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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF THE DEPARTMENT HEADS OF CITY GOVERNMENT OF SANTIAGO

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Abstract

This paper focused on the interpersonal communication skills of the department heads from the City Government of Santiago. Communication is as much a matter of human relationships as it is about transmitting messages. This fact is appropriate to an organization because it earns its reputation not because of its buildings or other material possessions but because of its people. The main tool used in this study was the Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory adopted from Learning Dynamics 2002. This Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory is designed to provide individuals with some insights into their communication strengths and potential areas for development. There were a total number of 16 department heads who served as respondents. The level of interpersonal communication skills of Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads was found to be needing more consistent attention, specifically in the following areas: Sending clear messages, Listening, Giving and getting feedback, Handling emotional interaction, with the mean score of 21.50, 20.56, 19.69, and 18.44 respectively. As to the significant differences, there were no significant differences found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads when grouped according to their age, sex, highest educational attainment, and years in the position. There were no significant relationship found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads when grouped according to their age and highest educational attainment. There were no significant relationship found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads when grouped according to their sex but there is a significant relationship in the area of Sending messages. Also, there were no significant relationship found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads when grouped according to their years in the position but there is a significant relationship in the area of handling emotional interactions.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication Skills, Department Heads and Santiago city.

I. Introduction

It is not an overstatement to say that communication is the life line of an organization. Communication is as much a matter of human relationships as it is about transmitting messages. This fact is appropriate to an organization because it earns its reputation not because of its buildings or other material possessions but because of its people.

The organizational workforce is continuously facing challenges from pressure of workload working with groups, teams, stakeholders and changing workplace environment. Individuals with excellent interpersonal skills rise to the top in their personal effectiveness and organizational growth. Bonding among the various levels of employees (heads and subordinates) need to be strong and it is possible if the interpersonal communication in the organization is effective much more expected from the department head of an organization. Managers/heads are far more than transmitters of information and instruction. They communicate with their subordinates and superiors on a day-to-day basis through interpersonal communication channels. In fact, today's employers look for quality skills in interpersonal communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving, not just the ability to complete job duties. Just as intrapersonal communication motivates an individual, interpersonal communication leads to everlasting relationships among the employees (heads and subordinates) of an organization.

The role of interpersonal communication in an organization can never be ignored. In fact, heads with effective and efficient interpersonal communication among their subordinates have an edge over the others because such a communication paves way for developing strong relationships between parties.

In the demands of today's workplaces, gone are the days when the organizations used to give importance mostly to the technical skills. Today's workplaces differ from their counterparts of yesteryears in terms of magnitude, work-environment, functioning, etc. Heads of the departments requires being the good if not the best communicators in the organization. Heads/leaders are the ones who are always transmits messages to their subordinates. Since most of the organizational assignments are carried out through teams that have become more prominent than ever. Heads who always engage in conversations with their subordinates, networking, making phone contacts and gives ad hoc meetings are some of the routine forms of interpersonal communication. Seldom does an employee, especially the head, work in absolute isolation; instead, he/she interact with consumers, peers, subordinates, members and management on a daily basis; there is a greater need to develop effective relationships among the team members, between the leaders and the members, between the leaders and managers, between heads and subordinates etc. All these demands make interpersonal communication an essential skill for today's department heads. Consequently in the absence of effective communication of the organization head, he/she is unable to transmit or he/she is not good at transmitting organizational goals, it will succumb to individualistic and personal goals. Though individual goals are important, they are less important than the team goals just as the team goals are less important than the organizational goals. In fact in order to accomplish its vision, every organization has to attain its goals irrespective of whatever the individual goals may be. Heads must have effective interpersonal communication skills because it is essential to social interaction and to the building and maintenance of all relationships with his/her subordinates. Poor communication skills can cause irrevocable damage to relationships; affecting productivity, satisfaction, performance, morale, trust, respect, self-confidence, and even physical health. In any organization, the success of achieving its goals depends largely on the head's communication ability and skills. In an era of apparent

constant change and “erosion of corporate loyalty” interpersonal communication skills in heads are vital to promoting employee attachment to the organization.

This paper focused on the interpersonal communication skills of the department heads from the City Government of Santiago.

Objectives of the Study

This research study generally aimed to determine the interpersonal communication skills of the department heads of City Government of Santiago.

Specifically it sought to:

1. Know the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years in the position;
2. Determine the interpersonal communication skills of the respondents as to Sending clear messages, Listening, Giving and getting feedback, Handling emotional interaction;
3. Identify the difference of respondents’ interpersonal communication skills when grouped according to their profile variables; and
4. Identify the relationship of respondents’ interpersonal communication skills when grouped according to their profile variables.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, the study aimed to determine the interpersonal communication skills of Department Heads of City Government of Santiago.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Highest educational attainment
 - d. Years in the position
2. What are the perceived interpersonal communication skills of the respondents in terms of Sending clear messages, Listening, Giving and getting feedback, handling emotional interaction?
3. How do the respondents differ in their interpersonal communication skills when grouped according to their profile?
4. Is there a relationship between the respondents’ interpersonal communication skills and their profile variables?

Significance of the Study

The result of the study may be used in planning, organizing, and implementing projects, programs, and activities in relation to the interpersonal communication skills of the department heads of City Government of Santiago to ensure effective communication in the organization.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The focus of the study was to determine the interpersonal communication skills of Department Heads of City Government of Santiago.

The respondents of the study were the department heads of City Government of Santiago. The number of the respondents was identified using the Research Advisor and through random sampling.

The department heads interpersonal communication skills were emphasized in this research study in terms of Sending clear messages, Listening, Giving and getting feedback, handling emotional interaction. The age, sex, highest educational attainment, and years in the position were also considered in order to know the differences and the relationship in the interpersonal communication skills of the department heads of City Government of Santiago.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Method

This study utilized descriptive method of research. It was descriptive in nature because it presented the survey through frequency, percentage and mean and it used t-test and f-test to determine and identify the significant differences and relationship.

Respondents

There were a total number of 16 department heads who served as respondents from the City Government of Santiago. The number of the respondents was computed using Research Advisor, a computer program designed to compute number sample respondents based on the total population of respondents. In this research, the number of the respondents was computed with 95% level of confidence and 0.5 margins of errors. The sample respondents were also selected through random sampling by means of fish bowl method.

Research Instrument

The main tool used in this study was the Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory adopted from Learning Dynamics 2002. This Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory is designed to provide individuals with some insights into their communication strengths and potential areas for development. By answering each question candidly, an individual received a profile that displays their level of competence in four key communication areas.

Data Analysis

This study utilized tools to answer the research questions. The profile of the respondents was described using frequency distribution, mean and percentage.

The perception of the respondents as to the communication skills were also described through mean with the following mean scores and descriptive equivalent.

Mean Score	Descriptive Equivalent
Scores in the 1-15	Areas of communication skills that need improvement
Scores in the 16-21	Areas of communication skills that need more consistent attention
Scores in the 22-30	Areas of strength or potential strength

Score Section I Total Sending Clear Messages	Score Section II Total Listening	Score Section III Total Giving and Getting Feedback	Score Section IV Total Handling Emotional Interactions
30	30	30	30
29	29	29	29
28	28	28	28
27	27	27	27
26	26	26	26
25	25	25	25
24	24	24	24
23	23	23	23
22	22	22	22
21	21	21	21
20	20	20	20
19	19	19	19
18	18	18	18
17	17	17	17
16	16	16	16
15	15	15	15
14	14	14	14
13	13	13	13
12	12	12	12
11	11	11	11
10	10	10	10
9	9	9	9
8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6
5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1

Learning Dynamics, 2002

III. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents, analyzes and interprets the findings of the study in the highest of its objectives and statement of the problem.

A. Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the profile of respondents according to sex, age, highest educational attainment and years of experience as department chairman.

As gleaned from the table, most of the respondents were males numbering to ten or 62.50 percent while six or 37.50 percent were females. This implies that City Government of Santiago prefers male department heads than female.

Most of them with 8 or 50.00 percent were under the age range of above 50 years old, followed by 4 or 25.00 percent each with ages from 45 and below and 46 – 50 years old, respectively. This means that the City Government practices seniority and considers years of experiences in the service.

Mostly were BS degree holders which comprised of 11 or 68.80 percent followed by 3 or 18.70 percent master’s degree holders and 2 or 12.50 percent doctorate degreeholders. This might be because the department head position does not require masters and/or doctorate degree.

It can also be noted that an equal number of six or 37.50 percent had served as department head for a period of below 5 years and above 10 years, respectively. Four or 25.00 percent had an experience of 6 to 10 years as department head. This might be due to the fact that department head position is co-terminus and rotational.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Profile	Frequency n = 16	Percent
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	10	62.50
Female	6	37.50
<u>Age</u>		
45 and below	4	25.00
46 – 50	4	25.00
Above 50	8	50.00
<u>Highest Educational Attainment</u>		
BS Degree	11	68.80
Master’s Degree	3	18.70
Doctorate Degree	2	12.50
<u>Years as Department Head</u>		
Below 5 years	6	37.50
6 - 10 years	4	25.00
Above 10 years	6	37.50

B. Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads

Table 2 shows that the respondents’ communication skills need more consistent attention in all areas. This was indicated by the mean score of 21.50 under the area

“Sending clear messages”; a mean score of 20.56 in “Listening”; 19.69 under the area “Giving and getting feedback” and the mean score of 18.44 in the area “Handling emotional interaction”.

This means that the level of communication skills of department heads need close supervision in order to ensure effective communication.

Table 2. Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads.

Area	Mean Score	Description
Sending clear messages	21.50	Need more consistent attention
Listening	20.56	Need more consistent attention
Giving and getting feedback	19.69	Need more consistent attention
Handling emotional interaction	18.44	Need more consistent attention

C. Differences in the Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads According to their Profile

Tables 3 to 6 reveal the differences in the communication skills the respondents according to their profile.

Sex.It can be noted that their communication skills in sending clear messages among the female respondents had a mean score of 22.67 which indicate strength or potential strength while among the males, the mean is 20.80 indicating that this particular communication skill need more consistent attention. However, the t-value of 1.65 with a significance level of 0.12 revealed that there is no significant difference between the male and female respondents’ skills in sending clear messages.

The mean scores of 20.80, 19.90 and 18.20 also revealed that the males’ communication skills in terms of listening, giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction need more consistent attention, respectively. In like manner, the mean scores of 20.17, 19.33, and 18.83 also revealed that on the female’s communication skills in the aforementioned areas also need more consistent attention. Furthermore, the t-values from 0.35 to 0.55 had significance levels greater than 0.05 also implied that there is no significant difference in the level of communication skills of the respondents, particularly in listening, giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction when grouped according to their sex.

This implies that the communication level of department heads is the same regardless of their sex.

Table 3. Differences in the Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads according to Sex.

Area	Male		Female		t	Sig.
	Mean	Desc.	Mean	Desc.		
Sending clear messages	20.80	NCA	22.67	SPS	1.65 ^{ns}	0.12
Listening	20.80	NCA	20.17	NCA	0.43 ^{ns}	0.68
Giving and getting feedback	19.90	NCA	19.33	NCA	0.55 ^{ns}	0.59
Handling emotional interaction	18.20	NCA	18.83	NCA	0.35 ^{ns}	0.73

SPS = Strength or Potential Strength attention NCA = Need more consistent attention

^{ns} Not Significant

Age. Table 4 showed mean scores from 16.50 to 21.25 which revealed that the respondents who were from 45 and below and 46 to 50 years old need more consistent attention in their communication skills in terms of sending clear messages, listening, giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction.

On the other hand, above fifty years old respondents had the strength or potential strengths in two out of the four areas of communication skills, particularly, sending clear messages and listening with mean scores of 22.63 and 22.13, respectively. The mean scores of 19.88 and 19.75 under giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction, respectively, indicated that these areas needed consistent attention. The F-values from 1.14 to 3.28 with significance levels greater than 0.05 revealed further that the level of communicative skills of the respondents in all four areas did not differ significantly when they were grouped according to age. This implies that age does not affect the level of communication skills of the department heads.

Table 4. Differences in the Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads according to Age.

Section	45 and below		46 – 50		Above 50		F	Sig.
	Mean	Desc.	Mean	Desc.	Mean	Desc.		
Sending clear messages	21.2	NCA	19.5	NCA	22.6	SPS	3.20 ^{ns}	0.07
Listening	19.2	NCA	18.7	NCA	22.1	SPS	3.28 ^{ns}	0.07
Giving and getting feedback	18.5	NCA	20.5	NCA	19.8	NCA	1.14 ^{ns}	0.35
Handling emotional interaction	16.5	NCA	17.7	NCA	19.7	NCA	1.39 ^{ns}	0.28

SPS = Strength or Potential Strength attention ^{ns} Not Significant NCA = Need more consistent attention

Highest Educational Attainment. As gleaned from Table 5, the mean scores from 19.36 to 21.45 revealed that the respondents who were Bachelor’s Degree holders need more consistent attention in their communication skills in terms of sending clear messages, listening, giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction. In the same manner, those with Masters Degrees also need more consistent attention in all areas of their communication skills as indicated by the mean scores from 17.00 to 19.50. On the part of the respondents who were Doctorate degree holders, it can be noted that their strength or potential strengths is in sending clear messages with a mean score of 22.00. On the other hand, the mean scores from 19.00 to 21.00 revealed that their communication skills in listening, giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction need more consistent attention. Finally, the F-value of 6.27 with 0.01 level of significance implied that among the four areas, the respondents, when grouped according to their highest educational attainment, significantly differed in their level of giving and getting feedback. Thus, it implied that the respondents who were Bachelor’s degree holders were significantly better in their level of communication skill in giving feedback than those with masters’ and doctorate degrees. This implies that the educational attainment does not influence the level of communication skills of the department heads.

Table 5. Differences in the Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads according to Highest Educational Attainment.

Section	BS		Masters		Doctorate		F	Sig.
	Mean	Desc.	Mean	Desc.	Mean	Desc.		
Sending clear messages	21.45	NCA	21.33	NCA	22.00	SPS	0.05 _{ns}	0.95
Listening	21.18	NCA	18.00	NCA	21.00	NCA	1.69 _{ns}	0.22
Giving and getting feedback	20.45	NCA	17.00	NCA	19.50	NCA	6.27*	0.01
Handling emotional interaction	19.36	NCA	14.67	NCA	19.00	NCA	2.83 _{ns}	0.10

SPS = Strength or Potential Strength

NCA = Need more consistent attention

*Significant ^{ns} Not Significant

Years as Department Head. Table 6 showed mean scores from 17.11 to 21.11 which revealed that the respondents who had 5 years and below and 5 to 10 years of experience as department head need more consistent attention in their all areas of their communication skills, particularly, sending clear messages, listening, giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction.

The respondents who were department heads for above ten years showed strength or potential strengths in their communication skills in sending clear messages and listening. This was revealed by the same mean scores of 22.00, respectively. On

the other hand, the mean scores of 19.75 and 20.75 under giving and getting feedback and handling emotional interaction, respectively implied that the respondents need consistent attention in these areas.

Furthermore, the F-values from 18.44 to 21.50 with significance levels greater than 0.05 revealed further that the level of communicative skills of the respondents in all four areas did not differ significantly when they were grouped according to their years of experience as department heads.

This implies that years in service do not determine the level of communication skills of the department heads.

Table 6. Differences in the Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads according to Experience as Department heads.

Section	5 and below		6 – 10		Above 10		F	Sig.
	Mean	Desc.	Mean	Desc.	Mean	Desc.		
Sending clear messages	21.11	NCA	22.00	SPS	22.00	SPS	21.50 ^{ns}	0.26
Listening	20.22	NCA	19.67	NCA	22.00	SPS	20.56 ^{ns}	0.72
Giving and getting feedback	19.22	NCA	21.00	NCA	19.75	NCA	19.69 ^{ns}	0.92
Handling emotional interaction	17.11	NCA	19.33	NCA	20.75	NCA	18.44 ^{ns}	1.92

SPS = Strength or Potential Strength NCA = Need more consistent attention
^{ns} Not Significant

D. Relationship between the Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads and their Profile

Table 7 reveals the relationship between the level of communication skills of department heads and their profile.

As indicated in the table, the correlation coefficient of 0.47 with 0.04 significance level implied that the sex of the respondents have a bearing on their level of communication skill in terms of sending clear messages. The level of communication skill of the respondents in terms of sending clear messages is significantly associated with their sex. Female department head are likely better in sending clear messages than their male counterpart.

Likewise, the correlation coefficient of 0.42 with significance level of 0.03 also implied that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' level of

communication skill in terms of handling emotional interaction and their years of experience as department heads. Hence, the higher the number of years of experience as department heads, the greater is their tendency to become more efficient in handling emotional interaction.

Table 7. Relationship between the Level of Communication Skills of Department Heads and their Profile.

Section	Sex		Age		Highest Educational Attainment		Experience as Department Head	
	Corr.	Sig.	Corr.	Sig.	Corr.	Sig.	Corr.	Sig.
Sending clear messages	0.47*	0.04	0.31 ^{ns}	0.12	0.01 ^{ns}	0.95	0.09 ^{ns}	0.67
Listening	-0.03 ^{ns}	0.91	0.26 ^{ns}	0.19	-0.20 ^{ns}	0.36	0.17 ^{ns}	0.40
Giving and getting feedback	-0.25 ^{ns}	0.27	0.10 ^{ns}	0.61	-0.42 ^{ns}	0.05	0.10 ^{ns}	0.61
Handling emotional interaction	0.12 ^{ns}	0.58	0.35 ^{ns}	0.07	-0.28 ^{ns}	0.20	0.42*	0.03

*Significant ^{ns} Not Significant

IV. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The research study aimed to determine the interpersonal communication skills of Department Heads of City Government of Santiago. Using the Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory adopted from Learning Dynamics, the following data were gathered and analyzed:

1. There were a total of 16 respondents, of which 10 were males and 6 were females.
2. Out of 16 respondents, 8 were under the range of above 50 years old, 4 were 46-50, and 45 and below respectively.
3. From the 16 respondents, 11 of them are BS Degree, 3 are Master’s Degree holder, and 2 are doctorate degree.
4. As to the years of service in the position, there were 6 heads who served 10 years and above and below 5 years, respectively, and 4 heads who served 6-10 years.
5. The level of interpersonal communication skills of Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads was found to be need more consistent attention, specifically in the following areas: Sending clear messages, Listening, Giving and getting feedback, Handling emotional interaction, with the mean score of 21.50, 20.56, 19.69, and 18.44 respectively.
6. As to the significant differences, there were no significant differences found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department

Heads when grouped according to their age, sex, highest educational attainment, and years in the position.

7. There were no significant relationship found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads when grouped according to their age and highest educational attainment.
8. Likewise, there were no significant relationship found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads when grouped according to their sex but there is a significant relationship in the area of Sending messages.
9. Also, there were no significant relationship found in the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads when grouped according to their years in the position but there is a significant relationship in the area of Handling emotional interactions.

In conclusion, the study found out that the interpersonal communication skills of the Santiago City Government Unit Department Heads need close supervision in order to ensure effective communication. Furthermore, their level of interpersonal communication remains the same regardless of their sex, age, highest educational attainment, and years in the position. Finally, sex has a connection in sending messages and years in position influences handling emotional interaction. It is recommended that the City Government of Santiago must provide programs and activities to strengthen and empower their department heads with regard to their interpersonal communication skills. One of which is to schedule team-building events on a regular basis. The City Government of Santiago can hire a team-building consultant to conduct an annual workshop for their employees most especially their Department Heads on their premises or at an off-site location, or they can include a quick team-building game before or after a weekly meeting. They can also try something as light as an ice-breaker game or something more complicated like holding a group discussion to solve a hypothetical workplace scenario. Effective team building should allow participants to learn how their colleagues' minds work, how they communicate and how their personalities influence their work styles. Moreover, giving team members' self-assessment questionnaires after problem-solving activities can help them learn even more about what helps their communication and what hinders it.

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