

COMMUNICATION CLIMATE: ITS RELATION TO INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

Danebeth Tristeza Glomo-Narzoles, Ph.D

Department of Languages and Literature
AMA International University-Bahrain Kingdom of Bahrain,
UAE.
dtglomo@amaiu.edu.bh

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this investigation is to determine the institutional productivity of a higher education institution (HEI) in the Philippines and how this might be influenced by the communication climate. The participants were 180 faculty and employees. This research employed quantitative and qualitative modes of data collection. For the quantitative data, validated researcher-made questionnaires on communication climate and institutional productivity were used. For the qualitative data, the researcher conducted focused group discussion among the participants. Further, documents that support institutional productivity were analyzed. Results of the study revealed that the faculty and employees assessed the institutional productivity positively. As a whole, the communication climate that dominates is neutral. As ascertained in this study, institutional productivity was significantly related with communication climate in school.

Keywords: communication, communication climate, productivity

INTRODUCTION

Institutional productivity is a primary determinant of an organization's level of efficiency, quality and effectiveness. It measures the extent to which the students, teachers, groups and schools accomplish outcomes or services intended (Sergiovanni, *et al.*, 1987). It partially determines the standards of schooling in a particular institution.

Theorists gave their views regarding factors affecting productivity in organizations. For Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman (1998) a culture that encourages employee involvement; for Madison (2000) participatory management, raising employee satisfaction despite lowering workers' compensation rates; and for Greenberg & Arakawa (2006), positive leadership and employing a strengths-based approach.

However, a productive higher education institution is one which achieves excellence in its tri-fold function which are instruction, research and community engagement.

A number of studies revealed that in an educational organization, productivity as a whole is influenced by a lot of factors. As for Biton (1997) school type and school location; for Frac (2004) administrative performance; for Saquibal (2007) empowerment and performance; for Ottico (2004) job satisfaction and school factors; for Saquibal (2007) empowerment and performance; and for Quiñon (2004) teaching commitment.

Schermerhorn (1984) holds that true productivity is only achieved when all resources—human as well as material are well-utilized to produce the goods and services of the organization.

Moreover, several studies reveal that there is significant correlation between institutional productivity and communication climate.

Elton Mayo's (1945) finding was that camaraderie among workers; supervisor's demonstrated interest, encouragement, praise and recognition; and the ability to form relationships on the job were more effective than economic incentives in increasing workers' productivity and morale; Pavitt (2000) pointed out that there is a relationship between member communication and work productivity; **Clampitt & Downs (2005)** linked communication on productivity that varied in both kind and magnitude; Madlock (2001) provided an association between communication, leadership, and employee job performance and productivity and communication satisfaction; and Segumpan (1999) Positive and significant correlations were observed between work performance and supportive communication climate and between defensive communication climate and empowerment.

However, Fernandez (2001) ascertained that the style of communication is not a consideration in the kind of working relationship and productivity in the organization as long as interventions were communicated.

This study had been advanced as a result of numerous upshots of noteworthy contributions of theorists and practitioners. Authorities have taken into account communication as a causative feature to the existence of a productive organization.

This study anchors itself on the theory of Davis (in Segumpan, 1999) that performance, satisfaction and productivity in the organization are dependent on communication since the achievement of the goals is of paramount importance to those who manage the enterprise. Effective management utilizes communication as an essential tool to attain these goals.

Koontz (1992) pointed out that in the process of operating an organization, communication is responsible for linking people to achieve common purposes.

This is further clarified by the Macro Approach Model shown in Figure 1.

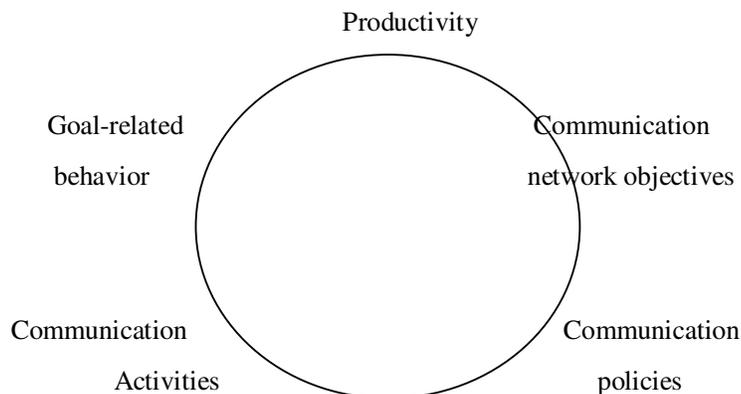


Figure 1. Macro Approach Model

The model shows that the communication system integrates many functions and links the enterprise with its environment to achieve productivity. Thus, communication is part and parcel of a productive organization.

What is the influence of locale of the school and size of the personnel on communication climate and institutional productivity?

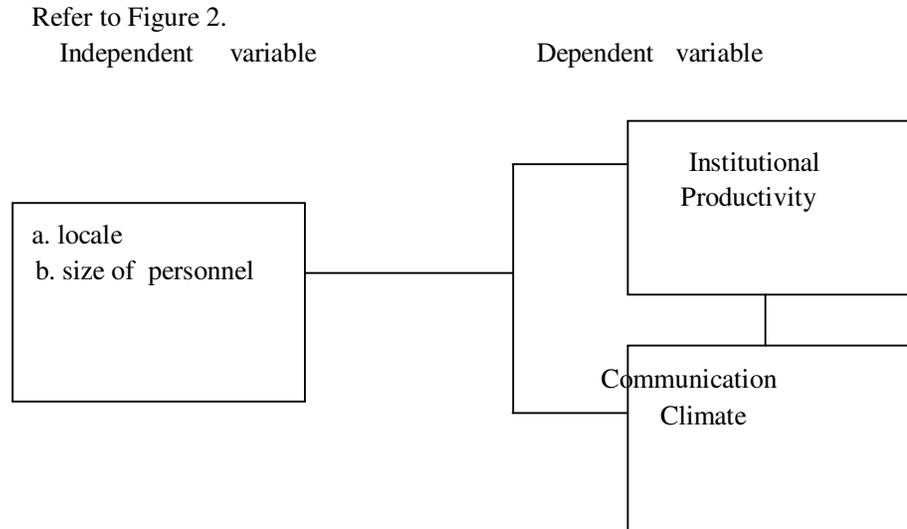


Figure 2. Institutional Productivity as Influenced by Communication Climate

Figure 2 shows that the independent variables in this study were locale and size of the personnel. The dependent variables were communication climate and institutional productivity.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this investigation is to determine the level of institutional productivity of the HEI and how this might be influenced by prevailing type of communication climate.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of institutional productivity of the entire school system and when campuses are classified according to:
 - a. locale; and
 - b. size of personnel?
2. What is the type of communication climate of the entire school system and when campuses are classified according to:
 - a. locale; and
 - b. size of personnel?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of institutional productivity of the campuses when classified according to:
 - a. locale; and
 - b. size of personnel?
4. Is there a significant difference in the type of communication climate of the campuses when classified according to:
 - a. locale; and
 - b. size of personnel?
5. Is there a significant relationship between institutional productivity and communication climate?

METHODS

Participants

The participants of the study were 180 teaching and non-teaching personnel in a higher educational institution in the Philippines. This is 30% of the total teaching and non-teaching personnel of 545. Stratified random sampling was employed in the selection of the participants.

Data Collection Instruments

This research employed quantitative and qualitative modes of data collection. For the quantitative data, researcher-made questionnaires were used to gather data needed in this study. Instruments on institutional productivity and communication climate were pilot-tested for reliability. Result of the pilot-test showed Alpha = .8380 reliability. Thus, the instruments had high reliability.

The Institutional Productivity questionnaire is a 24-item researcher-made questionnaire used to assess the level of institutional productivity in the core areas of instruction, research and community service.

For the qualitative data on institutional productivity, the researcher conducted FGD among the selected participants. They were asked about their comments and views regarding the core areas of institutional productivity which are instruction, research and community service. Their responses were noted by the researcher and at the same time, tape recorded.

Further, documents such as annual reports, journals, school publications and others that may contain information on what the school, specifically the personnel have achieved were analyzed.

The Communication Climate questionnaire was a 24-item rating scale using Likert format patterned from the Communication Climate Inventory by Costigan and Schmeidler (1984) was utilized. The items are descriptive of the type of communication between teaching and non-teaching personnel and the administration and their immediate supervisors on the job. Communication climate may range from defensive to supportive.

Data Analysis

The data gathered for the study were computer-processed for some statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program. The descriptive statistics employed were mean and standard deviation For inferential statistics, t-Test, Analysis of Variance (One-Way ANOVA) and Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation (Pearson’s r) were utilized. The results of inferential analysis were interpreted using .05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Institutional Productivity

Category	M	Description	SD
Entire System	3.03	Satisfactory	.51
Instruction	3.67	Very Satisfactory	.42
Research	2.60	Satisfactory	.51
Community Service	2.84	Satisfactory	.44

The level of institutional productivity of the HEI is “satisfactory” as indicated by the mean of 3.03 and standard deviation of .51.

The HEI has “very satisfactory” performance in the area of instruction because the administration was perceived to have “exercised sound judgment on curriculum matters which contributed to graduates’

performance in the board examination, the academic council supervised grading policy implementation, and the curricular offerings were constantly under management review to be relevant and flexible to address students' needs". These were supported by the findings from the document analysis and FGD.

The HEI's productivity in the area research was "satisfactory" which is credited to its strengths such as "wide-ranging research development program in the College, availability of research grants to faculty members, non-teaching personnel and students, and participation of the school personnel in professional research conferences". These were also confirmed by the document analysis and FGD.

"Satisfactory" productivity in the area of community service was made possible by the College's ability to "generate funds for community projects or activities. The funds maintain community development projects and the College also found it easy to solicit support of the community". These findings were verified by the document analysis and FGD responses.

Table 2. Comparative Level of Institutional Productivity of the HEI and Its Campuses

Category	M	Description	SD
A. Locale			
First District	3.02	Satisfactory	.41
Second District	3.15	Satisfactory	.55
Fourth District	3.14	Satisfactory	.57
Lone District	2.94	Satisfactory	.51
B. Size of Personnel			
Big (100 and more)	2.97	Satisfactory	.48
Small (less than 100)	3.14	Satisfactory	.56

Regardless of the locale of the campuses, the respondents perceived their respective schools' institutional productivity as "satisfactory".

Regardless of the size of the personnel, whether they number 100 or more or less than a hundred, campuses were perceived to have "satisfactory" productivity.

Table 3. Differences in the Level of Institutional Productivity According to the Locale of the School

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.431	3	.477	1.840	.142
Within Groups	45.623	176	.259		
Total	47.054	179			

There was no significant difference on the level of institutional productivity when the campuses were classified according to locale ($F= 1.84$, $df= 3$). The mean scores ranged from 2.94 to 3.15, all are described as "satisfactory", that is, the institutional productivity of the HEI and its school affiliates taken singly, were all satisfactory.

The results implied that the economic status and material resources of each congressional district have no differential influence on the institutional productivity of the campuses. Further, the result was corroborated by the claim of Fernandez (2001) that the type, including the locality of school was not related to or associated with educational organization's productivity; and Rabanes (1990) who found

out that organizational climate which includes the environment in and out the organization does not influence productivity.

Table 4. Differences in the Level of Institutional Productivity According to the Size of the Personnel

Category	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Size of the Personnel						
Big	114	2.91	.48	-2.217	178	.028*
Small	66	3.10	.56			

There is a significant difference on the level of institutional productivity when campuses were classified according to the size of personnel. To add, the participants had grasped the fact that that working with a few number of people is better than working with a big group.

This has been supported by the principle of reductionism which holds that the whole group is, at best, only equal to the sum of its parts. This happens if interaction runs smoothly. If interaction does not go well, a group's performance will be less than the sum of what each group member could have done alone. The larger the group, the greater the odds are that the group will have problems with interaction.

Steiner's (1966) theory of group performance strengthened the findings of the study. He noted that increases in group size lead to five outcomes: more total productivity; however, less productivity per person; and increased odds that a group member will propose an accurate answer; however, greater odds that the entire group will not accept an accurate answer; and finally, slower work.

Table 5. Type of Communication Climate in WVCST

Category	M	Description	SD
Entire System	2.97	Neutral	.51

The type of communication climate that prevailed in the HEI and its satellite campuses was “neutral”.

This neutral communication climate means that the communication atmosphere between the faculty and employees to the administration and their immediate supervisors is neither supportive nor defensive.

Table 6 . Communication Climate in HEI Campuses

Category	M	Description	SD
A. Locale			
First District	3.00	Neutral	.47
Second District	3.08	Neutral	.36
Fourth District	3.11	Neutral	.54
Lone District	2.87	Neutral	.42
B. Size of Personnel			
Big (100 and more)	2.91	Neutral	.44
Small (less than 100)	3.10	Neutral	.50

Regarding the locale of the campuses, the respondents viewed the type of communication climate in their respective schools as “neutral”. Since the HEI is a state-owned institution, the bureaucratic structure is very evident. The neutral communication climate has been an upshot of Weber’s theory (1947) that a bureaucratic structure enables organizations to define very clearly what behavior in employees is acceptable and expected. Bureaucracies adhere to formalized rules and policies that they put in place for themselves and communication within a bureaucracy goes by the book.

As to the size of the personnel, even if the institution has 100 or more, or less than a hundred personnel, all institutions were perceived to have “neutral” communication climate. However, those having 100 or more personnel have lower mean than schools having less than a hundred personnel.

Table 7. Differences in the Communication Climates Among the Campuses Categorized According to their Locale

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.062	3	.687	3.256	.023
Within Groups	37.145	176	.211		
Total	39.207	179			

*p<.05

F results revealed that there was a significant difference in the type of communication climate when the campuses were classified according to their locale. The difference in the communication climate on the locale of the campuses is verified by systems theory which emphasizes the effect of environment on managing an organization and this includes communication. Open systems are systems that allow free movement of energy, information, ideas, data, people and so on across organizational boundaries.

Table 8. Differences in the Type of Communication Climate According to the Size of Personnel

Category	N	Mean	df	F	Sig.
Big	37	3.03			
	178	3.542	.061		
Small	18	3.15			

Results of the t-test revealed that there was no significant difference on the perceived type of communication climate when the campuses were classified according to the size of personnel. This means that the number of personnel does not influence the type of communication climate in the organization. Whether the group is big or small, the same communication opportunities are experienced between the supervisor and his subordinates.

According to Pavitt (2000), as the size of group increases, the relative opportunity that members have to speak decreases. They get less "talk time" apiece.

Table 9. Relationship of Communication Climate and Institutional Productivity of WVCST

		Communication Climate
Institutional	Pearson r	.758**
Productivity	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	180

*p<.05

The results of the correlational analysis using Pearson r , revealed that a significant relationship exists between communication climate and institutional productivity of the HEI and its satellite campuses. Thus, the type of communication climate is a contributing factor to the College's productivity in the areas of instruction, research and community service.

This correlation between communication climate and institutional productivity was strengthened by Elton Mayo's (1945) most important finding which stood in stark contrast to classical theory was that informal groups and camaraderie among workers; supervisor's demonstrated interest, encouragement, praise and recognition; and the ability to form relationships on the job were more effective than economic incentives in increasing workers' productivity and morale.

Pavitt (2000) also added credence to the present investigation for he stated that there is a relationship between member communication and work productivity.

Moreover, findings of the study of **Clampitt & Downs (2005)** that explored the relationship between communication and productivity revealed that communication was perceived to have an impact on productivity that varied in both kind and magnitude.

Segumpan (1999) explained the result of his study citing Davis's theory which states that performance and satisfaction in the organization are dependent on communication since the achievement of the goals is of paramount importance to those who manage the enterprise. Effective management utilizes communication as an essential tool to attain these goals.

Thus, supportive climates contribute to positive work performance and productivity while defensive climates also pave the way for negative work performance and productivity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Locale of the school does not contribute to institutional productivity.
2. The size of personnel is a significant correlate to institutional productivity.
3. Locale of the school is a significant factor that affects communication climate.
4. The size of personnel is not influential to the communication climate in the school.
5. Institutional productivity is significantly related with the communication climate in school.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following were recommended:

The HEI administration should look into the strengths and weaknesses in the areas of instruction, research and community service. Policies have to be reviewed and revised and interventions should be introduced to enhance the area of instruction, most especially in the areas of community service and research which had satisfactory levels of productivity. The administration should also consider suggestions of the faculty and employees regarding these areas.

The College, through the Human Resource Development Office (HRDO) must conduct seminar-workshops and other activities which can foster positive and supportive communication climates in the institution.

The deans, heads and subject chairs, who are the immediate supervisors of the faculty members and non-teaching personnel, must encourage their subordinates to be involved in research and community service activities of the College. They should also update their subordinates on the policies, plans, developments, programs, projects and activities of the College pertinent to its tri-fold function of instruction, research and community service. The supervisors should try to create a supportive communication climate by having an open-door policy through listening to the subordinates, having

the willingness to express a common humanity in dealing with them and making them feel a sense of personal worth and importance within the organization. This supportive climate will then usher the attainment of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the College.

The faculty and employees should take necessary efforts to improve the level of institutional productivity of the College. The faculty members should recognize the fact that the function of teachers is not only on instruction but also on research and community service. As such, the faculty members as well as the employees should support the College's programs and projects by joining research and community service activities beyond the call of duty.

It is also recommended that the faculty and employees should use their initiative to keep abreast with the necessary information relevant to the College's academic and non-academic functions.

The students should also cooperate with the College's projects by joining activities which promote the school's tangible outputs in the areas of instruction, research and community service.

The findings of this study can be a benchmark of higher education institutions to enhance their institutional productivity in the core areas of instruction, research and community service. State and private colleges which also work out for their conversion into a university can gain a lot from the findings of this study.

REFERENCES

- Asian Development Bank and World Bank. (1999). *Philippine Education for the 21st Century. The 1998 Philippine Education Sector, Study*. Manila.
- Beck, C. (1985). *The open-door policy: communication climate and the military supervisor*. Retrieved from <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1985/may-jun/beck.html>.
- Biton, A.P. (1997). Team Relationship, Mentoring Behavior and Leadership Qualities as Correlates to Productivity Among Secondary School Administrators in Iloilo." Unpublished Doctor of Education (Educational Management) Dissertation, West Visayas State University, Iloilo City, Philippines.
- Evans, K.M. (1993). *Trust and shared governance of schools: A Qualitative Approach*. Dissertation Abstracts International. 53 (09), 3059.
- Gibb, J.R.(1961). Defensive and supportive communication. *Journal of Communications*, 1961, 11, 141-148
- James, I.C. and Martha, A.S. (1983). Communication Climate Inventory. <http://www.cps.usfca.edu/ob/studenthandbooks/321handbook/climate.htm>.
- Koontz, O. (1992). Weikreich, *Management*. New Jersey: Mc Graw, Inc. p. 704.
- Madison, W. (2000). *International Review of Business Research Papers*. Vol.3 No.2 June 2007
- Mayo, E. (1945). *The Social Problems of an Industrialized Civilization*. Andover, Mass.: Andover press.
- McCroskey, J.C. and Richmond, V.P. (1996). Human communication theory and research: Traditions and models. In M.B. Salwen and Stacks, D.W. (Eds.). *An integrated approach to communication theory and research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers, 233-242.
- McCroskey, J.C. and Richmond, V.P. (1997). *Communication in educational organizations*. Acton, MA: Tapestry Press.

- Odden, A. (1997). *Raising Performance Levels Without Increasing Funding*. School Business Affairs 63, 6 : 4-12. EJ 547 295.
- Pavitt, C. and Curtis, E. (1994). *Small group discussion: a theoretical approach*. Scottsdale, AR: Gorsuch Scarisbrick. Retrieved from <http://www.uky.edu/~drlane/capstone/group/productivity.html>.
- Pavitt, E. (2000). *Groups Versus Individuals: Which is "Better"?*. Retrieved from <http://www.udel.edu/communication/COMM356/pavitt.htm>.**
- Quiñon, N.V. (2004). Faculty Productivity as Influenced by Teaching Commitment and the Relevance and Implementation of the Faculty Development Program. Unpublished Doctor of Education (Curriculum, Instruction and Evaluation) Dissertation, West Visayas State University, Iloilo City, Philippines.
- Rabanes, T.R. (1990). Leadership Behavior, Organizational Climate and Productivity in Public and Private Colleges of Iloilo”. Unpublished Doctor of Education (Curriculum, Instruction and Evaluation) Dissertation, West Visayas State University, Iloilo City, Philippines.
- Richmond, V. P. and McCroskey, J.C. (2004). *Nonverbal behavior in interpersonal relations*. (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Richmond, V.P. and McCroskey, J.C. (1998). *Communication: Apprehension, avoidance, and effectiveness*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Saquibal, A.N. (2007). Empowerment: Its Influence on the Performance and productivity of the Public Secondary Administrators in the Division of Iloilo. Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy in Education, University of San Agustin, Iloilo City, Hilippines.
- Segumpan, R.G. (1999). Work Performance as Influenced by Communication Climate, Empowerment and Value Focus among University personnel. Unpublished Doctor of Education (Educational Management) Dissertation, West Visayas State University, Iloilo City, Philippines.
- Steiner, E. ***Groups Versus Individuals: Which is "Better"?***. Retrieved from <http://www.udel.edu/communication/COMM356/pavitt.htm>
- Triandis, H. (1989). *Cognitive similarity and Interpersonal Communication in Industry*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1989, pp. 209-211.
- Weber M. (1947). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations*. New York: Free Press.