

Communication Perspectives in Academic Settings: Employees' Perception Approach

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Human communication is a very complex phenomenon which involves social and cognitive processes. It affects not only the attitudes of participants but also the pattern of communication (Yate, 2009). Interpersonal communication in the educational institutions is a serious issue. This sector develops human resource that finally joins other departments of society. Therefore, consolidation of the society covertly depends upon the success of educational institutions. The intended study is embedded in the CCO theory (Communicative Constitution of Organizations) by Robert McPhee and OIT theory (Organizational Information Theory) by Karl Edward Weick.

Methodology: The study is qualitative and exploratory in nature. Main objective of the study is to explore relationship between the strategic management and an effective communication. Moreover, it is intended to explore the internal and external factors which affect interpersonal communication. Finally, to suggest measures for effective communication in academic settings. The present study is qualitative and interpretive in nature. Population of the study is 8 female colleges of district Khushab. The area is further delimited to four colleges. As per the convenient sampling technique, eight employees (two from each college) are selected as sample. Data is collected through open ended interview and interpreted by the researcher with reference to the theoretical perspective of the study.

Findings: The results express strong relationship between the strategic management and an effective communication. The results also provide guideline that how human resource can be optimally utilized by a carefully designed management strategy. The study proved that healthy communication environment in educational settings is necessary for the consolidation of the institution.

Conclusion: The study concludes that a well synchronized and strategic manager, with carefully designed management strategy, takes the lead in developing a healthy communication environment.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Professional Settings, Communication Barriers, Communication Strategy, CCO Theory, OIT Theory.

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Introduction

Human communication is not a simple mean of sharing information, but a relational process of creating and interpreting message to elicit a response. A process which not only affects the attitudes of participants but also the pattern of communication. Communication and management are inter-related as communication is the most important lever of management through which a manager can form a cooperative team. All the managerial roles including leading, planning, organizing, and controlling etc. depend on effective interpersonal communication. Management is not possible without the coordination of the team as the success of even a good manager depends upon a cooperative and dedicated team. Although, the domain of communication has been revolutionized by the technology since the last decade which drastically influences the people practices of communication (Chen et.al., 2012). Manager's personal interaction with team is main factor upon which the success or the failure of any institution depends. Any institution that aspires to pursue activities according to the social standards requires a carefully designed management strategy. According to Smith (2020), the contemporary settings require strategic management for mutual understanding to realize organizational goals for the public interest. Management based on academic settings implies how, what, with what and where, an academic institute could indulge and be engaged in the integration of pedagogical framework with the organizational model (Sirakaya & Ozdemir, 2018). Miscommunication, whether in private, public or professional life, is a serious problem faced by human beings.

Complexity of communication is basically because of arbitrary and relative meanings of words. Encoding and decoding of message in interpersonal communication is an art and skill which is to be acquired. It is human nature to filter and to hear through one's own perception and experiences. Educational institutions are the most important sector of society. Major focus of the intended study has been the relationship between interpersonal communication and the strategic management in educational settings. Effective communication in educational settings is not only required for the smooth working of the institution; but it also plays an important role in the character development of students. This sector develops human resource that finally joins other departments of society. Therefore, consolidation of the society covertly depends upon the success of educational institutions. Each institution needs to address this phenomenon by retaining its identity and without compromising its vision and mission (Frigotto et.al., 2022).

The intended study is embedded in the CCO theory (Communicative Constitution of Organizations) by Robert McPhee and OIT theory (Organizational Information Theory) by Karl Edward Weick. Its qualitative in nature as the complexity of communication requires in-depth analysis of internal and external factors. Phenomenon has been approached from employees' perspective to explore the relationship between strategic management and communication, and to suggest positive measures for the reduction of communication barriers and the betterment of the environment. The results are significant for both the management and the team to redefine their communication strategies and styles. The results also expressed that research in educational settings for effective communication requires more exploration as technology has made it more complex.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between strategic management and effective communication in academic settings.
2. To explore internal and external factors that affect interpersonal communication in academic settings.
3. To explore the measures for effective communication in academic settings.

Research Questions

1. What type of relationship does exist between strategic management and effective communication in academic settings?
2. What internal and external factors do affect interpersonal communication in academic settings?
3. How and to what extent can communication be made more effective in academic settings?

Literature Review

Communication a Complex Process and an Essential Tool

There are eight basic elements of communication including message, sender, medium, receiver, encoding, decoding, response and feedback (Adirika et.al., 1996). Communication is the use of verbal and nonverbal signs to exchange emotions, facts, ideas and information between and among people (Anugwom, 2007). According to Nwokeneme (2008), communication is a process of information transmission between individuals or organizations through some medium. Thus, communication is a complex process of meanings transmission (Inyang et.al., 2003). “Communis” is a Latin word which means “to share.” Sharing denotatively implies “co-operating.” Therefore, communication is a social activity for common understanding (Donnelly et.al., 1998). Scholars from different disciplines unanimously agree that it is vital for developing, maintaining and readjusting one’s relations.

Communication is an indispensable aspect of human phenomenon. It is fundamental aspect of life and takes place in every personal or impersonal, and formal or informal settings. It is not instinctive, but a socially acquired skill which depends upon complex interaction between cognition faculties and social environment. This phenomenon can’t be over generalized as it is a skill to be acquired through observation and arbitration. It entirely depends on the style of communication, effectiveness of medium, and accessibility of management to its subordinates (Kelvin-Iloafu, 2016). Generally, three main types of communication are mentioned: verbal, non-verbal and written. Written communication is an indirect way of communication. It is crucial and requires written competence. In nonverbal communication body movements, facial expressions, tone and style communicate the message. Kinesics and proxemics are two important categories of communication. Kinesics is concerned with the transmission of message through paralinguistic features in international management, while proxemics is the study of physical space during interpersonal communications (Ezezue, 2008).

Communication Barriers

Why does communication break down? It is not easy to answer this question as many factors are involved in the failure of communication. According to Inyang et al., (2003), communication is considered effective when transmission and reception of message take place in excellent interpersonal environment of mutual trust; and the message is perceived the way it is intended by the by the sender. Therefore, we can say that a barrier means a factor that hinders or distorts message and causes communication breakdown. Misunderstanding is the serious phenomenon of human beings. It is caused by multiple types of communication barriers, which are hard to remove but can be reduced through effective communication. Even in the well-developed communication systems, barriers do occur. Communication is not instinctive it is socially acquired; therefore, every individual needs to learn communication skills and to work on his personal traits so that he/she can effectively reduce the barriers to improve communication. Different studies have stated different types of communication barriers i.e. psychological, environmental, content, behavioral, emotional, physical, perceptual, personal bias, lack of confidence, priority problem, complex organizational structure, distraction, interruption, rank differences, semantic, cultural barriers etc. (Kapur, 2018).

According to Etuk (1991), general communication barriers are noise, perception, emotion, credibility and overload of information. Perception is a serious psychological barrier as relative perception leads to subjective interpretation. Emotional disturbance and short temperedness badly affect objective listening and neutral understanding of information. Credibility of the source is also an important factor. Extent of

credibility certainly influences perceptual process of receiver. Moreover, enormous information causes overload which impedes convenient interpretation and understanding.

Communication and Strategic Management

Imaga (2003) gives a comprehensive definition of strategic management. It means a strategic approach to organizing, staffing, directing, leading, controlling and coordinating the activities of organizations with a view to achieve optimally designed goals with minimum possible resources at the quickest possible time. According to Greene et.al., (1985), strategic approach requires a continuous thinking process through current organizational mission and environmental conditions, then combining these elements as a guideline for future decisions and results. According to Ezech (1999), strategic management is an organizational process of determining an initial plan for the achievement of long term objectives mentioned in the organizational mission which can later be developed into comprehensive plan. A strategic management plan is a dynamic element that enables any organization to achieve its goals in the competitive environment over a long period. Imaga (2001) says that it is not the quantity of managerial message but the quality that matters. Therefore, communication is an important channel. As per this background, communication and organizational success are intertwined. For the maximum realization of organizational objectives, the manager must be adept in effective transmission of message, ideas, feelings and attitudes through communication process (Etuk, 1991). There are two important managerial functions that can be achieved by effective communication. The provision of a vehicle for the implementation of plan and the provision of means for the motivation of organizational team. It indicates that issuance of orders and response of the team entirely depends on effective communication. The extent to which a manager accomplishes corporate goals depends on his ability to communicate effectively (Herich, 2008). According to Lawson (2006), actual words used in communication convey 7% of the meaning, the tone 38% and the body language conveys 55% of the meaning. The most important part of effective communication; therefore, is not what one says, but the way in which one says it and the attitude one adopts when one delivers it.

Overcoming Communication Barriers

It is very important to identify hidden causes of communication barriers so that a strategy can be chalked out to overcome them (Rani, 2016). There are different types of barriers. Efficient speaking and listening skills are required to remove such barriers. Effective speaking develops focused listening and increases understandability. Polite and courteous behavior of manager reduces misinterpretation of the message. Peaceful and conducive environment, emotional balance, active listening, simple organizational structure, and positive feedback improve communication (Kapur, 2018).

Physical space is also a serious barrier. Physical proximity is important for effective communication irrespective of hierarchical differences. An integrated working environment enhances effective communication. Employees are also required to work in coordination with the co-workers. Kelvin-Iloafu (2016), being a lecturer by profession, recommends cultivation of warm and cordial relation between management and employees. She also emphasizes the importance of a simple organizational structure for an easy transmission of the message. Humane behavior of manager with his team can receive willing support and obedience. Effective communication is the “lifeblood” of any institution.

In the 21st century, technological development has made communication more complex; therefore, this area requires more exploration for the effective management and communication. Moreover, in Pakistan there is a little work in the field of strategic management and almost no work in academic settings. This study is qualitative in nature and previously this phenomenon has been mostly approached quantitatively. Therefore, it will add new dimension to the complex phenomenon of communication.

Methodology

Research Paradigm

In the interpretivist paradigm, the present study is qualitative and exploratory in nature to figure out relationship between the strategic management and an effective communication. The ontological and the epistemological positions of the researcher are that reality is relative and data is contained within the perspectives of people who directly experience the phenomenon. Qualitative research has become a dominant methodology in communication and may be considered a feature of the epistemology of communication (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

Theoretical Perspective

Theoretical perspective for the study is CCO theory (Communicative Constitution of Organizations) by Robert McPhee and OIT theory (Organizational Information Theory) by Karl Edward Weick. These theories are related to the communication in professional settings. These theories claim that communication is not something that happens within organizations or between organizational members; rather, it is a process that constitutes the organization.

Research Design

Research design for the intended study is Phenomenological Qualitative Design.

Population

Population of the study is eight Govt. colleges (w) of district Khushab, Punjab.

Sample Size

Population has been further delimited to four colleges out of eight colleges.

Sampling Technique

(N=8) employees have been selected as sample of the study by using convenient sampling technique. (2 from each college).

Data Collecting Tools

The 20th century epistemological turn in social sciences acknowledged the importance of qualitative research methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). According to Hycner (1985), phenomenon dictates method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants. Therefore, Unstructured and informal interview is used as a data collection method. Bailey (1996) says that informal interview is effective tool to elicit more information about the institutional context of the person. Data has been collected in Urdu language, recorded, transcribed and explained. Each interview is assigned a number to preserve confidentiality of the participants. Explication of data requires careful handling. It includes delineating units of meanings, clustering of meanings, validating. Explication is the cognitive systematic process on the basis of which data is summarized and explained.

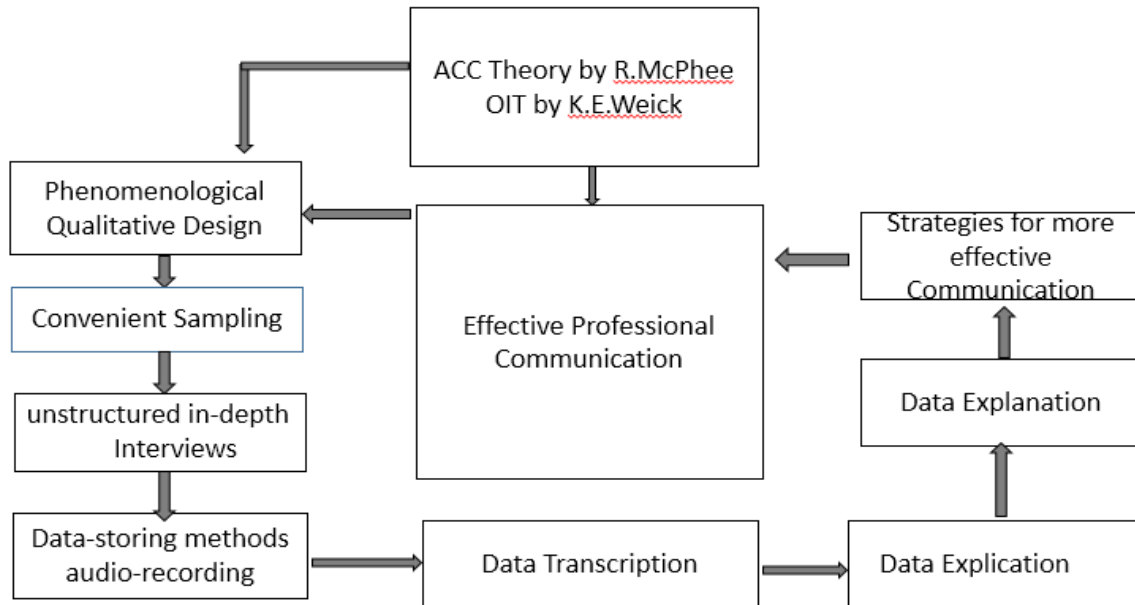
Data Analysis

Data has been analyzed by the researcher with reference to the theoretical perspective of the study. Data is analyzed with reference to the literature review and the theoretical perspective of the study.

Validity

Ethical and validity concerns have been ensured by an informed consent. Respondents have been informed about the purpose, nature, procedures and implications of the research in order to seek their voluntary participation and to protect confidentiality. Honesty and confidentiality reduce bias, promote sincere responses and increase validity of the research.

Figure 1: *Diagram of Methodology*



Data Analysis

An in-depth interview of eight employees has been conducted individually. Members have been given numbers as respondent 1,2,3 etc. in order to maintain their confidentiality. Their respective responses are given as per the interview questions. First of all, they were asked to define effective communication as per their lived experiences. Respondent 1 said, *“Effective communication is the communication that is focused, to the point and in healthy mood. Verbose and extended message demotivates, and decreases focused listening. Precise and to the point message increases effectiveness.”* Imaga (2001) also considers overload of information as a communication barrier and emphasized quality that matters more than quantity. Respondent 2 said, *“Behavior increases or decreases effectiveness, self-respect of the listener is of prior importance which develops healthy environment for communication.”* Respondent 3 who was also a junior said, *“Communication requires confidence and when the employee is given confidence motivation increases.”* Respondent 4 said, *“Effective communication requires a peaceful environment in which employees can talk to the administration with the confidence that she will receive neutral and focused listening.”* Inyang et al., (2003) also stress the importance of excellent interpersonal environment of mutual trust in which message is perceived the way it is intended by the by the sender.

Responded 5 said, *“Effective communication is possible when the style is dynamic and flexible with respect to the varying nature of listeners”*. Respondent 6 also said. *“Healthy office environment greatly improves communication”*. Respondent 7 said, *“Communication can be called effective when message is conveyed and perceived properly because the implementation of any order depends upon effectiveness of communication”*. Adirika et.al., (1996) also stated basic elements of communication including encoding, decoding, response and feedback. Responded 8 also said, *“Office environment with positive, friendly and humane behavior is pre requisite for the effectiveness of communication.”*

In reply to the question about relationship between strategic management and communication effectiveness, respondent 1 said, *"Assignment of duties requires a complete homework. A planned administration assigns duties according to the interest, workload and nature of the subject. For example, the duty of accounts and exams records can be assigned to the teacher of mathematics as it would be according to her interest. Being science teacher I stress that teachers with heavy academic work load can be assigned the duties which don't affect their academic responsibility because students' education is the priority. Therefore, a planned decision based upon thorough analysis of many perspectives as nature of subject, experience, interest, aptitude etc. is very important."* Respondent 6 said, *"Random assignment of the duties without the consent and the interest of the employee create resentment. If duty is assigned with prior meeting and consent of the employees, it increases dedication and quality of work. Thus random assignment of duties becomes a communication barrier and affects execution of the orders."* Respondent 7 said, *"Administration requires a thorough planning and strategic approach. Meetings with the employees are must to chalk out a plan with their collaboration. A prior discussion increases the effectiveness of the message. She quoted lived experience of two diverse administrative styles. "Under the strategic management, even those became good workers who had left work in resistance to the authoritative style. A strategic management, gets prior consent, considers interest and suggestions of employees and then fully trusts them."* Imaga (2003) also defined the process of strategic management as organizing, staffing, directing, leading, controlling and coordinating the activities of organizations to achieve designed goals with minimum possible resources at the quickest possible time. Respondent 8 said, *"Administration must have clear vision, she needs to be clear about what are the tasks and how can be achieved. A plan of action is to be chalked out in collaboration with the college council. Unplanned haphazard management destroys communication environment. A visionary, strategic and decisive management is most important to develop healthy communication culture."* Adams (2006) has stated that Strategic approach is an integrated thought process based upon organizational missions, contextual realities and then deciding a direction for future decisions. Ezeh (1999) also said strategic management is an organizational process of determining an initial and later comprehensive plan for the achievement of long term objectives.

In response to the question how far direct and indirect way of communication affects communication environment, Respondent 1 said, *"Indirect communication changes the real message; therefore, it creates conflicts."* Respondent 2 said, *"Indirect communication gives the feelings of disrespect. If one receives a message by junior, it is against the dignity of the senior. Whatever, the administration wants to say she should communicate directly."* Respondent 3 also said, *"Direct communication reduces misperceptions."* Respondent 6 said, *"In a big institution, the problem of indirect communication is serious. Head remains in touch with some seniors and the message is communicated to the juniors through seniors. Juniors don't get access to the office, which creates distance between them and the principal. Young staff is energetic and requires more motivation. Principal should directly communicate with them for motivation."* Respondent 7 said, *"Indirect communication affects environment badly as it leads towards conflicts and misperceptions. Message gets changed when it is passed through a 3rd person. It creates a distance between the employee and the management."* Respondent 8 said, *"Most of the communication problems in private and professional life are because of indirect communication. Communication through juniors or workers affects self-respect of the employee and increases physical gap between the head and the employee."*

Their responses to the question about relationship between physical space and effective communication are as follows: Respondent 1 and 3 being juniors said, *"Physical access to the principal office for guidance, confidence and motivation is very important."* Respondent 2 said, *"Access is necessary but it should be for positive purpose."* Ezezie (2008) also talked of physical proximity in interpersonal relations. Modern theories emphasize the importance of physical proximity during interpersonal communications. Respondent 4 said, *"A balanced access is to be provided, too much access affects the decorum of the office but distance also gives rise to conflicts and misperceptions. So, a thoughtful positive access is necessary."* Respondent 5 said, *"The equality of physical access to all employees irrespective of*

seniority difference is very important. Favoritism is also a barrier that affects communication environment. Physical access on the basis of favoritism leads towards indirect communication which gives rise to apprehensions and misperceptions." Respondent 6 said, "Physical access to the juniors is also necessary to boost their confidence." Respondent 7 also said, "Physical space is a great communication barrier. Mostly the junior staff is kept at a distance which creates communication gap. Senior staff behaves as a communication barrier between juniors and administration. This creates conflict between seniors and juniors. Such type of conflict deteriorates institutional environment. Administration needs to have direct contact with the whole team. Young staff requires motivation and appreciation. Secondly, some employees themselves remain away from the management. They don't bother to report back about the task assigned which causes mistrust." She suggested that physical barrier is to be removed from both the sides. Respondent 8 said, "Physical space requires thoughtful approach. Direct communication is very necessary for proper understanding, but one thing is worth considering that the access should be for guidance and suggestion. Otherwise, a culture of backbiting and leg pulling develops. Administration should give confidence to the team to reach her whenever they require guidance, but shouldn't give confidence to report about other team members. Thus physical access is to be also planned and positive." Kelvin-Iloafu (2016) also stressed the importance of an integrated working environment and accessibility of management because it enhances effective communication. Employees are also required to work in coordination with the co-workers.

When asked about the emotional barriers, respondent 1 said, "Human beings are occupied by many personal issues; therefore, emotional states also impede communication. Any professional, whether administration or employee, needs to learn emotional control." Respondent 2 said, "Emotional control is necessary for both, but emotional reaction of head is more damaging than the employee's. It affects the whole institution." Respondent 3 said, "Reactionary behavior and the mood swings of head badly affect interpersonal relations." Respondent 4 said, "There should be no emotional reaction on both the sides, but if any employee loses emotional control administration should deal that person reasonably. She might call that person in loneliness and can console her." Respondent 5 said, "Emotional barriers are of many types as fear, mistrust and anger etc. Authoritative behavior creates fear which becomes emotional barrier. Even mistrust of the administration also becomes emotional barrier." Responded 7 said, "The behavior of the administration is very important. If the administrator is flexible, considerate and pays attention to the problems and suggestions of the employees it develops confidence of the employee." As per Lawson (2006), only 7% of the meaning is communicated through words rest of 93% meanings is communicated through paralinguistic features as tone and body movements. Therefore, behavior is a serious emotional barrier which causes physical barrier from employee's side. Employee tries to avoid communication. Thus a friendly, rather motherly behavior affects the communication environment greatly.

When they were asked that how far motivation and appreciation can increase effectiveness of communication, Respondent 1 and 3, being young, stressed the importance of motivation and appreciation. Respondent 1 said, "Motivation for employees is just as fuel. It encourages and energizes them to produce quality work." Respondent 3 said, "Young workers have will for work and appreciation increases their elasticity for work." Responded 4 said, "Mechanical way of getting orders done, and lack of motivation decrease the inner urge to do work. Many members gradually recede from work because of no appreciation and demotivating behavior." Respondent 5 said, "Employee requires to be publically acknowledged in the meeting. Employees should be appreciated for their efforts, results, administrative duties etc." Responder 6 said, "Motivational sessions need to be arranged time and again, a single smile of administration makes a great difference; her appreciation really boosts up the confidence." Respondent 7 said, "Mostly juniors work under seniors and their work remains unnoticed. They, being young, require more motivation. Appreciation is very necessary as it is natural human desire." Respondent 8 said, "Whenever any administrative duty is performed or any function is held, those who work at foreground receive appreciation, while people working in the background remain unnoticed which increases mistrust. Success requires team work and a strategic management realizes it."

Their replies to the question about good leadership style for better communication are as follows: Respondent 1 said, *“Authoritative style creates fear, communication requires a humane style.”* Respondent 2 said, *“Administration is the part of the team her success depends upon the team; therefore, she should have flexible style.”* Respondent 3 said, *“Authoritative style creates physical distance as employees try to avoid the administration.”* Respondent 4 said, *“Style is the main factor, it is not only a barrier but also gives rise to many emotional, psychological and physical barriers. She needs to be flexible and needs to give ear to the suggestions of team. Her decision needs to be based upon the mutual consensus.”* Respondent 5 said, *“It is the style which either increases or decreases listening motivation. Style creates psychological block and the message can’t be properly perceived. When an administration is authoritative and doesn’t give importance to the suggestions of the team communication decreases.”* Respondent 6 said, *“Administration can run smoothly in collaboration with the team. She needs to value different perspectives. No doubt she is the decisive power, but her decision needs to be based upon consultation. After assigning duties, delegation of powers to the team with complete trust is necessary.”* Respondent 7 said, *“An authoritative and bossy style is serious impediment. She can’t run the institution alone; therefore, she needs to give ear to the suggestions of the staff. Even juniors need confidence to participate in discussion. Bossy or mechanical style is a serious barrier which causes lack of motivation and creates distance.”* Respondent 8 also said, *“The acknowledgment of the varying perspectives of the team is pre requisite for strategic management. Team understands ground realities and knows how to execute orders. A flexible administration seeks suggestions from team and thoughtfully takes decisions. A decision unanimously taken increases the quality of the execution.”*

In response to the question about the importance of mutual listening, respondent 1 said, *“Listening is very important. Employees have multiple issues for which they require guidance. Specially their official issues concerning NOC, ACRs, or Account Office correspondence for which, at least, they should be provided guidance. If administration shows cold behavior to their problems, it emotionally disturbs them and they get demotivated.”* Respondent 2 said, *“Administration should listen to the official issues of the staff. As she has access to the higher administrative authorities she should help them out. But usually employees receive indifferent attitude to their problems.”* Respondent 3 also said, *“At least guidance should be provided to the employees. Inexperienced employees wish to work but they need direction. Therefore, their problems should not only be heard but a due guidance should also be proved.”* Respondent 4 said, *“Listening is basic requirement for communication. Administration that listens to the employees’ issues receives more focused listening and vice versa. When an employee doesn’t receive proper listening she feels emotionally and psychologically tensed.”* Respondent 5 said, *“Until one understands you, interpersonal communication can’t develop.”* Respondent 6 said, *“An administration should be unbiased and positive in listening to the employees.”* She shared her lived experience that during meetings staff don’t have courage to speak as administration is always on speaking end. *“It also affects the listening of team, as people expression shows disinterest in the message of administration. Whenever someone speaks, she represents the apprehensions of a group. Any cold attitude to one’s issue or suggestion creates differences between the team and administration. Team should be given confidence to speak.”* Respondent 7 said, *“Listening depends upon the mood of the administration, if she is in mood she would listen, but if she is occupied in some work she would not listen even to the problems of the staff. Personal official issues of the staff are heard relative to their dedication. If a worker is dedicated one, administration provides guidance, but if the worker is not dedicated in her duties they receive indifference. Administration needs to pay complete concentration to the problems of the employees. Her cold attitude towards employees’ issues becomes a serious barrier which leads towards emotional barriers.”* Respondent 8 said, *“Due consideration to the staff problems increases respect for administration. If their problems are owned and proper guidance is provided to them their potential and dedication for institutional duties increases. Thus, it is the duty of administration to listen to the problems of the team.”* Kapur (2018) also stressed a Peaceful and conducive environment. She said that active listening and positive feedback improve communication.

When asked about psychological barriers, Respondent 1 said, *“When an employee is heard with biased perception it creates psychological block and listening at the employees’ level decreases. Positive perspective of administration is very important.”* Respondent 2 said, *“Perspective difference causes psychological tension. Neutral administration raises confidence to communicate confidently.”* Respondent 3 said, *“Understanding is really serious issue, when administration understands one’s perspective communication gets better and easy.”* Respondent 4 said, *“Perspective difference is natural and communication can be easy and smooth when one values the differing perspectives. No doubt she is the decisive power, but she should neutrally hear the perspectives of employees.”* Respondent 5 said, *“Leadership should have a flexible style, she should talk according to the nature and thoughts of employees.”* Respondent 6 said, *“Positive, flexible and neutral style can help to control perceptual barriers.”* Respondent 7 said, *“Perceptual problem causes conflicts and reactions.”* Respondent 8 said, *“Differing perspectives may cause psychological barrier. When the boss and the employee don’t perceive the things in the same perspective communication is impeded. It can be handled with open mindedness and flexible behavior. Strategic administration accepts differing perspectives of staff and tries to approach issues from different angles for better understanding.”*

Findings

The study has been qualitative in nature in with reference to the communication environment in educational institutions. The prior objective has been to explore the relationship between the strategic management and an effective communication. Communication environment of educational institutions is greatly important as it affects the character development of young generation. Later on this generation serves in different institutions of society. Therefore, this area has been decided for exploration on the basis of its sensitive role in the consolidation of society. Data produced from different employees of different colleges helped to foreground the deep and intertwined relationship between the strategic management and the communication environment in government colleges. It expresses that healthy environment for effective communication entirely depends upon strategic management. Take away strategic management from the basis of these institutions, and there will be complete chaos. Many internal and external factors have been mentioned by respondents i.e., negative behavior, favoritism, biasness, perspective difference, emotional behavior, authoritative and mechanical leadership style, lack of listening, physical space, indirect communication, subjective perceptions, varied perspectives, lack of trust, self-centeredness, lack of consultation, indecisive nature, short temperedness, emotionally toned content, verbose message, mood swings, irresolution, ambiguity of vision, indecisiveness, lack of motivation and guidance etc. Comparative analysis of all above mentioned barriers helped to infer strong relationship between strategic management and effective communication.

There is a chain and relationship between seemingly different barriers. For example, an indirect communication and physical space, as per the data collected, has become culture in educational institutions. It gives rise to biasness, favoritism, physical space, fear, mistrust, misperception, conflicts, negative communication and so many emotional and psychological barriers. All these barriers are inter-related. A direct communication can reduce many barriers. One barrier becomes the cause of many other barriers. Those who have physical access to the head of the department receive more favors. It creates differences and apprehensions in team members. If a planned and positive physical access on equal basis is provided to the whole team it develops good interpersonal relationship and makes communication environment peaceful and healthy. Moreover, this aspect reduces misperceptions and conflicts even among team members. Sound environment, steady nature, a flexible visionary, neutral and decisive personality, who considers herself the part of the team and works in collaboration with the team, can overcome many barriers. Secondly, strategic management is pre requisite as the whole institutional communication environment depends upon the management style. Strategic management in wider perspective includes all positive qualities of leadership. A strategic management is visionary. It is very clear about the objectives and future perspectives of the decided actions. Strategic management is thoughtful and has analytical approach towards all the issues of the department. Rani (2016) also said that

it is very important for the management to be well aware of all the barriers only then a strategy can be chalked out to overcome them. Qualitative approach through open ended in-depth approach helped to explicate the deep intertwined relationship between all these barriers and strategic management. As Bailey (1996) said, informal interview is effective tool to elicit more information about the institutional context of the person.

Strategic manager possesses a flexible style and gives confidence to the team to share their perspectives. She listens to diverse angles of thought, values the suggestion of the team, and after a thoughtful homework chalks out a strategic long term policy and a road map. She is the part of the team and takes decisions after consultation and is always available for guidance. She needs to be flexible and trustworthy. She needs not to impose orders in mechanical way. Thus, the capabilities of strategic management express that environment of institution entirely depends upon management. A well-disciplined, thoughtful, visionary, flexible, positive and decisive management can remove many barriers. Thus, the communication environment of an institution depends upon management style. According to CCT & OIT theories interpersonal communication in professional settings is a process that constitutes the organization.

Some suggestions have also been given by the respondents which are as follows: management selection should be through PPSC after analyzing the strategic capabilities because whole of the institution, its working and team collaboration depends upon management. A strategic manager overcomes the impediments and tries to get quality work from the team. Moreover, the time duration of management should be fairly long so that a positive interpersonal environment culture can be developed.

Conclusion

Communication is fundamental aspect of human correspondence, whether private or public. Without effective communication no work can be properly executed. It is a process that requires a planned administration to create a healthy and conducive environment in an organization. This already complex phenomenon is getting more complex with the technological development and cultural assimilation. This study has been carried out to explore the phenomenon deeply that helped to foreground, through lived experiences, an intricate relationship between strategic management and communication. An in-depth exploration gave clearer image of this phenomenon. It has helped to explicate and foreground basic aspects to make it more effective. It is inferred from the various perspectives that strategic management is the life blood of organization. A well planned and synchronized manager can over come seemingly diverse barriers. As the phenomenon has been approached from employees' lived experience, its results are guideline for management and team to reconsider their communication styles especially in educational settings.

Recommendations

In the 21st century, media intervention has made interpersonal communication more complex. Even after office hours, the access to the employees is easy that has disturbed the private life of people. Further studies can be conducted in communication area with reference to the media intervention to analyze the effects of digital communication in educational settings. Moreover, this study can be replicated in other departments as communication environment is life blood for the smooth working of any institution.

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