

Internal Communication Channels: Extent of Practices to Sustain a Well-Informed Academic Community

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ABSTRACT – *The study aimed to determine the timeliness and adequacy, relevance and accuracy of the information provided in the internal communication through various channels being practiced in the Lyceum of the Philippines University – Batangas in terms of written, verbal and electronic communications. Descriptive type research method was utilized in the study. Results showed that there is a need for continuous improvements particularly on the appropriateness and timeliness of the communication channel and the way that the internal communication should be able to catch the attention of the recipients, and that this should be more clear and precise that can create more understanding of the information intended to be conveyed. The electronic communications reach the recipients on real time but not all department heads may be able to check their emails from time to time. Therefore, it is recommended to implement and monitor the proposed action plan and evaluate the internal communication channel every two years to assess the improvement on how information liquefies among the members of the academic community.*

Keywords: Internal Communication, Written Communication, Electronic Communication

INTRODUCTION

Communication represents a complex process of transmitting messages, owing to which the emitter encodes the information transmitted through a specific channel towards a receiver that will decode it. In the business context, communication plays an important role in the delivery of services to its customers; through clear communications, organizations are able to meet customer requirements and needs. Providing quality products and services is always the ultimate goal of every educational institution making it as part of the vision and mission that proliferates from top management down to the rank and file employees of the organization (Laguador et al., 2014). In the end, the

meeting of business goals and objectives are met, which oftentimes is in the form of profits (Hulea, 2010).

In this modern business world, there are various ways of communicating within the organization. Internal communication refers to the sharing of information within an organization for business purposes. For example, internal communication within a company can take place via speech, telephone, radio, mail, paging, fax, closed circuit television, electronic mail, Internet connections and computer networks (“internal communication”). Based on the experiences of seasoned leaders, including this author, still the best form of communication is the face to face communication. Face-to-face communication, as per author’s experience, conveys not only a speedy understanding of the message or information; importantly, this also forms a better form of fellowship and bonding with each other, that is vital for a creation of unity and teamwork within the organization. However, this form of face to face communication is oftentimes not possible, due to expanding roles of leaders who have to attend to various commitments, which include responsibilities on how to continuously innovate the ways in meeting customers needs and requirements. Organizations must continue to share information to its employees so it can travel beyond efficiency and towards an innovative culture (Abadesco, Jr., 2012).

Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas is a tertiary educational institution located in Region 4A of the Philippines commits to provide quality education and services to all its customers, particularly the students. LPU-B employs around 600 employees who serve its 9,500 students. Internal communication plays a vital role in the dissemination of information coming from the top management and down to the teaching and non-teaching staff. LPU-B has three campuses, namely the LIMA campus in barangay Cuta, Batangas, the Riverside Campus located in barangay Gulod Labac, Batangas City, and the main campus located in Kumintang Ibaba, Batangas City. With this situation,

internal communication from among members of the organization becomes more crucial and challenging. Sometimes, confusion and miscommunication happens from among members of the LPU family.

Despite geographical distance, the top management commits to be accessible to all members of the organization through various internal communication channels. During the Philippine Quality Award (PQA) assessment, the PQA Assessors noted that the communication modes in LPU-B are documented through minutes of the meeting, board resolutions, memoranda, and electronic means such as text messaging, emails, and others. However, the PQA Assessors also noted that these internal communication modes are not reviewed or evaluated, and which consequently, does not undergo improvement process. Findings of this study will not only be a compliance to the PQA requirement. Importantly, this could propose a continuous improvement plan that is aimed to sustain a well-informed academic community in LPU-B.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research attempted to investigate the internal communication channels in LPU-B. Specifically, it aimed to determine the profile of respondents in terms of Nature of work (teaching or non teaching), gender, age and educational attainment; to determine the extent of information provided in the communication in terms of Timeliness and Adequacy, Relevance and Accuracy; to determine the level of internal communication channels being practiced in LPU-B in terms of written communication (memo, letters, any other written forms), verbal communication (meetings, speeches, face to face conversation, phone calls, etc) and electronic communication (emails, website, social media); to test the differences in the extent of information provided in the communication and the level of internal communication channels when the respondents are grouped according to profile; and to propose an action plan that can enhance the internal communication channels in LPU-B.

METHODS

Research Design

This research employed the descriptive method. It described the level of communication channels in in terms of timeliness and adequacy, as well as the relevance and accuracy of the communication. It also described the level of internal communication in terms of written communication, verbal communication and electronic communication.

Participants

The samples of the study were 159 teaching and non-teaching staff of LPU-B. The number of sample was based on the effect size of 0.25, with a power level of 0.80. The study did not consider the employment status of the participants, since everyone, regardless of their employment status are recipients of the internal communication channels in LPU-B..

Procedure

After a thorough consideration of the current practices regarding internal communication channels of LPU-B, there was a close coordination with the Human Resource Management and Development office, on how the data can be gathered.

Instrument

A self-structured questionnaire was deployed to target respondents. The instrument was left to the participants for about a week, so respondents can analyze and determine very well their responses.

Data Analysis

Data were processed with the help of LPU-B statistics center. The simple weighted mean, frequency distribution, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were the statistical tools used to treat the data answer the objectives of the study. In addition, the data were computed through the help of the software PASW version to further analyze the needed data.

RELATED LITERATURE

Organizations represent goals which a group or groups of people aspire to achieve (McLean, 2005). This group or groups of people comprise the organizations are with different backgrounds, personalities, and orientations; hence the key to clear communication channels is crucial or poses a challenge for the attainment of organization goals (Ahmati, 2014).

Communication represents a complex process of transmitting messages, owing to which the emitter encodes the information transmitted through a specific channel towards a receiver that will decode it. In the business context, communication plays an important role in the delivery of services to its customers. Through clear communications, organizations are able to meet customer requirements and needs. In the end, the meeting of business goals and objectives are met, which oftentimes is in the form of profits (Hulea, 2010).

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In the research conducted by Ahmati (2014) regarding development of organizational communication culture, majority of the respondents or more than 50 percent of the employees confirmed that they understand the information relayed to them by the management, and that they obtain all the instructions needed for them to perform their tasks. The respondents however claimed that they do not have either the power or the courage to communicate with their supervisors about some particular issues. This paper on development of organizational communication culture concluded that well-organized and productive communication requires appropriate open-minded managers, rather than a dominant management structure.

According to Contreras (2013), there should be institutionalization of internal communication process. He pointed out that in an environment where there is rapid and comprehensive change, it is imperative that all organizational members are informed of what is going on, particularly on matters that affect employees, their works, and their careers. Through internal communications, the Human Resource development group can develop and institutionalized various channels or vehicles for the propagation of information channels. Multi-media communication, events and other communication vehicles can be utilized to deliver information and messages, as well as rally employee

involvement in key activities. Electronic media communication is an effective drivers of dispersed work teams. These tools allow companies to have employee collaborate on projects and communicate with each other economically (*importance of electronic communication in the workplace*).

Meanwhile, Abadesco (2012) asserts that a key driver to create a culture of innovation is leadership. Leaders must be able to rally employees' commitment for them to sustain a spirit of competitiveness and building mutual trust. This culture must be driven by a group of employees who are well-informed, and which can thrive only if there is a sound internal communication process within the organization.

In communicating with groups, it is important for the management to recognize the nature and style of communication. There are different personalities and opinions who comprise the group, and so there communication can be overt- who talks to whom, about what, for how long, and how often. This way communication process is more understand and become clearer to the intended group/s (Cumming & Worley, 2012). To increase employees' responsibilities and work engagement, which can create more commitment and a culture of work excellence, communication being given them must be clear, accurate, and without ambiguous statement or thoughts (Ahmati, 2014).

Effective communication is based on qualities a successful manager ought to own (Sengaputa, 2011). The same author asserts that there are a variety of personal attitudes that managers and leaders need to possess in order to achieve their goals. Example of the personal attitudes is the need to be sensitive to the dynamics of interpersonal relationship, where good managers and leaders understand why some relations through the communication processes fail, and why, on the other hand, some succeed. Managers and leaders should possess excellent communication skills, in particularly speaking and listening. Leaders who are excellent listeners are those who are successful in management and leadership of their organizations. They recognize listening as a way to improve internal processes (Sengaputa, 2011). Managers and leaders should also be motivated to excel because it is hard for them to motivate someone else if they themselves are not motivated. Motivation in the work place supports the friendly culture and in turn, it inspires a good internal communication environment. Managers should also be trained to receive and give feedbacks. In terms of receiving and giving feedbacks, there are many details that seem to be not of importance for some who

possess that information, but those details can aid others in the organization to achieve or attain their goals.

Communication within the organization is seen as crucial, as this prepares and leads all activities toward replying to customer needs and requests (Kaul, 2000).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of nature of work, gender, age, and highest educational attainment.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Profile Variables	f	%
Nature of Work		
Teaching	59	39.07
Non-Teaching	92	60.93
Gender		
Male	47	31.13
Female	104	68.87
Age		
30 and below	48	31.79
31-40 years old	54	35.76
41 and above	49	32.45
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	71	47.02
Master's Degree	52	34.44
Doctorate Degree	28	18.54

It could be gleaned from the data that majority (60.93%) of the respondents belong to the non-teaching staff. Non-teaching staff are those who normally stay in their respective offices, and are oftentimes the first-hand recipients of the internal communication in LPU-B.

Meanwhile, 104 or 68.87% of the respondents are female. This is a manifestation that female dominates the teaching and non teaching staff in LPU-B.

Based on age, 54 respondents or 35.76 percent belong to the age bracket of 31-40, followed by 49 respondents or 32.45 percent who belong to the age bracket of 41 and above, and the least majority of 48

respondents or 31.79 percent who are in the age bracket of 30 and below. This shows that the respondents' age do not have a major disparity as they all belong to the middle age. These age brackets are those who can more or less member for a longer period of time, the internal communication they receive as their memory is still very retentive.

As to the highest educational attainment, the data show that 71 or 47.02 percent are bachelor degree holders, while 52 or 34.44 percent have master's degrees. There are 28 respondents or 18.54 percent who obtained doctorate degrees. This table reveals that 80 or the majority of 52.98 percent of respondents are holders of master's degrees; it is a truism that those with doctoral degrees are automatically holders of master's degrees. This is a manifestation that LPU complies in terms of CHED regulatory requirements that teachers are holders of master's degrees.

This could also be interpreted to mean that since majority are holders of master's degrees, they could be more or less aware of the internal communication channels pervading in LPU-B.

Table 2 shows the internal communication channels being practiced in LPU-B in terms of timeliness and adequacy. It could be gleaned from the table that the respondents strongly agree (*w.m.3.55*) that the internal communication is useful in performing their duties and responsibilities. This item ranks first compared with the other items. This could be interpreted to mean that the respondents strongly agree that they benefit from the internal communication they receive from the management; this is also an indication that the internal communication is adequate and timely. Meanwhile, the respondents agree (3.43) that they read and understand the internal communication in LPU-B, and for which they take corresponding necessary and immediate action. This could be interpreted to mean that the teaching and non teaching staff agree that they can act immediately related to their respective duties once they have read and understood the internal communication.

Table 2. Internal Communication Channels Being Practiced in LPU-B in terms of Timeliness and Adequacy

The information provided in the communication is...	WM	VI	Rank
1. being read and understood to take necessary and immediate action.	3.43	Agree	2
2. adequate and appropriate to the communication channel	3.37	Agree	4
3. considered useful in performing my duties and responsibilities	3.55	Strongly Agree	1
4. very timely and appropriate for the intended groups	3.25	Agree	5
5. being provided to me by my immediate superior from time to time which deemed necessary to my College/Department	3.39	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.40	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

On the other hand, the respondents agree (3.39) that the internal communication being provided to them by their immediate superior is adequate and timely and are necessary to their respective College or Department.

The respondents likewise agree (3.37) that the internal communication is adequate and appropriate to the overall communication channel of LPU-B.

Although the respondents agree (3.25) that internal communication is very timely and appropriate for the intended groups, this particular item received the lowest rating of w.m.3.25. This could be interpreted to mean that the respondents believe that in terms of internal communication for the intended groups, while very timely and appropriate, needs continuous improvements.

Communicating within the group is important as various personalities can have its varying interpretations of the facts being conveyed. The human resource management should be concerned with the idea of who talks to whom, talk about what, for how long, and how often (Cummings & Worley, 2011).

Table 3. Internal Communication Channels Being Practiced in LPU-B in terms of Relevance and Accuracy

The information provided in the communication is...	WM	VI	Rank
1. relevant to the trifold functions of the university	3.58	Strongly Agree	2
2. visible and legible	3.46	Agree	3
3. capable of catching attention	3.31	Agree	4
4. accurate without ambiguous statements or thoughts	3.3	Agree	5
5. short, clear, precise and easy to understand.	3.64	Strongly Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.46	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Meanwhile, Table 3 shows the internal communication in LPU-B in terms of relevance and accuracy. It could be gleaned from the data that the respondents strongly agree (w.m.3.64) that the internal communication is short, clear, precise and easy to understand. This could be interpreted to mean that the management is able to deliver to the respondents short, clear, precise, and easy to understand messages. In fact, this item ranks no. 1 compared with other items in terms

of relevance and accuracy of the internal communication. The respondents likewise strongly agree (3.58) that the internal communication they receive is relevant to the trifold functions of LPU-B. Since the job descriptions of the respondents are all aligned to research, instruction and community extension, this confirms the information in table 1 that the respondents believe the internal communication they receive is useful in the performance of duties and responsibilities. This is also an indication that the respondents believe, they benefit from the internal communication in terms of how they use it in their respective functions. The respondents agree (3.46) that the internal communication is visible and legible, which is an indication that they understand it. They likewise agree (3.13) that the internal communication can catch attention of the recipients. Meanwhile, the respondents likewise agree (3.3) that the internal communication is accurate and without ambiguous statement or thoughts. This item, however, received the lowest rating of “agree”, and which is an indication that this needs further improvements.

Faruk (2014) pointed out that employees responsibilities and work engagement, and which in turn can create more commitment and a culture of work excellence, if communication being given are clear, accurate and without ambiguous statement or thoughts.

Table 4, on the other hand, shows the level of internal communication channels being practiced in LPU-B in terms of written communication. It can be gleaned from the level of internal communication channel in terms of written communication is Moderate (c.m 3.33). This could be interpreted to mean that as far as written communication, there is still an opportunity to increase this to the High level. The same table also shows that the number one moderate level (w.m 3.41) among the items is “written communication is always posted in the bulletin boards of the Colleges and Departments of LPU-B. The items which received the lowest Moderate level are the items *easily kept and retrieved in the records once received, and being sent immediately and arrived on time within the week of the specified date*. This could be interpreted to mean that the respondents believe that the written communication while kept and can easily be retrieved in their records once received, can still have a room for improvement as the level of written communication is not yet in the High level. Similarly, the respondents also believe that the written communication while being sent immediately and that they arrive on time within the week of the specified date, still need to be improved for this to reach the level of High.

Table 4. Level of Internal Communication Channel Practiced in LPU-B in terms of Written Communication

Written communications are...	WM	VI	Rank
1. easily being noticed once received in the office	3.38	M	2.5
2. always posted in our bulletin board for us to be informed of the updates in my College/Department and the entire university	3.41	M	1
3. being sent immediately and arrived on time within the week of the specified date	3.17	M	6
4. easily kept and retrieved in the records once needed	3.28	M	5
5. much preferred channel for me to send short notices to concerned offices	3.38	M	2.5
6. easily for me to read than electronic communication	3.33	M	4
Composite Mean	3.33	M	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = High (H); 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate (M); 1.50 – 2.49 = Low (L); 1.00 – 1.49 = Very Low (VL)

Table 4 show that the written communication is always posted in bulletin boards as a way of information dissemination by Deans of Colleges and Department Head. The least item which received the lowest rating of moderate level (3.17) pertains to the time of delivery and receipt of the work units of the written communication (*being sent immediately and arrived on time within the week of the specified period*). This is a manifestation that this area needs improvement.

Table 5. Level of Internal Communication Channels Practiced in LPU-B in terms of Verbal Communication

Verbal Communications are being used...	WM	VI	Rank
1. To relay information through phone calls.	3.36	M	4.5
2. To discuss relevant topics, issues and concerns during meetings	3.44	M	1.5
3. To solicit opinion and immediate answer from active participation of the attendees from the meeting	3.44	M	1.5
4. for consultation of subordinates to their immediate superior	3.42	M	3
5. to discuss some confidential issues	3.36	M	4.5
6. to present the findings of any research output or result of evaluation during seminars, meetings and conferences	3.35	M	6
Composite Mean	3.40	M	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = High (H); 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate (M); 1.50 – 2.49 = Low (L); 1.00 – 1.49 = Very Low (VL)

Meanwhile, Table 5 specifies the level of verbal internal communication in LPU-B. The data show that the level of verbal internal communication in this institution is moderate. The highest moderate levels given by the respondents are the items which relate to the discussion of relevant topics, issues and concerns during meetings, and the solicitation of opinion and immediate answer or active participation of during meetings. This is a manifestation that there is openness and transparency existing between Deans/Department Heads and the teaching and non - teaching staff. The lowest moderate level are on the items about discussion of research findings (3.35); the verbal communication through telephone calls (3.36), as well as the discussion of confidential issues (3.36). This could be interpreted to mean that respondents' teaching and non teaching staff consider verbal communication given them by their respective Deans and Department Heads regarding research findings, telephone conversation, and discussion of confidential issues to be of low priorities. This could further mean that since many of the respondents are non- teaching staff, communication regarding research findings is not a high priority in terms to their office works. Similarly, this indicates that the phone conversation is also of low priority, because many of them belong to the same work units and there is no need for them to call by phone.

Meanwhile, table 6 indicates the level of internal communication in terms of electronic media, which could be in the form of emails, text messaging, website, and other forms of social media. In this table we can see that the respondents consider that the level of this internal communication is moderate. The first moderate (3.49) item is "*more economical in sending information to offices*". This table also shows that the internal communication that they receive through electronic means is necessary information that could prompt short course of action related to their works. The last three items with moderate level of electronic internal communication are: "*being read promptly and easily compared to the other channels*" (3.25); "*being received by the recipient in real time manner* (3.27); and "*evident through posting relevant and useful information which I usually read from the LPU-B website* (3.28). Since the level of communication in these three items are Moderate, and not yet in the High level, this could be interpreted to mean that electronic media channel in LPU-B can still be improved. Electronic media communication is an effective drivers of dispersed work teams.

Table 6. Level of Internal Communication Channels Practiced in LPU-B in terms of Electronic Communication

Electronic Communications are...	WM	VI	Rank
1. more economical in sending information to offices	3.49	M	1
2. being read promptly and easily compared to other channels	3.25	M	8
3. much preferred channel for me to send short notices to concerned offices	3.30	M	5
4. being received by the recipient in real time manner	3.27	M	7
5. being sent to me through text messages by my superiors and peers which are necessary information for short course of action	3.46	M	2
6. evident through posting relevant and useful information which I usually read from the LPU-B website	3.28	M	6
7. faster for me to send letters and information to concerned offices through email	3.39	M	3.5
8. much preferred channel for me to disseminate school activities through social networking sites	3.39	M	3.5
Composite Mean	3.35	M	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = High (H); 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate (M); 1.50 – 2.49 = Low (L); 1.00 – 1.49 = Very Low (VL)

These tools allow companies to have employee collaborate on projects and communicate with each other economically (*importance of electronic communication in the workplace*).

Table 7 shows the comparison on the internal communication channels practiced in LPU. This table indicates that internal communication channels in terms of **timeliness and adequacy** differed significantly

between male and female ($F = 2.017$; $p < 0.05$). This could be interpreted to mean that internal communication channels with regards to timeliness and adequacy were more practiced by male ($X = 3.53$) than female ($X = 3.36$). On the other hand, other variables do not show significant differences. This could indicate that they have the same level of practices as to the use of internal communication when grouped according to nature, age and educational attainment.

Table 7. Difference of Responses on Internal Communication Channels Being Practiced in LPU-B

		Mean	t-value / F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Timeliness and Adequacy	Nature	Teaching Non Teaching	3.41 3.40	0.113 2.017	0.910 Significant
	Gender	Male Female	3.53 3.36		
	Age	30 and below 31-40 years old 41 and above	3.30 3.39 3.51	1.258 0.291	Not Significant Not Significant
	Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctorate Degree	3.39 3.38 3.54	0.594 0.620	Not Significant
	Nature	Teaching Non Teaching	3.41 3.49	0.707 0.481	Not Significant
	Gender	Male Female	3.49 3.45	0.282 0.778	Not Significant
	Age	30 and below 31-40 years old 41 and above	3.30 3.35 3.73	3.583 0.015	Significant
	Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctorate Degree	3.50 3.35 3.51	0.542 0.654	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

As to relevance and accuracy, there is a significant difference among the three age groups on using internal communication channels. This was observed since $F = 3.583$, $p < 0.05$, which indicates that age group 41 years old and above (3.73) frequently use communication channels compared to those in the age bracket of less from 30 years old and below and 31 to 40 years old. This could be interpreted to mean that those in the higher age bracket are more conscious of the relevance and accuracy of the internal communication they receive in LPU-B.

Meanwhile, Table 8 summarizes the results on level of internal communication for written, verbal, and electronic means. As can be gleaned from the table the highest moderate result is in verbal communication, followed by electronic communication and the last moderate is written communication. This is a confirmation of the opinion of several authors in communication that despite the many forms of communication we have in our society at present, still the best form of communication is the face-to face communication. This result is also a manifestation, that as one LPU-family, face to face communication can achieve better forms of understanding and the feeling of oneness and unity, if there is frequent face to face interaction between LPU-B family members.

Table 8. Summary of the levels of internal communication in LPU-B

Internal Communication	Composite Mean	Rank	VI
Written	3.33	3	M
Verbal	3.40	1	M
Electronic	3.35	2	M

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Female employees dominate the workforce of the teaching and non-teaching staff; there is no major disparity on the age bracket of the respondents who belong to the middle age 31 to of 41 age bracket. Majority of the teaching and non-teaching staff have obtained master's degrees. In terms of timeliness and adequacy of the internal communication in LPU-B, there is a need for continuous improvements particularly on the appropriateness and timeliness of the communication channel channels for the intended groups. There is a need for continuous improvements in the way that the internal communication should be able to catch the attention of the recipients, and that this should be clear and precise that can create more understanding of the information intended to be

conveyed. There is an area for improvement in the written communication channel in such a way that there should be easy retrieval of them when needed and that they should be sent to the recipients on time so that they could respond and take actions immediately. There is a need for continuous improvement in terms of the electronic communication reaching the recipients on real time, and on how the recipients can be encouraged or trained to read communications channels through electronic media. Verbal communication through meetings and face to face conversation also have to be enhanced as participants consider this as the still the best form of communication compared to written and electronic channels.

Thus, it is recommended the continuous implementation of the Continuing Education Program (CPE) under the Employee Development Program of the HRMD to sustain compliance with CHED requirement that all regular teaching staff possess relevant master's degrees. Implement and monitor the Action Plan that is being proposed by this study. Evaluate the Internal Communication channel every two years to assess the effectiveness of this Action Plan.

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