

The Relationship between Manager's Communication Style and Employees' Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Communication can be described as giving and receiving messages between two or more employees in an organization. This study applied the four components of a manager's communication style: telling, selling, joining and consulting within an organizational context and analyzed its effect on job satisfaction. The communication variables were strongly related to employees' communication styles. The focal purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between a manager's communication style and employees' job satisfaction at Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) Bangi, Selangor. A total of 291 respondents among the Malaysia Palm Oil Board (MPOB) Head Quarters Bandar Baru Bangi workers responded to a survey. Data were analysed by using SPSS to see the relationship between managers' communication styles and employees' job satisfaction at this organisation. Results showed a significant relationship between a manager's communication style and employee job satisfaction at MPOB Bangi, Selangor, where most of the employees preferred the managers to use consulting to communicate with others. This shows that these organisations have an atmosphere of trust, honesty and open communication.

Keywords: Communications Style, Job Satisfaction, Organisation & Employee.

Introduction

Communication is one of the most important means to foster relationships between employees in an organization. It takes place among all employees in an organization. Communication can be defined as the process of giving and receiving messages between two or more employees in an organization (Nobile and McCormick, 2008). Every time we communicate, information changes shape (Barker, 2022). Good relationships between managers and employees are essential in achieving organisational goals. Organizations retoo manage the organization wisely as the most important assets. The success of an organization depends on its employees. In addition to their qualifications, the motivation of the staff and

their identification with the company are decisive factors and can be promoted by the right communication strategy (Hashim, 2022). The manager is the person who is responsible for supervising the employees and spent most of their working time with the employees. Managers who are good at communication will lead to employees' job satisfaction, and decrease the rate of organizational turnover.

The measuring of employee satisfaction is one of the key components of human resource management. In order to increase productivity, responsiveness, quality, and recognition of service, employers must ensure that employee satisfaction levels are high (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Job satisfaction is the attitude of the workers who feel the work and the organization, where they carry out their work (Mosadegh & Yarmohammadian, 2006). Employee job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance. An employee who received a high level of job satisfaction leads to several benefits, such as being motivated to do a job and more likely to build a good relationship with others. In contrast, a Manager who does not provide motivation or engage in hostile behaviour can be stressful for employees. Thus, an employee who received a low level of job satisfaction leads several weaknesses, such as low morale and hard to build a good relationships with others.

In order to evaluate the level of employees' job satisfaction, the researchers have identified four managers' communication styles, which are telling, selling, consulting and joining (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958). Manager use telling when he wants to give information to the employees, while selling is used when a manager wants to gain any commitment from employees. Besides, consulting is used when the manager encourages any new ideas from employees while the joining method is used when the manager invites the employees together in making a decision. These communication styles will help the manager, as well as the organization to determine what are the appropriate styles of communication that are suitable to be applied, in order to achieve the employees' job satisfaction. A manager who possesses good communication styles does give a positive impact on the employees' job satisfaction. However, issues on managers' communication styles in the workplace have encouraged us to carry out a study on this topic.

Communication plays the most important role in each organization. It is essential in all areas of the organization to increase the productivity of organizations and built up the relationship between the manager and employees. People who work in organisations and those who research them are both very interested in the study of job satisfaction. Numerous organisational variables, including motivation, performance, leadership, attitude, conflict, morals, etc., have been found to be strongly correlated with job satisfaction (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Several amounts of research conducted in various situations has found different aspects of organizational communication have relation with job satisfaction (Goris et al., 2000) and there are many studies on communication and job satisfaction that have been published. However, only a few investigations that analyze dynamic productive cultures within organizations that affect the perceptions of employees evaluated and satisfied with their work, are supported by the communication style of the managers. Thus, there is still a clear need to study organizational communication and how the manager's communication style influences job satisfaction (Butts, 2010). The communication style of the administrator confirms their voices and opinions among the employees involved, as well as the level of attention of the votes considered.

Although currently there is no concrete evidence that shows how the manager's communication styles, which are telling, selling, consulting and joining will lead to employees' job satisfaction, the findings of this study are important to help the organization see the

outcomes of implementing the right method for the communication styles. Apart from that, this study will provide additional knowledge to research that has already been done on the related topic. Moreover, this study can help organizations to indicate what managers' communication styles need to consider in determining the level of employees' job satisfaction. The manager's communication style can serve as guidelines to ensure the employees' job satisfaction in the organization. Employees who are satisfied with their job are more likely to perform better than others who are not satisfied with them. Therefore, this study will attempt to examine the relationship between manager's communication style and employees' job satisfaction based on the theory of Hersey-Blanchard Model of Leadership. Furthermore, this study also looks on how the manager's communication styles will effect employees' daily operation in the organization. As well as, to identify which of manager's communication styles (telling, selling, consulting and joining) is preferred by the employees.

For that purpose, the research questions driving this research are as follows

1. Which communication styles (telling, selling, joining and consulting) are preferred by the employees?
2. Is there a relationship between managers' communication styles (telling, selling, joining and consulting) and the job satisfaction of the employees?

Literature Review

Communication styles of management give an opportunity to the employee to express their opinion in the organization's daily operations. Supervisors' consideration and support are determinants of employees' job satisfaction (Hashim, 2022; Ralph, 2017). Poor managers' communication styles have given an impact on the employees' job satisfaction because both elements are closely linked (Butts, 2010). Ineffective communication and lack of job satisfaction has a result on the major problem in an organization such as absenteeism (Sharma, 2005). Past research has discovered that communication within an organization does definitely have an effect on job satisfaction. Job dissatisfaction is known as the moderator of absenteeism and is consistently associated with higher levels of labour turnover.

Poor communication style also may lead to low performance of employees, misunderstandings, lack of information flow, disrespect and poor teamwork (Maxfield, 2005). Lack of job satisfaction will lead to job stress, boredom job turnover and absenteeism. As a result, employees will work under pressure and it will decrease their work productivity. Employee and manager need to have a good relationship in order to ensure the organization run smoothly. Other problems with organizational communication are communication barriers and bias (Pitts, 2007). Communication barrier can happen when the employee and manager are hard to see each other. The employee also faced problem to communicate with their manager because of the level of power between the manager and employees.

Most of organizations place effective communication as the main value in their organization (Pandey, 2006). One of the methods to achieve organizational effectiveness is by the ability of a manager to communicate to the employee effectively and meet the employee job satisfaction. Communication is described as the process of transferring information between people. People can communicate by speaking and writing, or by using a sign language (O'Hair, 2005). Communicate is closely relate to emotion and motivation.

Managers in several successful organizations communicate using various styles of communication to communicate with the employees, in that good communication can lead to employees' satisfaction and highly related with employees' job satisfaction and productivity, since it relates to employment of qualified workers, training employees, and the development of human capital (Lussier, 2004). The main purpose of communication in the professional atmosphere is to transfer and exchange information to achieve the organizational goals. There are different types of employees in an organization, which is from different background, objectives, and desired. The effective communications between manager and employee is important in order to maximize the organizational productivity and employees' job satisfaction and motivation. Good communication also can enhance the cooperation of the organizational team, effort, and develop positive relationship between employers and employees. Effective communication also can be more successful if the person has the same interests, needs and goals.

In order to meet employees' satisfaction and understanding, the use of effective communication style can help the manager to deal with difference types of employees. Transferring and receiving information process among individual is a shared communication process (O'Hair, 2005). Shared communication can be defined as the sender and receiver of the communication shared the meaning and understands the messages in the same manner and it also was influenced by the style of how the sender is delivering the information (Barker, 2022; Pandey, 2006). Different styles of communication have different influences and reactions from the employee. The managers have to take responsibility on how to communicate effectively with the employee to make sure the employee understands and receives the information clearly.

Management Communication Styles

Managers have a responsibility toward the employees and the achievement of the organization. As a manager in organization, each of them has to make a decision and give commands to the employee. However, the style of managers' communication somehow will give a negative or positive impact toward the employee. According to Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958), there are four styles of manager communication which can increase employee job satisfaction and improve the performance (Butts, 2010). These styles are telling, selling, joining, and consulting. Different styles of communication have different influences and reactions from the employee. These communication styles are being investigated in this study to find out their impact on employee job satisfaction in organizations.

Telling is one of management communication style that usually use when the manager makes the decision in emergency situations and not have enough time to ask on how the employees feels about the situation (Yang, 2020). Telling style is one direction communication that travels between manager and employee. It is generally used when a decision is receive from upper management and executive. However by using this method, the employee does not have opportunity to speak, and they have to follow the decision whether they like or not. In this situation also the manager give complete direction. This communication style is normally useful when communicating about safety issues, organization rules and regulations.

On the other hand, selling is used when the manager makes the decision and then tries to gain supports from the employees by "selling" the encouraging parts of the decision. This communication style is use when the manager tries to get attention from the employees. The manager makes this communication style useful when employee commitment is needed in

discussing and makes decision, but the final decision is not depends on the employee authority.

Consult is normally used when the manager has a plenty time to plan for each situation and the communication is occur in both direction. The manager consults with the employees to get information to make the decision. Yet, the managers still the only person who can make the final decision for the communication situation. The consultation is successful when the employees know the important of their involvement in the communication. However, sometimes employee will dissatisfied when the idea and input that the employee share is not being appreciated (Yang, 2020).

Finally, the management communication style, which is joining, is the most preferred style by the employees. In this situation, both manager and employees have enough time to sit together and communicate on the organization problem and come up with the joining decision. The manager invites employee to communicate with them about the organization process and problems. The manager also gives the authority to the employees to make the decision with him. Besides, the manager also believes his voice is equal in the decision process. Joining communication style can be successful when the manager truly develop harmony communication transfer around him and willing to accept others ideas and opinion.

How Manager's Communication Styles Relate with Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to people's attitudes and feelings about their work (Loan, 2020). Job satisfaction has been defined in several different ways. Manager's communication style does give impact to employee's job satisfaction. Employee who experience job satisfaction can be evaluated by their performance and retention towards the organization. In order to maintain the high level of performance of the employee for the long period of time, it is necessary to make them satisfied with their jobs perform as well as their position.

Additionally, manager's communication styles have a direct impact on employee's job satisfaction. Manager who communicates effectively with the employee will enhance the level of job satisfaction among the employee, at the same time motivate them to perform well on their jobs. Although telling is one way communication, but is useful for the manager when informing any decision that has been made. This type of communication style does give impact on the employee's job satisfaction. Level of employee's job satisfaction will increase if the employer implements telling style in updating any information that is useful for performing their jobs.

On the other hand, selling, joining and consulting possess two ways communication, which include both manager and employee in achieving any decisions related to improving their organization. Employee also will try to generate new ideas as a contribution to the organization. Although employee not have a fully authority in making the final decision, but it is essential in knowing the employee's feedback in any situation or problem arise that related to the organization. Besides that, employee will fell satisfied if the manager hears their voice. If the employee experience job satisfaction, they are able to perform well and always increasing their productivity towards the organization.

Although all these manager's communication styles have different influence and reactions to the employee, but each of the communication styles does give effect to measure the employee job satisfaction. Employee will be more likely to improve their performance if the manager is able to communicate effectively about any recent information that related to organization goals. Effective manager's communication styles will motivate and inspires the employee to perform well in the future.

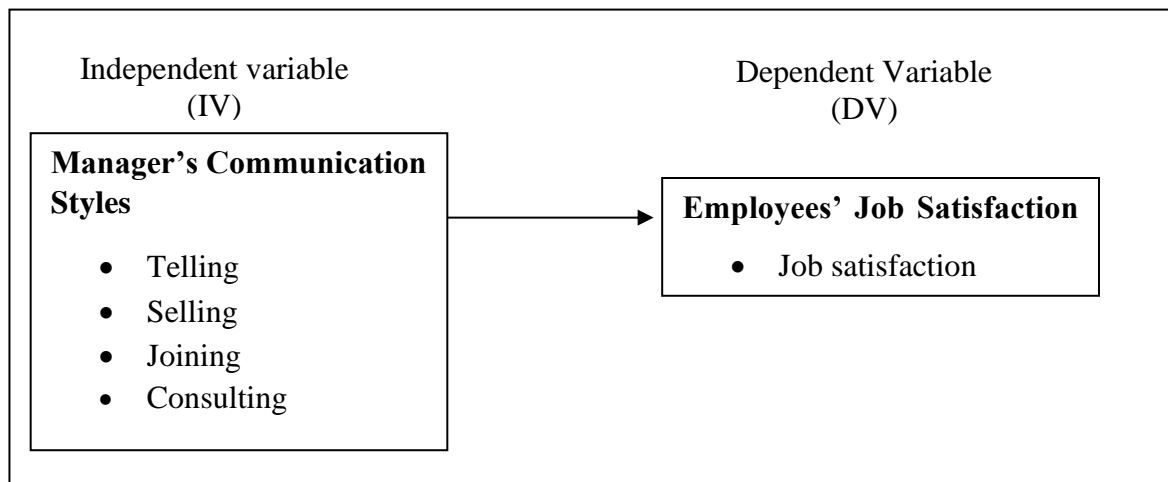


Figure 1.0 : Conceptual Framework for the Relationship Between Manager's Communication Styles and Employees' Job Satisfaction.

Figure 1.0 explain the Conceptual Framework for the Relationship between Manager's Communication Styles and Employees' Job Satisfaction at Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB), Selangor. The independent variables of this study are Telling, Selling, Joining and Consulting. The dependent variable of this study is Employees' Job Satisfaction.

Methodology

Researchers used the correlation method of presenting valid reliable data to reduce bias when examined the connection between manager's communication style of telling, selling, consulting, and joining and employees' job satisfaction at Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB), Headquarter, Bandar Baru Bangi. The sample size for this study is 285 (N=987, n=285). The population for the study is diverse in race (Malay, Chinese, Indian), gender (male and female), religion, educational background and physical disabilities (physical impairments) from four departments at MPOB. To meet the objectives of this research, the questionnaires divided into three sections; Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A consists of the demographic information of the respondent while Section B requires the respondents to answer questions regarding the components in communication style. Section C, which serving as the last section require the respondents to give feedback concerning their job satisfaction with the organization. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on the statements. The items were rated using a 7 point likert-scale that ranged from 1 = strongly disagree until 7 = strongly agree.

Results and Discussion

- Research Objective 1: To determine which communication styles (telling, selling, consulting and joining) is preferred by the employees.
- Research Question 1: Which communication styles (telling, selling, joining and consulting) is preferred by the employees?

Table 1

Overall Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Manager's Communication Style

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Telling	27.58	4.22
Selling	27.16	4.01
Consulting	27.26	3.78
Mean Score of Joining	27.31	4.30

In order to answer research question 1, the researcher has provided table 1 which stated the overall mean score and standard deviation of manager's communication style. As stated above, there are four types of manager's communication style, which are telling, selling, consulting and joining. According to the result, it was stated that the highest mean score of manager's communication style preferred by employees at MPOB was telling, with mean and standard deviation score respectively (M=27.58, SD=4.22). That indicated this variable accumulated highest total agreeing to the manager's communication style preferred by employees at MPOB. Then, it followed by mean and standard deviation score of joining communication style (M=27.31, SD=4.30). This finding showed that joining was the second communication style preferred by employees at MPOB. Next, the findings showed that consulting style as a third communication style preferred by employees at MPOB. The mean and standard deviation score was respectively (M=27.26, SD=3.78). The lowest score of mean and standard deviation was selling style (M=27.16, SD=4.01). As a conclusion to answer Research Question 1, the result showed that telling was the most preferred types of communication styles among employees at MPOB. Furthermore, employees in MPOB preferred manager's with telling style rather than consulting, selling and joining because it is easier for employee to do the work that has been ordered by the manager without any hesitation. But this condition will not create win-win situation, where employees can't voice out their opinion and suggestion while the manager is able to choose the best solution for the problems.

Research Objective 2: To examine the relationship between manager's communication style and employees' job satisfaction.

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between manager's communication styles (telling, selling, joining and consulting) and the job satisfaction of the employees?

Table 2

Correlation Statistic of Manager's Communication Style and Employees' Job Satisfaction (n=291)

		Mean of Manager's Communication Styles	Mean of Employees' Job Satisfaction
Mean of Manager's Communication Styles	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.696** .000
Mean of Employees' Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.696** .000	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between manager's communication style and employees' job satisfaction was conducted using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality. In order to answer the Research Question 2, hypothesis was generated from the research question.

H₁ : There is a relationship between manager's communication style and employees' job satisfaction

Based on the finding acquired in table 2.0, a bivariate correlation was undertaken between the mean score of managers' communication style and the mean score of employees' job satisfaction. It was a significant relationship between the two variables at level 0.01 with 0.696 correlation coefficient. This table is sufficient to prove that the manager's communication style give an impact to employees' job satisfaction with a positive relationship. That signifies the employees will satisfy when the manager used the preferred communication style to interact with them. As referred to Pearson Correlation Index (Salkind, 2009), the relationship between these two variables indicated a strong relationship. As a result, the hypothesis (H₁) was accepted.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Manager's communication style can have a significant impact on employee job satisfaction, as communication is essential for effective management and leadership. The way a manager communicates with their employees can affect the level of trust, understanding, and motivation within the workplace. Overall, the Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum model provides a theoretical contribution to the understanding of leadership styles and the importance of adapting leadership style to the situation, followers, and task. The model emphasizes the importance of communication in leadership and the need to recognize that leadership is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

The Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum is a model that describes the range of leadership styles that can be used by a manager in a given situation, from autocratic to democratic. This model is significant to existing knowledge in several ways, as it provides a framework for understanding the different approaches to leadership and how they can be used to manage teams effectively. Firstly, the Tannenbaum-Schmidt model highlights the importance of situational leadership, where the style of leadership adopted by a manager

should be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the team. This is particularly relevant in today's rapidly changing and diverse business environment, where different teams may require different types of leadership to achieve their goals.

Secondly, the model emphasizes the need for flexibility in leadership style, recognizing that effective leadership requires a manager to adapt to changing circumstances and evolving team dynamics. This is particularly important in today's digital age, where technological advancements and remote working arrangements are changing the way teams work and collaborate. Finally, the Tannenbaum-Schmidt model underscores the importance of communication and collaboration in effective leadership, particularly in the democratic style of leadership. This style of leadership encourages team members to participate in decision-making, fosters creativity and innovation, and promotes a sense of ownership and accountability among team members.

The purpose of this study is to add to research on communication in the workplace by determining which communication styles (telling, selling, joining and consulting) in Tannenbaum-Schmidt Leadership Continuum Model are preferred by the employees. This study also examines if there is a significant relationship between supervisors' perceived communication styles (telling, selling, joining and consulting) and employee job satisfaction. The study concluded that the manager's communication style that preferred by the employee is telling. From the data analysis, it concludes that there is significant relationship between manager's communication style and employee job satisfaction. The most preferred communication style are believe to make employees more motivated and satisfied with their job and will reduce the number of turnover. But, the other manager's communication style also important according to the situation that their faced with.

Telling is where the managers order the employee involvement in contributing idea and effort in order for manager to decide the decision. Employee involvement is important in the organization in order to contribute idea and provide new innovation. These involvements will increase the feel of belonging and commitment among the employees. Telling also encourages an environment in which employees can't choose to be motivated and contributing. The employees will be very committed to the organization to work in team, being loyal to the organization as well as strive hard to help the organization achieve its mission. Other than that, the employees are always willing to cooperate with other skills at the workplace. All in all, they can be categorized as a highly committed and creative group of employees

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations were made that can be used for future research as follows

1. Managers should have several style of communication according to situation and use more than one style of communication to satisfy the employees. For example; managers can use consult and join communication style together in order to reduce employees communication anxiety and to be seen as a leader who has employee-centered leadership style and get the employee involve. But at the same time the managers are not hand over the responsibility for decision making to the employees.
2. Employee should be more open to accept different style of communication perceive by the managers.

3. Managers and employees should support and be involved in programs or attend the training concerning issues of communication strategy in order to learn how to communicate well with others in the organization.
4. Managers and supervisors in organizations need to know the different communication styles and the outcome of the styles on employee satisfaction.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is recommended that further in-depth studies related to the relationship between manager's communication style and employees' job satisfaction should be conducted.

The recommendations are

1. Since this research was carried in the government link cooperation sector, it is suggested that future research should focus on the other sectors. This should allow for comparative studies to be made as it will give a true reflection on the focus of the study among sectors.
2. This study can be expanded to other region, not only within Selangor but also outside the Selangor area. It can be done in wider area to give wider perspectives from the employees among different sectors and areas.
3. An interview should be another method of data collection. This interview approach allows the researcher to probe and, therefore, richness of the data is obtained. This method of probing would help to strengthen the findings of the study from the questionnaires.
4. It is also suggested that conducting an observation will be much better as compared to distribute the questionnaire. From observation, there will be more information and data on the real situation or environment on how manager communicate with their employees which can contribute to the job satisfaction.
5. The future research should enlarge their sample size to increase generalizability of the study in order to ensure the finding will be more accurate and relevant.

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