Satisfaction of Faculty Members with the Communication Components and Processes in the College

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Abstract: Communication connects individuals, units, and institutions. It develops rapport, initiates ideas, and encourages innovations. However, communication, when wrongly performed, can also break linkages, destroy relationships, impede understanding, and hinders advancement. Through a descriptive survey method and purposive sampling, this study assessed the level of satisfaction of the faculty members with the communication channels, communication flow, communication feedback, and access to communication. Results manifest the need to review the communication policies, procedures, and protocols of the institution and that these should be regularly disseminated from managerial to line personnel, staff, and students.

1. Introduction

Communication can be seen as the foundation of knowledge management. Probst, et al. (2000) cited that systematic communication is an essential precondition for launching knowledge management activities and carrying them through. Knowledge management involves personal communication within networks of relationships, or interaction between people and machines. Communication between the decision-makers and those affected by the activities is critically important. Baker (2002) mentioned that communication practices and technologies have become more important in all organizations much more in knowledge-intensive sectors. However, McDermott and Sexton (2004) stated that “Communication technology changes at warp speed.” In not a long while, more and more communication devices and innovations will surely be invented and initiated.

Communication processes influence organization’s effectiveness and efficiency in handling or managing its affairs. These affect the performance of administrators and employees and the satisfaction of both not only in the processes involving communication but also in the diverse systems and procedures in the institution. Putti, Aryee and Phua (as cited in Bowditch, et al., 2008) said that satisfaction with communication is suggested to enhance the individual’s sense of membership in his or her organization, yet can contribute to a reduced commitment to the organization and its tasks. For this reason, there is a need to assess the communication components and processes and the satisfaction of organizational players as regard the communication flow, the channels utilized, the feedback processes, and the access to communications.

2. Results and Discussions

The discussions below reveal the level of satisfaction of the faculty members along the four (4) components of communication process namely, the communication channels, flow, feedback, and access. Accordingly, the computation of the mean ratings along all the categories conferred moderate satisfaction of the faculty members.

2.1. Level of Satisfaction of Faculty Members with the Communication Channels

Table 1 discloses the level of satisfaction along communication channels. While there are faculty members who appreciate receiving memos by taking those as reminders and notifications, there are also some who take memos as against them. Hence, some faculty members react to memos by reacting negatively and criticizing explicitly.

Interestingly, memos under print or written media have the highest mean rating. This entails that the respondents have high level of satisfaction regarding such written communication from the superiors. This further entails that faculty members perceive that the proper procedure or appropriate approach is being fulfilled by the superiors in giving memos to them or their colleagues.

With regard to the factors that may have affected the answers of the respondents to this item, the frequency of issuing memos by the administrators may not have direct influence. Despite the fact that the release of memos are aptly conformed for purposes of good and efficient personnel and records management, there are some departments or
institutions who minimize the release of memos due to the negative implications by recipients.

Table 1. Level of Satisfaction of Faculty Members with the use of Communication Channels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>Very Much Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very Much Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notices</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>Very Much Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin boards</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>Very Much Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>Very Much Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular phone</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic media (e-mail, intranet, internet)</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.22</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moderately Satisfied</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the factors that may have affected the answers of the respondents to this item, the frequency of issuing memos by the administrators may not have direct influence. Despite the fact that the release of memos are aptly conformed for purposes of good and efficient personnel and records management, there are some departments or institutions who minimize the release of memos due to the negative implications by recipients.

The use of electronic media (e-mail, intranet, internet), obtained the lowest rating which is 2.71. This means that the respondents are moderately satisfied about this channel of communication. Some factors that may have influenced the respondents in answering this item include lack of computers, intranet, and internet. It was also revealed during the interviews that in most of the schools, internet and intranet are not readily available. There are also some who would only consider these as the least among the channels of communication, while some would not prefer the use of e-mails because these often result to lack of preservation or documentation of messages.

Electronic media (e-mail, internet, intranet, other social media) had radically changed organizations’ operations. This serves a forum to promote a desired image, to communicate with customers, and to conduct business of diverse origins. But despite its role to organizations today, there are still disadvantages. In some organizations, employees are often found checking their e-mails, thus, draining organizational productivity (Argenti, 2009).

Miller (2009) imparts that electronic mail has clearly changed both personal and organizational life in recent years. Jones (2002) reports that the number of emails sent daily from 1995 to 2001 had exponentially increased. E-mail is an ubiquitous form of organizational communication that can be used to send instant messages to targeted individuals, to broadcast information to a large organizational group, to chat with collaborators, exchange complex documents, and many more. However, Miller argues that even though this contributed to a dramatic change in the realm of communication, organizational players should still utilize this in a way that would be most beneficial to the organization.

There is, however, a slight difference between item 1, electronic media, and item 2.a, phone conversations with the use of telephone which had a mean rating of 2.74. This implies that the respondents are moderately satisfied in the use of telephones. The proliferation of technology used in communication such as mobile phones may have declined the use of the most common and one of the oldest channel of communication - the telephone. In small institutions where offices of different departments are just adjacent with each other or the faculty and staff and heads stay in one building or one area, as in the case of most schools of Criminal Justice in C.A.R., the use of the telephone is infrequent in faculty – head conversations. Usually, the channels are print media or ordinary conversation.

The subordinates are also moderately satisfied with nonverbal communication. With regard to this, Bergland (1992) cited that in communication, only 7% clues can be derived from spoken words, 38% from voice tone, and 55% from nonverbal or facial expression. Thus, if nonverbal or facial expressions are not very well or skilfully portrayed, or maybe conveyed differently from the message being spoken, then the audience or receivers in the process of communication may obtain a negative impression on the speaker or on the message.

2.2. Level of Satisfaction of Faculty Members with the Communication Flow

The faculty members are very much satisfied with the flow of communication. The items yielded mean ratings from 3.25 to 3.33 where all have the same interpretations as “very much satisfied” as exhibited in the Table 2.

As reflected, item 2 has the highest mean rating of 3.33, interpreted as “very much satisfied”. This implies that the respondents have high satisfaction on the communication between them and their heads. The respondents seem least satisfied with upward communication compared with the downward and horizontal flows. This could imply that since the downward communication is more often the frequently used flow – the respondents have more opportunities to see its outcome and hence, be more satisfied. Upward communication is less commonly used and feedback is not immediately given to them. Hence, the outcome is not as satisfied as downward communication.
2.3. Level of Satisfaction of Faculty Members with the Communication Feedback

Table 3 exhibits that in this area, the level of satisfaction had an area mean of 3.17 which is interpreted as “moderately satisfied”. This is because of the low mean ratings in each item, except for item 1 which is rated 3.28, interpreted as “very much satisfied”. This implies that the respondents have high level of satisfaction as regards their superiors’ delivery of responses of comments. This is often carried out through verbal or written communication.

Though not all administrators are skilled in communication, many are able to deliver well their responses and comments such that their subordinates appreciate them more and admire their humility. Consequently, faculty members will have high level of satisfaction.

Balmores’ (2008) findings disclosed that open communication lines are indispensable in terms of giving feedback, disclosing information to the subordinates, as well as in establishing decisions. The results imply a highly evident open communication as subordinates are encouraged to discuss their concerns or feedbacks with the heads. Like for instance, the heads ask subordinates about their preference as to what they want to be assigned to them, know their reasons for their good actions, and recognize what the teachers feel. However, because some items were reflected to be seldom practiced, she posited that bureaucratic procedures could be a factor.

Lussier and Achua (2007) shared that an effective leader should develop several activities or habits in delivering comments or responses. These are coaching, mentoring, and encouraging self-assessment among employees. He defined coaching as developing employees’ knowledge, abilities and skills. He explained that any leadership behavior that focuses on making the person feel bad does not help develop the employee. For him, some things are best not said because if an employee makes a mistake and realizes it, verbalizing it is not needed, or it will just make them feel bad. Mentoring is a form of coaching in which a more-experienced manager helps a less-experienced protégé. However, this is more involved and personal than coaching. In relation to this, Beich (as cited in Lussier and Achua, 2007) mentioned that the primary responsibility is to coach the protégé by providing good, sound career advice and to help develop leadership skills necessary for a successful management career.

In another light, when negative behaviors or outcomes are observed, Brass, et al (2004) said that it is important to respond positively by pointing mistakes at the same time selling the benefits of positive behavior. This could generate bad mindset among employees. As for Begley (as cited in Lussier and Achua, 2007), he said that subordinates usually remember what they believe and the danger is when they rely on misinformation even when shown these are to be wrong.
In some occasions, there are managers who do not know the proper approaches in delivering their comments. Therefore, for the subordinates these are criticisms. Placing blame and embarrassment and focusing on the person are not comments but are types of criticism. This action is rarely effective because it involves a judgment, which for the person the action is either right or wrong (Hymowitz, 2004). Hymowitz proposed that in order to avoid confusion over which particular behavior needs to be improved specific feedback or comment is needed.

Once a person is told directly or indirectly that he or she is wrong, four things usually happen: (1) they become defensive and justify their behavior; (2) they don’t really listen to so – called constructive feedback; (3) they are embarrassed and feel bad about themselves; (4) they begin to dislike the task or job, as well as the critic (Lussier & Achua, 2007).

Among the other four items which are interpreted with moderate satisfaction, item 2, which is the use of technology in giving feedback has the lowest mean value of 2.99. This is probably because of lack of resources or equipment in most schools of Criminal Justice. Though technologies are greatly promoted in academic institutions for the use of the faculty and the staff, there are some schools that are not yet capable of acquiring equipment or sustaining resources such as financing high cost of electricity, internet or telephone connections. This could be one of the reasons why administrators do not widely use electronic channels of communication. Similarly, the subordinates are not able to maximize the use of these channels when communicating with their superiors. Nonetheless, there are some subordinates who are hesitant to send messages in writing or face-to-face to their superiors. As a result, communication of ideas and feedbacks between both parties is suppressed whether with or without the use of technologies.

Yates and Orlikowski (1992) cited that new technologies offer organizational participants a wide array of interaction and decision – making options that can differ substantially from traditional ways of working. However, he said that a person needs to consider the impact when these technologies are used in communication. For Short, Williams, and Christie (1976), new technologies differ in terms of the cues that are available in the communication process. They cited that communicators are unable to assess nonverbal communication cues that are available in face – to – face settings. These cues are filtered out, thus, participants are unable to gain information from vocal or visual channels.

2.4. Level of Satisfaction of Faculty Members with the Access to Communication

The second item, speed in locating and retrieving of information, has the lowest mean. On the other hand, the first item, availability of data or information, has the highest mean of 3.28 which is interpreted as “very much satisfied”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Areas</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of data / information</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>Very Much Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Releasing or dissemination of information</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed in locating and retrieving of information</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the researcher’s conversations with some faculty members and heads, it was disclosed that data and information are “usually available but not always”. This is because not all activities, events, and reports written down. Sometimes, these are communicated verbally. Some documents even disappear because borrowers do not sign the logbooks, or they do not return what they borrow, or misplace, or keep them for personal use. In spite of these circumstances, the faculty members still say that data or information are available among some individuals or offices but the problem really lies on the acquisition and retrieval of these.

A common anxiety among faculty members and administrators is the hampering of activities and processes due to difficulty in locating information. This usually happens when documents being requested, required or investigated are in the previous possession of personnel who were formerly connected to the institution. Some instructors who were tasked as chairmen or members of the committees or assignments would grumble about the absence of information, documents or records. Accordingly, faculty members and staff would be dissatisfied when locating or retrieving lost documents. However, this could also reflect poor management of records and filing system in the college or institution. Some colleges or institutions may have ignored, overlooked, or not anticipated the importance of these documents and records. On the other hand, some institutions keep documents or records for five years. These documents and records are not released without following the policies or procedures established by the institutions, unless these are not firmly implemented. As practiced, the personnel or the staff needing a certain document needs to accomplish a written communication to the head of the office where the data or document is available. The letter should also be noted by the immediate superior of the former. Before approving
the request, an interview is sometimes carried out by
the head or officer in charge. The interview elicits
the reason for the gathering of data or retrieval of
document, and for what activity, project or program
will it be utilized. A logbook is filled up with the
proper and necessary information such as the dates of
retrieving and returning the document, the title or
description of the document or record, the purpose of
retrieving or the reason of use, the borrower’s or
retriever’s complete name and proper signature, and
the department where he or she belongs. There are,
however, some who would allow and grant
permission even through verbal request, either
through phone or face to face communication. In this
case, the request is granted immediately and the
document is retrieved rapidly.

3. Conclusion

The faculty members are very much satisfied
with the flow of communication which reflects the
observance of the chain of command in
communication up and down the levels in the
organization. However, they are moderately satisfied
with the other components which reflected the
limited use of some channels of communication or
inadequate provision of such. Specifically these
include the unavailability of computers or internet
connection to be used for electronic media (e-mail),
absence of telephones, and improper use of
nonverbal communication. In terms of feedback, the
weak areas involve the medium and channel being
used, the time or period of response, and the
scheduling of feedback sessions. With this, there is
limited opportunity for the faculty members to give
feedback to their superiors. Finally, the slow or
intricate process in the releasing and disseminating
information in the college of department diminished
the access to communication. Some important
matters are not timely relayed or made available to
those concerned.

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