Is My Boss Effective? A Retrospection of the Middle Managers' Communication Style and Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

Clear and specific communication lines need to be established within the educational system to achieve successfully the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the institution. The study aimed to determine middle managers' management communication styles and its effectiveness, and the barrier commonly encountered. The study was conducted in a state university of the Philippines utilizing the descriptive research design to describe the middle mangers management communication style, effectiveness and barriers encountered. There were two groups of respondents in the study; group of middle managers and the group of subordinates. The subordinates are the faculty or staff who were directly under the supervision of the middle managers. They validated the management communication styles, effectiveness and barriers encountered by the middle managers. The questionnaires were intended to define the demographic profile of the middle manager, identify the management communication styles, and assess the effectiveness and barriers to effective communication. Most of the middle managers' management communication style was open, then blind, hidden and few of them were using closed style. These managers were found effective in seeking and giving feedback, listening, understanding others, influencing and relating and oral and written skills. The management communication performance of the middle managers is not greatly affected by the different

management communication barriers.

Keywords – Organization Management, Communication Management, Management Style, Management Effectiveness, Communication Barriers, Middle Managers

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a complex endeavor. So many factors go into getting two people to really understand one another. Great companies rely on effective communication for greater efficiency and teamwork (Feigenbaum, 2012). Communication is heavily constrained by formal organizational structure: the vast majority of communication occurs within organization unit and functional boundaries (Kleinbaum et. al., 2008).

Effective communication is crucial to the success of any educational institution. Clear and specific communication need to be established within the educational system to achieve successfully the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the institution. The desired goals of the educational institution necessitate a multiplicity of roles performed by school administrators and influence is exerted through their management communication styles and effectiveness.

The primary communication task of educational administrators is the structuring of an official network that provides all persons in the institution the information they need when they want it. The stakeholders of the institution should be reasonably well-informed and know where and how they could obtain the necessary information. Through clear policies in the communication system, information, values and insights transmitted in adequate amounts to the right person who needs it and minimizes problems. Therefore, figuring out how to get it together so teams can function optimally is a priority for any business or organization.

Moreover, school administrators have the task of creating an intellectual environment that provides the means of communication where each feels free to reveal his needs and values, to discover the purpose and perceptions of others without any risk of miscommunication or communication gap among members of the institution.

At the Nueva Vizcaya State University (NVSU), communication through a variety of channels is urged among the constituents. In line with the University structure, official communications of administrative personnel are coursed

through the Section Chief, then to the Director of the Program and to the Vice President concerned and finally to the President. Courtesy and diplomacy are observed in all official communications. All official letters and documents relative to the concerns of the University are addressed to the President or to the offices concerned. Except for emergency cases, official communications are sent through channels through the office higher in rank than the originating or transmitting office.

This policy on communication flow within the university is expected to be understood by the middle managers. They are expected to be equipped with the proper skills and competencies of communication and be able to implement a smooth communication flow.

A comprehensive understanding of effective communication strategies, negotiation skills, styles, competencies and media expertise prepares managers for management challenges. Their professional skills as communication management specialist will transfer across sectors, making them equally valuable in the different fields of their works. Likewise, a harmonious relationship between the middle managers and employees shall be established resulting in a more excellent and successful implementation of the university's vision, mission, goals and objectives.

The realization that effective communication based on personal foundation upon which organizational life is built among middle managers encouraged the researcher to venture in this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine the communication styles and the effectiveness of the middle managers of the NVSU. The barriers encountered that affected the management communications of the middle managers were likewise explored.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research utilized the descriptive survey method using questionnaires to determine the management communication styles, its effectiveness, and barriers encountered by the middle managers of the Nueva Vizcaya State University while performing their duties and responsibilities. The study also employed the correlation method to inter-relate communication styles to effectiveness and barriers.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were the middle managers such as the college deans, directors of academic related and non-academic offices, laboratory high school principals, department chairpersons, coordinators of special projects and programs and head of non-academic offices of the Nueva Vizcaya State University. There were two groups of respondents; the first group was composed of middle managers, and the second group was composed of the subordinates such as faculty and staff who were directly under the supervision of the middle managers. The subordinates validated the management communication styles, effectiveness and barriers encountered by the middle managers in performing their duties.

Table 1. Number of middle managers and subordinates respondents

Positions of the Middle Managers	Number of Middle Managers	Total Number of Subordinates in the Unit	Number of Respondents for Unit Managers Only	Number of Respondents for Unit and Sub-unit Managers	Total Number of Actual Respondents
College Deans	11	211			154
Directors	15	83	45	36	34
Principals	2	44			24
Department Chairmen	35	117	36	60	
Coordinator	5	48	12	12	12
Head of Office	8	23	23	23	23
Total	**86**	**526**	**116**	**131**	**247**

As seen in Table 1, there were 86 middle managers broken down into 11 college deans, 15 directors, 2 principals, 35 department chairpersons, 5 coordinators and 8 head of offices. There were 526 total number of employed faculty and staff at the Nueva Vizcaya State University both Bayombong and Bambang Campuses but only 247 respondents actually answered and retrieved set of questionnaires. Out of the 247 actual respondents, 116 of them rated the unit managers only while 131 of them rated the unit and the sub-unit middle managers.

Research Instruments

The researcher utilized a self-made questionnaire, one set for the middle managers and one for subordinates. Part I intended to gather the demographic profile of the managers. Part 2, 3 and 4 were used to determine the middle managers' communication styles; effectiveness and barriers encountered while performing their duties. Part 2 was management communication styles lifted from the book of (Hamilton and Parker, 2008). Part 3 was adapted from the communication effective questionnaire (Consulting tools, 2006). Part 4 was a self-made questionnaire on Barriers to Effective Communication. The sets of questionnaires were validated by experts in the field of communication and management.

Data Gathering

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to all the middle managers. Another set of questionnaires was distributed to the selected faculty and staff of their respective office/unit/department. For offices with more than 4 staff, random sampling was done to determine at least three subordinate-respondents. While for offices with less than 4 staff, all were considered as subordinate-respondents. When the distribution and collection of questionnaires were completed, the researcher tabulated the responses and data were treated according to the objectives of the study.

Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools were used to analyze the data gathered. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percent were used to describe middle managers' responses in terms of management communication styles, effectiveness and barriers. Ranking was employed to determine the manager's dominant management communication styles. Spearman Rho (r_s) was used to determine the association of communication management styles to effectiveness and barriers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Management communication styles of the middle managers as determined by themselves and their subordinates

Using the scoring procedure defined for the survey from Hamilton and Parker (2008), middle managers of the Nueva Vizcaya State University revealed their dominant communication styles through the combined self-assessment

and subordinate-reports on preferred actions given some management-related situations. The table 1 shows the distribution of the management communication styles as determined by the middle managers themselves and their corresponding subordinates.

Table 2. Distribution of the management communication styles
as determined by the middle managers and the subordinates

Management Communication Styles	Total	Percent
Open	43	50.00
Blind	17	19.77
Hidden	18	20.93
Closed	8	9.30
Total	86	100.00

Of the 86 middle managers, there were 43 (50%) middle managers are open, 17 (19.77%) blind, 18 (20.93%) hidden and 8 (9.30%) closed. These scores can be inferred that the greater number of middle managers in the Nueva Vizcaya State University use open style of management communication. According to Hamilton and Parker (2008), an open style is a person who is a good communicator, likes and respects other people and uses the communication disclosures and feedbacks properly. The second most leading styles of the middle managers were blind and hidden. Closed style is basically non-communicator, has anxiety feeling, insecurity, fear of people, and seldom use communication disclosures and feedbacks while, blind style is the same with authoritarian, over confident, have overused communication disclosures and seldom recognize the need of seeking and giving feedbacks,. Only 8 (9.30%) of the middle managers were closed and according to Hamilton and Parker (2008), these managers are those who mistrusts people, have the desire for social acceptance, seldom use communication disclosures and have over used feedbacks.

Professor David Thomas pointed out that "increasingly the people who are the most effective are those who essentially are both managers and leaders" (Blagg & Young, 2001). HBS Professor Joe Badarocco agreed that the traditional manager versus leader argument tends to undermine the value of management. "There are lots of people who look and act like managers, who have excellent managerial skills, and who don't make a lot of noise". It is in this event that

an open manager has to loom to avoid any conflict that may raze the smooth operation of the organization.

Extent of management communication effectiveness of the middle managers

The following tables show the extent of management communication effectiveness as assessed by the middle managers and their subordinates. They were measured in eight indicators in each skill namely: listening (table 3a), seeking and giving feedback (table 3b), understanding others (table 3c), influencing and relating (table 3d), and oral and written (3e).

Table 3a. Extent of management communication effectiveness in listening as assessed by the middle managers and their subordinates

Management Communication Effectiveness Indicators	Self Assessment by the Managers			Assessment by the Subordinates		
	Mean	SD	Extent	Mean	SD	Extent
1. He/She answers questions specifically and direct to the point.	4.12	0.94	HE	3.87	0.84	HE
2. He/She always sees to it that he/she learns from the interactions if he/she has a good conversation with someone else.	4.01	0.86	HE	3.84	0.74	HE
3. He/She always remembers that people are more attracted towards those who have interest in them, and therefore will pay more attention to what they will say.	3.67	0.89	HE	3.77	0.71	HE
4. He/She is approachable and easy to talk with.	4.14	0.87	HE	4.06	0.78	HE
5. He/She receives and acts upon feedback from others in a non-defensive manner.	3.65	0.89	HE	3.69	0.87	HE
6. He/She allows his/her colleagues to finish what they have to say whenever they are communicating with him/her.	4.12	0.96	HE	3.94	0.71	HE

7.	He/She listens to the person first because he/she believes that communication is a two-way process.	4.26	0.80	HE	4.10	0.70	HE
8.	He/She doesn't try to catch something which someone has just said and immediately goes on telling his/her own story.	3.27	1.20	ME	3.55	0.81	HE
	Over-all Listening Skill	3.90	0.54	HE	3.85	0.48	HE

Legend: NE - Not effective;   SE – Slightly effective;
            ME – Moderately effective;   HE – Highly effective;
            EE – Extremely effective

Table 3a shows that middle managers manifest a highly effective performance in listening by answering questions specifically and by being direct to the point. They see to it that they learn from the interaction with their subordinates. They are likewise easy to talk with and approachable. They believe that communication is a two-way process and that they always pay attention when someone is speaking as denoted by a high grand mean score of 3.90 for the middle managers and 3.85 for the subordinates which were qualitatively described the results were highly effective like the other items in this measure except for the last item which was qualitatively described by the middle managers as moderately effective. The middle managers are effective in listening.

This conclusion was in parallel with the following ideas; Bittel (1992) said that school managers must be good listeners, receptive to feedbacks and questions and must be willing to share ideas in such a way that information could be very beneficial to the employees. Catt (1989) stated that good listeners are individuals who are admired, valued, and respected by others. Booher (2000) argued that active listening begins with one's willingness to listen. Listening for understanding is more than simply hearing words and knowing their meanings. Listening requires conscious effort and a willing mind. It is a decision to take an action.

Table 3b. Extent of management communication effectiveness in seeking and giving feedback as assessed by the middle managers and their subordinates

Management Communication Effectiveness Indicators	Self Assessment by the Managers			Assessment by the Subordinates		
	Mean	SD	Extent	Mean	SD	Extent
1. He/She uses to ask questions. It is great way to show to people that he/she really interested in them.	4.10	0.95	HE	4.07	0.72	HE
2. If other persons have different point of view towards him/her, he/she will find out why they have such point of view.	3.51	1.05	HE	3.45	0.83	ME
3. He/She tries to value others input as his/her own input. He/She believes they have opinions which can be better than his/hers.	3.70	0.93	HE	3.57	0.77	HE
4. He/.She listens to the views of others.	4.38	0.80	HE	4.24	0.71	HE
5. He/She asks questions for him/her to learn more about what his/her colleagues are saying.	4.01	0.96	HE	3.96	0.67	HE
6. He/She gives constructive feedback through letters to help others improve their performances.	3.87	0.99	HE	3.88	0.83	HE
7. He/She sends impact and meaningful verbal messages.	3.83	0.91	HE	3.96	0.73	HE
8. He/She constructively questions how things are done.	3.88	0.82	HE	3.73	0.78	HE
Over-all Seeking and Giving Feedback Skill	3.91	0.59	HE	3.86	0.50	HE

Legend: NE - Not effective;   SE – Slightly effective;
          ME – Moderately effective;   HE – Highly effective;
          EE – Extremely effective

Table 3b shows that middle managers have the ability to provide knowledge about the meaning and impact of the message for the receiver and an opportunity for the sender to correct any problems. They effectively seek and give feedback by listening to the views of others. They ask question to show to people that they are really interested in them. They value others' opinion which can be better than their opinion. They likewise give constructive feedback through any means to help their subordinates improve in their performances. These results were denoted by a grand high mean score of 3.91 for the middle managers and 3.86 for the subordinates. Both were qualitatively described as highly effective like the other items in this measure except for the third item which was qualitatively described by the subordinates as moderately effective.

This further entails that middle managers are really flexible in dealing with their subordinates to get the best results of their management communication. Being effective managers must have to be an effective communicator. Seeking and giving feedback is indispensable in effective management communication. Careful analysis of the message received can make communication effective. Sending good feedback or asking questions to learn more about the sender contributes to the effectiveness of any communication.

The research of (London, 2003) disclosed that the importance of job-related feedback is generally accepted. Specific and timely feedback from a co-worker may help a new employee to master unfamiliar duties. Conversely, feedback that is negative in tone and lacking in detail may cause a new employee to become demoralized although feedback's importance is widely accepted, this does not mean that individuals are particularly good at giving and receiving feedback. Research has shown that the feedback provided by manager is often lacking in specificity, harsh in tone, and/or delivered in an untimely manner. Potentially worse, sometimes feedback is simply not provided.

The table 3c indicated the over-all mean scores for management communication effectiveness in understanding others as assessed by the middle managers themselves was 3.87 and 3.94 as assessed by the subordinates were described the results as highly effective. It can be inferred that effective management communication manager has the ability to understand and recall the spoken or written word delivered by the message sender. They are likewise aware of the importance of being a good receiver; they are likely to show some improvement almost automatically. They are competent in comprehending the material well, evaluate it, make inferences and judgments from it, and use it intelligently.

Table 3c. Extent of management communication
effectiveness in understanding others as assessed by the middle
managers and their subordinates

Management Communication Effectiveness Indicators	Self Assessment by the Managers			Assessment by the Subordinates		
	Mean	SD	Extent	Mean	SD	Extent
1. He/She recognizes unspoken thoughts and feelings.	3.40	0.94	ME	3.45	0.71	ME
2. She/He openly communicates team achievement to others.	4.20	0.92	HE	4.42	3.20	HE
3. He/She tries to identify what are the causes of people's long term attitudes by making a record of their behavior.	3.44	1.01	ME	3.68	0.65	HE
4. He/She encourages people to be open with each other.	3.93	0.86	HE	3.99	0.59	HE
5. He/She actively seeks the views of her/his colleagues.	3.90	0.95	HE	3.91	0.77	HE
6. He/She treats others with dignity and respect.	4.34	0.83	HE	4.26	0.66	HE
7. He/She always understands the reasons behind her/his colleague's thinking that will lead her/him to understand one another's point of view.	3.95	0.87	HE	3.93	0.62	HE
8. He/She can sense how people feel about anything happening around them through their body language.	3.79	0.95	HE	3.84	0.65	HE
Over-all Understanding Others Skill	3.87	0.56	HE	3.94	0.54	HE

Legend: NE - Not effective;   SE – Slightly effective;
          ME – Moderately effective;   HE – Highly effective;
          EE – Extremely effective

In addition, effective management communication manager treats others
with dignity and respect, tries to identify what are the causes of people's long term

attitudes by making a record of their behavior, and recognizes unspoken thoughts and feelings. It is believed that understanding the feelings and movements of the subordinates can lead to better results of communication. Sensing how your colleagues feel about anything can develop a good relationship between the manager and the subordinates.

Similarly, likewise, effective communication manager relies on understanding peoples' behavior and feelings when communicating. The meaning of the message can be easily understood when subordinates are open to share ideas and thoughts (Hoy & Miskel, 2008) stressed that communication is a two-way process. They added that two-way communication requires continuous exchanges and transactions of ideas. Each participant initiates messages that each message affects the next one. Empathy is the art of seeing the world as someone else sees it. When you have empathy, it means you can understand what a person is feeling in a given moment, and understand why other people's actions made sense to them.

Rogers and Roethlisberger (1991) pointed out that in communication, understanding is the result of listening. What does this mean? It means that to see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regard to the thing he is talking about; you have to listen to him in intent and in serious manner.

Table 3d. Extent of management communication effectiveness in influencing and relating as assessed by the middle managers and their subordinates

Management Communication Effectiveness Indicators	Self Assessment by the Managers			Assessment by the Subordinates		
	Mean	SD	Extent	Mean	SD	Extent
1. He/She is interested in people he/she communicates with.	4.05	0.92	HE	3.81	0.82	HE
2. He/She openly shares information to his/her colleagues because he/she trusts them.	3.86	0.96	HE	3.81	0.78	HE
3. He/She presents ideas in a persuasive manner.	3.86	0.92	HE	3.80	0.79	HE
4. He/She makes sure that people talk about them first and then he/she carefully tells them so as not to sound like a competition.	3.71	1.00	HE	3.71	0.82	HE

5.	He/She tries to think why it all went well and remembers key points for the next time. If it did not go well, he/she will try again and take note of the negative points.	3.98	0.87	HE	3.78	0.73	HE
6.	He/She presents cases or problems to his/her colleagues through meetings.	3.71	0.96	HE	3.73	0.78	HE
7.	He/She smiles and uses eye contact in all his/her communication activities.	3.94	0.92	HE	3.75	0.82	HE
8.	He/She changes his/her own approach to encourage others to adopt a course of action.	3.83	0.95	HE	3.77	0.66	HE
	Over-all Influencing and Relating Skill	3.87	0.61	HE	3.77	0.52	HE

Legend: NE - Not effective;   SE – Slightly effective;

ME - Moderately effective;   HE – Highly effective;

EE – Extremely effective

The table 3d indicated ratings of effective management communication manager in terms of influencing and relating. The middle managers grand mean score of 3.87 and 3.77 for the subordinates. All items in this measure were described as highly effective. Further, the manager makes sure that people talk about themselves first and then the manager carefully tells them about himself so as not to sound like a competition. He presents cases or problems to his colleagues through meetings and makes sure that every employee is kept informed about what the organization is doing and what he intends to do in the ensuing years.

This further infers that middle managers possessed the ability to influence and relate information properly to their colleagues. These will also prove that because of genuine interest, trust, confidence and respect the managers are continuously demonstrating to their people, supportive communication climate, cooperative interactions and an open culture of sharing knowledge can be achieved easily.

Influencing and relating are important process of sharing information to someone in such a way that the real purpose of communication can be achieved. Furthermore, other forms of communication like oral or written forms, formal or

informal like memorandum, school organ, business letters, conversation, inquiry and debate can be used effectively by any individual to relate his message or influence others about something. These can be effective indicators for successful management communication (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Table 3e. Extent of management communication effectiveness in oral and written as assessed by the middle managers and their subordinates

Management Communication Effectiveness Indicators	Self Assessment by the Managers			Assessment by the Subordinates		
	Mean	SD	Extent	Mean	SD	Extent
1. He/She is relaxed every time he/she talks with other people.	3.67	1.44	HE	3.76	0.94	HE
2. He/She personally talks to anyone who is directly involved in any issue or endeavor.	3.88	0.98	HE	3.46	0.86	ME
3. During meetings, he/she presents ideas in a well organized manner.	3.81	0.93	HE	3.97	0.79	HE
4. When he/she is speaking, he/she tries to be enthusiastic and he/she uses voice and the body language to show this.	3.81	1.00	HE	3.89	0.76	HE
5. He/She respects the views of others.	4.13	0.84	HE	3.89	0.79	HE
6. He/She keeps people informed and up-to-date in all programs and activities of the organization thru memoranda or route slips.	3.90	0.92	HE	3.93	0.65	HE
7. He/She expresses ideas clearly through writing.	3.86	0.88	HE	3.81	0.76	HE
8. He/She passes notices and lets us affix our signature every time he/she calls for a meeting.	3.81	0.93	HE	3.67	0.85	HE
Over-all Oral and Written Skill	3.86	0.61	HE	3.80	0.55	HE

Legend: NE - Not effective;   SE – Slightly effective;
            ME – Moderately effective;   HE – Highly effective;
            EE – Extremely effective

As could be inferred on the table 2e, being effective management communication manager who practice the effective use of both an oral and written forms of communication indicated that they show high respect of people in all their communication or transactions. They keep people informed and up-to-date in all programs and activities of the organization thru memoranda or route slips. They personally talk to anyone who is directly involved in any issue or endeavor.

The above statements were based on the results as denoted by high grand mean scores of 3.86 for the middle managers and 3.80 for the subordinates. Both results were described as highly effective. These scores explain that middle managers are effective communicators using both oral and written. They lead the meetings in a well organized manner and express ideas clearly not only through oral form but also through written form of communication.

Toffel and Lenox (2008) said that managers face a range of options to diffuse innovative practices within the organization. They believed that there are many techniques providing practice-specific information through mechanisms such as internal seminars, demonstrations, knowledge management systems and promotional brochures. This "information provision" approach empowers facility managers to decide which practices to actually implement to achieve effective information dissemination among subordinates.

Management communication barriers as encountered by the middle managers

Table 4 shows the extent of communication barriers as encountered by the middle managers and their subordinates. The over-all mean scores for the combined assessment of the middle managers and their subordinates for the communication barriers were 3.12 with a description of "occasionally" encountered. The indicator with the highest mean score of 3.24 is the Psychological Barrier, followed by 3.15 for Physical Barrier, and 3.11 for Physiological Barrier. While the indicators with the least mean scores of 3.08 and 3.01 were the Cultural/Attitudinal Barriers and Semantic Barrier respectively. The results of the study further imply that communication barriers moderately affecting the management communication effectiveness of the middle managers.

According to Williams (2012), effective communication occurs when someone's intended meaning successfully and accurately reaches another person. Problems occur at many junctures, from the initial sender using the wrong language or medium, through noise or interruptions to the message along

the way, up to the receiver misinterpreting the message. Potential obstacles to effective communication arise on several levels, from individual to another individual, office to another office or an individual to an organizational. But many precautions can help managers and employees avoid the worst of the obstacles.

Table 4. Extent of cultural/attitudinal communication barriers as encountered by the middle managers and the subordinates

Management Communication Barriers Indicators	Combined Assessment of the Managers and the Subordinates		
	Mean	SD	Extent
Cultural/Attitudinal	3.08	0.83	Occasionally encountered
Semantic	3.01	0.82	Occasionally encountered
Physical	3.15	0.74	Occasionally encountered
Physiological	3.11	0.82	Occasionally encountered
Psychological	3.24	0.82	Occasionally encountered
Over-all Barrier	3.12	0.73	Occasionally encountered

Cultural / Attitudinal Barrier

The indicators for cultural/attitudinal barriers included in the study are as follows; having harsh tone from any of the communicators, insufficient training for middle managers and subordinates, giving negative information or criticism from any member of the organization and lack of motivation or dissatisfaction of works. The mean score of 3.08 indicating the combined assessment of the middle managers and their subordinates was described occasionally encountered. This further revealed that among the indicators for cultural/attitudinal moderately affect the management communication performances of middle managers.

Cultural barriers are brought about by cultural differences. Three ways in which culture interferes with effective cross cultural understanding include cognitive, behavioral and emotional constraints. Cultural barrier is a tradition or a practice that often comes in the way of success of an organization. The cultural barrier often serves as a wall that makes it very non-conducive for an organization to go about with their activities.

There are many reasons why communication being affected by culture or attitude. Cultures provide people with ways of thinking--ways of seeing, hearing,

and interpreting the world. Thus, the same words can mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they talk the "same" language. Languages are different, and translation has to be used to communicate, the potential for misunderstandings increases. According to (Feigenbaum, 2012), effective communication requires deciphering the basic values, motives, aspirations, and assumptions that operate across geographical lines. Given some dramatic differences across cultures, the opportunities for miscommunication in cross-cultural situations are enormous.

Baldwin (2014) considered co-workers as a barrier to effective communication because others may stereotype one another based on perceived beliefs about their peers' backgrounds. Some employees may not have a full range of vocabulary in the office's primary language, causing misunderstandings. Cultural values also impact workplace communication. A female employee may come from a country in which she acts as subordinate to men. As a result, she might be reluctant to take the lead on projects. The radius of personal space also differs from culture to culture. One employee might stand in a peer's personal space without realizing he is doing so.

Semantic Barrier

It can be noted from table 4 that semantic barriers were occasionally encountered by the middle managers as validated by their subordinates. The semantic barriers included in the study are as follows; using difficult or inappropriate words in communication, words having general and multiple meaning, and poor choice of words were considered moderately encountered. The mean score of 3.01 indicating the combined assessment of the middle manager and their subordinates was described occasionally encountered. This further suggests that these barriers affect moderately the effectiveness of the managers.

Semantic barrier refers to ideas, objects, and actions that can be referred to by more than one word or meaning. Semantic barriers are the meanings people attach to words. The different meanings people attach to the same word create one barrier to effective communication.

Moscovici (2008) focused his study upon the way in which particular meaning complexes can prevent dialogical engagement with alternative representations. These meaning complexes referred to as "semantic barriers." He wanted to draw out the two main semantic barriers that he identifies, and then add to this a consideration of five additional semantic barriers, such as rigid opposition, transfer of meaning, prohibited thoughts, separation, stigma, understanding the

motives and bracketing. At the polemical end of the continuum, the alternative representation tends to be locked, by semantic barriers, into a rigid and often un-dialogical and uncreative relation to the main representation. He concluded that these semantic barriers are one of the subtle means employed by polemical representations to adapt to contexts of a plurality of potentially competing representations. These barriers stand between the sociological and psychological levels, enabling intolerance to exist at a psychological level while plurality increases at the sociological level.

Physical Barriers

The following are the physical barrier indicators; large working areas that physically separating employees, background noise, poor lighting, and hot or cold environment, unclear organizational structure, and outdated and lack of communication equipments causes moderate problem in the management communication for both the middle managers and the subordinates. The grand mean scores of 3.15 indicating the combined assessment of the middle managers and their subordinates were described as occasionally encountered. This further means that the above indicators of physical barriers can moderately affect the management communication effectiveness of middle managers.

Physical barriers to effective management communication are not directly under anyone's control. Noisy typewriter, a duplicating machine, someone' loud voice, or a nearby vacuum cleaner could prevent us from hearing and understanding an important message. Since many physical barriers are difficult for us to control or eliminate, we have to control ourselves when these barriers are present. Concentration is the key to dealing with physical barriers to management communication. Devoting the entire mental effort to the message we are supposed to be receiving is difficult but necessary for effective management communication.

Williams (2012) stated that even the company's physical structure can block communications. A work team needs physical closeness to discuss work problems and share solutions. Separating members with walls or large spaces hampers this process. Managers can obstruct interaction with a closed door, as employees get the message that the manager is too busy to talk. Or team members might be located across the country or the world from each other. Feigenbaum (2012) said that sometimes barriers are very literal. Walls, doors and dividers do their jobs-- they divide. And while people need these to have quiet time, private conversations and structure to a workspace, they can be a subtle hindrance to communication.

If you think about it, people in open rooms tend to talk more and walk about more freely. Therefore, organizations interested in great communication consider how they configure employees' space. The idea of Feigenbaum was in accordance with the idea of Baldwin (2014) when he said that a departmentalized layout can also cause communication barrier among employees in an organization. An organization's departments form internal bonds that can put employees at odds with other departments. Even cubicles offer privacy and certain amount of isolation may also act as a physical barrier that discourages communication between employees and subordinates. The location of the supervisors' office can serve as another physical barrier. A closed door signifies a reluctance to talk with subordinates. Likewise, if the supervisor's office is isolated from the rest of the office, the supervisor may appear out of touch with the rest of the employees.

Physiological Barriers

The mean score of 3.18 for the combined assessment of the middle managers and the subordinates was described as occasionally encountered. The indicators of physiological barriers are the following; the communicator looks stress and harassed with work, lack of comprehension from any of the message sender or receiver, insufficient, uncertain and changing information from any of the communicator, and inability to converse in the language that is known to both the sender and the receiver. This further shows that the management communication performance of the middle managers was moderately affected by the indicators of physiological barrier.

Since physiological barrier is the result of sensory dysfunction, Dalley (2013) thought-out on the other hand that emotions weather a person is happy or sad may likewise cause physiological barrier to communication among employees in an organization. He said that if a person is engrossed in his emotions for some reasons, he tends to have trouble listening to others or understanding the message conveyed to him. According to the College of Marin, if someone is angry, resentful, happy or excited, that person may be too preoccupied with emotions to receive the intended message. Emotions mainly involve fear, mistrust and suspicion. Excessive fear of what others might think of others and what he say can interfere with what he wants to communicate and his ability to form meaningful relationships.

Psychological Barriers

The indicators of psychological communication barriers in the study are the presence of personal conflicts or problem between the message sender and the

receiver; having personal misunderstanding between the communicator and uttering unnecessary words which may imply personal prejudices and biases among communicators. The mean score of 3.24 for the combined assessment of the middle managers and their subordinates was described occasionally encountered. This further proves that the above indicators of psychological barriers can moderately affect the management communication of the middle managers.

Psychological barriers can arise from almost any source. Personal problems such as finances, behavior of the co-workers and family members could all serve as sources of psychological distraction. Distraction can also originate in events or conditions at work. Likewise, personal problems involving the school manager can affect his management in general. Unhealthy relationship with the subordinates can have a harmful effect on management communications. Being bias in making decisions and giving assignments as observed by the subordinates can affect the work. They will always think that they were treated unfairly by the manager.

According to Katz (1947), the effect of psychological barrier to individual lasts longer than any other barriers to communication. He further stressed that physical barrier are rapidly disappearing but the psychological obstacles remain. These psychological difficulties are in part a function of the very nature of language; in part they are due to the emotional character and mental limitations of human beings. Meanwhile, (Baldwin, 2014) believed that emotional stability and family problems may result to psychological barrier to effective communication. Some employees are hostile when it comes to authority, which may make for heated confrontations. You'll find other employees can't connect with your other employees due to shyness. Their shyness might make them appear unfriendly; as a result, peers won't try to connect with them. Problems stemming outside of the workplace creep into office culture and impact communication. An employee who is dealing with an illness in the family, for example, might become withdrawn or lash out at peers.

Relationship Between and among Management Communication Styles to Management Communication Effectiveness and Management Communication Barriers

The following tables reflect the relationships of management communication styles to management communication effectiveness (table 5a) and to management communication barriers (table 5b).

Table 5a. Correlation matrix between management communication styles and management communication effectiveness

Management Communication Effectiveness Open		Management Communication Styles			
		Blind	Hidden	Closed	
Listening	r	-0.27*	0.23*	0.01	0.02
	Sig.	0.01	0.03	0.90	0.88
Seeking and Giving Feedback	r	-0.30*	0.17	0.01	0.11
	Sig.	0.01	0.11	0.90	0.32
Understanding Others	r	-0.17	0.04	0.04	0.13
	Sig.	0.13	0.71	0.74	0.23
Influencing and Relating	r	-0.23*	0.21	-0.04	0.02
	Sig.	0.04	0.06	0.68	0.89
Oral and Written	r	-0.18	0.13	-0.09	0.11
	Sig.	0.10	0.22	0.40	0.29
Over-all	r	-0.26*	0.18	-0.02	0.09
	Sig.	0.02	0.10	0.88	0.41

Legend: * - significant

The open management communication style was significantly related to management communication effectiveness indicators like listening, seeking and giving feedback, influencing, relating and the over-all management communication skill. The r-values together with the significance values, all were less than the 0.05 level of significance suggest these findings. Only the listening skill showed significant relationship to the blind style with r-value of 0.23 and has a significant value of 0.03. All the other styles like hidden and closed have no significant relationship to any of the management communication effectiveness.

The results show that middle managers who use open style of management communication have a high tendency of becoming good listeners, can seek and give good and constructive feedback for better flow of communication, and can influence others to work cooperatively than middle managers who were using blind, hidden and closed style of management communication.

The middle managers who use blind style believed that listening is a prerequisite to effective management communication. Listening to employees is a way of showing support and acceptance which make for a more open climate, and an open climate makes employee satisfaction and productivity more likely.

These findings were supported by Hamilton and Parker (2008) when they stated that an open communication manager is someone who is flexible in meeting the needs of his people, accepting and open for criticisms, genuine liker for people, flexible in using communication styles, careful listeners, seen as trusting, honest, tactful, look at all sides of a problem, share job feelings, doubts and concerns, friendly, productive and dependable, and willing to share feelings as well as knowledge. However, this does not mean however, that open is always the best communicator or the best person.

Table 5b. Correlation matrix between management communication styles and communication barriers

Management Communication Barriers Open		Management Communication Styles			
		Blind	Hidden	Closed	
Cultural/Attitudinal	r_s	0.22*	0.03	-0.25*	-0.07
	Sig.	0.04	0.76	0.02	0.51
Semantic	r_s	0.35*	-0.11	-0.08	-0.20
	Sig.	<0.01	0.33	0.44	0.06
Physical	r_s	0.08	0.03	-0.21	0.07
	Sig.	0.47	0.76	0.06	0.51
Physiological	r_s	0.26*	-0.04	-0.25*	-0.06
	Sig.	0.02	0.72	0.02	0.61
Psychological	r_s	0.15	0.03	-0.27*	-0.02
	Sig.	0.17	0.77	0.01	0.89
Over-all	r_s	0.23*	-0.01	-0.23*	-0.06
	Sig.	0.03	0.92	0.03	0.57

The open management communication style was significantly related to communication barriers indicators like cultural/attitudinal, semantic and physiological communication barriers. The hidden management communication style was significantly related to cultural/attitudinal, physiological and psychological communication barriers. The r-values together with the significance values corresponding to the skills and the styles were all less than the 0.05 level of significance. While, the blind and closed management communication styles were not significantly related to any of the communication barriers indicators.

The findings further suggest that middle manager who practice open and hidden type of management communication were more aware of the presence of communication barriers in their workplace. These further imply that middle managers who were using open and hidden styles were aware with the presence of communication barriers in the workplace which has the possibility of affecting or obstructing their management.

Being identified as an open type manager is not enough to become calm and contented. As a manager, it is critical to understand and be aware of the potential sources of communication barriers and constantly avoid these barriers by making a conscientious effort to make sure there is a minimal loss of meaning in communication. These statements are in parallel with the idea of Chua and Morris (2009). According to them, "capabilities to communicate are needed to work across cultures". There is a need to identify affect relevant strengths such as confidence, trust, bond with others and non-verbal communication. These strengths have to be considered by an open type manager to avoid conflict in his organization.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the middle managers of the university adhered to an open management communication style in dealing with different management communication situations. There were managers who use the blind or closed as their management communication style. Few of the managers adapted the hidden management style. In addition, middle managers have tendencies to used more than one management styles depending on the situation; however most of the managers used the open management communication style as their dominant style, and either blind or closed as their secondary management preferred style.

The middle managers disregarding their styles were highly effective in utilizing management communication effectiveness strategies in conveying ideas and information especially in seeking and giving feedback, listening, understanding others, influencing and relating and oral and written skills. The management communication performance of the middle managers is not greatly affected by the different management communication barriers.

The higher the tendency of one in becoming an open manager, the less effective he is in listening, seeking and giving feedback and in influencing and relating with others. On the other hand, the higher the tendency of one in becoming a blind manager, the more effective he is in using listening skills.

The higher tendency to become an open manager, the more effective he become in dealing with cultural/attitudinal, semantic and physiological management communication barriers; while the lower the tendency to become a hidden manager, the more effective he becomes in dealing with cultural/attitudinal, physiological and psychological management communication barriers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The management communication style of all university managers should be evaluated yearly to ensure effective management. In addition, a management communication program must be crafted by the university considering the following objectives; to initiate a series of trainings and seminars on management communication among university officials in order to acquire better strategies, approaches and techniques, and to further enrich or strengthen the management communication attributes with more emphasis on the latest trend on management communication which will be useful in the facilitation of an effective and competent management; to schedule a management communication development programs to upgrade the university managers in terms of their functions and be updated with the latest trend in communication; to introduce an innovative work procedure, method or device that could benefit the middle managers in terms of greater management communication effectiveness; to provide immediate and possible solutions to the problems in management communication especially the communication barriers affecting smooth communication flow; to adopt an appropriate management style to a particular management situation; and to strengthen an effective use of oral and written forms of communication among people in the university.

Improve their personal qualities through their attendance to trainings and seminars on management communication and show evidence of improvement in the actual setting. Participate actively and show positive and supportive behavior to the plans and programs of the university in relation to improving their capability in communication. Engage themselves in research works and enhance their skills through their attendance to research capability building activities initiated by the university and come-up with a research output in management and in communication.

They should explore other qualitative methodologies that require more variables and in-depth analysis on related topics in management communication.

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