

# Enablers and Impediments to Organizational Communication Climate in the University

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## Abstract

Organizational communication is hampered by obstacles, and good communication is essential for production. It is not always possible to achieve open or effective communication. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that promote and hinder the development of an effective organizational communication climate. It makes use of descriptive correlational analysis. According to the findings, the university's chain of command is clearly defined, and the authority to force subordinates to undertake a duty that falls within their job description has been established. When property is utilized to achieve the company's objectives, the chain of authority inside the university establishes who is in charge of issuing instructions, and it adds to the effective attainment of those objectives. The most significant communication barrier in the university is bureaucratic communication, which occurs because there are several offices from which the communication must be downloaded before it can be sent to the intended recipients of the information (210 or 51.53). Because of the large number of offices or officials to whom the communication must be downloaded or approved, the flow is extremely slow. Officials at the university, campus, and college levels must take advantage of the high organizational trust and positive communication climate that exists among their constituents in order to assure the success and achievement of the school's goals and mission.

**Keyword:** enablers, barriers, organizational communication climate, bureaucratic communication

## Introduction

Personal and organizational elements that hinder the development of an effective and open communication climate in an organization are referred to as "barriers to communications climate." Obstacles to Effective Organizational Communication Productivity is dependent on the ability to communicate effectively. It is not always possible to achieve open or effective communication. Diwan (2000) says that "the challenge of effective communication is sadly bigger than just the recognition of its scale and importance," and that "the problem of effective communication is unfortunately greater than just the recognition of its scale and importance." It is possible that people are not aware that their attempts to communicate have been unsuccessful. Communication difficulties are

summarized by Koontz (2001) as follows: "Communication difficulties are frequently indications of more deeply entrenched problems." Poor planning, for example, may be the root cause of ambiguity regarding the direction of the organization."

According to Gibson's (2007) analysis of the research on safety-related communications, there are five main factors of communication that determine the likelihood of error: First and foremost, there is the sender-medium-receiver communication process. When operators have trouble determining the critical information that needs to be provided, process breakdowns might occur. For example, during a shift handover or a pretask briefing, the sender may be forced to be selective in terms of the information that can be delivered due to limited time constraints. As a result, certain

communication procedures may be better suited to certain situations than others. Before deciding on a format or structure, it is critical to ensure that the correct procedure for driver-signaller communications is described, as well as for which scenarios this process is used. The second point to consider is the purpose of the communication process. It is critical to understand the communication's intended audience. This means that each party is aware of the work that the other party is pursuing and the information that they require in order to complete that task. In situations when a sender or recipient has made assumptions and believes they have sent the correct message, miscommunication can occur. The third factor to consider is the language that is employed during the communication process. The language employed can have a significant impact on the success of a communication effort. If rapid and flexible engagement is required, verbal communication can be swift; nevertheless, the pace is always regulated by the sender, which is especially important in emergency situations where there may be substantial pressure to talk quickly. The ambiguity of words and the meanings they convey, as well as redundancy in language and expectations, can all contribute to linguistic failures.

The fourth point to consider is the communication situation. Making the message sender as sensitive as possible to the information required by the receiver, so that they understand the level of information required for that particular work context, is one of the most successful strategies of preventing communication failures. Individual factors are the fifth factor to consider. A variety of individual circumstances such as stress, weariness, and age might have an impact on the communication process. It is frequently observed that cultural problems have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of communication, in particular Working as a team, according to some research, can improve communication while also combating the impacts of weariness.

Some organizational aspects can be ascribed to both the enablers and the barriers to a positive communication climate. The influence of elements such as culture and organizational

characteristics on efficient communication should not be overlooked, according to Gibson (2011), despite the fact that the method of communication is vital. This is supported by the findings of a poll of over 2500 railway employees in the United Kingdom, which revealed perceived influences on the quality of communication, which included variables such as peer pressure and management's example, rather than the formality of the communication itself (RSSB, 2008).

These approaches also make the important distinction that fundamental shifts in behavior or performance, such as the link between correctly following communication protocols to reduce incidents, necessitate the involvement of senior management commitment, leadership with strong safety values, and a strategy for implementation briefing, training, and ongoing evaluation.

Dickinson (2008) asserts that it is the commitment of senior management and leadership that truly propels an industry into action and forward progress. Lowe and Nock (2010) believe that with effective communication monitoring numbers, the costs of communication failures can be estimated in order to better engage senior management and free up resources for other tasks.

An enabling or supporting environment is also required to ensure that effective communication takes place in an organization's communication climate. Employees that work in supportive workplaces are confident in their ability to provide information to superiors without hesitation, knowing that their superiors will take it without question, whether it is good or bad, positive or negative. A worker, for example, who reports an EPA violation in the company's disposal of hazardous waste must be confident in the company's assistance from upper management. Employees who believe that disclosing regulatory infractions to their superiors will result in their being labeled as whistleblowers and so jeopardizing their careers are more likely to remain silent. However, because supportive supervisors are perceived as non-threatening, if not even caring, employees are more likely to confide in them and disclose

unpleasant or potentially harmful facts. When people feel vulnerable or unsupported, they are encouraged to keep their lips shut by feelings of fear, shame, and pride. An individual may not inform a group that a product delivery would be delayed because the receiving agents were not notified in time, for example, during a meeting with clients. A late delivery date puts the entire marketing strategy in peril, resulting in millions of dollars in missed revenue and a significant reduction in market share. Given the stakes, an employee's self-protective reaction to say nothing in a hostile environment is a sensible decision to protect his or her employment.

Communication, on the other hand, is inhibited in non-supportive contexts because knowledge is perceived as a danger by the participants. Employees who work in supportive workplaces are more likely to communicate for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the reporting mechanism treats them with decency and respect. They have no reason to be concerned about being punished for informing others of terrible news. The truth is rewarded, and they benefit from it. Furthermore, they are recognized as important sources of information that are critical to the organization's performance. As a result, this research was conducted.

### **Statement of the Problem**

1. What are the enablers and barriers of organizational communication climate in the university?

### **Research Methods**

This study has a quantitative design. It used the descriptive-correlational method. The descriptive component of the study determined the university's communication channels, organizational communication climate, and employee trust. Aspects of organizational communication environment included enablers and impediments to organizational communication climate.

That is, whether there is a meaningful relationship between the organizational communication climate and employee organizational trust in the university. The survey covered all eight Cagayan State

University campuses throughout the province. The study used colleges and administrative agencies. Colleges of Medicine and Surgery, Law, and Graduate School were excluded from the study. The figure depicts the university's campuses. The study's respondents were university faculty, administrators, and authorities. The entire sample of faculty and administrative staff was computed using Slovincs formula. However, due to their small number, all officials were counted. A stratified random sampling was utilized to establish the sample size for faculty and administrative personnel. The survey only looked at regular teaching and administrative workers. Officials with an ETL of 12 units or more were included. Table 1 shows the overall number of faculty, administrators, and officials per campus. The survey used 480 respondents: 247 faculty, 162 administrative personnel, and 71 university authorities.

Brad Rawlins (2009) sought to construct a reliable and valid measure of employee communication in understanding organizational transparency. In addition to accountability, the tool measures openness, involvement, substantial information, and justice (items 26-32). The responses ranged from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale.

The Organizational Trust Scale was used to assess organizational trust. Katie Delahaye Paine created the OTS in 2006. The measure comprises six dimensions: organizational integrity (items 1-4), dependability (items 5-8), control mutuality (items 9-12), satisfaction (items 13-16), commitment (items 17-20), and community ties (items 21-24). Like the first instrument, the response options ranged from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale.

Finally, a survey checklist was used to assess organizational communication climate and trust. Another survey checklist was used to assess the extent of use of communication channels and their perceived efficacy. After the dissertation proposal was approved, the researcher approached the University President. The researcher next contacted the Campus Executive Officers for permission to conduct two standardized

survey questionnaires, Organizational Communication Climate and Organizational Trust Scale (OTS). After receiving approval, the researcher administered the two questions himself. The researcher had to give and retrieve the questionnaires for three months. The researcher employed the following statistical techniques to tally, tabulate, compute, analyze, and interpret the data:

Organizational communication enablers and barriers were studied using descriptive statistics. The same descriptive statistics were used to assess the extent of use and perceived efficacy of communication channels. Frequency count, percentage, and mean

One-way ANOVA was utilized to find the significant differences in the hypothesis. In order to establish a link between corporate communication climate and employee organizational trust, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used. Finally, the study's hypotheses were not significant at 0.05.

### **Discussion of Findings and Results**

#### **Enablers of organizational communication climate in the university**

Table 1 illustrates the enablers of communication in the university as perceived by the designated officials, administrative staff, and faculty member. The first enabler of the communication in the university is *Clear line of authority and term of reference in duties and responsibilities* (389 or 92.07%). This finding means that the chain of command within the university is clear which confers the power to order subordinates to perform a task within their job description. The line of authority within the university establishes who is in charge of giving who orders, and it contributes to the efficient attainment of the company's objectives when property is used. Such clear line of authority is also affirmed by the clear duties and responsibilities of all officials in the university. With clear term of reference there is no encroachment of each other's turf and thus, this build better relationship and effective communication. In the university, the clear line of authority and term of reference is enshrined in

the organizational chart and functional chart at the university, campus and college levels. Moreover, these concepts are defined in the manual of operations for instruction, research and extension as well as production. These are all required for accreditation that is why all of them are done in the university.

The second facilitating factor of communication in the university is *Clear job specialization among officials and employees* (386 or 88.53%). This finding illustrates that there is division of labor in the university. Employees and officials are put in places based on their educational qualifications, expertise and experience. There is also an allocation of tasks to individuals or organizations according to the skills and/or equipment those employees and officials possess. In CSU, clear job specialization is done when the university hires employees and designates employees based on some criteria relative to the requirements of the job. In this instance, there is right fitting of all people in the university which leads to greater productivity and success of the college, campus and university at large.

The third enabler of communication in the university is *Consistency of policies to governmental standards like CSC, DBM and CHED* (366 or 86.03). This connotes that the university's communication is effective and healthy because it follows the policies and guidelines of these regulatory bodies. When the policies are anchored to government's standards, then everything is put in its right place. The consistency of policies with government standards are reflected in the utilization of government funds prescribed by DBM, appointments for CSC and program compliance for CHED. It is interesting to point out that the university has to follow the policies and guidelines of these regulatory bodies lest it will find difficulty in its operations.

The fourth facilitating factor in the university is *Effective communication plan/mechanism for information sharing* (363 or 86.00). This finding signifies that CSU has a good road map for getting the message delivered to its audience. It sends a clear, specific message with measurable results. It also describes what CSU as an organization wants to accomplish with the information it sends out as well as

identifies the people responsible for building and managing information, when it should be communicated and where records should be stored.

The fifth facilitating factor is the *Conduct of fora, meetings, and consultations to discuss essential information* (361 or 82.40). This finding implies that the university has useful and productive fora, meetings and consultations. This happens because the different officials properly lay down agenda and a time frame which are accomplished much more in a shorter period of time. It also implies that there is effective moderation of officials and group contribution of the subordinates. In the university, periodic meetings, fora and

consultations are done at all levels of management. All of these mechanisms are essential in resolving numerous issues, problems and concerns besetting the college, campus and university in general. Hyo-Sook (2013) stated that excellent organizations enclose management structures that empower employees' participation in decision-making. According to Heller et al. (2008), increased participation in decision-making by lower-level employees has been found to have a positive effect on the efficiency of the decision-making process. Employees who participate in the decision-making process have higher levels of satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

Table 1. Enablers of communication in the university as perceived by the designated officials, administrative staff, and faculty members.

Enablers	Designated Officials		Administrative Staff		Faculty members		Total of all Respondents	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Effective communication plan/mechanism for information sharing	50	94.3	109	84.5	201	83.4	360	86.00
Effective feedbacking mechanism relative to grievances and problems	54	98.2	82	63.6	156	64.7	292	75.50
Functional organizational structure	45	81.8	92	71.3	143	59.3	280	70.80
Clear line of authority and term of reference in duties and responsibilities	51	92.7	120	93.0	218	90.5	389	92.07
Provision of technology channels such as internet, mobile phones and social networking	49	89.1	112	86.8	195	80.9	356	85.60
Clear job specialization among officials and employees	43	78.2	125	96.9	218	90.5	386	88.53
Clear information ownership and accountability	43	78.2	89	69.0	167	69.3	299	72.17
Conduct of fora, meetings, and consultations to discuss	43	78.2	103	79.8	215	89.2		

essential information							361	82.40
Openness of university officials to divulge information relative to employee welfare	41	74.5	73	56.6	119	49.4	233	60.17
Consistency of policies to governmental standards like CSC, DBM and CHED	48	87.3	108	83.7	210	87.1	366	86.00
Presence of functional grievance committee	24	43.6	68	52.7	127	52.7	219	49.67
Presence of an information office to disseminate information	48	87.3	108	83.7	201	83.4	357	84.80
Organization Communication Audit to assess the current state of the communication system.	47	85.5	76	58.9	113	46.9	236	63.77
Integration of feedbacks from employees on how to improve communication climate	29	52.7	101	78.3	164	68.0	294	66.33
Provision of communication allowance	40	72.7	104	80.6	201	83.4	345	78.90
Management's connection with University Faculty Association (UFA)	48	87.3	77	59.7	121	50.2	246	65.73
Managements' connection with the Administrative Personnel Association (APA)	44	80.0	59	45.7	86	35.7	189	53.80
Compliance of the university to anti-red tape act (facilitating transaction among stakeholders)	32	58.2	78	60.5	132	54.8	242	57.83
Functional website and print materials to disseminate information	45	81.8	91	70.5	144	59.8	280	70.70

### **Barriers of organizational communication climate in the university**

Table 2 shows the barriers of communication in the university as perceived by the designated officials, administrative staff, and faculty members. The foremost barrier of communication in the university is the *Bureaucratic communication* because there are numerous offices where the communication is downloaded before it reaches the end-users of the information (210 or 51.53). The numerous offices or officials to where the communication is downloaded or approved makes the flow very slow. Sometimes, there is insufficient time to act of a task because the communication is delayed as it stayed in the office of an official for a substantial number of days. Sometimes, it is also difficult to trace the whereabouts of the communication because the tracking system is ineffective and done manually which is unlike other organizations wherein tracking of documents is done through computer or data base. All of these problems are especially felt by campuses which are far from Andrews Campus where the seat of governance is located.

The second barrier of communication is *Communication overload downloaded by officials and received by employees* (191 or 46.57). This finding implies that there is pool of information from the different levels of management, i.e., university, campus and college. Sometimes, the overflowing communication pertaining to the directives of different officials makes the subordinates stressed on what to prioritize. They feel anxious, overburdened, and, most of all, overwhelmed. If they could spend all day just responding to the incoming messages they receive, they become problematic doing the real work done. This is particularly observed when the message contains information that is new to the subordinates, including processes or concepts that are not familiar to them, thus, the chances of overload increase greatly.

The third barrier of communication is *Grapevine with informal organizations within*

*organizations* (168 or 42.43). This finding signifies that gossip also exists in the university. These rumors and gossips distort the flow of genuine communication which influences the tasks to be executed by the officials and employees of the university. Moreover, the finding illustrates that confidential matters are leaked out by some officials and subordinates to their friends or colleagues. This can be generated through overheard conversation or anonymous sources of information.

The fourth barrier of communication is the *poor, listening/decode and premature evaluation arising from lack of understanding* (166 or 39.27). This finding connotes that word-of-mouth communication in the university happens just like any organization. In this case, an informal information network thrives too in CSU where negative information and speculation are disseminated. Rumors and gossips also proliferate which creates turmoil in relationships of the different stakeholders because information is distorted along the way. Another negative consequence of the grapevine in the university is that messages become garbled in transmission from person to person, or if a person fails to receive the message through some misunderstanding, then relations are severed, tasks are not accomplished and cooperative is not ensured.

The fifth barrier of communication in the university is the *lack of adequate infrastructure for information services* (165 or 36.33). Such finding implies that the employees and officials long to have more, better and effective infrastructure for information services to fast track the communication from all levels of management. This may include having data base to trace documents and more technology network to upload, receive and download information in the university. Moreover, this finding implies the maximization of fax machines which are needed for quicker and effective ways to communicate at far flung campuses of the university.

Table 2. Barriers of communication in the university as perceived by the designated officials, administrative staff, and faculty members.

Barriers	Designated Officials		Administrative Staff		Faculty		Total of all Respondents	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Communication overload downloaded by officials and received by employees	29	52.7	55	42.6	107	44.4	191	46.57
Badly expressed message (written or oral) leading to misinterpretation of information	12	21.8	28	21.7	42	17.4	82	20.30
Inappropriate medium/Language utilized in crafting and disseminating information	11	20.0	29	22.5	38	15.8	78	19.43
Poor, listening/decode and premature evaluation arising from lack of understanding.	27	49.1	57	44.2	82	34.0	166	39.27
Grapevine with informal organizations within organizations	24	43.6	40	31.0	104	43.2	168	42.43
Hostility between and among subordinates and campus/university officials	19	34.5	32	24.8	51	21.2	102	26.83
Bureaucratic communication (there's numerous offices where the communication is downloaded before it reaches the end-users of the information)	28	50.9	78	60.5	104	43.2	210	51.53
Carelessness in information dissemination	13	23.6	52	40.3	93	38.6	158	34.17
Lying and deceit among officials and employees	9	16.4	35	27.1	47	19.5	91	21.00
Manipulation undercuts made by management in policy formulation	10	18.2	19	14.7	49	20.3	78	17.73
Openness of public information made by officials	13	23.6	21	16.3	39	16.2	73	18.70
Absence of a special unit to manage issues, provide information on management policies to the	23	41.8	42	32.6	80	33.2	145	35.87



academic community								
Poor interpersonal relationship among officials, faculty members, and administrative staff	24	43.6	40	31.0	72	29.9	136	34.83
Unavailability fora and media to communicate and interact on a regular basis	20	36.4	35	27.1	57	23.7	112	29.07
The absence of information one-stop, integrated to the members and students	24	43.6	42	32.6	60	24.9	126	33.70
Lack of adequate infrastructure for information services	15	27.3	54	41.9	96	39.8	165	36.33
Absence of a regular activity to discuss the issue took place between members of the organization	20	36.4	28	21.7	50	20.7	98	26.27
Vague performance standards	13	23.6	27	20.9	51	21.2	91	21.90
Poorly designed organization structure	19	34.5	32	24.8	51	21.2	102	26.83

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The three (3) enablers of organizational communication climate in the university are (a) *Clear line of authority and term of reference in duties and responsibilities*; (b) *Clear job specialization among officials and employees*; and (c) *Consistency of policies to governmental standards like CSC, DBM and CHED*. On the other hand, the barriers of organizational communication climate are (a) *Bureaucratic communication*; (b) *Communication overload*

*downloaded by officials and received by employees; and (c) Grapevine with informal organizations within organizations*. However, favorable communication climate and high organizational trust are perceived differently by the designated officials, administrative staff and faculty members as well as the different campuses of the university. The university, campus and college officials must utilize the high organizational trust and favorable communication climate of the employees as this can ensure the success and realization of the school's goals and mission.