

Original Article

# The Inter-Office Communications Analysis in the UEP-Main Campus Qualified Offices

Ma. Mercedes G. Sosa

*Doctor of Public Administration*

*OIC, Director, LogoTRI, UEP/ Faculty, College of Arts and Communication, University of Eastern Philippines, University Town, Northern Samar*

*Assistant Professor IV, Department of Languages and Communication/ Social Sciences Department*

**Abstract** - *The study was an inter-office communication analysis on the communication barriers of selected inter-office communications in the qualified offices of the University of Eastern Philippines – Main Campus and its inputs to strengthening administrative communications. The study used the descriptive-analytical research design to determine the type of inter-office communications selected as samples and the inter-offices as the qualified subject of the study. To find out the communication barriers, the descriptive-evaluative research design was used. The data of the inter-office communications which pertained to the objectives of the study were tabulated, analyzed, and evaluated using the frequency counts, percentages, mean, and ANOVA. Results showed that there were thirty-three (33) inter-office communications gathered from the eleven (11) offices of UEP. These inter-office communications were two (2) Special Orders, two (2) Memorandum, and two (2) letters. It showed that by nature, SOs, Memos, and letters are common and inherent in offices as an interpersonal exchange of information and understanding. Most communications are downward considering they are memoranda and special orders; most were intended to give orders and compliance. They contain the what, why, when, where, and how information. The mechanics in writing of Special Orders and Memoranda were very much observed because they have a standard form so with the Memoranda, but with letters, errors in capitalization, spelling, punctuation, spacing, wrong abbreviations, and the wrong use of apostrophe lowered its grand mean. In the light of the findings of this study and the conclusions are drawn, it is therefore recommended that the issuance of special orders, memoranda, and letters in its standard form be regularly maintained to be safe in writing communications, management awareness of communication barriers as improving communication process, written and/or inter-office communications have to be reviewed and revised many times to ensure that rules for communication are followed, and colleges have to spearhead the conduct of training in the writing of inter-office communications.*

**Keywords** - *Communication, Barriers, Strengthening, Administration, Inter-office, Communications*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Effective management in public administration is unattainable 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 the mismanagement of communications, particularly in handling office communication – the processing of the information, the channels, the medium, 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.

Communicating ideas should not mislead, but rather it is getting one's meaning across the 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 understand and facilitate interactive situations. Communication then reflects an ability to perform the 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 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 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 on the performance and morale of an organization (Leveriza, 2007). Without 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 could 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 that 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 in a decrease in administrative efficiency. This is the very nature of communication. It is a two-way process.

In reading from the 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 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 the communication process. Forms of disturbances destroy the meaning of messages. These are the encoding and the decoding errors, the non-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 to rule 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 the completeness and conciseness of the information contained in the communications.

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 in 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 of the different colleges and from offices of the Vice-Presidents.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Generally, this study aimed to analyze the written office communications in the selected offices of the University of Eastern Philippines-Main Campus.

Specifically, it aimed to (1) qualify the forms of inter-office communications in the UEP-Main Campus; (2) find out the communication barriers in the inter-office communications of UEP-main campus, and draw inputs for strengthening administrative communication.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) Main Campus.

The University of Eastern Philippines 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 three barangays and is 4 kilometers or 20 minutes away from the town proper.

It was first known as the Catarman Farm School, founded in June 1918, then became the Catarman Agricultural School, and later the Catarman Agricultural High School, which in 1951 was converted into the Catarman National Agricultural High School. On June 14, 1956, it became a State College – the Samar Institute of Technology. Eight years after, on June 20, 1964, Republic Act No. 4126 granted the school a University status.

Being an academic institution, it has nine colleges, namely: College of Law (CL), College of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Natural Resources (CAFNR), College of Arts and Communication (CAC), College of Business Administration (CBA), College of Education (CoEd), College of Engineering (CE), College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (CNAHS), College of Science (CS) and College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM).

Specifically, this study involves all the colleges in the university, 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, the Office of Student Affairs, the Finance Office, and the Budget Office.

The study used the descriptive-analytical research design to determine the type of inter-office communications selected as samples and the inter-offices as the qualified subject of the study. To find out the communication barriers, the descriptive-evaluative research design was used.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Form

Physical Barriers

Lack of adequate time is another issue that would cause a problem for effective communication. Time is always short, and this fact leads to distorted communication: A great

Findings show that 30 or 45.55% were semi-block; 20 or 30.30% were modified block; 13 or 19.20% were square-block; 3 or 4.55% were full block.

While the inter-office communications were written in varied, most were in semi-block form. It means that the semi-block is the usually preferred form of writing as it is easy to write.

Barriers in Inter-Office Communications

Table 2 presents the types of inter-office communication barriers in terms of process and semantic.

Process Barriers

As regards process barriers, Table 1a shows that out of 27 identified barriers, comprising of four (4) memoranda, four (4) special orders, and 19 letters, 10 or 30.0 percent were on capitalization, three (3) or 11 percent were on mechanics, one (1) or 3.7 percent was in spelling, seven (7) or 25.8 percent in punctuation and six (6) or 22.3 percent on diluted words.

Semantic barriers

On semantic barriers, there was 10 or 21.7 percent in redundancy which were found in three (3) in memoranda, 5 in special orders, and 2 in letters.

There was 71 or 71.7 percent in the wrong use of words and 3 or 6.6 percent in the use of wrong articles.

Personal Barriers

People tend to react in different ways to the same cause based on their personal experiences, habits, and interpretation abilities (Szilagui and Wallace, 1990, *Organizational Behavior and Performance*).

These barriers did not reflect in the sample communication because this may only surface out of a personal interview asking the respondent as he/she had experienced a communication situation where personal experiences and interpretation abilities may play a part in the barrier.

challenge when pressed for time would be to overlook formal communication channels (Szilagui and Wallace, 1990)

**Table 2. Types of Barriers**

Types of Barriers	Memoranda	Special Order	Letter	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Process Barriers</b>					
Capitalization	1	2	7	10	30.0
Mechanic (Spacing/slash)			3	3	11.1
Spelling	1		4	1	3.7
Punctuation	2	1	5	7	25.9
Diluted (words/letters)		1		6	22.3
Total	4	4	19		100.0
<b>Semantic Barriers</b>					
Redundancy	3	5	2	10	21.1
Use of Words	8	7	18	33	71.1
Wrong Articles	1		2	3	6.6
Total	12	12	22	46	100.6

**A. Inputs to Strengthening Administrative Communications**

Considering the important role played by written communication in the administration of public offices, programs, and projects or activities specifically in planning, deciding, directing, and controlling, all of these issues are put in written form. But when they are not made clear, they can cause confusion, misconceptions, disunity, and dissatisfaction.

For a manager to get his/her message across writing, a thorough knowledge of the style, rules, and mechanics of written communication is a must as they can lead to understanding and facilitative interaction between the manager and the people s/he manages. To avoid breakdown of inter-office communication as a result of poor management, and In-Service Training on Writing Inter-Office Communications must be conducted among managers and secretaries in the university with an emphasis on the mechanics, barriers, and the elements where they are weak because they have little or no knowledge/awareness of them.

Experts in administrative communication can come to the rescue by printing a Resource Guide or module and Test Bank as useful aids and supplements in writing inter-office communications.

**V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the light of the findings of this study and the conclusions are drawn, the following recommendations are hereby advanced: Issuance of special orders, memoranda, and letters in their standard form be regularly maintained to be safe in writing communications. Management awareness of communication barriers as improving communication process.

Written and/or inter-office communications have to be reviewed and revised many times to ensure that rules for communication are followed.

Colleges have to spearhead the conduct of training in the writing of inter-office communications.

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