

**EXPLORING COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS AT AN ENGINEERING
WORKPLACE: AN INTERVIEW-BASED STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Lack of communication is a universal phenomenon. Organizations, companies, corporations, and firms often require good communication practices to thrive in an environment where social interactions flourish and strong employee ties are maintained. However, various communication barriers bring hurdles in every communication process, and organizational communication is not an exception.

Therefore, the main concern of this study is to evaluate the most recognized communication strategies practiced by the selected Engineering firm, Henro Construction and Development Corporation, in the City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, and to determine how the three selected personnel handle the challenges that occur within their workplace; including the cultural aspects of the employees and the clients they interact with. All of the data acquired from the participants were gathered with permission. The researchers used a qualitative research design and collected the data by conducting a structured data collection technique with ten open-ended questionnaires in the form of a face-to-face interview.

Based on the results obtained, it is confirmed that an organization, indeed, considers communication as the heart of every organizational success. The presence of cultural differences and the importance of company training for the employees were identified. For this reason, the integration of cultures into one brought the members of the organization closer, and the implementation of training led to more effective and successful transmission of ideas.

Keywords: Communication Strategies, Face-to-face Interview, Communication Barriers, Engineering Firm, Cultural Differences.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is crucial for an Engineering firm to have a good foundation of communication to perform their respective duties competently. In this interview-based paper, the researchers have chosen Henro Construction and Development Corporation as the main subject to be observed. Henro Construction and Development Corporation is a construction firm located in the City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan that centralizes in developing and renovating homes. The corporation's ultimate goal is to provide a comfortable place by developing and renovating modern shelters in the presence of a home. It was founded by Engineer Henro Robes and still continuously rendering its service to the Filipino people.

The main objective of this research is to acquire an enhanced perception of the communication dynamics happening within the corporation. This aims to obtain knowledge regarding their work culture, observing the members' ethics and values that influence their behaviors when interacting with one another. Additionally, this paper wants to address the conflicts

the people in the organization are commonly experiencing while communicating, and their different strategies to settle them.

In line with this, the researchers used a qualitative approach to determine how communication works inside the organization. This aims to discover the flow of communication among the people behind the corporation. Furthermore, interview questions were used to gather data about the existing culture and the difficulties present while communicating with each other.

2. THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Organizational Communication

In the present world, communication is undeniably an essential academic discipline and organizational communication is a crucial subset of it. Every goal-driven business entity holds within them a certain recipe that can maintain a refreshing environment where no one feels unattended and invaluable. This is the main purpose of effective communication: to build strong ties between the people, to promote teamwork, and to create a haven for everyone where open communication is met. Nevertheless, certain boundaries are still present (Downs et. al, 2020).

In terms of historical context, Smith (1992, as cited in Mumby and Kuhn, 2018) explained that two important perspectives have been influential to organizational-communication relationships. These are: 1.) The Communication in Organization perspective and 2.) Organizations as Communication Perspectives.

Communication from an organizational perspective is an approach where normal conversation occurs inside of an organization. On this basis, organizations are the vessels of communication processes in which important messages are sent coming from different areas and positions. Meanwhile, the Organization as a Communication Perspective, to put it in simple words, is the most fundamental foundation of life in an organization. Organizations come to a stop when communication is not present.

The study of Antony (2013) focused on how effective communication influences labor productivity in Civil Engineering projects at Kampala Central division. Key factors like work duration, educational background, timely updates on project changes, teamwork, and proper training were examined. The results indicated that clear communication and timely updates on project changes are essential for productivity. Managers are advised to give clear instructions, offer sufficient training, promote teamwork, and establish effective communication strategies to enhance productivity.

Further studies proved that companies that have good communications can survive even the most downsizing moment of their life. A study by Conrad (2014) emphasized that good communication habits can be considered the heart of every triumphant company. It is said that every company with good communication benefits two major things, and those are: the ability to receive important information and the creation of strong bonds and relationships with one another. Every employee must feel that they have the right to voice out. They also have to sense that they are rightfully being told crucial information.

Moreover, Kube (2014) explained in his study that open communication in an organization leads to a culture of inclusiveness, and therefore plays a significant role in team building and prevents the incident of losing ideas during group work. His study also highlighted several advantageous results of responsive communication among the members of an organization, such as the creation of an environment where ideas are shared and all employee's thoughts are taken

into account. This drives employees to have better interaction with their clients and improves the overall well-being of the organization.

Cultural Aspects of Communication

Culture serves as a framework of behaviors, attitudes, and actions within an organization. It is also often described as a bundle of norms, values, beliefs, and common interests that define a particular group of people. As a result, different cultures and subcultures emerged, reflecting multiple types of organizational views such as their communication styles (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016).

In today's world, cultural background has become a crucial point of reference for interaction and communication among employees in the workplace (Tharp, 2009, as cited in Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Sapungan et. al (2014) supported the idea that communication is not only a way of interconnecting our thoughts with one another. Instead, communication is also one of the major essences of life which considers the exchange of values, beliefs, and perspectives in life. Furthermore, Black et. al (1992, as cited in Belias & Koustelios, 2014) revealed that different cultural backgrounds lead to organizational incompetence due to the incapacity to adjust to unconventional practices. In conclusion, their studies justified that communication is a fundamental aspect of valuing every individual's feelings and embracing every message that everyone has to convey.

Challenges / Barriers of Communication

There are several hurdles in communication that will show up by default to mess up during the communication process. These are also the major reasons why misunderstanding, misconception, and miscommunication happen every once in a while, which are called communication barriers (Boone, 2013).

Communication barriers are the concerning issues that occur in every communication process, either due to external factors or the ones that are caused by different cultural contexts. This is what makes communication unreliable enough (Mamoria, 2013).

Buarqoub (2019) further supported the claim that a bad communication practice can lead to far-too-plausible effects which include confusion, low level of understanding, unreliable information, changed meanings, concerning details, and even a life and death situation that only began as a mere misunderstanding and misinterpretation. When it becomes a habit, what seems to be a small confusion may lead to a disruptive effect. The suggested solution for the said problem is to practice specific and simple wordings, avoid sarcasm, provide contexts, ask for feedback, and prevent typographical and grammatical errors. Hiring a language specialist and professional translators may also help in a company's communication practice, especially when workers use regional dialects and foreign employees have varying languages.

Odine (2015) studied many organizations' communication management wherein he pointed out that learning what issues are present in the communication process is not enough to ensure that good communication circulates. In addition to that, he highlighted the significance of implementing training and seminars, as a preventive measure ensuring good communication within a certain environment, to address communication issues.

Mostly, an organization or a company tends to underestimate concerns coming from their low-level employees. The concerning thing about this is the fact that ignoring what their employees have to say may cost them a lot more than expected. Moreover, when the employees learn about

the important matters that should be discussed but are being held, they tend to feel rage, disvalued, and worst, feel as though they are irrelevant. A similar situation that may occur is when gossip circles in social media and become out of their control, distorted stories can be expected. These are just minor possibilities that may occur when some matters are not communicated (Vdovin, 2023).

According to Erlangga and Sos (2020, as quoted in Sunarsi, 2020), in communication, interaction with each other is needed. Thus, many factors that influence it arise, and one of them is the person involved in said communication. In communicating in modern times, challenges in understanding one another appeared all over the world with highly developed technology. Leadership communication does not only determine the survival of a company, but it also determines the company's reputation through the style used by the boss and the employees themselves.

On the other hand, Hussain (2018) said that language barriers, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, culture shock, attitude, time management on tasks, and trust are the few challenges in communication that were commonly observed.

3. METHODOLOGY

Methods and Techniques

This study utilized a qualitative research design to determine the communication dynamics in the corporation. According to Tenny (2022), this approach provides data from the respondents' insights and personal experiences. In this paper, the researchers gathered data regarding in communication process and obstacles the employees and the employer have encountered while working together in an organization.

Sampling Technique

The respondents of this study are the three (3) personnel under the organization, such as the Chief Executive Officer and the two (2) foremen. The selection was based on their relevance to the firm, in which they often have the bigger part to take in every organizational communication, and their availability to be a respondent.

Research Instrument

The researchers conducted a structured interview and prepared ten (10) open-ended questions that focused on evaluating the importance of communication in the Engineering industry, as well as the organizations' means of communication. The researchers also considered the vital role of implementing policies, such as confidentiality and hierarchy within the organization, and the possible positive outcomes of them. Moreover, the interviewers asked the interviewees to enumerate the common issues they have encountered while communicating with each other, and what are the things they did to resolve them. Lastly, the participants were questioned about the different transitions in communicating as the years passed by.

Data Collection Procedure

Upon selecting the participants, the researchers proceed to set a place to conduct an interview. Several considerations were made, such as the distance of both the interviewers and the participants' place from the designated interview location, the location's safety from any harmful events, and the possibility of distractions while doing the interview. Furthermore, in obtaining data from the respondents, the researchers asked first their permission to record the whole interview, as the strict implementation of confidentiality is important to protect their privacy.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Using the data collected by the researchers, the study was able to answer the questions on how organizational communication occurs in the company based on the researchers' observation and how the members of the organization interact with one another. The interviewees gave relatively similar answers to the questions, such as when the researchers questioned their methods of communication, they answered that they mostly communicate verbally through face-to-face settings, or when far apart from each other, they use another medium, such as cellphones and laptops, to let the manager communicate with the employees.

Although miscommunication happens, it can be minimized through successful communication. However, it cannot be avoided at any cost, so one of the interviewees stated that when such a thing happens, the boss will personally handle the matter, thus no further problems will arise because everything, including the employees' behaviors, will be settled. Furthermore, the need to be meticulous in addressing the problem is one of the key factors the respondents answered to have a smooth flow of communication within the organization.

Additionally, according to one of the interviewees, adaptation is a must. In contracting, one should start to prioritize humility instead of money because there are clients who do not want an arrogant contractor. Many clients reject low-cost projects because of such contractors, which is why proper use of communication skills is essential in the field of Engineering. Cooperation is also needed when working in the industry. Language barriers are unavoidable, so working around them is a must. All in all, the respondents emphasized that constant communication and comprehension in a workplace builds a stable connection with each other.

Discussion

The outcomes of this study have provided insight into the communication dynamics of an organization. The findings showed that communication is an essential part of a company. Communication has changed greatly in the setting of business organizations. The requirement for multicultural communication skills, changes in the person-organization dynamic, the nature of organizational processes, and technological improvements are the main drivers of these changes (Waldeck et al., 2012). However, it can be solved through adaptation. The respondents adapted to the new way of communicating by maximizing technology, such as cell phones and laptops.

Not only that but the interviewees also shared the importance of exchanging information between each member, especially voicing out their concerns when a problem arises. Therefore, a healthy working environment is one of the factors for better conveying of information, since communication problems, including demeaning attitudes and responding in rude ways, allow incompetence to grow (Blosky & Spegman, 2015).

Miscommunication happens in any company, no matter how big or small the company is. One reason for such a thing to happen is communication barriers. It occurs in every communication process. Thus, the interviewees' way to avoid this is to be patient and try to understand the other person, even when they have a different cultural background. One has to understand other cultures for effective communication to occur since it involves the exchange of meaning. Without this sharing, true communication cannot occur. To succeed in team settings, working with others, or within the community, one must need to understand the context of the communication and recognize the obstacles that prevent the exchange of information (Rani, 2016).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

A corporation is an interconnected organization. Therefore, it must also have an effective way of communication. Constructive transmission of conversation was highly implemented to ensure the efficiency of tasks and duties of the employees and their employers. However, different cultures and modes of communicating are integrated into one as an organization requires it for an effective way of communication, which implies great significance as it improves the flow of work within a company. Communication in the workplace also comes with barriers which might lead to great danger. Nevertheless, it is being handled smoothly.

Recommendations

Implementation of training that focuses on developing communication among the workers within an institution might lead to a more effective and successful transmission of ideas and data. For this reason, effective communication equates to success in the field.

The number of participants is also to be considered in this paper. This can be improved even more if the number of respondents is higher than what is used in the interview, which will enable the researchers to strengthen the results of this study.

Limitations

The respondents of this paper were aligned in the field of Engineering, specifically those people who are in construction. It is how they communicate, their culture, and common challenges faced when communicating. The results from the interviews done by the researchers may present differences from other fields of work or profession.

Additionally, this paper's main focus was communication within an institution or workplace only. It does not necessarily tackle how the workers converse with their respective families, friends outside their duties, and other people. It may vary when compared to how communication flows in their daily setup outside their label.

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