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A Study on Employee Perception on The Internal Communication System In Organizations

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Abstract

In the era of unceasing pressure to exist in a globalized economy where organizations struggle to remain competitive the internal communication system upholds the position of being the most challenging zone. The complexity of the internal communication system is reflected in the way organization communicates externally. The success of the internal communication system depends on a number of factors however the current study is limited to three most significant factors namely employee awareness, superior subordinate relationship, and the flow of communication in organizations. Since individuals as organization members have different ideologies, behaviour, competencies and attitudes it is significant to study the perceptions of employees towards the communication system followed in organizations. Therefore, the major objective of this study is to highlight employees' perception of the internal communication system with regard to the variables taken for study and the manner in which the variables influence the bottom line of the organizations in achieving its goals. The outcomes of the study signify that, the general perception of employees towards the internal communication system is reasonably satisfactory but there are certain flaws in the communication pattern and supervisory communication which could be detrimental to organizational health.



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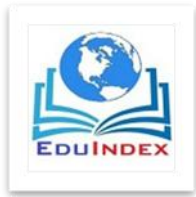


Keywords: Internal Communication, employee awareness, superior subordinate relationship ,flow of communication

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Internal Communication has been clearly declared as the defining factor for organizational success. This is so as all communication problems can be avoided with a robust system of communication. Although there are innumerable factors which contribute to an organizations' success communication is inarguably one of the most critical factors which if constructive can lead an organization achieving greater heights or if a constraint can lead to its downfall. It is such a factor which defines all relationships first establishing one then maintaining it through social and work related interactions. Earlier the role of communication was to give directions and exercise control but with the advancement in information and technology it has taken a more strategic role which facilitates the development of a flexible work setting. Although every individual as a member of the organization has his or her own style of communication it is deeply influenced by the practices of communication, the policy followed and its values. It is very important for organizations to be concerned about how its employees perceive the communication system. A lot of effort and thinking should go into designing the structure of the organization as all communication parameters are based on the structure and function of the organizational set up. This ensures the reporting formalities of who communicates to whom and also allows free flow of information at all levels of interface. Majority of information flows through managers and supervisors so they can be called the front runners who integrate the entire communication system and its subsystems securing the dynamics of various parameters in the communication system. Managerial communication is strategic for achieving goals. (Herich, 2008) has rightly pointed out saying 'The degree to which a manager achieves corporate objectives depends on his capability to communicate commendably'.



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In spite of the essential part that internal communication plays nevertheless, it remains to be the overlooked facet in most organizations where the emphasis is more on what is delivered externally with minimal realization that it is the nervous system internally that helps coordinate its actions externally.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- a) To study the perceptions of employees towards the communication system followed in the organization.
- b) To know the significance of superior subordinate relationship and its effect on work environment.
- c) To determine the extent to which the flow of communication influences communication effectiveness in organizations.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Employee Perception and Internal Communication Defined

Different submissions on employee relations have proved that Perception is a key factor facilitating an organizations growth initiative. Whilst employee perceptions concerning the system of Internal Communication, superior-subordinate relationship, and the flow of communication in organizations are contemplated to be fundamental to success of an organization, there are insufficient pragmatic studies that assess how these mind-sets may vary depending on the nature of communication.

Employee Perception can be defined as a practice wherein the employees as members of organization form imprints by interpreting content as per their understanding of the situation thus giving sense to the environment which further guide their behaviour. Woodruffe (1995) referred to internal communication as regarding employees with colossal value throughout the practices of plans to realise organizational purposes. The function of Internal communication should be to support the functions of the organizations providing well-defined relations internally and creating clear communication associations which provide strength to the organization.



2.2 Internal Communication as Critical Tool for Accomplishment of Organizational Objectives

Nnamseh (2009) was of the view that Communication is the fundamental means through which an organization provides a platform to its members by connecting with each other through meaningful interactions by exchanging ideas, attitudes and emotions, which could be through any means be it verbal, or through written medium or even symbolic. If this viewpoint is considered then it becomes essential for the manager to transfer information in the best possible way to attain corporate goals. Michael (1995) described the nature of communication functions as persuasive in the context of the drastic change that the environment of business has gone through earlier it was not the need of the hour that management conveys everything to the employees. But today organizations have started recognising the crucial role that communication has in the area of employee relations which define the success parameters. Welch and Jackson (2007) were of the view that internal communication is central to all important strategic connections. Howard (2000) considered interactions with people on a face to face basis as essential for effective communication internally which although ranked higher in many research studies cannot be guaranteed as the organization grows to a larger set up. Dolphin (2005) stated the function of internal communication is to build trust among employees strengthening employee relations, providing information which is not just timely but having a high reliability factor which creates a motivating work environment.

2.3 Success factors defining Internal Communication

A number of factors affect the internal communication system in organizations however this varies from company to company depending on its size and structure. Moreover a lot depends on managerial and employee level of competence. The factors identified for the current study is limited to three most significant factors namely employee awareness, superior subordinate relationship, and the flow of communication in organizations.



2.3.1 Employee awareness

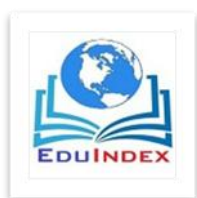
Rosenbloom (1991), asserts that communication is a medium for all connections among the members of the organization whether such connections are supportive or contradictory. Communication is the binding factor for the personnel of a company and supports them to achieve the understanding that is indispensable for their collaboration in the execution of organizational purposes.

The company's communication strategy and policy decides the entire set-up of how communication flows and at what levels interactions would take place employees want to know what is expected of them. It becomes important for employees to know the communication policy of the organization so that they have clarity with regard to the pattern and system of communication. A lot depends on the network and the structure of the organization the flow of information, how much of flexibility is permitted and ultimately what does the management expects from the employees.

2.3.2 Superior subordinate relationship

Superior-subordinate communication refers to an interchange of information and stimulus among organizational members, either of both having an approved right to direct and assess the activities of the workforce of the organization (Jablin, 1979). Superior subordinate relationship is significant both from management point of view as well as the employees way of working. This is so as the supervisor is the key person through whom all information travels. This relationship could be for various reasons or purposes in the organizational setting. It could be to give directives related to task performance or to give information on processes and policy or to convey expectations to employees.

This relationship proves to be fruitful if communication between superior and subordinate is two way. Superiors can prove to be effective if they are fair and subordinates can share all work-related problems to them without any hesitations. A great deal of internal communication depends on the way this relationship is defined.

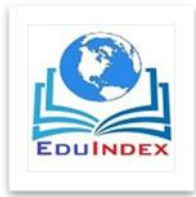


2.3.3 Flow of communication in organizations

James (2002) came to the conclusion that collaboration throughout the work relationships is possible only with good interconnections and effective communication. The flow of communication should be from management down towards the various operational levels depending on the need then flowing from one level of workforce to another level. This viewpoint is expressed by Reitzfeld, 1989. This is the most permissible and dynamic expression of modern communication style which is opposed to the one way traditional style of communication between higher ups and those down the hierarchy. In fact Kane, 1996 and Smith, 1990 had declared that this is the most significant move for modern organizations.

Since communication constitutes to be basic component of the role of management in organizations developing an effective two-way communication system between the top management and employees and continuous evaluation of the same would have a positive influence leading to higher satisfaction level with regard to the flow of information. Efficacious choice of an appropriate channel has prominence on various levels of categorised communications of the company; it unswervingly expedites fruitful realization of company aims. As per Robbins (2003) communication which flows downward is expended by leaders and supervisors to allocate work, specify job directives, update employees on strategies and processes, identify problems which require notice and provide opinion about routine functioning and overall performance. This facilitates direction and control as vital management functions. The greatest benefit of downward communication is that employees become aware as to how they can contribute as part of the sub system to identify with organizational goals. However, it should be taken care that this type of communication does not create authoritarianism.

Upward communication moves towards higher ups which can be used for providing information through regular reports, discuss issues, or provide feedback which is an excellent way to keep management aware about the general perception of the organization and specific aspects related



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to employees. Buchannan (2001) affirmed that upward communication has constantly been subdued, misrepresented and easily discounted by managers. Managers should have an open policy for upward communication so that employees feel free to communicate in this direction. Lateral or horizontal communication is communication between employees or work groups at the same level which is characterized by the fact that it gives good emotional support and comfort. Memoria & Ganker(2001) assert that horizontal communication promotes speedy handling of matters and is a great reliever for employees and superiors as it avoids unnecessary problems.

Diagonal Communication is cross ways which does not stick to any relations established as a result of hierarchy and practically moves crossing all levels, functions and departments. Diagonal Communication is useful when work issues are rather difficult to solve in an environment which is not easy going but still there is hope because the management and organization support innovation.

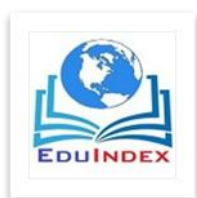
3.1 Research Methodology

The current work is based on descriptive research design. A literature review was also conducted with the intent to gather secondary data..A total of 100 questionnaires were administered for the study at Bharat Electronics, one of the leading Public Sector Organizations in Bangalore city. The data collected provided adequate coverage to the examination. The data collected is then analysed using Excel as a tool and the Table shown below summarizes the result achieved after applying, t-Test and computing Pearson Correlation coefficient.

3.2 Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

H₁ There exists a significant relationship between employee awareness and its influence on the effectiveness of the internal communication system in organizations.



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H_0 There is no significant relationship between employee awareness and its influence on the effectiveness of the internal communication system in organizations.

Hypothesis 2

H_1 There exists a significant relationship between superior subordinate relationship and its influence on the work environment

H_0 There is no significant relationship between superior subordinate relationship and its influence on the work environment

Hypothesis 3

H_1 There exists a significant relationship between the flow of communication and its influence on communication effectiveness in organizations

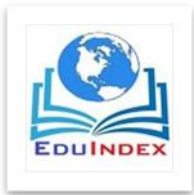
H_0 There is no significant relationship between the flow of communication and its influence on communication effectiveness in organizations

3.3 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table and graphs below represent the response received from 100 respondents for examining the relationship between employees perception and its influence on the internal communication system in organizations.

Table 1.0: Relationship between employee awareness and effectiveness of the internal communication system in organizations

S.No	Title	SDA 1	DA 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
1.	Communication system is structured	0	10	26	48	16
2.	Communication policy is clear	0	0	38	28	34



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3.	Free flow of information at all levels	0	0	32	42	26
4.	Employee expectations are communicated	0	0	28	36	36

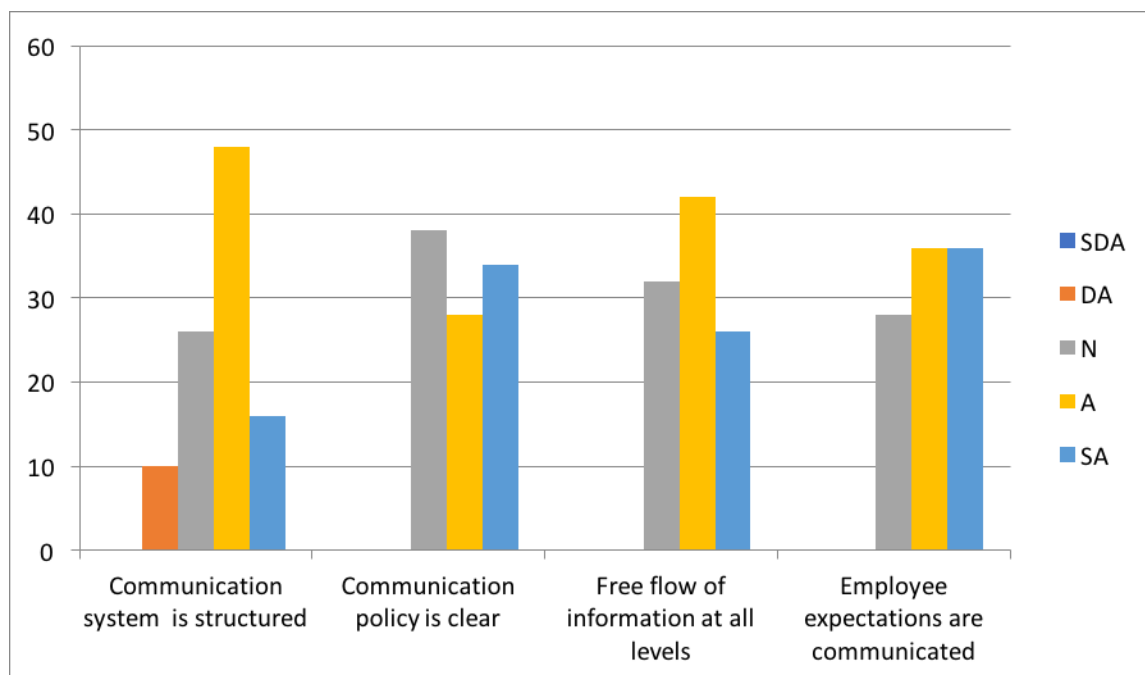


Fig 1.0: Relationship between employee awareness and effectiveness of the internal communication system in organizations

Pearson Correlation = 0.676682

PValue = 0.001123

Positive value of Pearson Correlation coefficient indicates that there exist a strong relationship between employee awareness and its influence on the effectiveness of the internal communication system in organizations.



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Hence better the employee awareness better will be the effectiveness of the internal communication system in organizations.

The p-Value computed indicates that there is strong evidence to reject the Null Hypothesis and accept Alternate Hypothesis.

Hence from both Pearson Correlation coefficient and p-value, it can be concluded that there exist a strong relationship between employee awareness and its influence on the effectiveness of the internal communication system in organizations.

Table 1.1: Relationship between superior subordinate relationship and work environment

S.No	Question	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Complaints and problems can be communicated freely to supervisor	0	0	38	28	34
2.	Supervisor listens to issues with an open mind	0	0	32	42	26
3.	Supervisor encourages open communication	0	0	28	36	36
4.	Supervisor is supportive in work related and personal issues	0	0	39	43	18



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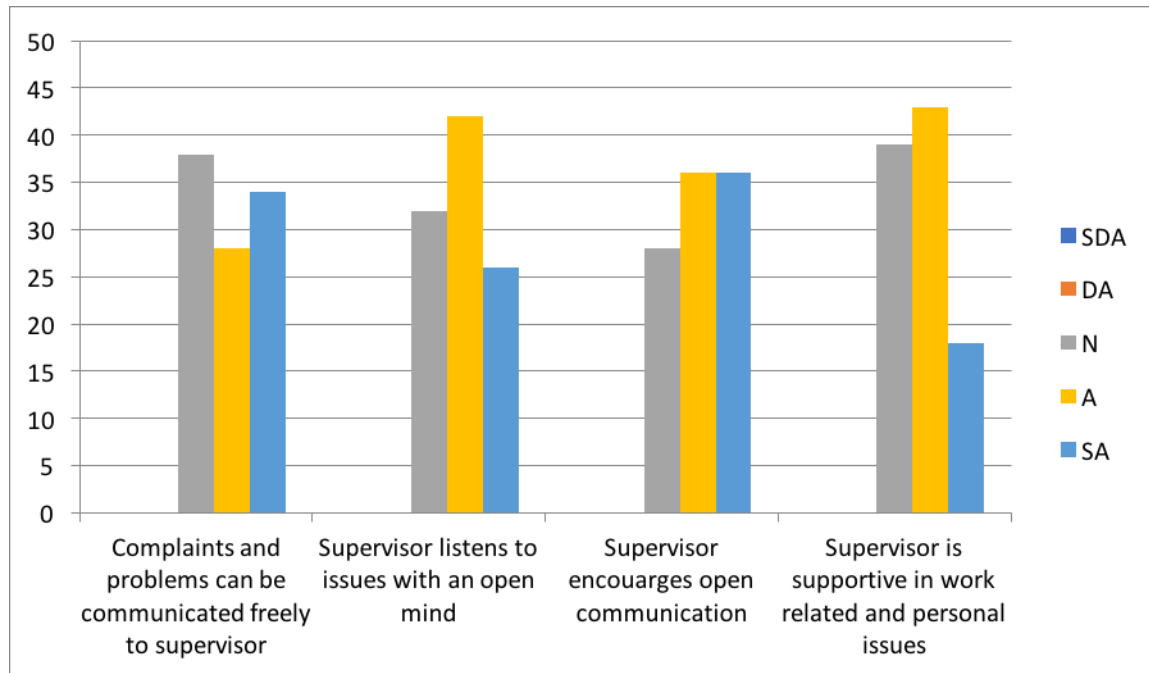


Fig 1.1: Superior subordinate relationship and work environment

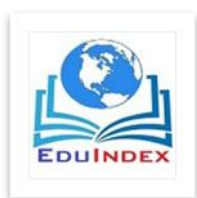
Pearson Correlation = 0.631883

PValue = 0.000489

Positive value of Pearson Correlation coefficient indicates significant relationship between superior subordinate relationship and its influence on the work environment

Hence better the superior subordinate relationship better will be the work environment

The p-Value computed indicates that there is strong evidence to reject the Null Hypothesis and accept Alternate Hypothesis.



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Hence from both Pearson Correlation coefficient and p-value, it can be concluded that there exists a significant relationship between superior subordinate relationship and its influence on the work environment.

Table 1.2: Relationship between the flow of communication and communication effectiveness in organizations

S.No	Question	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Suggestions and Ideas are encouraged	0	10	27	50	13
2.	Relevant information and constructive feedback are communicated effectively	0	0	26	45	29
3.	Communication with colleagues is healthy	0	0	27	52	21
4.	Communication with other departments is free flowing	0	0	26	42	32

Fig 1.2: Relationship between the flow of communication and communication effectiveness in organizations

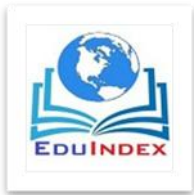
Pearson Correlation = 0.316664

PValue = 0.023566

Positive value of Pearson Correlation coefficient indicates significant relationship between the flow of communication and its influence on communication effectiveness in organizations

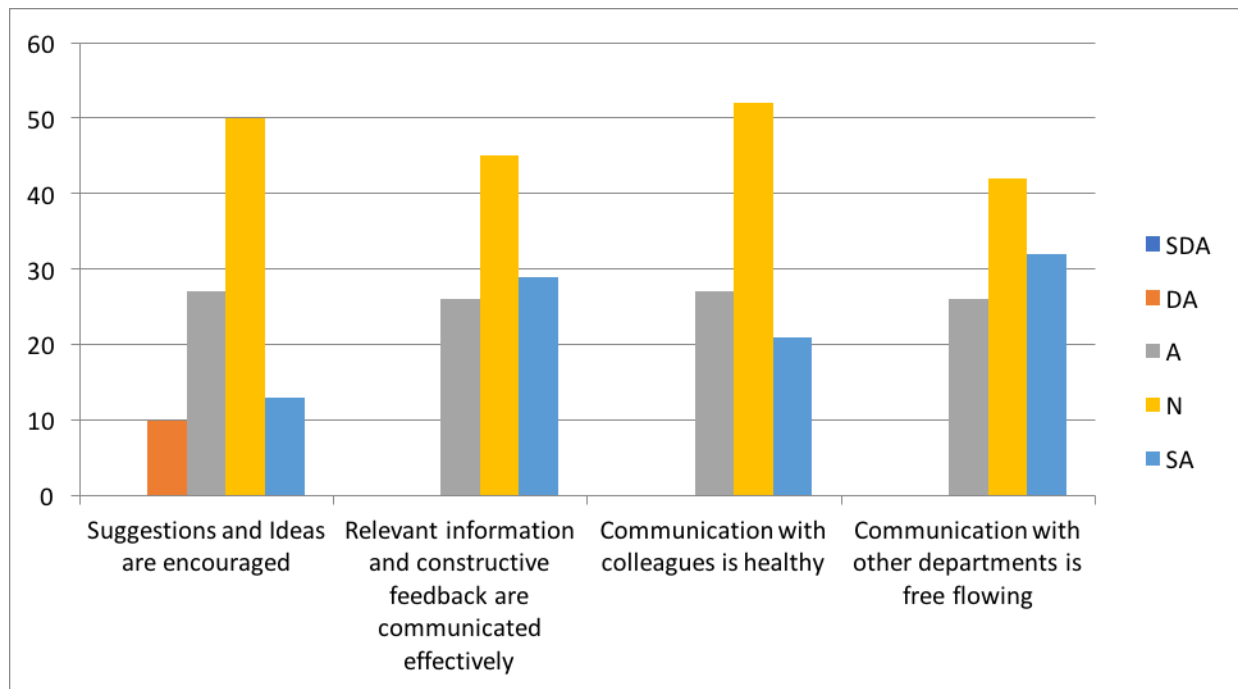
Hence better the flow of communication better will be the communication effectiveness in organizations

The p-Value computed indicates that there is strong evidence to reject the Null Hypothesis and accept Alternate Hypothesis.



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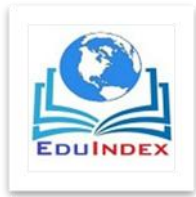
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Hence from both Pearson Correlation coefficient and p-value, it can be concluded that there exists a significant relationship between the flow of communication and its influence on communication effectiveness in organizations.

3.4 Summary

The study revealed that effective communication is a basis upon which every organization should be established. Survey analysis also indicated acceptance of the prominence of communication in attaining corporate objectives. In the organization studied, it was observed that the system of communication can be more robust than it is at present. The organization has a communication policy strategically planned but the same can be made more effective by



communicating it to the employees with more clarity the same could be evaluated on a regular basis. The organization does reflect a mix of communication patterns which could be improved with varying degrees at all levels. The study also discovered that superior and subordinate relationship could be more open so that employees can freely express their feelings without any constraints. Employees should be made aware of changes in the communication system on a regular basis. The lines between good and effective communication are seen blurred at the organization studied therefore care should be taken to make messages interpreted in the same way as intended. It can be concluded that the sooner the organizations stop taking communication as a second fiddle the better it is for the development of the organizations. It is recommended that there should be some flexibility in the structure of the organizations so that reporting relationships are not very rigid which creates unnecessary restrictions. Superiors could have face to face verbal interactions with employees whenever possible which translates into better outcomes.

Superiors should encourage two way communications which acts as the biggest motivator for employees. Upward communication could be more free flowing than downward communication. always are encouraged to make use of feedback while communicating with their workers/subordinate. Lastly, communication should be made easy by using familiar words and the key word to communicate should be simplicity rather than complexity. This will definitely give an edge to the organization to be competitive and stay competitive.

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