the delegation of responsibilities, and the provision of feedback to subordinate staff (Turner, 2023). This assertion was supported by Participant 1, who stated, "Usually, in a corporation, there is a ranking system. Here, our boss was the one who instructed the managers, and the managers will disseminate the task to the employees."

Channels of Communication. It is a tool used in the workplace to convey information effectively. According to Turner 2023, corporations can use many downward communication routes to achieve successful transmission and reception. There are in-person and digital methods. The in-person conversion helps people quickly understand and respond to questions and concerns (Turner, 2023). As stated by Participant 1, "During meetings, our boss usually sits at the center and the one who

leads the team." Additionally, according to Turner (2023), emails and memos provide precise and detailed communication, ensuring employees grasp the message. This was supported by Participant 3, who said, "Through email, details of the new project alongside the documents needed were sent to us."

The findings indicate that the company's downward flow of communication follows a formal manner of communication. Consequently, the transmission of information follows a pattern from superior to subordinate. Furthermore, the results show that communication occurs through in-person interactions and electronic means like emails.

2. Upward Communication. Employees and subordinates communicate their thoughts and opinions to their superiors. Smith (2023) states that upward communication informs managers of employees' sentiments regarding their employment, organizational policies and procedures, and the organization as a whole. As stated by Participant 2, "We can discuss our concerns regarding a specific matter with our supervisor." Furthermore, Participant 3 asserted, "Of course, the tone is casual. We joke around, and sometimes they are the first to kick off a joke. We have to build a good relationship with them. Being formal might put a barrier between me and them." Based on the data, an upward flow of communication between superiors and subordinates fosters mutual trust in the workplace.

3. Horizontal Flow of Communication. Peers at the same hierarchical levels engage in conversation with each other to enhance work efficiency. Traditional face-to-face horizontal communication has expanded to include electronic means such as email or phone (Ward, 2021). The testimony of Participant 3 corroborates this claim: "During our work at the project site, our communication primarily took place in person, while for urgent matters, we relied on the use of Messenger." The results suggest that communication among engineers at the same level occurs in person and through modern technologies.

Feedback Loop. The act of receiving feedback and utilizing it for one's professional development. Feedback loop Feedback may be positive or negative. For instance, within a professional environment, a manager might offer constructive criticism to an employee, which can inspire and encourage them to sustain their exceptional performance (Ian, 2023). On the contrary, Ian (2023) asserts that negative feedback loops frequently manifest when the feedback emphasizes negative rather than positive aspects. This statement was backed up by Participant 3, who stated, "I guide them and compliment or appreciate their efforts on their project.", and Participant 1, who stated, "If needed, I tell them what needs to be done in a not-so-harsh way, but impactful. The data indicate that communication at RDDC involves an interplay of both positive and negative feedback loops.

Challenges in Communication Faced in Civil Engineering Environment

With the data gathered from the interview, the challenges in communication faced by the RDDC are conflict management and miscommunication.

Conflict Management. It is a process of managing and settling disagreements constructively. Conflict is an inevitable fact for any organization. It is a situation when two or more parties are in disagreement. (Lim & Yazdanifard, 2012). This was supported by Participant 1, "Now here, issues or intrigues among our technical people often arise. What we do in those situations is to confront them, talk to them, advise them, and as much as possible, avoid those kinds of things."

The findings indicate that conflict management is an essential component of organizational dynamics. It maintains harmony, productivity, and positive connections among team members. The statement made by Participant 1 emphasizes how RDDC adopts a proactive stance when addressing problems and intrigues among its technical personnel.

Miscommunication. It happens when two or more people cannot accurately communicate or understand each other. It occurs in diverse workplaces due to differences in cultural backgrounds, language proficiency, communication styles, and non-verbal cues. Furthermore, the complexity of the concept makes it one of the most challenging problems that modern-day organizations are currently dealing with (Cletus et al., 2018). The perspective was backed by Participant 3, "In giving instructions, perhaps there are words that have different meanings in their culture compared to mine. Sometimes, miscommunication arises from that, but it rarely happens; most of the time, we still understand each other."

The results suggest that effective communication can face significant obstacles due to workplace diversity. The viewpoint of Participant 3 emphasizes how linguistic and interpretive cultural variations might lead to misunderstanding. The study's participants generally continue to comprehend one another despite these obstacles, indicating that communication barriers can be overcome with effort and understanding.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the Rockavilla Realty and Development Corporation (RDDC) is an organization that facilitates a variety of communication. The study's findings in terms of the company's flow of communication are upward communication, downward flow of communication, and horizontal flow of communication. A feedback loop was also determined through this dynamic and organized communication style in the workplace, which exists in both negative and positive ways. The workers' positive attitude, reliability, and the company's flexible work schedule on the site also contributed to the effectiveness of the institution's communication. Thus, the organization's primary source of prolific communication is its discipline, behavior, and moral characteristics. However, despite the miscellany of the organization's communication, challenges still needed to be discovered as it was identified that conflicting management had been performed in the company due to issues and intrigues that arose among the employees.

Furthermore, cultural variations that lead to miscommunication serve as impediments or barriers to communication. Hence, the study's findings suggest improvements in cultural understanding and the emotional management or handling of the workers. Appropriate programs or seminars that will help incoming workers prepare to associate themselves with other employees with different cultures practiced, beliefs, and regarded values are recommended to be implemented in the institution or any workplace. Moreover, administering more restrictions regarding meeting deadlines and schedules is best for enhancing the efficiency of the workers, which is also vital for developing their relationship with superiors. After a careful and thorough analysis, it is also strongly advised that future researchers study and have comprehensive discussions about cultural communication in the workplace, focusing on newly employed workers.

6. LIMITATIONS

•The research study is limited to a single organization.
•A small sample size constrains the study. Due to scheduling conflicts and respondent availability, only three participants were interviewed.

•There are limited studies on communication dynamics in civil engineers' workplaces.
•The participants' bias could have a substantial impact on the data analysis.

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