



Communication Barriers In The Inter-Office Communications In The UEP-Main Campus Offices

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Abstract: *The study was an inter-office communications analysis in the University of Eastern Philippines-Main Campus and its inputs to strengthening administrative communication. The study used the descriptive-analytical and evaluative research design. Specifically, it tried to: find out the content of communications sent to selected offices in UEP-Main Campus, as regards to nature, direction of communication, form, and purpose; analyze office communications in terms of clarity, conciseness, accuracy, organization, and mechanics; find out the communication barriers in the inter-office communications in the UEP-Main Campus; determine whether the communication is effective or ineffective based on the findings of the study; find out if there are significant differences in the inter-office communications among colleges and selected offices; and draw inputs to public administration. The study involved 11 offices of the University – the University Management Centre headed by the Office of the President, the Graduate School and nine (9) colleges of the University with the Offices of the Deans of all the nine (9) colleges and school. This study considered only the offices which issued Special Orders, Memoranda, and letters sent to different offices in the University. the data of the inter-office communications which pertained to the objectives of the study were tabulated, analyzed, and evaluated for the purpose of arriving at desired results. It made use of the frequency counts, percentages, mean, and ANOVA. Results of the study showed that by nature, memoranda, special orders and letters are common and inherent in offices as an interpersonal exchange of information and understanding. By direction most communications are downward considering that they are memoranda and special orders which are usually issued by the head or manager of the office. While the inter-office communications were written in varied, most were in semi-block form. Most of the inter-office communications were intended to give orders and compliance, considering that they are special orders and memoranda coming from the offices of the President and the Deans. On analysis in the content of inter-office communications, all inter-office communications especially special orders were very much clear which means that they consistently use specific direct expression of ideas; structures and vocabulary are simple and appropriate. Among the inter-office communications which were evaluated, special orders came out to be very much concise among the others which were also very much concise. Special orders had the highest level of accuracy compared to memoranda and letters which only came out to be much accurate. Special orders came out as very much organized among the three (3) types of inter-office communication. This means that they are highly organized with clear progression of ideas and well-linked. It contains the what, why, where, and how information. The writing of special orders very much observed mechanics because it has standard form so with memoranda, but with letters, errors in capitalization, spelling, punctuation, spacing, wrong abbreviations, and apostrophe lowered its grand mean. On barriers of communications, there were more process barriers than semantic barriers. From the three types of inter-office communications, it can be inferred that special orders have the highest level of effectiveness. The Graduate School, and the College of Law produced the most clear special orders.*

Keywords: Inter-Office Communication, Communication, Letters, Letter composition

1. Introduction

Effective management in public administration is unattainable in the absence in the absence of understanding office systems like communication management.

Communication in an organization is a vital element in the administration of public policies, programs, and projects or activities particularly in planning, directing,

leading, decision making and management control. The issue of rationality, effectiveness, efficiency, and control in organizations comes in mismanagement of communications, particularly in handling office communication - the processing of the information, the channels, the medium,

Communicating ideas should not mislead, but rather it is getting one's meaning across writing. It is a reflection of the individual's cognition and must be a successful means of relating to others and to people within the organization. It should lead the way to understanding and facilitate interactive situations. Communication then reflects an ability to perform task. If people in an organization cannot perform tasks such as simply writing a clear communication, then the concept of responsibility becomes an issue. According to Claude S. George, Jr. (1964) with Jose P. Leveriza (2006), one of the most immediate and costly results of poor organization is the breakdown of inter-organization communication, and the resulting loss of an integrated operating system. This is another issue despite the fact that lines of authority they said, provide ready-made channels of communication. The upward and downward directions are often used and should be used solely to pass directives downward and never as a means of communicating attitudes, and feelings upwards.

There are also problems of the downward communication despite clear, good, and sound policies and principles of management. The managers or executives should not overuse their downward channels (Leveriza, 2007). They should encourage the free flow of communication in the organization, or better, the use of

and the communicators involved. Issues of public concern and of organizational policies are put into written form. On matters of policy decisions, communications that are not made clear can cause confusion, misconceptions, disunity, and dissatisfaction.

bottom-up communication to provide management with facts and data upon which decisions are based and are made. They are the needed feedback that management seeks (Kohn, 1977).

Channels of communication have an effect upon the performance and morale in an organization (Leveriza, 2007). Without a clear, concise communication, Calvin Sellers (2016) pointed out in his "The 5 Most Efficient Communication Methods" and mentioned that it is harder for everyone to do his/her jobs. As communication is an important tool in the workplace. He also said that it can also hinder collaboration and productivity.

Meanwhile, Weber's concept of formal rationality tells how organizations work which could be understood through the concepts of authority, bureaucracy, and officials. The most prevalent structure shown in the formal rationality perspective is the bureaucracy because it is characterized by rules, regulations, and authority to give commands and designate official duties. This is true in the directional type of communication where the top management has the authority to issue directives, orders, and instructions on the job details, procedures, and guidelines for strict compliance at the lower levels. Such official communications are official documents which the lower levels of management and the employees must read

and be able to understand the information. If employees or subordinates do not read at all or read with displeasure, it creates a problem on feedback which results to decrease of administrative efficiency. This is the very nature of communication. It is a two-way process.

In a reading from Australian Research Center for Administrative Communication, a view is emphasized that administrative personnel often also experience the official linguistic style as burdensome. According to the issue that many find it difficult to grasp themselves what they are made to communicate. This is a barrier to communication – effective office communication.

Barriers, particularly language barriers on the content of information block a communication process. Forms of disturbances destroy meaning of messages. These are the encoding and the decoding errors, the none-standard use of figures and symbols, the errors in mechanics, form, and the style of language.

According to the Center for Administrative Communication on Administrative Language of the Australian Research Center, one high barrier is the style of language in administration. It is because it is viewed that administrative language is largely based on technical jargon. An example cited was on official documents which need to communicate facts and ruling reliably and must stand up to juridical scrutiny. As such, there is a great need for administrative communication, particularly inter-office communications to be correct, clear, concise, complete, and organized.

In this institution, the University of Eastern Philippines, it is the researcher's observation that there are still office communications that commit errors in their structure of statements, the syntax, accuracy in the use of words, and in the completeness and conciseness of the information contained in the communication.

From these various points of perspective on administrative communication, communicators have to be mindful of communication skills in writing their office communications to be able to convince political actors and the broader stakeholders of the merit of an organization or an institution. It is by these that the researcher was moved to conceptualize a study on evaluating and analyzing inter-office communications finding out end results to strengthen administrative communication in this institution.

In the University of Eastern Philippines, special orders and memoranda usually come from the Office of the President. Only four (4) come from the colleges. Special orders issued by a college usually partake the nature of a designation of a faculty as Department Chair or as Officer-in-Charge in the college in the absence of the Dean. Letters come from different units and/or offices for the different colleges, and from offices of the Vice-Presidents.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed generally to analyze the written office communications in the selected offices of the University of Eastern Philippines – Main Campus, as inputs to

strengthening administrative communication.

Specifically, this study is aimed at (1) finding out the communication barriers in the inter-office communication in the UEP-Main Campus; (2) determining whether the communication is effective or ineffective based on the findings of the study; and (3) drawing outputs to overcome these barriers and enhance effective administrative communication.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted at the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) Main Campus. This is the only comprehensive State University in the Eastern Visayas Region. It is located in the Municipality of Catarman, Northern Samar. It has a land area of 394 hectares with 3 barangays and is 4 kilometers or 20 minutes away from the town proper.

Specifically, this study involved all the colleges in the university, the Center for Advanced Studies – Office of the Graduate School, the Office of the President, the Offices of the Vice-Presidents, the Research Office, the Extension and Training Office, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Human Resource Management Office, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of Student Affairs.

The descriptive-evaluative method of research was used to evaluate the content of the written inter-office as to clarity, conciseness, accuracy, organization, and mechanics.

4. Findings

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that special orders and memoranda form integral part of inter-office communication; a majority of the direction of office communications are downward; semi-block is the most common form used in the office communication and most of the inter-office communication in the University emanate from the managers. On analysis on the content of inter-office communications from the head office are clearly written like the special orders which have already a standard format.; in terms of conciseness, special orders are very much concisely written which means that they consistently avoid wordy phrases, redundancies, and repetitions of ideas so the content is understood more easily; in terms of accuracy, as to the facts given, special orders were very much correct or accurate; in terms of organization, all types of inter-office communications are easy to organize with the special orders as the easiest to organize with the use of specific concrete words; and in terms of mechanics, more errors in mechanics are apparent in letter writing. It means that standard or accepted rules that govern the composition writing are not observed or followed. On barriers in inter-office communications, barriers do exist in inter-office communications. On level of effectiveness of inter-office communications, communications that follow standard form are effective, as errors are very minimal if not totally eradicated.

5. Conclusions and Implications

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions are hereby drawn:

Most of the inter-office communication in the University emanate from the managers. Inter-office communications which come from the head imply that it is intended to effect change and to influence action for the welfare of the organization.

More errors in mechanics are apparent in letter writing. It means that standard or accepted rules that govern the composition writing are not observed or followed. Errors in inter-office communications are committed because some writers do not know/observe the mechanics in letter writing. Less mistakes are expected in memoranda and special orders as they have standard format to follow. Barriers do exist in inter-office communications. Inter-office communications cannot be effective if there are barriers as they interfere with the accurate terms – mission or reception of a message.

6. Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are hereby advanced.

- 1.1 Standard form of communication must be used in inter-office communication.
- 1.2 Maintain the observance of clarity in inter-office communication.
- 1.3 Conciseness in writing inter-office communication must be consistently adhered to.
- 1.4 To be safe in writing communication, follow a standard.
- 1.5 Use of good outline to achieve orderly and logical structure in writing.
- 1.6 Written communications have to be reviewed and revised many times to ensure that the rules are followed for

full comprehension of the ideas by the researcher.

- 1.7 Management awareness of these barriers is a good start to improve the communication process.

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