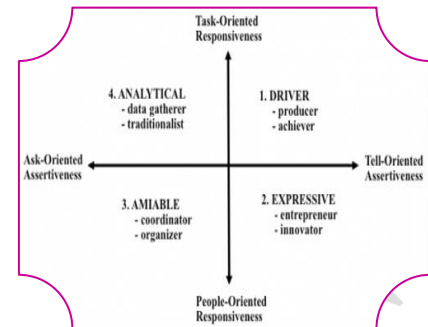




DIMENSIONS OF COMMUNICATION STYLES IMPACT MANAGERIAL DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

Organizational communication is defined as 'the sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve individual and common goals'. Organizational communication is highly contextual and culturally dependent. Individuals in organizations transmit messages through face-to-face, written, and mediated channels. Organizational communication largely focuses on building relationships and interacting with internal organizational members and interested external publics. For organizations to be successful, they must have competent communicators. Effective communication is a building block of successful organizations. In fact, communication acts as organizational blood. Communication is significant for managers in the organizations so as to perform the basic functions of management, such as Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling & **most importantly Decision-making**. Communication serves as a foundation for Decision-making. Organizing also requires effective communication with others about their job task. Similarly managers must communicate effectively with their subordinates so as to achieve the team goals. Managers devote a great part of their time in communication. They generally devote approximately six hours per day in communicating. Decisions may be made by a single leader, a committee or a large group of people, depending on the nature of the organization. Each of these models is more or less appropriate depending on the nature of the decision and the context in which it is being made. When communication is thorough and accurate, decisions tend to be more informed and effective. The challenge for businesses is to channel these myriad communications so they serve to improve customer relations, bolster employee satisfaction, build knowledge-sharing throughout the organization, and most importantly, enhance the firm's competitiveness. There is no formal history of business communication systems. It has existed in some form since the first business owner hired the first employees and issued the first instructions. The author found this area immensely interesting where a research could be carried out to assess how communication styles are different in males & female managers in the organization. The researcher also proposes to probe the communication styles adopted by different levels and different level in experience of managers, in an organization. The present study deals with this versatile area.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Decision –making, Formal Communication, Grapevine .

INTRODUCTION

Communication has been derived from the Latin Word 'Communicare', which means to share, impart, participate, exchange, and transmit or to make common. 'Therefore communication means exchange of ideas, facts, opinions and understanding between two or more persons. It can also mean transmission and receipt of information between two employees, departments or work units. Communication involves interchange of thought or information among persons in an organisation and is a

systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding. The proper understanding of a message is an important aspect of communication. As per Terry and Franklin "Communication is the art of developing and attaining understanding between people. It is the process of exchanging information and feelings between two or more people and it are essential to effective management."

According to Allen Louis "Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding."

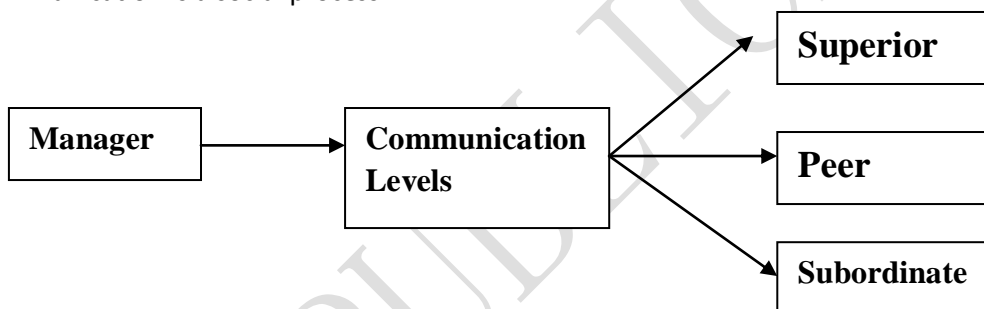
Newman and Summers (1972) defined communication "as an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons". Gibson (1981) defined it as the transmission of information and understanding through the use of common symbols – common symbols may be verbal or non-verbal. Barnard (1948) viewed communication as the unifying means by which organisation members were linked together to achieve a common objective.

It would be appropriate to say that communication is an 'essence' of management. It is not only a part of directing process but manager has to communicate with subordinate for performing other management functions. A manager nearly spends 80% of this total time on communicating. A manager communicates at following three levels.

To get better results at any level effective communication is more important than any function of management as every function of management depends on efficient communication for its success.

FEATURES OF COMMUNICATIONS

- Communication is a social process.

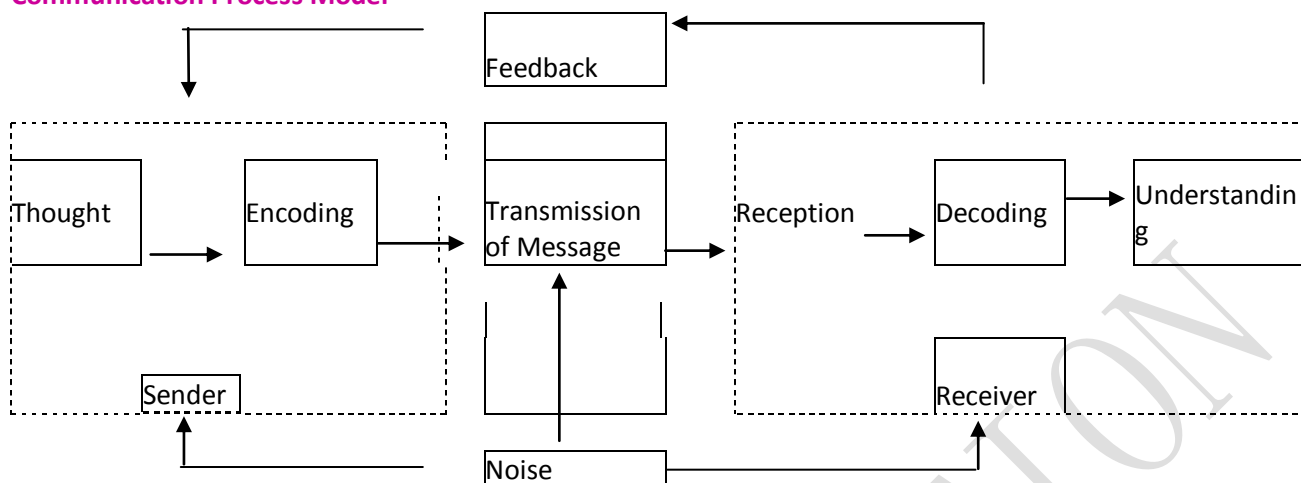


- It is a two way process.
- It is all pervasive
- It is a continuous process
- It aims at creating, understanding or commonness between sender and receiver of information.
- It is multi dimensional.

Significance of communication

- Communication is needed for sound planning
- It encourages factual decision-making
- It helps in creating cordial interpersonal relations
- It helps in achieving coordination
- Helps in boosting morale of employees.
- It helps to cope with environment.
- It helps in building public image.
- It is only communication which has made world a global village.

Communication Process Model



Source: Communicating for managerial effectiveness by Philip G. Clampitt. (1966), Harper and Row, New York.

Myths and Realities of Communication

SN	MYTHS	REALITIES
1	Communications is conscious and deliberate	It is mostly spontaneous therefore requires caution.
2	Communication is through words.	It is through words, Para language and also Body language.
3	Words mean the same to everyone	Words mean differently to different people because of perception, IQ, EQ & SQ.

ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

In the business world, managers perform their tasks and responsibilities through communication. Communication provides the basis for effective implementation of plans, assigning jobs to people, carrying out directions and activities and facilitates control. Management functions can be performed successfully when managers communicate face-to-face, telephonically or electronically with their superiors, peers, subordinates, customers, suppliers, competitors etc. Even when they are not talking, they are busy reading or writing reports, memos and letters which are different forms of communication. Communication has reduced geographical distances into storable and confidential forms and has facilitated a large number of people to interact with each other. It is important that communication should be effective. Effective communication is transfer of information along with transfer of understanding. It means transfer of messages, ideas and information in a manner that the sender and receiver understand the subject in the same sense.

SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION

In the fast changing world, managers communicate changes in technology, structure or people to the subordinates. If the communication system is well organised, it becomes easier for subordinates to understand and act upon the message. Communication plays important role in the organisations in following ways:

- An effective system of communication helps in obtaining this information
- Communication helps managers know needs of their employees so that they can adopt suitable motivators and inspire them to develop positive attitude towards the work environment.
- Exchange of information develops trust, confidence and faith amongst managers and subordinates.

- Managers who follow an effective system of communication understand employees' needs, adopt suitable motivators to satisfy them, appraise their performance and provide them regular feedback.
- Communication coordinates organisational resources, individual goals with organisational goals and internal environment with external environment.
- Communication brings managers and trade unions closer, develops mutual understanding and promotes industrial peace and harmony.
- Effective communication process facilitates leaders to carry out the leadership functions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Berg (1978) very appropriately stated that "the literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future work will be built". A review of the literature gives the researcher an understanding of the previous work that has been done. It enables the researcher to know the means of getting to the frontier of the field problems under study. It implies locating, reading and evaluating reports of research as well as reports of casual observations and opinions that are related to the researcher's planned project.

FOREIGN STUDIES

Mischel (1960) conducted the Marshmallow experiment in the US in 1960s. Walter Mischel, a psychologist at Stanford University, distributed marshmallows to groups of 4-year olds and left the room, promising that any child who would postpone eating them until he came, highlighted, that various suggestions are also given to make the communication effective in the organization. Most of the organizations do not have effective communication system. It is proposed that in-depth studies should be conducted to find out various barriers and evolve better strategies.

Webber's (1975) survey of several levels of managerial hierarchy indicated above 75% interpersonal communication. Lawler, Porter and Tannenbaum (1968) report 89% for middle managers and Mintzberg's (1973) study of 5 top executives showed that 78% of their time was spent in interpersonal communication. Communication is a complex issue particularly in large organizations, Managers face difficulty in maintaining effective communication to pass messages accurately without distortion.

Wofford (1977) suggested that a communication style represents a category of communicating behaviour, which have related purposes and similar approaches. A particular style will be used with consistency by a person for similar situation. Thus a person may vary his or her style depending upon the particular context but will generally employ a given style more or less consistently when a similar situation arises.

Glanser (1984) presented a model to summarize factors associated with the frequency, utility and accuracy of upward communication. It is concluded that the transmission of accurate information from lower to higher levels is important to organizational functioning and effectiveness.

Penley and Henwood (1991) examined the relationship between managerial performance and communication competency by identifying communication skills that are associated with managerial performance. The communication variables investigated were oral/written communication, comprehension, communication competency, media perspective, talking and self monitoring. Results linked managerial performance to communications skills.

INDIAN STUDIES

Maheshwari (1980) studied communication process which is closely related to decision making. He studied two features of communication process in the organization, the willingness to share information or the extent of openness, and the method of communicating. They found 60% of all managers claimed high degree of openness. In respect to method of communication of decision on important matters, it was found that oral communication was prevalent.

Gupta (1981) explained communication as the core element in the organization. There is transfer of information from one person to other. Various barriers of communication in the organizational context are highlighted; various suggestions are also given to make the communication effective in the organization. Most of the organizations do not have effective communication systems. It is proposed that in-depth studies should be conducted to find out various barriers and evolve better strategies.

Dubey (1993) concluded in his study that Formal and Informal measures of communicational styles were positively and significantly related to managerial effectiveness for Executives only. The studies carried out both in India and Abroad basically tried to analyze the measures of communication styles with respect to Decision-Making measures. The Gender, Levels, Demographic variables were also focused at, while studying communication styles. Studies Abroad also concentrated on process of communication between management and employees indicating hurdles or barriers to communication.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are some of the objectives framed for the study.

- To find gender differences, if any, with regard to decision making variable like different communication styles
- To find significant difference, if any, between senior level & middle level managers with regard to chosen variable for the study.
- To make a comparison between more experienced managers with that of less experienced managers with respect to chosen variables for the study.
- To assess the relationship of Communication with each dimension of Decision-making.
- To develop training Module and HR Intervention.

Hypothesis

- Male managers do not differ from female managers with regard to communication styles
- Senior level managers do not differ from middle level managers with regard to communication style
- The managers with more experience differ in Communication styles & Decision making in comparison to the managers with less experience.

METHODOLOGY

The present study has been proposed to offer an understanding of decision making in relation to communication styles. Decision making has been studied as a consequent variable which is affected by personal variables such as communication styles of the organisation. A collective study of managers both from private as well as public sector undertaking taking into consideration both male as well as female managers in different levels for making a comparative study has been proposed.

ORGANISATIONS STUDIED

To accomplish the purpose of the study the data has been collected from a wide range of sources so that a heterogeneous group is reached in order to get unbiased results. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed in ABOUT 20 Organizations consisting of Central Government, PSUs, Private sector & Educational institutions

Tools Used

Communication Style Measure

The questionnaire included 8 point rating scale in which response varies from 7 to 0. The categories are as follows.

- 7: Always
- 6: Constantly
- 5: Usually
- 4: Fairly often
- 3: Sometimes
- 2: Once in a while
- 1: Never
- 0: Cannot say/I don't know

The communication style questionnaire by **Klauss & Bass (1982)** was used. Klauss & Bass have defined communication style as a set of critical essential elements or behaviour that in combination can be used to describe, in a generalized way, how a focal person communicated with colleagues. The different components described by Klauss & Bass which have been considered are as follows:

- 1-Careful transmitter (CT)**- The items focus on the idea of careful organisation of thoughts & choice of words when communicating with others. **(The test-retest reliability is 0.563)**
- 2-Open & Two way (OT)** - Items focus on asking for other person's views giving feedback ensuring two way communication. **(The test-retest reliability is 0.793)**
- 3-Careful Listener (CL)**- These items relate to communication attentiveness & careful listening to others. **(The test-retest reliability is 0.248)**
- 4-Informal (IL)**- Items include three key factors all of which focus on the notion of natural, relaxed & informality in communicating with others. **(The test-retest reliability is 0.331)**
- 5-Frank (FR)**- These items refer to clear, self assured communicating style. **(The test-retest reliability is 0.855)**
- 6-Brief & Concise (BC)** - Items pertaining to this component refer to the notion of conciseness or to opposite notion of wordiness or lack of brevity which have negative factor loading. **(The test-retest reliability is 0.626)**

The scale consists of 25 items constructed on the above described 6 components which have been accepted as separate variables by Klauss & Bass. The different components, according to item number, have been given below:

- 1. Careful Transmitter (CT): 2,4,8,21,25
- 2. Open & Two Way (OT): 1,5,13,14,19
- 3. Careful Listener (CL): 6,22
- 4. Informal (IL): 7,12,15,16
- 5. Frank (FR): 9,17,18,23,24
- 6. Brief & Concise (BC): 3,10,11,20

Comparison between Male & Female Managerial Staff

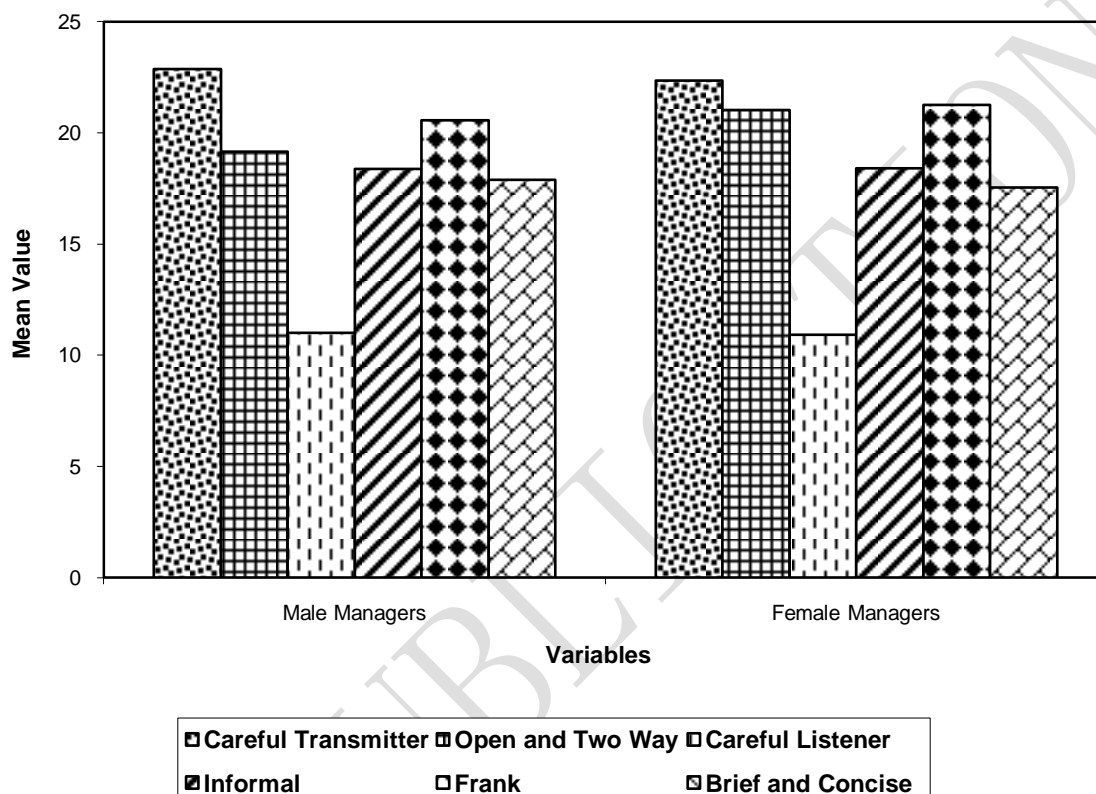
With respect to Communication Style

Communication Style	Male Managers		Female Managers		t-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
(i) Careful Transmitter (CT)	22.86	6.61	22.35	4.09	0.563
(ii) Open & Two way (OT)	19.15	3.96	21.01	4.22	2.793**
(iii) Careful Listener (CL)	11.01	2.68	10.91	2.13	0.248

(iv)	Informal (IL)	18.37	4.09	18.41	4.24	0.331
(v)	Frank (FR)	20.56	4.86	21.26	5.23	0.855
(vi)	Brief & Concise (BC)	17.88	3.15	17.54	3.51	0.626

** p < .01

Bar Diagram showing Comparison between Male & Female Managerial Staff With respect to Communication Style

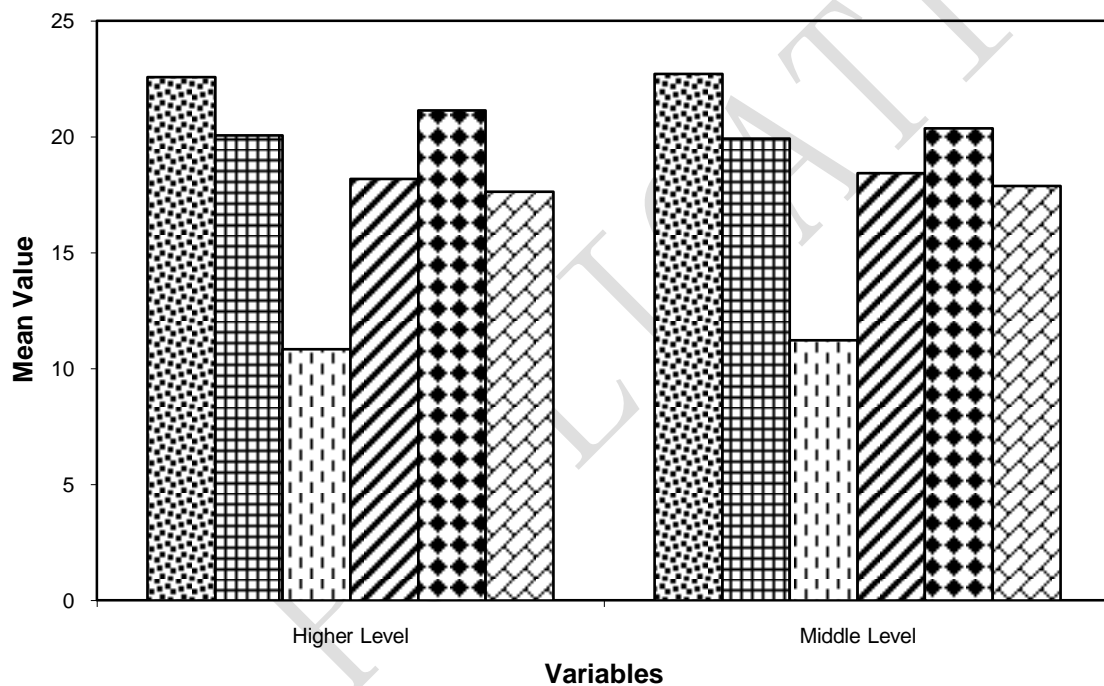


The comparison on the dimension of Communication Styles shows that there is no significant difference between Male and Female Managers with respect to Careful Transmitter (CT). On the Open & Two Way, measure the mean value in case of Female Managers is higher (21.01) as compared to Male Managers, which is 19.15. There is a significant difference in terms of t-value, being 2.793 indicating female managers to be better in Open and Two Way Communication. There is no significant difference between Male & Female Managers on other dimensions. In case of other variables, the difference is very negligible namely for careful listener, informal, frank, brief and concise. On the basis of the given Mean, standard deviations & t-values, it appears that Male Managers are more careful transmitter as compared to Female Managers, whereas there is much higher open & two way Communication in case of Female Managerial staff. On rest of the parameters, both Male & Female Managers show no significant difference. In fact the table clearly shows that they match in case of being a careful listener (CL), informal (IL), Frank (FR) & Brief and concise (BC).

**Comparison between Higher Level and Middle Level Managers
With respect to Communication Styles**

Communication Style	Higher Level		Middle Level		t-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
(i) Careful Transmitter (CT)	22.58	5.84	22.72	5.08	0.151
(ii) Open & Two way (OT)	20.05	4.17	19.92	4.21	0.179
(iii) Careful Listener (CL)	10.84	2.63	11.22	1.98	0.988
(iv) Informal (IL)	18.18	4.08	18.44	4.31	0.354
(v) Frank (FR)	21.14	4.99	20.36	5.12	0.887
(vi) Brief & Concise (BC)	17.64	3.43	17.88	3.10	0.431

Bar Diagram showing Comparison between Higher Level and Middle Level Managers with respect to Communication Styles



■ Careful Transmitter	■ Open and Two Way	□ Careful Listener
■ Informal	■ Frank	□ Brief and Concise

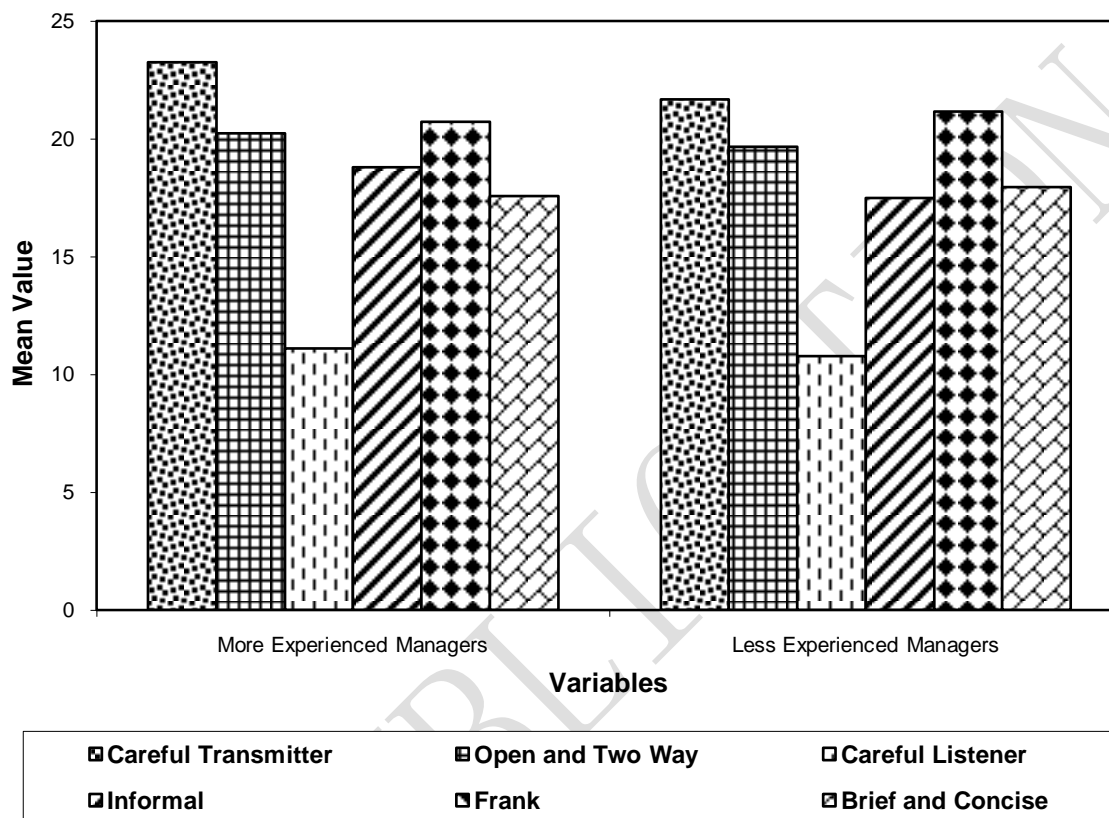
On being compared, the higher level and middle level Managers showed no significant difference with respect to the all measures of Communication Styles.

Comparison between More Experienced and Less Experienced Managers with respect to Communication Styles

Communication Styles	More Experienced Managers		Less Experienced Managers		t-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
(i) Careful Transmitter (CT)	23.25	6.08	21.66	4.59	1.822
(ii) Open & Two way (OT)	20.23	4.41	19.66	3.79	0.843
(iii) Careful Listener (CL)	11.10	2.30	10.76	2.63	0.803
(iv) Informal (IL)	18.78	4.07	17.47	4.19	1.887

(v)	Frank (FR)	20.71	5.31	21.14	4.60	0.515
(vi)	Brief & Concise (BC)	17.57	3.48	17.95	3.06	0.700

Bar Diagram showing Comparison between More Experienced and Less Experienced Managers with respect to Communication Styles



When Managers, with more experience were compared with the ones with less experience, it was observed that more experienced Managers showed a higher mean score as compared to Managers with less experience with respect to the dimensions of careful transmitter, open & two way and informal, whereas the less experienced Managers showed higher mean score with respect to Frank & Brief and concise. It has the implication that greater experience probably made Managers good transmitters, careful listeners and a better Open and Two Way Communicator, Whereas the Managers during initial years of their job are more frank, brief and concise. In terms of the t-value also, the more experienced Managers & less experienced Managers showed though not significant difference with respect to Careful Transmitter & Informal. T-value being 1.822 & 1.887 respectively but a trend has been seen. On other dimensions, no significant difference was observed.

DISCUSSION

Male Vs. Female Managers

Male and Female managers were compared with respect to the chosen variables namely the Communication Styles

Higher Level Vs. Middle Level Managers

When Higher Level Managers were compared with middle level managers there appeared to be no difference between them in terms of Communication Style.

More Experienced Vs. Less Experienced Managers

The study compared the More Experienced and Less Experienced Managers, that is, in terms of total number of years spent in the industry whether in the same organisation or different organisations. On this front, the outcomes of the study revealed that more experienced managers had better organised thoughts and used words carefully, were better listeners, more informal while communicating as compared to less experienced managers, whereas the less experienced managers were more Frank in comparison to more experienced managers.

Inferences Relating to Chosen Variables

After having computed Mean, Standard Deviation and t-tests, the managers have been analyzed on the variable under study, namely Communication Styles. The different measures considered for communication styles are Careful Transmitter, Open & Two way, Careful Listener, Informal Frank and Brief & Concise.

- On the dimension of Communication styles the first measure is Careful Transmitter which reflects the careful organization of thoughts and choice of words when communicating with others. **There was no significant difference between Male Managers and Female Managers on this measure.**
- The Higher Level Manager and Middle Level Managers also showed no significant difference.
- However the **more experienced Manager were higher in terms of Mean values and t-value as compared to less experienced managers.** Even though the difference was not significant but the trend (t-value 1.824) indicates that more experienced managers are more organized in their thoughts and choice of words.
- Therefore irrespective of Gender and Level differences the Managers tend to get more organized in their thoughts as they mature in experience and age.
- This held true for Managers working in Government PSU(s), Private sector and Educational Institutions.
- However the pattern of scores present a very interesting picture relating to Open & Two way which indicates the Manager's insistence on having the feedback from the others in the organization.
- The Female Managers showed that they were more concerned about receiving the feedback from others as compared to Male managers. The difference was significant t-value being 2.793.
- Though the Higher level managers and middle level managers showed no significant difference. This indicates that level in the managerial hierarchy was no criterion for being concerned about receiving feed-back from others.
- Even in case of more experienced and less experienced there was no significant difference, on the open and two way measure.
- Careful listener another measure of communication style indicates the communicator's (in this case Manager's) attentiveness and carefulness in listening to their colleagues, superiors and subordinates. It is an important measure considering that Effective Listening makes a Manager popular, successful, and humane and better informed whereas Inattention results in creating distance, simmering and frustration amongst subordinates.
- On this dimension, it was noteworthy that male managers and female managers did not differ.
- There was no significant difference even between higher level managers and middle level managers in terms of t-values. Though if mean values were compared it was interesting to note that middle level managers were higher on mean values as compared to higher level managers.
- This trend could be on account of the fact that the senior level managers, for lack of time, find it difficult to pay that kind of action which the middle level managers can. However the more experienced managers were slightly higher on mean value as compared to less experienced managers, though no significant difference was observed between the two in terms of t-values.
- On the fourth measure which is Informal wherein the communicator focuses on the notion of natural, relaxed and informality in communicating with others, the results showed that Male & Female managers were not different from each other in terms of t-values as well as mean values.
- Similarly the higher level and middle level managers showed no significant difference either on t-value front or mean values. However when more experienced managers were compared with less experienced

managers although there was no significant difference, but t-value 1.887 indicated that more experienced managers were more informal in their conduct and approach as compared to less experienced managers.

- On the fifth measure Frank which means a clear, self-assured communicating style, the Male & Female managers showed no significant difference in terms of t-values. Though, if mean values are compared, the female managers score higher indicating that female managers are more frank as compared to Male Managers. **Female managers being more direct, undiplomatic and usually blunt are more frank in contrast to their counterparts** who are more diplomatic and prefer beating around the bush rather being direct.
- Similarly the higher level managers & middle level managers did not differ significantly in terms of t-values, but on comparing mean values, it is evident that higher level manager are more frank as compared to middle level managers.
- Where as in case of experience comparison between managers, although there is no significant differences between the two, in terms of t-values but mean values show that less experienced managers were more frank as compared to more experienced managers.
- In the last measure called **Brief & Concise** which highlights the notion of being precise, to the point, and opposite notion of wordiness on the part of Managers, the Female Managers and Male Managers did not differ significantly from each other. Even the mean values were more or less identical.
- Similarly the two levels considered namely the higher level and middle level managers did not show any significant difference both in terms of t-value as well as mean values. Following the similar pattern, even the more experienced and less experienced managers also did not reveal any significant difference.
- On this measure all the three comparisons resulted in absolutely no difference which indicates that irrespective of gender, level and experience the managers were equally Brief and Concise.

Similar to the findings of the study implying communication to be significant, Webber (1975) found 75% interpersonal communication, Lawler, Porter and Taunenbaum (1968) reported 89% for middle level managers and Mintzbergz (1973), conducted a study of 5 top executives which showed that 78% of their time was spent in interpersonal communication.

Regarding use of a particular style of communicating Wofford et al. (1977) suggested that a communication style represents a category of communicating behaviour and a particular style will be used by a manager with consistency by a person in similar situations.

Samaras (1980) established that a four stage model of communication between management and employees. He also highlighted significance of feed-back.

Gupta (1981) concluded that communication as the core of management which means it also has an impact on decision-making which has also been a finding in case study.

Price (1997) worked on his study and represented ten 'C's for effective organisation. Those C's included openness and free from all barriers. In the present study also the Female managers showed better decision-making because of open and two way communication.

CONCLUSIONS FOR H.R. INTERVENTION

- Female managers appeared more open to suggestions, views and opinions and also encourage two-way communication.
- They are better suited for public relations jobs, counselling, Grievance handling, coordination work, events management, etc.
- Results indicated areas which would help the HRD Department to tap the untapped potential. Further, it would enable them to train, groom and retain employees which would lead to reduced employee turnover.
- A manager, irrespective of differences in gender, level or experience, and the one who is brief and concise while communicating is dynamic, has critical parent instinct, is content with the role and is

achievement oriented, makes use of sensation while deciding.

- This indicates that managers who are high on the said measures decide more realistically and factually.

Limitations

No research is devoid of limitations, and this one is no exception

- Time constraint is always there in any research
- Cost also becomes another limitation, as if a broader perspective is to be achieved, it is better to travel more & to far off places to collect data
- Sample size could always be increased as the bigger is the sample size, better will be the results.
- More organizations could have been chosen

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APPENDIX

Communication styles questionnaire

The following statements pertain to the communication at the workplace. Against each statement write the number which best described how often you behave or act in the way described in the statement.

The numbers 0 to 7 represent the following descriptive terms:

- 7 : Always 6 : Constantly 5 : Usually 4: Fairly Often
 3 : Sometimes 2 : Once in a while 1: Never 0 : Cannot say, don't know.

S.No.	Statements	Response
1.	I Interrupt with my own comments before others can finish a statement.	
2.	I speak deliberately when I communicate.	
3.	I dominate discussion.	
4.	I choose my words carefully.	
5.	I ask for others view on problems and issues.	
6.	I keep my mind on what the speaker is saying.	
7.	I am very informal and relaxed when I communicate.	

8.	I organize my thoughts before I speak.	
9.	I am frank in saying what I really think.	
10.	My comments are brief and to the point.	
11.	I am polite in my choice of words.	
12.	I go out of my way to find out information which may be relevant to my work responsibilities.	
13.	I follow up conversation with feedback.	
14.	I jump to conclusions before complete information is presented	
15.	I am very natural in the way I relate to others.	
16.	I give others a feedback on their suggestions and comments.	
17.	I tend to use harsh words.	
18.	I say what I think without mincing words.	
19.	I am receptive to difference in opinion.	
20.	I use a lot of words to say something which could be said in a few words.	
21.	I reflect self confidence in expressing my views.	
22.	I let others finish their points before I start.	
23.	I level with others when I disagree with their views.	
24.	I am restless when I disagree with other's views.	
25.	I drift from topic to topic during the course of conversation.	



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