ENHANCING EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION THROUGH ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO IMPROVE TEAMWORK: A CASE STUDY OF A FACULTY AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Arin Choksereesuwan[1] and Papitchaya Wisankosol[2]

[1,2]Organization Development Program, Assumption University

Abstract

The objectives of this action research were (1) to implement organization development interventions (ODI); (2) to enhance employee communication and teamwork (on collaboration and task process); and (3) to identify the changes between the PRE-ODI and POST-ODI phases. This study was an action research to study the case of a faculty at a private university. The research process was divided into three phases (1. PRE-ODI, 2. ODI, and 3. POST-ODI). The population size was 45, and the sample size was 40 as determined based on Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Table (1970). All of the sample members participated in all of the three phases. The researcher implemented "the improvement score" to show an area needed for improvement. Then, he designed the intervention which was in two phases. The first phase was about the principle of employee communication. The second phase was the investigation of intensive knowledge by focusing on individual communication, interpersonal communication, and team communication. The intervention workshops were conducted with active learning, project- based learning, and feedback and reflection.

This research findings revealed that OD Interventions were successful. The paired sample t-test was used to analyze statistically whether there was a significant difference in communication and teamwork between pre and post ODI activities at a significance of 95% or alpha = 0.05. The improvement score was moved from the PRE-ODI phase's "Priority Area for Improvement" to the POST-ODI phase's "Strengths". Furthermore, the simple linear regression results confirmed that the employee communication had a significant impact on teamwork.

Keywords: Employee Communication, Organization Development, Teamwork

Introduction

Lifeblood of a successful organization is effective communication. It enhances the vision of the organization, links employees to the business, promotes improvement of the process, enables progress, and drive business results by changing employees' behaviors. Employee communication is an important part

Corresponding Author

E-mail: arincho@pim.ac.th

of every kind of organization, as organizations can only accomplish their aims and priorities through the coordination of their members (Pekkala, 2020). In a number of ways, employee communication and teamwork have been linked. Efficient organizational communication contributes to an organizational commitment to overall quality control (Allen, 1992) and employee communication, which is a primary antecedent of teamwork (Ridder, 2004).

Any educational institute is a kind of organization that need an effective communication. Private universities play a major role in the university community in Thailand (Mala, 2018). The criterion for determining the quality of university services must begin with the quality of university communication (Yeo, 2008). The XXX University, nowadays, are facing a difficult situation due to rapid changes in economy, society, and technology disruption. Employee communication and teamwork are the key effect that need to improve. The results from SWOT/SOAR, and The Star Model interview showed that people in the faculty of Management Sciences lacked communication skills. The messages are always unclear and distorted. There are various channels or platforms to get messages. When conflicts take place, the solutions were appropriate way. These cause low trust among team members and cannot process the tasks or any project well. Therefore, members in the faculty have no collaboration. As a consequence, action research is necessary to determine how employee communication and teamwork are done and how to improve them in order to create or

enhance internal organizational processes, such as employee communication and teamwork. This action analysis model, consisting of the assessment phase of the OD process (PRE-OD Phase), the production phase of the OD intervention process (ODI Phase) and the examined phase of the ODI process (POST-ODI), is closely compatible with the focal framework of the Private university.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is:

1. To investigate the current situation of employee communication as well as teamwork on collaboration and task process.

2. To design the appropriate interventions to enhance employee communication on people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate aspects.

3. To examine the results of the interventions between Pre and Post ODI on employee communication and teamwork.

4. To determine the impact of employee communication on collaboration.

5. To determine the impact of employee communication on task process.

Research Questions

This research study will answer the following research questions:

1. What is the current situation of employee communication on people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate as well as teamwork on collaboration and task process at XXX University?

2. What are the appropriate interventions to enhance employee communication on people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate aspects?

3. Are there any significant differences between Pre-ODI and Post-ODI on employee communication (people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate) and teamwork (collaboration and task process)?

4. Are there any impacts of employee communication (people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate) on collaboration?

5. Are there any impacts of employee communication (people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate) on Task Process?

Research Hypotheses

H1o: There is no significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on People (senders and receivers' communication skills).

H1a: There is a significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on people (senders and receivers' communication skills).

H2o: There is no significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on messages.

H2a: There is a significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on messages.

H3o: There is no significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on communication channels.

H3a: There is a significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on

communication channels.

H4o: There is no significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities in the communication climate.

H4a: There is a significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on communication climate.

H5o: There is no significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on collaboration.

H5a: There is a significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on collaboration.

H6o: There is no significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on task process.

H6a: There is a significant difference between PRE and POST ODI activities on task process.

H7: Communication (people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate) has significant impact on Collaboration.

H8: Communication (people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate) has significant impact on Task Process.

Literature Review

Communication Theories

Lasswell's Communication Model (Figure 1), was created in order to study the mass communication, this model is used to disseminate message to diverse audiences in different contexts for interpersonal communication or group communication. Lasswell's model was designed to analyze countries and enterprises media propaganda at the time.
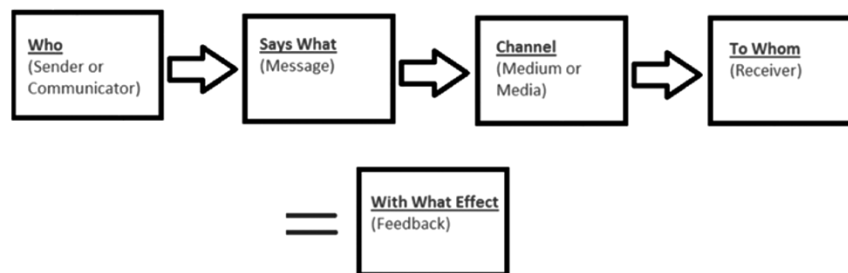
Figure 1 Lasswell's Communication Model

Note: Bajracharya (2018)

Additionally, The Newcomb's Model, in 1953, University of Michigan presented the New Comb's models of communication. To enhance communication and social connection in society and to maintain social balance, this theory's primary goal is to highlight the value of communication.

Employee Communication in an Organization

The importance of employee communication, is becoming increasingly recognized. Far too often, we prefer to edit with the message's contents instead of attempting to find solutions to make sure the answers to the message receiver are appropriate. This fallacy in contents leads us to conclude that we "getting through" to our audiences, only when we are entering through to ourselves (Jablin, 2008).

Employees are more likely to have productive working relationships and behave in a way that supports the company when they can successfully communicate with one another and their managers (Kang & Sung, 2017). Effective communication among employees is essential for a company's prospects of success

and survival. It is a management strategy that aids in establishing, building, and maintaining connections between the management of a company and its workers. To achieve specified goals, a communication strategy involves communication planning and management (Prouska et al., 2022). All formal and informal interactions with employees at different levels of the hierarchy of the business are considered to be part of employee communication (Fritz, 2022). In this crucial process in businesses, employees communicate information, the significance of that information, and their feelings. It helps to facilitate most organizational operations, build connections, create organizational culture, and take part in decision-making (Nurdin, 2014). Strategic communication management in the context of managing interdependence and fostering cooperative connections between a corporation and its internal stakeholders is the foundation of employee relations (Mazzei et al., 2019).

The Role of Employee Communication

According to Gómez and Dailey (2017), Formal communications are function-related because they are addressed to organizational

functions rather than the person doing the organizational job. In other words, the importance of an individual depends more on the position they occupy within the organization than on themselves.

The function of employee communications is one which has considerably changed (Keenan & Hazelton, 2006; Therkelsen & Fiebich, 2003). Today's communication professionals concentrate on challenging and stimulating employees, managing changes, and gaining employee engagement and loyalty (Smith & Mounter, 2005).The purpose of employee communications has shifted from managing and directing employees to assisting the construction of a responsive work environment that can adapt to change, pursues innovation, exchanges experience and knowledge, generates ideas, and engages employees in attaining strategic goals (Keenan & Hazelton, 2006; Smith & Mounter, 2005).

Factors Influencing Employee Communications Communication Climate

Downs and Hazen (1977) has established a significant dimension as an organizational communication element which is still being explored extensively by researchers today. The climate of interaction is to what extent collaboration motivates and motivates employees to meet organizational goals.

Channel of Communication

Themes included distinct internal channels of communication for varied people, the enhancement of face-to-face communication over computer and social media, and the use of success stories as powerful motivational

tools for participants (Ruck et al., 2017). E-mail and instant messages are the number one media format favored by participants versus the face-to- face communication method with trainers. The participants, in their views, did not want face-to-face contact to accompany the social media and text or E-mail alerts to be sent to the participants. Ruck et al. (2017) also found that electronic and social media channels may be successful in influencing actions as means of employee communication.

Teamwork Theories Tuckman Theory

In teamwork, the researchers also reviewed core theories from previous research literatures: Tuckman theory model (Figure 2) showed how the team builds maturity and capacities, establishes relationships and the leader changes the leadership style. There are four stages in group development: Forming, Storming, Normalizing, and Performing. To attain their maximum potential, organizations benefit greatly from the Tuckman approach.
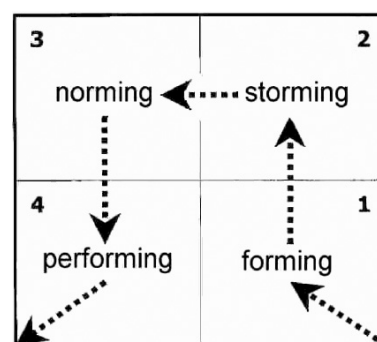

Figure 2 The model of Tuckman

Gladstein's Model

The Gladstein model (Gladstein , 1984) classified the variables as input, process, or output by divided the inputs into two categories:

group and organization. The decision-making process is referred to as a process, while the team's performance is referred to as a result.

Communication in Teamwork (Collaborative Relationships in Organizations)

A working team always looks at, respects, and accepts, listens, and communicates information, and eventually has outstanding decision-making skills. People feel trusted to share their thoughts and opinions through collaboration. Teams are successful because they have the ability to bring other people's experiences together, not only as individuals immerse themselves but because cooperative communities gain self-confidence and self-valuation (Tjosvold & Tjosvold, 1995).

Task Process communication

Regarding team goal formulation, task process communication is concerned with the clarity of objectives, feedback, transmission, and customer demands (Hirst & Mann, 2004). Having a clear direction for the entire innovation initiatives conducted by the teams would improve their innovativeness. This is because every member of the team understands the goals that must be met and will work hard to attain them.

Theorical Framework

The theoretical framework (Figure 3) is the structure of these theories. An organizational evaluation by all researchers led to the suggestion that three systems, namely employee communications, teamwork, and organizational development, are linked in one context.
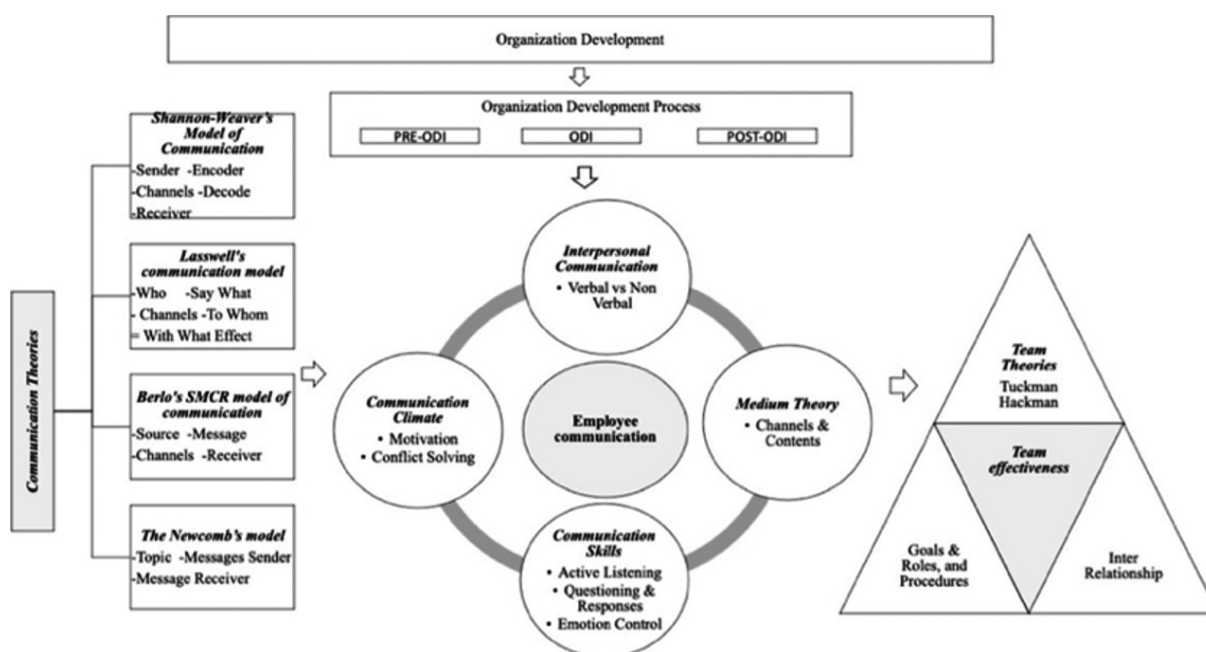

Figure 3 Theoretical Framework

Note: Developed by the Researcher for this Study

Conceptual Framework of the Study

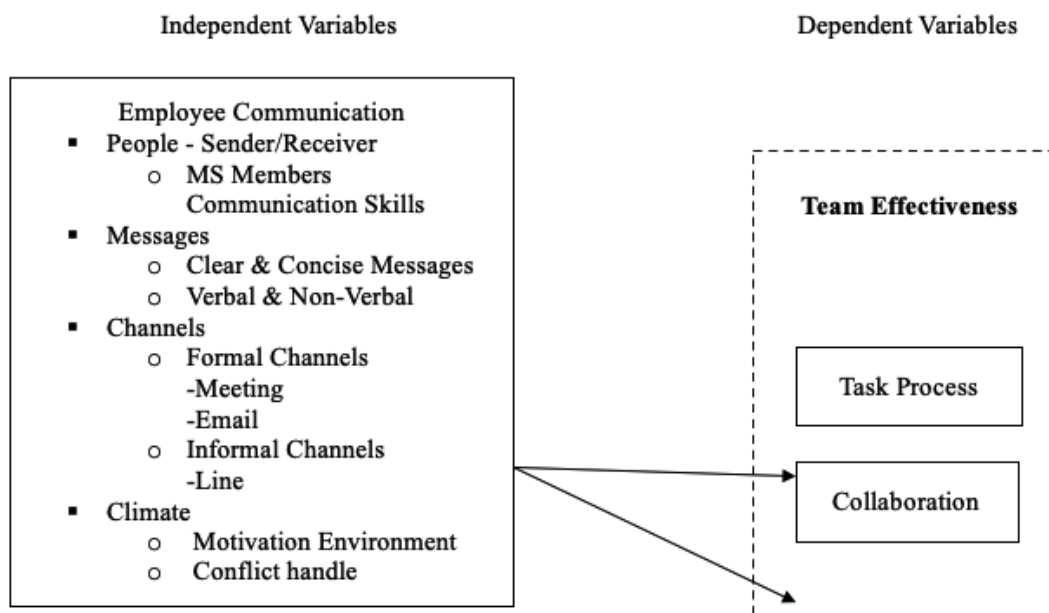To create its conceptual structure, it depends on a theoretical framework and a literature review as (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Research Design

Action research framework (Figure 5) involves cyclical procedures for diagnosis, transformation, and research. The diagnostic's conclusions make recommendations for improvements, which are subsequently put into practice in the same system and their impacts are further investigated by more research and diagnosis.
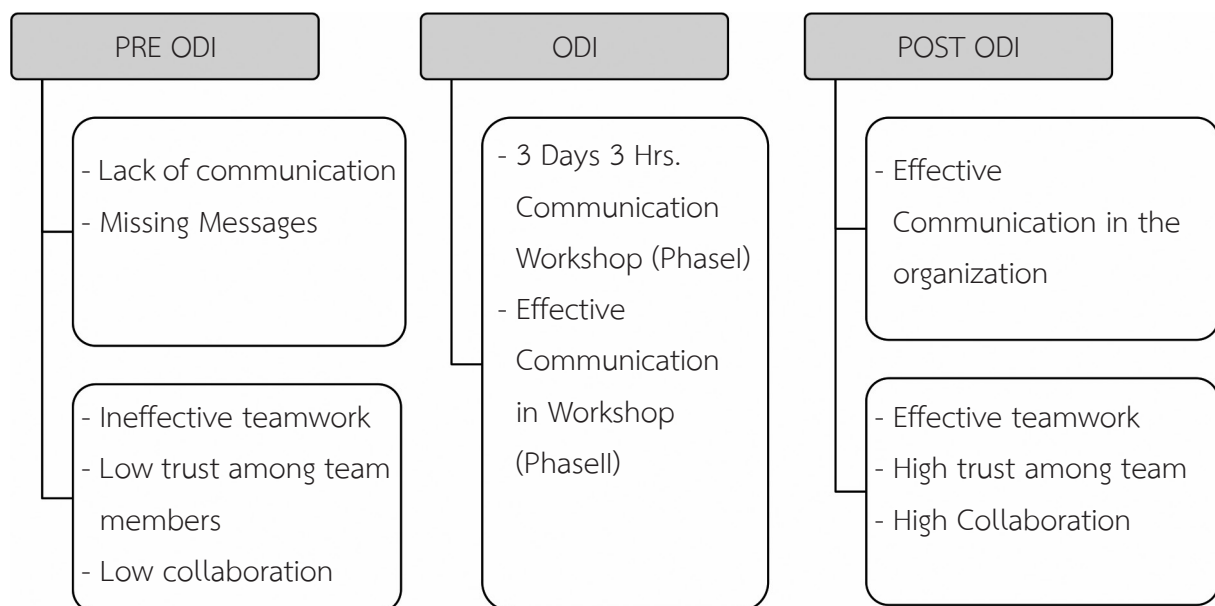

Figure 5 Action Research Framework

The PRE-OD Phase is a diagnostic stage where the objectives are to assess the current state of XXX University with respect to two variables: Communication and teamwork. The stage of implementation is known as the OD Intervention Phase. For certain areas of concern, which are the variables mentioned earlier, the researcher must establish an OD intervention strategy. POST-OD is the stage where assessments are made.

Population and Sampling Procedure

Since the study is a case study, a set of criteria was employed to select only The Faculty of Management Sciences at a private university in Bangkok, Thailand, out of a total of 45 participants (N). The sample size was then set at 40 using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) approach. Besides, the minimum sample size ten participants can have one variable (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996; Hair et al., 2014). The characteristics of population, most of them are young generations at age about 26-40 years old. They like to communicate through social media, such as Line. Although the organization uses email as the main channel to communicate within the organization, employees seldom use it. They use email only for sending information. They also prefer to work individually.

Research Instrument

An action research approach combines the two to provide a more efficient analytical approach. In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the organization, this review involved a quantitative approach, partial qualitative and the intervention outcomes were rigorously evaluated. While qualitative methods such as interventions, observations, and interviews were used in the analysis, quantitative methods (PRE-and POST-ODI studies) were developed. For this research, the questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part was about general information. The second part was designed to reflect the perception of employee communication and teamwork in the organization. The questionnaires were adapted from the previous study in the literature reviews. The majority of items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, which is intuitively familiar to participants and flexible in terms of measurement and perception (Fowler, 2013). A similar questionnaire was used for both PRE-OD and POST-ODI. In addition, semi-structured interviews used as interview guidelines were completed in the POST-intervention periods, with respondents selected from the purposive selection. The interview guidance provides more comprehensive details and explanations of employee experiences, as well as specific information on topics like communication workshops to support the results of quantitative.

The questionnaire was validated by 5 experts for content validity (Item-Objective Congruence: IOC). Plus, thirty participants were chosen at random from various divisions to participate in the questionnaires pilot test. The acceptance range for alpha, according to several studies is 0.70 to 0.95 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The results demonstrated that the entire questionnaire is consistent in term of content, structural validity, and confidence values may be utilize to gather data accordance with the requirements.

Data Analysis

To achieve the study's goals, this study employs both partial qualitative and quantitative methods. A quantitative analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Quantitative research methods included frequency distribution and descriptive statistics such as Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Percentage, Paired Samples T-Test, and Simple Linear Regression. The results of the survey were used to verify the findings of the interviews and observations. The content analysis approach was used to analyze the responses to interview questions for qualitative analysis.

Results

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1 Demographic data of respondents

Demographic Data of Respondents		
General Information	Total 40 (People)	100 (%)
1. Gender		
Male	9	22.5
Female	31	77.5
Total	40	100.0
2. Age		
20-25 Years Old	6	15.0
26-45 Years Old	25	62.5
More Than 45 Years Old	9	22.5
Total	40	100.0
3. Highest Graduated Education		
Bachelor's Degree or Lower	15	37.5
Master's Degree	19	47.5
Doctor's Degree	6	15.0
Total	40	100.0
4. Working Position		
Management	4	10.0
Lecturers	16	40.0
Senior Manager/Manager/Supervisor	4	10.0
Staff	16	40.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 1 Demographic data of respondents (Cont.)

Demographic Data of Respondents		
General Information	Total 40 (People)	100 (%)
5. Working Period in Organization		
Less Than 1 Year	6	15.0
1-5 Years	22	55.0
More Than 5 Years	12	30.0
Total	40	100.0

As demonstrated in table 1, 1) most of the respondents are female at 77.5%. 2) 62.5% ages are between 26-45 years old. 3) most of them hold a master's degree at 47.5%. 4) 40% of the respondents work in the lecturer position, which is the same as respondents who are working in staff. 5) most has been employed for between 1-5 years, which is 55%.

Quantitative Analysis of the Research (PRE-ODI)

The Current Situation of Communication and Teamwork

Improvement scores created by Wisankosol and Chavez (2016) were used to take the criteria into consideration. The criterion used "Improvement Scores" (Table 2) to identify areas of strength, areas for improvement, and places that need improvement the most.

Table 2 The improvement scores

Group	Score	Detail
Priority area for improvement	$\overline{X} < 3$	To get a better outcome, this group needs an improvement as early as possible
Area for improvement	$3 \leq \overline{X} < 4$	This group needs an improvement
Strengths	$\overline{X} \geq 4$	Ideal. Expected to see especially after the post ODI stage

The participants in the study consisted of 40 all level in the faculty of management sciences from a faculty of a Private university in Bangkok, Thailand who answered an online survey. The perception of the respondents on the current situation of communication at PRE-ODI Phase (Table 2) is at "Priority Area for Improvement" level at the mean score 2.50. Besides, the overall of teamwork is "Priority Area for Improvement" with mean score 2.10.

Organization Development Intervention (ODI)

As the Pre-OD was concentrated on analyzing the existing state of communication and teamwork workshops were created by the researcher and facilitated for participants. The OD Intervention included two phases, for the first phase "Three Days and Three Hours workshop (Phase I). The main objectives are 1) To understand of the important elements of effective communication. 2) To succeed choosing and using messages, tone, and temperature to match the goal of communication. 3) To learn and understand different personality styles, and 4) To learn how to communication through emotion and body language. Moreover, the second phase, "The Effective Communication in Workplace" (Phase II), was divided into four topics which were consecutive and intensive from the first phase. Besides, in each topic conducted for two days with lecture, active learning, and peer & group sharing. After learning one topic, learners would break for one week so that they can digest knowledge, observe themselves and others, and practice their communication skills. When the four topics had been completed, learners took two more weeks break in order to more digest knowledge, observe themselves and others, and practice their communication skills. Then, learners came back for the last three hours reflection. Learners shared what they have learned to classmates and guest speakers. The workshop conducted with active and project-based learning.

POST-ODI Phase

Between the PRE and POST ODI stages, each communication perception question's mean score is compared in this phase. After the PRE-ODI phase that the researcher investigated the current situation and designed the intervention and conducted them in the ODI phase. Then, the same questionnaire that was used to measure participants' perceptions of communication was given out to measure those perceptions. This study reveals that the implementation of the ODIs; communication workshops have made significant differences between PRE-ODI and POST-ODI by comparing mean scores between PRE and POST ODI, the results showed that mean scores increasing after implementing ODI. Plus, the Improvement scores by Wisankosol and Chavez (2016) improve from "Priority Area for Improvement" to "Strengths". Moreover, research findings indicate the result of eight hypotheses. For hypotheses 1-6, T-Test was used to analyze statistically whether there was a significant difference in employee communication and teamwork between pre and post ODI activities at a significance of 95% or alpha = 0.05. The results indicated the significant level is less than 0.05. Therefore, The POST-ODI mean score was statistically significantly higher than the PRE-ODI with 95% significance level as Table 3.

Table 3 Hypotheses 1-6 testing results summary to compare PRE-POST ODI phase

Hypotheses	Variables	Comparison	Mean	Mean difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Comparison Results
			Paired Differences			
H1	People	POST	4.20	1.87	0.000	PRE&POST
		PRE	2.33			Significant difference
H2	Messages	POST	4.28	2.18	0.000	PRE&POST
		PRE	2.10			Significant difference
H3	Communication Channels	POST	3.90	1.19	0.000	PRE&POST
		PRE	2.71			Significant difference
H4	Communication Climate	POST	4.25	2.12	0.000	PRE&POST
		PRE	2.13			Significant difference
H5	Task Process	POST	4.45	2.34	0.000	PRE&POST
		PRE	2.11			Significant difference
H6	Collaboration	POST	4.13	2.04	0.000	PRE&POST
		PRE	2.09			Significant difference

For Hypothesis 7, The Simple Linear Regression for employee communication & collaboration, the research found that a significant regression equation was found ($F_{(1, 38)} = 829.529$, $p < .000$), with an R^2 of 0.978. Participants' predicted collaboration is equal to 0.646 where employee communication is equal to 0.877. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 (Ho7) is rejected. Additionally, this study illustrates that employee communication had a significant impact on task process.

Besides, hypothesis 8, the Simple Linear Regression for employee communication & task process, the research found that a significant regression equation was found ($F_{(1, 38)} = 580.353$, $p < .000$), with an R^2 of 0.939. Participants' predicted collaboration is equal to 0.575 whereas employee communication is equal to 0.917. Therefore, Hypothesis 8 (Ho8) is

rejected. Additionally, this study illustrates that employee communication was significant impact on task process.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine whether there were any observable relationships between the teamwork and employee communication techniques currently being employed by staff members at the Faculty of Management Sciences. The results of descriptive analysis for the current situation of communication revealed that the perception of the respondents on the current situation of communication people, messages, communication channels, and communication climate at PRE-ODI Phase is at "Priority Area for Improvement" level. Besides, the results of the current situation of teamwork on collaboration

and task process were "Priority Area for Improvement". This action research utilizes the major interventions to enhance employee communication and teamwork, which were the components of effective communication, listening skills through deep listening, how to talk, and body language. Moreover, participants learned the understanding the work of self and others, DISC, and the power of effective communication skills workshop activity. The quantitative analysis reveals that the level of employee motivation has increased significantly after the ODIs. Moreover, Communication and teamwork were statistically significantly higher during the POST-ODIs than during the PRE-ODIs, according to the Paired Sample T-Test of the research variables. This statistical analysis could represent the focal organization's improved situation in terms of communication and teamwork following the ODIs. Therefore, the findings from this research study supported that OD procedure suggested by Cummings and Worley (2014) that the implementation, transition, and enhancement of behavioral science knowledge at the system level is referred to as organizational development. Likewise, ODI is a set of tasks, actions, and events that are intended to help an organization improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Regardless of the industry, the results of this study have broad ramifications for the study of cooperation and communication in businesses globally.

Despite the fact that the data is specific to one organization, it confirms the implication that employees require timely information and interaction from leaders and team members. Finally, the findings of this study indicate that the Faculty of Management Sciences at a Private University would benefit from a series of changes in how managers/ management communicate with employees. Furthermore, if members understand others working styles and know how to communicate with each other, teamworking would be more powerful teamworking.

Conclusion

The participants in the study consisted of 40 all level in the faculty of management sciences from a faculty of a Private university in Bangkok, Thailand who answered an online survey. This study reveals that the implementation of the ODIs; communication workshops have made significant differences between PRE-ODI and POST-ODI by comparing mean scores between PRE and POST ODI, the results showed that mean scores increasing after implementing ODI.Plus, the Improvement scores by Wisankosol and Chavez (2016) improve from "Priority Area for Improvement" to "Strengths".

Recommendation

The effectiveness of the intervention design suggests that, in order for the focal company to sustain the development of employee communication skills and teamwork skills, the researcher would advise the focal company to continuously apply OD intervention to the entire organization. The action research methods design was a crucial part of providing

a thorough interpretation of the quantitative findings in this study. Team building and communication trainings were the most suggested programs not just for the present but also for long-term growth in the future. Many participants provide positive feedback on these intervention programs, which should be done on a regular basis to promote communication and team harmony in the company and among team members, especially cross-functional members. Also, management should make it a must for new hires to develop the same new mindset as long-term employees.

Furthermore, the company should develop a training plan based on other activities in order to keep the plans fresh and provide regular updates based on current situations.

Recommendations for the future, to acquire a deeper knowledge of the phenomenon of communication and teamwork, incorporate participants from other departments in the organization, as well as upper-level management in the qualitative portion.

In order to ascertain whether certain criteria are markers of organizational performance rather than communication and cooperation, this study must be replicated at other universities. Replicating this study in comparable and different circumstances may lead to a better understanding of the connection between communication and teamwork.

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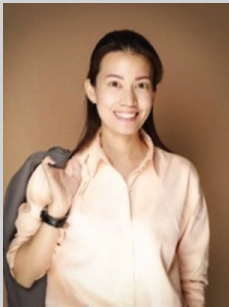
Name and Surname: Arin Choksereesuwan

Highest Education: Master of Professional in Organization Development & Training, University of Denver, Colorado, USA. Master of Business Administration in Human Resource Management, Colorado Technical University, Colorado, USA.

Affiliation: Assumption University

Field of Expertise: Business Administration, OD, and HRD

Name and Surname: Papitchaya Wisankosol

Highest Education: Doctor of Philosophy, Assumption University

Affiliation: Assumption University

Field of Expertise: Business Administration, OD, and Marketing