STUDY ON COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION OF TRAINERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AT INSTITUTIONS IN EAST BANGALORE.

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ABSTRACT

The role of communication satisfaction has comparatively been downplayed in importance compared to job satisfaction. One must need to showcase the fact that communication satisfaction is a prime determinant of job satisfaction. Communication satisfaction could be a potential component even in attrition. We often hear people quitting organizations because of insecurity created in the work environment through the so called "talk in the air". Most of the organizational policies get decoded in personal context with varying degrees of interpreting management decisions.

The present study is intended to explore the intricacies of Organizational Communication using Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) developed by C.W. Downs and Hazen. The study is focused on communication satisfaction of employees in Higher Education in East Bengaluru (Bangalore), which is chosen as the population and a sample of 57 respondents from the teaching fraternity.

The prime objective of the study would be to see if ages, experience and gender affect the perceived quality of Communication Satisfaction within the organization. Alternate hypotheses had been framed to check the impact of the independent variables namely age, gender and experience on the dependent variable, Communication Satisfaction. The findings throw light on significant variations in perceived communication satisfaction and were observed that age and experience do influence the factor under investigation for this presentation.

Keywords : *Communication Satisfaction, Organizational Communication, Job Satisfaction, Trainers (Teaching Staff), Higher Education.*

1.   INTRODUCTION

Academic organizations or higher education institutes serve a great number of individuals from diverse backgrounds and roles. To function effectively, some mode of communication is essential that not only transmits the message or information but also considers its impact on employees. As higher education institutions change in the way they are structured, the way they function, especially with both virtual and on ground format, and the changes in demographics. They require constant evaluation of their communication practices to maintain and improve their effective functioning and building effective relationships with individuals they serve.

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Several studies have discovered that communication satisfaction among employees occur at different levels based on the facts that contribute to the satisfaction level. Staff members play a key role in impacting the well-being, success, and smooth functioning of their institutions. It is important to understand the potential factors influencing organizational communication satisfaction and job satisfaction because low levels of job satisfaction has been associated with low productivity. Because the roles that staff members and faculty play are different, this study is focused only on staff members' perceptions of communication satisfaction and job satisfaction in their current work positions and the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. Because the interest of this researcher is communication that occurs within the organization, for the purpose of this study the terms organizational communication and internal communication are used interchangeably to mean communication that occurs amongst employees within the organization, in this case higher education institution.

Communication in an organization forms an integral part of the organizational processes. Duncan and Moriarty (1998) reveal that communication is an activity that links employees together and generates satisfaction. The concept of communication satisfaction as said by Thayer (1968) was "the personal satisfaction a person experiences when communicating successfully" and was understood to be a unidimensional construct having communication effectiveness as its important dimension. Later, Redding (1972) concluded that the communication satisfaction might be multidimensional in nature. Wiio (1976) reconfirmed the multidimensionality of communication by proposing the dimensions like message content, improvements in communication, and channel efficiency. Gordon (1979) observed supervisory communication as an important aspect for employees having administrative responsibility. Later, the other factors like media quality, horizontal communication, and subordinate communication also came into light. Nicholson (1980) found that administrators were quite satisfied with media quality, supervisory communication and communication climate factors.

Organizational communication is an important topic in many types of organizations. The changes in society makes it very crucial to reconsider the way communication occurs in organizations because communication has been found to affect many other aspects of organization's effective functioning. Exploring the level of communication satisfaction and job satisfaction will help in understanding what factors play a significant role in affecting satisfaction among employees in educational set ups at the higher levels where teachers are more of trainers and facilitators.

The terms organizational communication, communication in the workplace, and internal communication are often used interchangeably. Because the interest of the researcher was to explore communication that takes place within the organization and not communication outside the organization, the focus of this study remained on internal communication in an organization.

Moyer (2011) used the terms organizational communication and internal communication to mean the same thing. Organizational communication in its general sense is described as the sending of messages or information through formal and informal networks that assists in constructing meaning and influencing individuals and groups in an organization (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Education Portal (2003-2015) described internal communication as the process of transmitting information among members of an organization within the different parts of the organization. Deetz (2001) described internal communication as a process in which organizations are described and explained about. Communication plays a central role that aids employees in information sharing, building relationships, and constructing meaning, culture, and values in Higher Educational organizations.

Objectives of the study :

➢ To critically analyze Communication Satisfaction of Trainers in Higher Education Organizations.

➢ To study the influence of age on Communication Satisfaction of Trainers.

➢ To evaluate the role of respondents' gender as a potential factor influencing Communication Satisfaction.

➢ To examine the variations in Communication Satisfaction owing to the experience of the participants of the study.

Hypotheses :

➢ There exists age related influences on Communication Satisfaction of trainers in Higher Education.

➢ Communication Satisfaction will be affected by the gender of the respondents.

➢ Experience would influence the Communication Satisfaction Levels of Higher Education trainers.

Methodology:

To investigate the trends aforesaid in the objectives, a questionnaire on Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) developed by C.W. Downs and Hazen was administered on 57 respondents who were working in Higher Education Organizations in East Bengaluru.

Communication Satisfaction in this investigation is studied with reference to four domains namely, communication information, relationships, channels and climate.

The questionnaire measures eight factors that deals with satisfaction with communication information, relationships, channels, and climate:

1. Communication Climate is one of the strongest dimensions, in that people first think of climate when asked about communication satisfaction. The questions in this section measure communication at the organizational and individual levels, probing whether or not the company's communication is stimulating or motivating and whether it encourages employee identification. The questions also assess the perceived communication competence of employees and the extent to which information flow assists the working process.

2. Relationship to Superiors includes the components of upward and downward communication. This dimension measures the openness of superiors to subordinates as well as superiors' ability to listen. Superior's perceived trust of the employee is incorporated in two of the items.

3. Organizational Integration revolves around the information employees receive about their job and related items, such as policies and benefits. Also included is information about what is happening currently, what departments are doing, and personnel news. Information about such matters makes employees feel they have been integrated.

4. Media Quality looks at communication as it travels through several channels (e.g., publications, memos, and meetings). Employees are asked about the helpfulness and clarity of these information sources and the quantity of information.

5. Horizontal and Informal Communication questions the amount of activity of information networks and the accuracy of the information they contain.

6. Organizational Perspective refers to the information given out concerning the corporation and its goals and performance. It also encompasses knowledge about external events such as new government policies, which impact the organization.

7. Relationship with Subordinates is only completed by those in supervisory or managerial positions. It taps receptivity of employees to downward communication and their willingness and capability to send good information upward. Superiors are also asked whether they experience communication overload.

8. The Personal Feedback dimension contains questions about superiors' understanding of problems faced on the job and whether or not employees feel, the criteria by which they are judged, are clear.

The breakup of demographic variables for the sample is as follows: out of the 57 participants of the study, 22 were male and 35 were female, 25 of them were in the age group of 35 – 45 years, and 32 were in the group of 45 – 55 years. With regard to the experience of the respondents, 31 partakers had 11 – 20 years of experience, while 26 of them had 21 – 30 years of work experience.

The questionnaires were collected from the respondents and data were compiled and subject to SPSS 17.0 to find out significant influences and variations on the variables under investigation. The outcomes are discussed in detail here below.

RESULTS :

Table I: Influence of age on Communication Satisfaction levels of trainers in Higher Education

Dimension	Age (in years)	N	Mean	SD	t - value
Communication Information	35 – 45	25	11.3	3.28	1.54**
	45 - 55	32	15.7	4.51	
Relationship (official)	35 – 45	25	8.3	2.21	5.59**
	45 - 55	32	11.7	1.91	
Channels (of Communication)	35 – 45	25	12.3	1.12	.62
	45 - 55	32	12.7	1.08	
Communication Climate	35 – 45	25	9.9	1.03	1.79*
	45 - 55	32	12.7	1.01	

As can be seen from the table above, significant variations are observed in 3 dimensions of Communication Satisfaction, namely communication information, relationship (official), and communication climate. Respondents on a higher age group have felt that communication information given about the institution's and department's goals and policies are clear, when compared with the attitudinal perception of younger employees, who tend to

show disparity in clarity of the foresaid organizational and departments matters. This could be because they are comparatively new to the field and the may have to rely more on grapevine communication than their seniors who are in better touch with the same.

Moving on to communication relationships at work, once again the younger employees, (trainers at higher education) have felt that less information is given about the benefits and pay they are entitled to, and also they feel they are not aware of the financial standing of the institution.

As for communication climate is concerned, older employees have felt that the organization provides sufficient scope to stimulate and encourage employee identification by giving them opportunities to explore various work related activities and the same is being perceived as work thrusted than entrusted by younger employees as a probable justification for the trends observed in this regard. Thus the hypothesis stating that there exists age related influence on communication satisfaction of trainers in Higher Education is true as per the findings of the current exploration.

Table II: Influence of gender on Communication Satisfaction of trainers in Higher education.

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t - value
Communication Information	Male	48	11.3	2.18	.54
	Female	27	10.7	2.01	
Relationship (official)	Male	48	9.3	2.21	1.59
	Female	27	8.7	1.91	
Channels (of Communication)	Male	48	12.3	1.12	.62
	Female	27	12.7	1.08	
Communication Climate	Male	48	9.9	1.03	1.49
	Female	27	10.7	1.01	

As can be seen from table II, no significant variations are found with reference to the influence of gender on communication satisfaction of trainers in higher education in the study. Therefore the hypothesis stating that, Communication Satisfaction will be affected by the gender of the respondents does not hold good for this study.

Table III: Variations in Communication Satisfaction levels based on experience of the employees.

Dimension	Experience (in years)	N	Mean	SD	t - value
Communication Information	11 – 20	48	10.3	3.18	1.04
	21 – 30	27	10.7	3.01	
Relationship (official)	11 – 20	48	10.3	2.21	5.59**
	21 – 30	27	8.7	1.91	
Channels (of Communication)	11 – 20	48	10.3	1.12	2.62**
	21 – 30	27	12.7	1.08	
Communication Climate	11 – 20	48	9.9	1.03	1.09
	21 – 30	27	8.79	1.01	

Note: * - $p < .05$
      ** - $p < .01$

As can be seen from the tables, significant differences are observed among trainers in higher education with varying experience in years. In matters dealing with relationship at work, and channels of communication, trainers with lesser experience at higher education have expressed contentment as far as superior – subordinate relations are concerned as in supervisors' willingness to offer guidance to solve job related problem and have felt that informal communicate, (as an aspect of work relationship) is accurate. Respondents with more years of experience seem to have less time in maintaining official informal relationships as they are more into policy drafting and decision making activities.

Moving on to respondent satisfaction and channel of communication within the organization, Trainers with more experience who are generally in the role of supervisors or managers have expressed greater levels of satisfaction with regard to responsiveness of the subordinates toward downward directive communication and have also felt that they are receptive to evaluation, suggestions and criticisms. As there are sufficient variations observed in this dimension, the hypothesis stating that, Experience would influence the Communication Satisfaction Levels of Higher Education trainers is proved true in the current enquiry.

Major findings of the study:

✓ Communication Satisfaction of trainers at Higher Education are influenced by the type of communication information, supervisor – subordinate relationship, communication channels and climate.

✓ Perceived work relationship as a factor of Communication Satisfaction is influenced by both age and experience of respondents in the study.

✓ Gender differences have been observed to have an impact on Communication Satisfaction of trainers in the higher education, according to the current study.

CONCLUSION:

The study could have included non-teaching besides the teaching staff in educational institutions, as there could be communication failures between the teaching and supporting staff too. Owing to time constraint the sample size considered for the study is small, thereby restricting the findings from being generalized to a larger population. However the trends observed in the current investigation could be used to understand specific dimensions of communication satisfaction of trainers in higher education.

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