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Index

<u>Models of communication</u>	3
○ Shannon and Weaver model	3
○ Schramm model	3
○ Berlo's model	4
<u>Communication Skills</u>	
○ Verbal Communication	5
○ Non-verbal Communications	5
○ Active listening	5
○ Empathetic listening	6
<u>Advantages and disadvantages</u>	
○ Advantages	7
○ Disadvantages	7
<u>A case Study</u>	8
<u>References</u>	9

The Models of Communication

The communication models play a vital role in enabling the communication process efficiently. Several theorists have formulated communication models to try and comprehend and outline methods of enhancing communication and rhetoric. Some communication models include the Shannon and Weaver model, the Schramm model, and the Berlo's model.

Shannon and Weaver Model

The model is an arithmetic communication theory that asserts that communication can be subdivided into six important concepts, including channel, sender, encoder, receiver, noise, and decoder (Kubota, 2019). The Shannon and Weaver model is considered one of the crucial communication models, particularly since it has been utilized to generate other models. One of the main advantages of the Shannon and Weaver model is it comprises signal information transmission. Essentially, through the encoder, the message is transmitted via the channel to the receiver, thus reaching its intended destination (Kubota, 2019). Besides, the source of information is utilized for message generation, which is to be transferred out of an array of likely messages, which may be written or verbal messages.

The model's main characteristic is its capability to describe how messages can be confused and misunderstood while sending and receiving information. As a result, the model introduces concepts such as faults, noise, and transmission troubles. Most importantly, the theory outlines the need to sustain the requisite balance between the extent of ambiguity and idleness and states the distinctiveness of information (Kubota, 2019). In other words, the more the noise in communication, the greater the necessity to create redundancy. Thus, the message repetition limits the ambiguity regarding the message. Critics of the model highlight its hardware-based approach, stating that it was formulated for engineering issues and not for expediting communication between people (Kubota, 2019). Moreover, critics mention that the theory failed to incorporate the feedback element, essential in completing the communication process.

Schramm Model of Communication (1954)

The model, proposed by Wilber Schramm in 1954, regards communication as a process that occurs between a sender and a receiver and considers the message and the transmission medium (Kuznar & Yager, 2020). Besides, the receiver may utilize a feedback method of communicating to approve that the message has been appropriately received and comprehended. In this model, information is useless until it is sensibly converted into words and transferred to other individuals. Thus, encoding plays an integral part since it initiates the communication process by transforming the idea into the content (Kuznar & Yager, 2020). After the recipient receives the information, their main duty is to comprehend the speaker's purposes for communicating. Thus, the model asserts that encoding and decoding are two essential elements of effective communication that are imperative to facilitating information flow between people.

Furthermore, Schramm believed that a person's awareness, capability, and cultural upbringing play an essential role in communication (Kuznar & Yager, 2020). Essentially, people from different cultures and religions usually interpret messages differently. However, this model's feedback process is essential since it believes that communication is ineffective if the sender does not receive a response.

Berlo's Model of Communication

David Berlo's communication model outlines the various aspects that constitute the elementary communication process. Most importantly, Berlo expanded on Shannon and Weaver's communication model to create a model that includes the sender, message, channel, and receiver (SMCR) (Kuznar & Yager, 2020). Besides, Berlo's SMCR model can be utilized for effective communication since the communication tool underscores the importance of coding and decoding messages.

In this model, the sender is the individual who formulates and sends the information to the receiver. The model outlines some aspects that influence the message's source, including communication expertise, attitude, social systems, culture, and knowledge. The message can be availed in video, audio, text, and speech, and is influenced by how it is packaged, coded, structured, and non-verbal elements (Kuznar & Yager, 2020). Besides, the channel is the medium utilized to transmit the information and ascertain that the human sensory system recognizes it. The receiver is the individual who gets the message and consequently decodes the coded information. According to this communication model, factors such as noise and distortion may result in an interrupted communication process (Kuznar & Yager, 2020). Thus, Berlo's model asserts that the sender and receiver need to have a common ground for the message to be transferred effectively.

Communication Skills

Verbal communication

Verbal communication is regarded as using words and sounds to communicate one's opinions and concepts (Mitra et al., 2020). Verbal communication includes face-to-face dialogue and communication through telephones, radio, and television. Besides, language is defined by a succession of grammar guidelines and words. Two or more individuals can rapidly communicate if they know their languages. It might be intricate for individuals to communicate without a mutually recognized language. Thus, effective verbal communication requires using a common language that the involved parties can understand.

Types of verbal communication include public, interpersonal, small group, and intrapersonal communication. Public communication involves a single person communicating with several individuals in a public space, such as the leaders communicating to the crowds during campaigns (Mitra et al., 2020). Besides, small group communication entails communication between two or more individuals, such as in a press conference or family gatherings (Mitra et al., 2020). Furthermore, intrapersonal communication involves a person communicating with themselves through self-analysis and solo speaking. Lastly, interpersonal communication involves communication through a particular medium such as video conferencing.

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication involves transmitting messages or signs via non-verbal cues like posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures. Besides, non-verbal communication includes visual cues such as touch, distance, body language, and physical appearance (Knapp, 2020). Most importantly, non-verbal communication is invaluable when communicating with uneducated individuals. However, interpreting non-verbal communication is intricate compared to verbal communication since it involves paying attention to several elements like facial expression and body language (Knapp, 2020).

Active listening

Active listening is the capacity to consciously focus on the speaker, comprehend their message, and reply considerately. Therefore, active listening ascertains that one can absorb and later remember particular specifics without requiring information to be reiterated. Besides, active listeners employ verbal and non-verbal practices to show and maintain their attention to the orator (Wahyuni, 2018). Active listeners ascertain their attentiveness and communicate to the speaker that they are interested and engaged in listening. An active listener can occasionally nod, smile, maintain an open posture, and encourage the speaker by making minimal verbal comments such as 'yes' (Wahyuni, 2018). Besides, paying attention requires maintaining eye contact with the speaker, disregarding sidetracking considerations, and avoiding distractions by environmental elements. Active listeners provide feedback when the need arises and may involve asking follow-up questions, proving personal viewpoints, or reflecting on the speaker's message.

Empathetic communication

Empathetic communication involves accepting and permitting diverse viewpoints and emotions in other individuals and sharing them to enable backing and reassurance. Besides, it involves actively listening in an attempt to comprehend the emotions of the person one is communicating with (Wahyuni, 2018). Communicating with empathy requires one to reply in a timely way to the apprehensions of the target audience. Furthermore, empathetic communication requires reflective listening through verbalizing a person's feelings back to them in one's own words, assisting people in feeling understood and not only heard (Wahyuni, 2018). Most importantly, it requires acknowledging other people's subjective outlooks even if one disagrees. Furthermore, according to context, empathetic communication requires using emotive language responsibly to ascertain that an individual does not pointlessly induce anxiety or resentment to prompt a response from the intended audience.

Empathetic communication expertise is invaluable for internal and external communication in an organization. Thus, any manager who effectively communicates with subordinates and customers must utilize empathetic communication to show that they appreciate and respect diverse opinions regarding organizational functions or products (Wahyuni, 2018).

Advantages of Technology in Communication

The increased computer and internet use has enhanced communication by simplifying the creating, editing, production, and distribution of documents with ease and at limited costs compared to traditional communication like writing letters and sending them to the post office (Islam & Jin, 2019). Besides, technology has improved the storage and retrieval of verbal communication when the need arises. Besides, technology enhances the quality of information by making it easy to contact all relevant individuals to clear any doubts or false impressions (Islam & Jin, 2019). Since communication cost has been limited because of technological advancements, thus promoting accessibility. Furthermore, technological advancements have streamlined communication by permitting extensive information to be delivered at minimum cost. The invention of mobile phones has enhanced communication permitting more individuals to communicate from any place. Technology has enhanced teaching, particularly during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, where in-person learning could not be conducted. Thus, technology stopped learning disruptions, thus contributing immensely to helping people adjust to the new normal.

Disadvantages of Technology on Communication

The use of emails and text messaging permits people to communicate in brief, properly-edited sentences that lack proximity. As a result, it eliminates the contextual information offered by the body language and tone. Consequently, individuals who rely on technology for communication find it intricate to maintain face-to-face conversation since they may find it hard to comprehend non-verbal cues (Islam & Jin, 2019). Besides, messaging slang has contributed to deteriorating language since some individuals may unknowingly utilize the words informal settings, such as when completing school assignments or writing business messages.

The use of technology for communication has presented barriers between communicators, thus making it easier for individuals to write demeaning or abusive messages to others which have increased cyberbullying and affected the mental health of many individuals. Besides, the continuous use of electronic gadgets such as mobile phones has destroyed real life, which has made it difficult for people to maintain relationships with friends and family in the physical world (Islam & Jin, 2019). Furthermore, communicating through one's phone or on social media platforms allows for misunderstanding since a person cannot use body language and non-verbal cues that aid in providing context. Furthermore, face-to-face communication offers room for immediate clarification, which may be difficult when using technology as one may hurt other people's feelings and be blocked before clarifying statements (Islam & Jin, 2019). Abbreviations and acronyms have contributed to increased grammatical errors and spelling mistakes, particularly when texting.

A small- to a medium-sized private firm in Finland conducted a qualitative study to determine how the company can enhance empathetic communication in remote internal settings (Smith, 2021). The study's objective was to understand how empathy is presented in digital communication. The key discoveries of this research reveal how subtle the subject is: simple communication breaks can affect workers' feelings. The study's conclusions reveal that providing staff members with enough chances and avenues for developing significant connections is invaluable (Smith, 2021). Thus, the case study provided valuable insights regarding employing empathetic communication within an organization can positively shape the company culture if conducted systematically.

A case study

My close friend Alfred constantly complains to me about poor communication at his firm, pointing out that his boss rarely listens to the employees. Thus, Alfred feels like his manager disregards his personal feelings, negatively affecting their relationship at work. In particular, Alfred states that whenever he notices an issue with production or packaging processes at the manufacturing plant, the manager seems not to care since he is always typing something on his laptop or scrolling down his phone. The manager then states that Alfred writes it down and brings the issue to his desk. However, Alfred points out that his manager's office desk is full of paperwork from the numerous complaints he rarely reads. Furthermore, he rarely asks him to elaborate on the issue or shows interest in remedying the problem. Since the issues normally go unchecked until when it affects production, Alfred feels like he is not being valued at the company because his contributions do not matter. The organization can utilize the organizational information theory, which focuses on the way firms adopt information that is crucial for their sustainability. The theory asserts that firms' communication regulates the surroundings, influencing workers' behavior and, therefore, productivity (Rousydiy & Kom, 2020). Essentially, the main purpose is to limit vagueness to receive only vital information disregarding the surplus. Thus, Alfred's manager can utilize the information equivocality concept associated with the theory. Simply put, the management can create a special division and distribute the workforce to their respective departments to limit equivocality in the messages received by the manager. Thus, instead of Alfred having to report to the main manager, who receives an array of information from many employees, he can report any issues directly to the departmental manager, who can effectively assess the information provided and determine the course of action.

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