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COMMUNICATION GAPS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHEASTERN PHILLIPPINES-COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT MINTAL CAMPUS, DAVAO CITY; A Case Study

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ABSTRACT
The study was conducted to explore the existing organizational communication gaps in the University of Southeastern Philippines, College of Development Management, Mintal Campus through qualitative design. A total of five participants including the dean of the college and the head of different offices were chosen to serve as key informants in obtaining a meaningful data. Open-ended interview questions were formulated to facilitate the direction of the key informant interview**.** The gathered data was processed, synthesized, and interpreted using thematic content analysis. Results of the study revealed that there are existing communication problems or dilemmas that impede efficient and effective organizational communication flow in the subject organization. The communication gaps identified in the study include improper documentation, untimely yet urgent delayed memorandum, passive recipient, miscommunication due to incomplete information in the memorandum, delayed dissemination of memorandum, slow internet connection, unavailability of access to emails, and restriction in announcement.

Keywords:
Qualitative Research, Case Study, Organizational Communication Gaps
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INTRODUCTION
Communication is the process by which information is shifted to individuals and/or organizations in a manner that its result could bring forth an understandable reaction (Peter, 2015). Primarily, relationships develop due to communication, and the operations and entity of organizations rely on potent relationship among persons and groups. As stated by Oteyza et.al, (2018), communication plays a vital role because it is the center of the management process. Thus, communication is an essential ingredient in everyone's life—social or professional. Against the backdrop of organization, communication becomes crucial factor for organizational success and source of harmonization as it transfers information to a larger group of people in the organization.

Hence, all administrative decisions and managerial actions should be communicated for the fulfillment of organizational objectives and overall effectiveness of the organization. Thereupon, an organization that understands the importance of communication uses it in its organizational environment. Making sure of the collaboration of material and human factors helps an organization in evolving an efficacious network of transformation and progress. However, effective organizational communication works only when barriers which obstruct the smooth flow of effective organizational communication are managed in a dexterous manner (Haroon and Dad Malik, 2018).

For this, it is vital to unveil the reasons that interstice in communication and realign the steps in having functional communication flow. Consequently, this study focused in the investigation of dilemmas that predominantly affect the communication flow in the subject organization which can be derived from the experience of the research participants.

OBJECTIVE
The main objective of the study was to determine the various conditions that hinder effective communication flow in the University of Southeastern Philippines particularly in the College of Development Management. The identified conditions were then considered as communication gaps.

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METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative design which refers to a range of data collection and analysis techniques that use semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Dudwick et al., 2006; Gopaldas, 2016). It is inductive in nature, and the researchers generally explored meanings and insights in a given situation (Levitt et al., 2017). Its purpose is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the individual or population being studied, and to generate new concepts and theories (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016). The participants of the study came from USEP-CDM Mintal Campus, Davao City that includes the Dean and head of the different administrative offices. In order to gather the data needed, the researcher made use of Key Informant Interview (KII) whose main purpose is to collect information from people who have first-hand knowledge about the phenomenon that needs to be uncovered. On the other hand, supporting information or evidence was taken from the existing related researches significant to the research topic. The data obtained, were processed and analyzed using thematic content analysis on which its goal is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is much more than simply summarising the data it makes sense of it (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the communication gaps resulted from the gathering, synthesizing and interpretation of data from the selected heads of offices of USeP-College Development Management Mintal Campus. These gaps impede or served as barriers in an effective, efficient and functional communication flow in the aforementioned subject organization.

Improper documentation. The study found out that there is no coordination among different offices that cause overlapping of activities. This makes other personnel unresponsive because of overlapping and unexpected activities. It was also accentuated in the study of Panday & Jamil (2010) that coordination is complex and crucial, both at the day-to-day operation level and at the policy level. Coordination problems may occur when several institutions are required to act together to achieve certain objectives, and the problems may worsen if the various institutions' activities, operations and areas of jurisdiction overlap. Moreover, lack of coordination creates numerous problems, one of which is failure in meeting project deadlines, and the other being overlap and duplication of activities. Therefore, coordination is a part of planning, because it tells what to include in a good plan and how to execute it. At the same time, coordination is part of organizing, because it takes the first lead (Gulick & Urwirck, 1957, cited Osifo, 2013).

Untimely yet urgent memorandum. There were instances that the communications were given in the morning and the expected deliverable is on the afternoon of the same day or even in the succeeding day. This usually results to infirm feedback of works because of the immediate deadline given. In most organizations, work needs to be accomplished before deadlines, which results in time pressures and constrain an individual's ability to communicate. And with under time pressure, people sometimes do not carefully compose a message before sending it (Hitt et al. 2010).

Passive Recipient. According to the informants, only few are responding to emails, text messages, and even reading on posted communication at the bulletin board. Moreover, even if the recipient is already informed, there were times that they will not respond and they keep on reasoning of having load of other work activities. But commonly, the recipients misplaced the received communication letter. When people are overloaded with information, they definitely cannot process all of it. Instead, they may prioritize which important information to handle while the rest of the information is ignored. Selecting only a part of available information for use, nevertheless, can result in imprecise or inadequate communication (Hitt et al. 2010).

Miscommunication due to incomplete information from the memorandum. It was also found out that some memoranda were not giving the exact and complete information. This usually results to miscommunication or misinformation. This will also result to redundancy of work if the instructions were not completely and exactly given at the same time if from different sources. It is common that information is misrepresented, either intentionally or unintentionally. Unintentional distortion can occur due to honest mistakes or time pressure. Conversely, intentional distortion is likely to happen when there is a competition between units or departments in an organization (Hitt et al. 2010).. At the same time, many communications fail because of inadequate

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planning. Therefore, good planning must consider the goals, attitudes, and needs of those who will receive the communication and those who will be affected by it (Lunenburg, 2010).

Delayed dissemination of memorandum. According to data gathered, this commonly happens when the person assigned to route the communication letter cannot reach the necessary recipients or there is no follow up in routing the communication. According to Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang (2014), an administrator's best efforts at communication may be wasted, and he/she may never know whether he/she has succeeded in expressing his/her true meaning and intent if he/she does not follow up to see how well he/she has put his/her message across. Mainly, an administrator can do this by asking questions, by encouraging the receiver to express his/her reactions, by follow-up contacts, and by subsequent review of performance. Therefore, it is essential that an administrator needs to make certain that every important communication has feedback so that complete understanding and appropriate action are ensured.

Slow internet connection. When it comes to memoranda and other communications sent through emails, the information sometimes reach the recipients late due to very slow internet connection. The internet connection of the institution is supported with an internet provider service, though the services are there but there were really instances that it works slowly. The reason emphasized was that the occurrence of disaster that cut the lines which result to slow internet connection. According to the brief research on "An Overview of Internet Governance and Infrastructure in the Philippines" (2017), Republic Act No. 7925, Internet service delivery is anchored on telecommunications networks that, in turn, are controlled almost exclusively by two monolithic companies: the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, or the PLDT group—which also owns providers such as Smart, Talk n Text, and Sun Cellular—and Globe Telecom, Inc. These two companies also own most of the Internet infrastructure in the country, allowing them to dictate the cost, quality, and extent of Internet connectivity. As of 2012, there were already over 350 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the country. Most of these ISPs connect through PLDT's network, which owns the majority of fixed-line connections, as well as a 100,000-kilometre fiber network that makes it the most extensive in the country. The government's planned launch of free Wi-Fi services targeted half of its cities and municipalities over the course of 2015, with the goal of expanding the service with the help of increased funding in 2017. However, there remains a lack of interconnectivity between the major ISPs. As a result, an estimated 97% of local traffic is routed externally through places such as Hong Kong and the United States before returning to the country, which causes delays in data transmission and slows down internet access.

Unavailability of access to emails. Although emails are essential in the administrative operations, some of the employees don't have personal computers or they cannot access the computers often. Communication through emails will not be received by the recipients because they do not have any access to internet or even having personal computer units. On the other hand, those communications through text messaging will not also reach the recipients for having some issues like fluctuated mobile signal or even denial. There was a survey conducted from November 2017 to January 2018 which included 403 senior executives, managers and junior staff at US companies by the Economist Intelligence Unit which emphasized some interesting discrepancies exist between which modes of communication are seen as effective and which are frequently used. Email is unsurprisingly the most heavily used mode of communication, with 60% of respondents saying they use it every day. Yet only 40% say it is a very effective means of communication. Rather than replacing communication tools, improving daily communication at work may be more about using effective technologies more often.

Restriction in Announcement. Using wrong communication tool, there are times when an email is appropriate and other times a phone call or in-person meeting is more suitable. Misjudging the situation and picking the wrong tool can lead to a breakdown in communication and create confusion, misunderstanding and hurt feelings (Lisa Mc Querrey, 2018). Moreover, meaning and intent are conveyed by more than words alone. There are many other factors influence the overall impact of a communication, and administrators must be sensitive to the total setting in which they communicate: the circumstances under which an announcement or decision is made; the physical setting, whether the communication is made in private or otherwise; the social climate that pervades work relationships within the department and sets the tone of its communications; custom and practice, the degree to which the communication conforms to, or departs from, the expectations of the audience. Hence,

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administrators should constantly be aware of the total setting in which they communicate. Like all living things, communication must be capable of adapting to its environment (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014).

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CONCLUSION

Considering the issues that affect communication flow really plays a crucial role in an organization. In the case of University of Southeastern Philippines—College of Development Management, Mintal Campus, communication gaps unveil such as; improper documentation, untimely yet urgent memorandum, passive recipient, miscommunication due to incomplete information from the memorandum, delayed dissemination of memorandum, slow internet connection, unavailability of access to emails, and restriction in announcement. It accentuated that communication can either make or break an individual, a team or holistically an organization. Make in a sense that effective communication or a functional communication flow makes information or a message clear from sender to the receiver and vice versa that will make processes smooth and harmonious which leads to the achievement of organizational goal. Break in a way that occurrence of organizational communication gaps will hinder effective and efficient delivery of information which results in unsuccessful transactions, actions and operations. Furthermore, understanding is the key that both parties, even in every departments of the organization will possess in order that veracity of communication confidently achievable. Indeed, communication is absolutely essential to organization and prominent pillar for effective and efficient action taken in an organization. The head of an organization should therefore create an environment wherein problems, plans, issues, opinions, thoughts and ideas pertaining to work, are discussed and handled in a professional, proficient manner through positive and effective communication. At the same time, the part of the colleagues in an organization is essential to be heard and understand together with sets of considerations that would definitely good rapport and pleasant work environment. Therefore, both parties are necessary to impart what the organization needs to address pertaining to communication in order to have good organizational communication flow.

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