



The Perception of Working Professionals on the Role of Organisational Communication in Enhancing Team Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

This paper tries to explore how communication affects the teamwork of an organisation and gain insight from the studies held in this perspective. In an organisation, it is interaction lays foundation of trust between the employer and the employee. Transparency in communication related to assigned work binds the team members together and allows them to bring out remarkable outcome for the organisation. Also, organisational communication paves way for better understanding of the assigned work, smooth functioning of the organisation and for achieving productivity in work. Commitment towards work from the members of an organisation is achieved through communication. This study reveals that effective communication in an organisation facilitates building up of a strong team apart from free flow of information.

Keywords: Organisational communication, Team building, Teamwork

1. Introduction

The term communication has evolved from the Latin words *communis* (root word) which means common, *communicatio* (noun) which means sharing or imparting and *communicare* (verb word) which means make something common. Thus, communication means exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions between two or more persons or groups in order to create a common understanding (Newman and Charles, 1963). Apparently, communication channel plays a decisive role in achieving common understanding between the communicators.

Communication has an integral role to play in an organisation. The process of communication in an organisation, includes employer, employee, team, team leader, team member or supporting staff. During communication, any one of them or a group takes up the role of sender who encodes the message, then selects a suitable communication channel as the medium to send the message to the respective receiver who decodes the message (Reinsch, 1984). Appropriate conveyance of message depends on the communicators as well as on the medium.

Effectiveness in the act of communication reflects the amount of productive work done in an organisation. It is very important to have proper understanding created by transferring information from an individual or a group to another individual or group (Westmyer et al, 1998). Use of the common system of symbols, signs or behaviours between communicators while speaking, writing or using some other medium, is expected to affect the amount of work done in that organization. This result or output would confirm whether the communication was effective in the organisation.

2. Objective

The study is to analyse the perception of working professionals on the role of organisational communication in enhancing team effectiveness

3. Research Methodology

Researcher explores literatures in the field of communication with respect to team effectiveness in an organisation, through organisational communication. A discussion was held with working professionals in various organisations in India to qualitatively analyse how the working professionals perceived the role of communication in an organisation. For quantitative analysis, a questionnaire was circulated to understand their perception level. The researcher designed a questionnaire with 10 aspects revolving around the factors impacting organisational communication effectively. The survey questions were designed to assess the perception of organisational communication. The focus was on designing questions

around organisational communication with respect to team building and success (Appendix 1). The questionnaire was built on a Likert scale ranging from responses agreeing to disagreeing.

4. Literature Review

Van et. al suggests that organisational communication can contribute towards better functioning of an organisation through affective commitment from the employees. While trying to gain insight on organisational communication to work perceptions, found out that the employer can influence the perception of employees on the values and capabilities of organisations. This study reveals that 'both person-organization fit and the organizational efficacy partly mediate the main effects of communication and affective commitment'.

Sadia et. al confirms the effectiveness of internal communication on employees' productivity. The study explores the relation of employees' efficiency in an organisation with respect to effective communication. Their findings reveal that effective internal communication can positively affect the work capability of employees. The study showed a flourishing in the employee productivity. Further, recognised that effective communication develops a strong bond between the employer and the employee, builds up trust among the employees and make them more productive.

Bergman et. al proposes that effective communication processes can build up trust, good organizational climate and a healthy workplace. Exploring the communication processes happening in workplace meetings of an organisation, researchers found out that the meetings functioned as platforms where the employees could influence decision-making and development at the workplace apart from communicating information from superiors to subordinates. Researchers affirmed that workplace meetings have distinctive value in workplace development and outcome.

Bucata & Rizescu expound that communication is important for the formation of team and achieving performance from them. In their opinion the superior needs to establish bridges between the members of the organisation through effective communication. This would help in executing organisational activities promptly. Communication as a management tool promotes better interpersonal relationship between the subordinates and creates a favourable environment for the development of the organisation. Distribution of organisational power is made possible through effective communication.

Fapohunda recognises the effects of teamwork as contingent upon several factors like the organisations' culture and climate, effectiveness of team leadership, employee commitment, the system of compensation and rewards, and the level of employee autonomy. The researcher indicates that 'clear goals; decision making authority; accountability and responsibility; effective leadership; training and development; provision of resources; organizational support; and rewards for team success'.

5. Group discussion

A discussion was held to understand the perception of the members working in several organisations regarding the role of communication in an organisation. Each member was given an opportunity to speak about their understanding on the role of communication in their organisation well as put forth their concern in the respective matter. The main points accrued from the discussions were related to communication in an organisation, relevance of communication in team work and the importance of communication in building up strong team in an organisation. The details of the discussion are as follows

5.1. *Communication and organisation*

Communication is an indispensable part of an organization. Conveyance of information in an organisation happens through communication. Employer will have to communicate with subordinates regarding the work-requirements in the organisation. Similarly, the employees will have their requirements regarding the work for which they may have to approach the employer or colleagues in that organisation. Here, communication supports everyone in the organisation for its smooth functioning.

Being a two-way process, communication facilitates sharing of information in an organisation for attaining mutual understanding. The information from the sender has to be improved for the receiver to understand properly. Also, the sender has to understand what the receiver has to communicate. Obviously, both the sender and the receiver try to understand and to be understood. This helps to develop mutual understanding with everyone - between employees or employer-employee in the organisation.

The two-way approach of communication helps an organisation to execute the basic functions of the management like planning, leading, organising and controlling very efficiently. Employer reaches out to the employees for informing plans related to work or task or project or assignment or about the organisation, lead them during implementation, support them while organising and control them whenever required, through communication. Also, the employer will get response or feedback regarding the respective work, from the employees.

Communication functions as a tool to achieve the desired targets in an organisation. The employer uses communication to motivate the employees, gain their trust, kindle interest towards organisational goals and drive their potential to extract best output for the organisation. In this context, communication helps to reach out to the employees regarding their goal and achieve desired result for the organisation. The extent to which a manager accomplishes corporate goals depends on his ability to communicate effectively (Herich, 2008).

5.2. Communication and teamwork

Organisational climate could be made favourable for productive work mostly through communication. Though the organisation has its own aims and objectives, employees also will have their own individual aims and objectives. So, it is necessary to synchronise the objectives of the employees with that of the organisation to achieve best result or output or outcome from the whole team. Here, communication is the only option before the employer to address the matter and bring their attention to the organisational goal.

Team work becomes fruitful only when each member of the team strives hard for a common goal rather than an individual goal. Possibility to achieve this goal is by maintaining transparency in communication between the members of the team, regarding the work assigned to them. This approach is expected to build up rapport and develop trust among the employees. Also, the employer or team leader would be able to drive the employees to steer forward a common goal through purpose-oriented communication.

Proper dissemination of work within the team becomes necessary to achieve a desired result. Here, the team as a whole will have to understand the assignment as well as the potential of their members to allocate the work. In this context, proper communication between the members of the team becomes essential to understand the assignment before them and what each one would be able to contribute. This communication would be beneficial to reveal the amount of work, necessity of team work and for good outcome.

Team work can bring in change in the work culture of an organisation through communication. Communication with the team is expected to make each member realise their individual potential and fuel up their performance. This performance would radiate positivity in the organisation. Thus, the encouragement that is permeated through communication can bring in change at the individual level, could move on to higher levels and can become the work culture of that organisation.

Communication can aid brainstorming of ideas in a team. As team work upholds co-operative working mentality, a team is more likely to work together and come up with better ideas. During times of stagnancy, solution becomes inevitable to move forward with the assignment. Here, communication with the team members will help to brainstorm ideas and come to a consensus on a possible solution or remedy. This brainstorming session is expected to put the team back to working mode and steer forward with enthusiasm.

5.3. Team building and organisation

Communication is as the heart and soul of any team. Communication has a major role to play in order to bring the team together. It is communication that mediates the task, sets target, schedules activities, conveys information, designates responsibilities, helps to socialize, figures out strengths and weakness, helps to discuss problems and assists in developing positive work atmosphere. Obviously, communication connects the members of a team and keeps them together to work unitedly for a common goal.

The progress or success of an organisation is accelerated by the sincere work of the team of employees. To become successful as a team, the goals of each member of the team has to be channelised in the same direction. Also, the whole team has to work towards a common goal. When the potential of each member is figured out and driven towards the same purpose, the team would be aligned towards a target. Thus, united effort of the team would prove to be beneficial for the growth of the organisation.

Good interpersonal relationship between the employees of an organisation becomes essential for building up a team (Brennan, 1974). Obviously, employees need to learn to value each other in terms of their strength. Understanding the potential of each member would be beneficial while assigning a task. Working with members of different abilities is expected to bring out excellence in the work, as weakness of one would be sufficed by the strength of the other. This team building efforts would bring success for the organisation.

Collaborative work of the team provides clarity as well as support for the members of the team. Employees are likely to be more productive when they work in a team. The feel of being part of a team is expected to bring out the best performance from them. Likewise, collective effort permeates confidence to take up the task and gives motivation to carry forward the work with enthusiasm. Eventually, the foundation for team building would be made strong. This strong team would be an asset for the organisation and would deliver success.

Performance level of a team could be improved by motivation which could be achieved through communication (Mckinney, Barker, Smith & Davis, 2004). Low performers in a team could be informed about the manner in which their performance could be improved by providing suggestions. Those with better performance could be informed on enhancing their performance level or may be detailed on moving to the next level. In both the contexts, communication facilitates the purpose of improving the competence level of the performer.

Decision-making process in a team necessitates communication between the members. Any information related to the assigned task has to be shared with the members of the team before taking a decision. This would be followed by a discussion between the members of the team leading to a conclusion. All these procedures require the whole team to analyse the information, identify pros and cons, check for alternative options and offer opinions. During each stage, communication allows the team to reach out to each other.

5.4. Organisational communication

Organisational communication can be understood as the type of communication that happens for the requirement of an organisation. This communication can happen for internal purpose or external purpose. Internal purpose can refer to the type of communication that happens between an employer and employee or between employees. External purpose refers to the communication that happens between the organisation with the general public. When internal communication happens mainly for generating outcome external communication happens for developing business.

Communication in the form of rules and regulations are informed through downward communication channels in an organisation. Employer informs the team about the organisational policies as part of work ethics or work culture. Here, the flow of information or communication happens between superior and subordinate. This formal channel of communication, facilitates the flow of information from the employer to the team members and supports team building.

Communication in the form of opinion or grievance towards the higher authority of an organisation is conveyed by means of upward communication channel. This type of communication serves as feedback for the downward communication and informs the employer about the progress of an assignment or effectiveness of the implementation of their plans and policies on behalf of this communication. Also, employer makes considerable changes or revisions in their plans and policies on the basis of upward communication. Obviously, this type of communication favours team building. Communication for mutual understandings between the employees of an organisation is achieved through horizontal communication. This happens with the employees at the same level with an intention of clarification, discussion or conflict resolution. This type of communication helps in analysing the matter and in co-ordinating their activities without escalating most of the issues to the superiors. Most often, this communication develops a favourable work culture in the organisation and supports in building up strong team.

6. Results and discussions

The response based on each question of each respondent was assessed with respect to their agreement level - very often (V), often (O), sometimes (S), rarely (R) and not at all (N). Total number of persons who agreed or disagreed completely and partially for each question was found out. Similarly, who maintained neutral viewpoint was also found out. These numbers were converted to percentage to find out the acceptance level of organisational communication among the whole respondents.

Table I – Agreement level of working professionals in percentage

| Agreement level | Very often (V) | Often (O) | Sometimes (S) | Rarely (R) | Not at all (N) |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|------------|----------------|
| Question | | | | | |
| Development | 80 | 18 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Motivation to work | 42 | 42 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| Work-culture | 56 | 30 | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| Successful teamwork | 76 | 20 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Interpersonal relationship | 72 | 24 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Goal orientation | 52 | 38 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Team building | 58 | 28 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Employee-employee | 50 | 44 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Employee-employer | 38 | 34 | 26 | 2 | 0 |
| Employer-employee | 48 | 26 | 22 | 4 | 0 |

6.1. Data Analysis

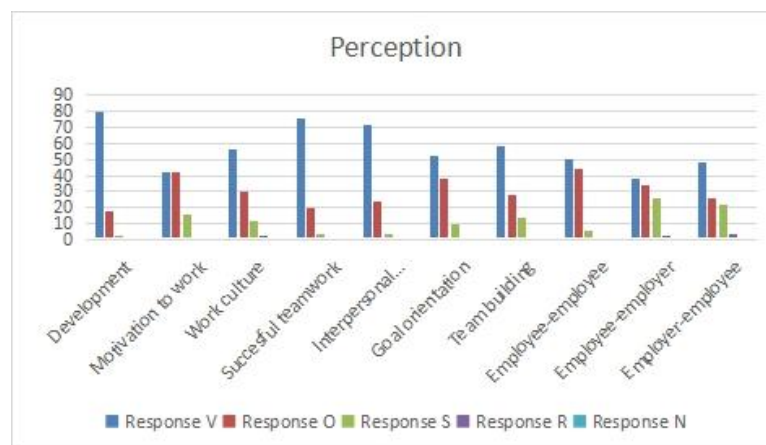


Fig. I - Perception

Overall percentage level shows that majority of the persons has affinity towards organisational communication. Considering the perception level, each of the aspects showed agreement level is more than 50%, though the level fluctuated from higher to high in most case. Disagreement was less with least neutral responses. The graph (fig. I) represents the perception of working professionals towards the impact of communication in an organisation over 10 aspects. The analysis for each perception is given below

6.1.1. Does communication play an important role in the development of an organisation?

80% responded as very often (V), 18% responded as often (O) and 2% responded as sometimes (S). This data reveals that 98% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion agreed on the effect of communication on development of the organisation and only 2% was not sure about that effect. But, nobody disagreed. Obviously, this aspect is very well agreed by more than majority of the respondents with confidence.

6.1.2. Do you think communication will motivate the employees to work hard?

42% responded as very often (V), 42% responded as often (O) and 16% responded as sometimes (S). This data reveals that 84% of the working professionals have agreed that communication can motivate the employees to work hard and only 16% was not sure about that effect. But, nobody disagreed.

6.1.3. Can communication develop good work culture in the organisation?

56% responded as very often (V), 30% responded as often (O), 12% responded as sometimes (S) and 2% as rarely (R). This data reveals that 86% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion agreed that communication can develop good work culture in the organisation, though 12% was not sure about the impact and 2% disagreed to some extent.

6.1.4. Will teamwork become successful through communication?

76% responded as very often (V), 20% responded as often (O) and 4% responded as sometimes (S). This data reveals that 96% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion have agreed that teamwork would become successful through communication and only 4% was not sure about the effect. But, nobody disagreed.

6.1.5. Do you think communication can develop good interpersonal relationship between team members?

72% responded as very often (V), 24% responded as often (O) and 4% responded as sometimes (S). This data reveals that 96% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion have agreed that communication could develop good interpersonal relationship between team members and only 4% was not sure about the effect. But, nobody disagreed.

6.1.6. Can communication unite the team towards a common goal?

52% responded as very often (V), 38% responded as often (O) and 10% responded as sometimes (S). This means that 90% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion agreed that communication can unite the team towards a common goal, though 10% was not sure about the impact. But, nobody disagreed.

6.1.7. Is it possible to build up a strong team through communication?

58% responded as very often (V), 28% responded as often (O) and 14% responded as sometimes (S). This means that 86% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion agreed that communication can be utilised to build up a strong team, though 14% was not sure about the possibility. But, nobody disagreed.

6.1.8. Will communication facilitate mutual understanding between the colleagues?

50% responded as very often (V), 44% responded as often (O) and 6% responded as sometimes (S). This means that 94% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion agreed that communication can facilitate mutual understanding between the colleagues, though 6% was not sure about the effect.

6.1.9. Do you communicate your feedback, grievances and opinions to your employer occasionally?

38% responded as very often (V), 34% responded as often (O), 26% responded as sometimes (S) and 2% as rarely (R). This data reveals that 72% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion agreed that they communicate with the employers occasionally regarding feedback, grievances and opinions though 26% was not sure about the impact and 2% disagreed to some extent.

6.1.10. Does your employer communicate organisational policies to you, orally or in written form?

48% responded as very often (V), 26% responded as often (O), 22% responded as sometimes (S) and 4% as rarely (R). This data reveals that 74% of the working professionals who took part in the discussion agreed that the employer communicated organisational policies to the employees, orally or in written form though 22% was not sure about the impact and 4% disagreed to some extent.

6.2. Findings

The result reveals the perception level of the importance of communication in an organisation. Each of the 10 aspects showed high level of acceptance among the working professionals. Overall, the data exemplifies that more than the majority has affirmed the changes that could be made through communication in an organisation. All the aspects received more than 50% agreement. Only 2 aspects received disagreement to some extent. Disagreement was received for those aspects related to upward and downward communication channels and the work culture in an organisation. The agreement level was strong as well as not so strong, but majority showed affinity towards agreement with the aspects related to perceptions of the working professionals. In brief, the study recognizes the strong belief of the employees in building the rapport created by communication in building up a strong team.

7. Conclusion

Effective communication helps in building up a good network in the organisation. The employees are brought together on a common platform gearing up for success through the socialising aspect of communication. This approach is expected to develop positive attitude towards the work culture. The relationship between the employer and the employee would become cordial enough to develop an engaging as well as energetic work environment. Eventually, this would lead to the establishment of a highly result-oriented strong team.

Researches reveal that the existence of successful organisations are mainly based on their teamwork. The process of communication in an organisation coordinates the team members, disseminates information and instils control over the employees. A strong foundation built up on trust is expected to develop good relationship between the team members. This foundation would favour an organisation during crisis management and for accommodating organisational change.

8. Recommendations

Organizations need to develop positive approach towards building up a strong team through effective communication. Employer needs to look into the work-related difficulties of the employees and provide necessary support. They need to train their team members to understand their roles in the respective team. The work has to be assigned to team members understanding their individual ability and management support has to be extended upon requirement. Also, team building activities has to be designed to enhance communication, cooperation and accommodation for developing team effectiveness and performance.

Appendix A. The perception of working professionals on the role of organisational communication in enhancing team effectiveness

| Sl. No. | Question | Very often | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Not at all |
|---------|--|------------|-------|-----------|--------|------------|
| 1 | Does communication play an important role in the development of an organisation? | | | | | |
| 2 | Do you think communication will motivate the employees to work hard? | | | | | |
| 3 | Can communication develop good work culture in the organisation? | | | | | |
| 4 | Will teamwork become successful through communication? | | | | | |
| 5 | Do you think communication can develop good interpersonal relationship between team members? | | | | | |
| 6 | Can communication unite the team towards a common goal? | | | | | |
| 7 | Is it possible to build up a strong team through communication? | | | | | |
| 8 | Will communication facilitate mutual understanding between the colleagues? | | | | | |
| 9 | Do you communicate your feedback, grievances and opinions to your employer occasionally? | | | | | |
| 10 | Does your employer communicate organisational policies to you, orally or in written form? | | | | | |

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