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Communication dynamics within the Department of Education: A case study of central schools in southern Nueva Vizcaya

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Abstract

This study employed a mixed methods approach, specifically an explanatory sequential design, to examine the nature of organizational communication in selected central schools in southern Nueva Vizcaya. The design integrated quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic understanding of communication dynamics within school environments. The quantitative phase utilized a descriptive-correlational method to assess the perceived level and relationship of communication components, while the qualitative phase explored the challenges and contextual nuances through open-ended responses. The study involved 122 teachers and 7 school heads from seven established central schools, selected using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling, respectively. An adapted version of the Organizational Communication Descriptive Questionnaire (Gubeladze, 2022) served as the primary instrument. Ethical standards were strictly upheld, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Findings revealed that organizational communication was generally rated as high by both groups. However, a significant difference in perceptions between teachers and school heads was noted. Commonly cited challenges included miscommunication, delayed interactions, lack of inclusivity and feedback, information overload, overlapping responsibilities, and pressures for immediate reporting. Based on these findings, the study recommends enhancing communication accuracy and timeliness through structured feedback mechanisms, inclusion in School Improvement Plans, and revisiting compliance with DepEd Memorandum 017, s.2021. Additionally, training in digital communication and provision of reliable internet connectivity are suggested to address communication barriers. This research provides both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for fostering effective organizational communication in public elementary schools.

Keywords: organizational communication, mixed methods, school leadership, communication challenges, public elementary schools

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1. Introduction

Effective communication is a cornerstone of workplace productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational success. In the education sector, it is particularly vital, forming the foundation that supports the entire educational system. Employees' ability to fulfill their roles effectively is largely dependent on the quality of communication within their institutions. For teachers, communication is the primary tool for delivering the curriculum through strategic teaching-learning methodologies. Likewise, school administrators utilize communication to ensure that resources are harmonized for efficient school operations. Despite its seemingly simple definition as the exchange of ideas between a sender and a receiver, communication within organizations is a complex process, shaped by various factors and challenges, regardless of the communication channel used.

Although communication has been extensively studied, organizations continue to struggle with its effective implementation. As Bosworth (2017) emphasized, communication is a vital skill necessary for organizational success, particularly in environments reliant on human interaction. Effective communication not only resolves conflict but also boosts client relationships, collaboration, profitability, and employee engagement. It enhances workforce performance by fostering stronger engagement and productivity. Organizational communication is structured through both formal and informal systems designed to coordinate and facilitate information flow. These systems comprise the individuals involved, the messages conveyed, communication tools used, and the organizational frameworks governing interactions. As Colera (2016) notes, communication within organizations can be internal or external and encompasses interactions among employees, between management and staff, and with external stakeholders such as clients and investors.

Organizational communication serves various functions: it disseminates core values, clarifies work processes, establishes authority lines, and identifies stakeholders. Through effective communication strategies, organizations enhance efficiency and achieve their goals. Karanges et al. (2015) highlighted organizational communication's critical role in internal public relations, linking it with positive outcomes like improved employee engagement based on meaning and value. Communication flows within organizations in multiple directions—downward, upward, horizontal, diagonal, and external. The predominant direction depends on the organization's structure and nature. In traditional institutions, vertical communication is common. Downward communication flows from superiors to subordinates, while upward communication flows in the opposite direction, enabling subordinates to provide feedback and report issues.

Communication also facilitates coordination and knowledge sharing—two essential processes for organizational learning. Ahmed et al. (2018) distinguish between knowledge donation (sharing expertise) and knowledge accumulation (acquiring information), emphasizing the organization's role in nurturing these behaviors. However, communication is often hindered by various barriers. Ravichandran (2018) identified physical, mental, emotional, and psychological obstacles that lead to misunderstandings or communication failures. Effective communication only occurs when the receiver accurately interprets the sender's message (Kijko, 2017). Thus, message accuracy is crucial.

Reliability and timeliness are also essential. Bieńkowska et al. (2017) noted that unreliable communication systems can impair organizational functions and customer satisfaction. Tworek (2018) emphasized the need for reliability, especially in information-dependent sectors. Carroll (2015) added that timely communication enables stakeholders to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. Media effectiveness, as Williams (2019) observed, is another vital component. Stronger communication channels are needed for complex messages to ensure clarity. The choice of media—ranging from face-to-face interaction to digital platforms—can

significantly affect communication outcomes. Interaction frequency further influences organizational effectiveness. According to Wroblewski et al. (2022), regular communication among employees fosters collaboration, strengthens relationships, and ensures consistent information flow. Each element of organizational communication—flow, coordination, barriers, reliability, media, and interaction frequency—is interconnected. Akarika et al. (2023) and Fuchs & Reichel (2023) stress that managing these components holistically enhances organizational cohesion and performance. Organizations that fail to invest in robust communication protocols risk inefficiency, disengagement, and employee turnover. As Youssouf (2013) suggested, understanding the causes of communication issues and implementing the right tools are vital steps toward improvement.

In the education sector, employees often take on additional roles such as crisis communicators and brand ambassadors, contributing beyond their primary duties. This role expansion can lead to stress and role conflict, especially without a clear communication framework. In their study, Luardo et al. (2018) found that communication gaps—such as delayed or unclear memoranda, inactive recipients, poor internet connectivity, and restricted announcements—hinder effective communication. Zoonen et al. (2023) also noted that assessing communication frequency requires accurate measures, including log records, to account for discrepancies in self-reporting. Supervisors play a dual role as communicators and implementers of change. However, inconsistencies may arise between managerial and organizational messages, complicating communication flow. Rahmat (2020) revealed that time constraints impair employees' ability to process information critically, advocating for organizational improvements to support better communication practices. Moreover, Rahmat (2020) suggested that future research should explore the differing perceptions of communication between employers and employees, and identify additional variables affecting communication flow.

In the Department of Education, formal communication typically takes the form of memoranda, orders, and advisories, cascaded from the national to the school level. Schools operate on constant communication between employees at all levels. While most communication follows a vertical structure, schools may also initiate programs and communicate them horizontally or vertically. In today's educational landscape, effective communication is indispensable. Teachers, in particular, require clear and accurate communication to comprehend and implement educational policies effectively. Strong communication is thus fundamental to organizational productivity, operational harmony, and the success of the education system as a whole.

2. Related Literature

This study is grounded on two key theoretical frameworks: Fred Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Management (1960) and Blumer's Network Theory (1969). These theories provide insights into how situational variables and communication networks shape organizational performance and behavior.

Contingency Theory of Management. The Contingency Theory of Management postulated by Fred Fiedler (1960) emphasizes that there is no singular best approach to managing an organization. Instead, managerial effectiveness depends on the alignment between leadership style and situational demands. It posits that management must adapt to context-specific factors such as organizational structure, team dynamics, and environmental conditions. According to Watts (2023), the theory asserts that management behavior should shift in response to varying circumstances to achieve optimal effectiveness. Several essential elements of this theory include:

- Adaptability in leadership approach.
- Consideration of contextual and organizational factors.
- Recognition of external and team influences.

Miles (2022) highlights that leadership success is contingent on context, suggesting that effective leaders adapt their approaches depending on the environment. He further suggests that individuals can cultivate new

skills to meet evolving demands with the appropriate support and resources. Hansen and Machin (2019) advocate for contingency planning as a strategic method for dealing with uncertainty. Their view encourages school administrators to collaborate with stakeholders to create flexible strategies. They emphasize that multiple management strategies may be effective within a single organization and that various leadership styles can be suitable depending on situational contexts.

Expanding on this, Hanson (2019) emphasizes that the ultimate goal of contingency theory is to establish alignment between an organization and its external environment. He asserts that internal elements such as decision-making processes, technology, and instructional strategies should be responsive to evolving external needs. Fiedler's Contingency Model specifically outlines three key situational variables:

- Leader-member relations – the degree of mutual trust and respect.
- Task structure – the clarity of team assignments.
- Leader's position power – the authority to reward or discipline subordinates.

The theory marked a departure from universal management models by asserting that leadership and decision-making processes should be tailored to specific organizational contexts.

Network Theory. Another foundational theory for this study is Network Theory, introduced by Herbert Blumer (1969). This theory underscores the significance of communication within human organizations. It views organizational communication as a system of interconnected nodes, where formal networks follow hierarchical structures and informal (emergent) networks evolve from spontaneous interactions. Zhang and Agarwal (2009) contend that while ICT systems excel at managing data, they fall short in effectively managing knowledge, which is essential for decision-making. They argue that communication becomes truly effective when knowledge is shared and contextualized, rather than simply transmitted. Munsayac (2020) further explains that advancements in ICT have improved employees' ability to connect, which enhances knowledge flow, social influence, and resource exchange within organizations. Dwumah and Kwadwo (2015) establish a strong link between communication and worker productivity, asserting that clear communication aids in defining goals and executing strategies. Likewise, Mbhele (2016) promotes internal communication through a stakeholder approach, emphasizing its role in employee engagement and satisfaction.

Bucata and Marius (2017) argue that management and communication are interdependent, with the latter being crucial for leadership, team coordination, and organizational success. This is particularly relevant in educational institutions where leadership depends heavily on effective communication. Rukmana et al. (2018) also confirm that organizational communication positively influences employee performance, reinforcing its value in managerial practice. Schirmer (2023) extends Network Theory by describing it as a framework for understanding the interactions among network elements—individuals, groups, or objects—connected through strong or weak ties. This theoretical perspective helps explain how communication within and across groups fosters collaborative structures and performance outcomes.

Organizational Communication Components. Drawing from the aforementioned theories, this study also incorporates the eight components of organizational communication identified by Gubeladze (2022):

- Communication Flow – as conceptualized by Bergman et al. (2016), this includes vertical (upward/downward) and horizontal/multi-way communication within an organization.
- Knowledge Sharing – defined by Ashikuzzaman (2024) as the exchange of explicit and tacit knowledge to enhance collaboration, learning, and innovation.
- Communication Barriers – factors that hinder message encoding and decoding, as discussed by Mahmud et al. (2020).

- Accuracy – the truthfulness and precision of information, which strengthens relationships and organizational credibility (Fiveable, 2024).
- Reliability – the consistency of communication outputs over time and contexts (IBM, 2025).
- Timeliness – the value of prompt and appropriately timed communication in enabling action and decision-making (Dittloff, 2020).
- Media Effectiveness – the influence of chosen communication tools and channels on message clarity and reception (Muyano, 2023).
- Interaction Frequency – the regularity of communication interactions within the organizational network.

Conceptual Framework Alignment. While this study does not primarily focus on leadership effectiveness, it draws inspiration from Contingency Theory, particularly its emphasis on situational variables such as contextual factors and organizational characteristics. As Hansen and Machin (2019) suggested, strategic responses to uncertainty involve aligning internal capabilities with external demands—a central concern of this study. Simultaneously, the Network Theory informs the study's treatment of communication as a dynamic, relational process that shapes organizational outcomes. It justifies the inclusion of variables such as communication flow, knowledge sharing, and network interactions in understanding how organizations function effectively under varying circumstances.

3. Methodology

Research Design. This study adopted a mixed methods approach, specifically an explanatory sequential design, to thoroughly investigate the nature of organizational communication in selected central schools of southern Nueva Vizcaya. This design integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing the research to benefit from the generalizability of statistical data and the depth of contextual understanding. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), this approach is particularly effective in addressing complex educational issues, while Creswell (2014) further delineates quantitative research as an empirical inquiry using numerical data, and qualitative research as an interpretive process grounded in participants' experiences. The quantitative phase utilized a descriptive-correlational method, aiming to describe the current state of organizational communication and examine relationships among its key components. Meanwhile, the qualitative phase complemented this by analyzing open-ended responses to identify communication-related challenges, thereby enriching the numerical findings.

Research Locale. The research was conducted in the seven most established central schools across the southern municipalities of Nueva Vizcaya: Aritao Central School, Bambang Central School Integrated SPED Center, Dupax del Norte Central School, Dupax del Sur Central School, Kasibu Central School, Kayapa Central School, and Santa Fe Central School. These schools were chosen for their high teacher populations, SBM Level II recognition, accessibility, and diverse programs including SPED and ALS. All schools shared similar hierarchical structures and communication flows—downward, upward, horizontal, and interactive.

Respondents and Sampling. The study involved 7 school heads and 122 teachers out of a total teacher population of 153, determined through Slovin’s formula to achieve an 80% sample representation. Purposive sampling was used to select school heads based on their leadership roles, while a stratified random sampling technique was employed for teacher-respondents. Teachers were grouped by school, and samples from each stratum were drawn randomly, ensuring proportional representation and minimizing sampling bias.

Ethical Considerations. Ethical research standards were strictly observed. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured of voluntary participation, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any stage. Data confidentiality was preserved, and no personal identifiers were included in the analysis. The

study adhered to the principles of autonomy, beneficence, and non-maleficence, particularly in safeguarding participants from emotional or psychological discomfort when discussing sensitive workplace issues.

Instrumentation. The primary research instrument was an adapted version of the Organizational Communication Descriptive Questionnaire developed by Tea Gubeladze (2022). This tool measured various dimensions of organizational communication using both structured and open-ended items. The questionnaire's reliability and validity were pre-tested to ensure the accuracy of data collection. By combining strong quantitative data with rich qualitative insights, this explanatory sequential study provided a comprehensive understanding of the organizational communication dynamics in public elementary schools. The mixed methods design, representative sampling strategy, and rigorous ethical protocols ensured credible findings with both theoretical relevance and practical implications for school leadership and teacher engagement.

4. Results and Discussion

Problem 1. What is the perceived level of organizational communication along communication flow, knowledge sharing, communication barriers, communication accuracy, reliability, timeliness, media effectiveness and interaction frequency of the teacher and school head respondents among central schools in the Southern District of Nueva Vizcaya?

To arrive at the answer to this problem, the mean of each of the components of organizational communication was computed to determine the overall perception level of the respondents. The results are displayed on the table below. The overall level of perception of organizational communication among respondents, based on the grand mean of 3.97 is rated as high. This suggests that communication processes within the organization are generally viewed positively.

Table 1
Respondents' Level of Perception of their Organizational Communication

Organizational Communication	Teacher		School Heads			
	Mean	QD	Mean	QD	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Communication Flow	3.58	High	4.74	Very High	4.16	High
Knowledge Sharing	3.44	High	4.45	Very High	3.95	High
Communication barriers	3.53	High	4.67	Very High	4.10	High
Communication accuracy	2.94	Moderately High	4.19	High	3.56	High
Reliability	3.09	Moderately High	4.48	Very High	3.78	High
Timeliness	3.17	Moderately High	4.14	High	3.65	High
Media effectiveness	4.08	High	4.57	Very High	4.33	Very High
Interaction frequency	3.74	High	4.71	Very High	4.23	Very High
Grand Mean	3.45	High	4.49	Very High	3.97	High

However, when disaggregated by group, a notable disparity emerges: teachers reported a grand mean of 3.45 (High), while school heads reported a significantly higher grand mean of 4.49 (Very High). This indicates that school heads perceive organizational communication to be more effective than teachers do, potentially due to their greater involvement in leadership and information dissemination.

Across all communication dimensions, school heads consistently provided higher ratings than teachers. For instance, in Communication Flow, school heads rated it 4.74 (Very High) compared to teachers' 3.58 (High), resulting in an area mean of 4.16 (High). A similar pattern is observed in Knowledge Sharing (teachers: 3.44, school heads: 4.45) and Communication Barriers (teachers: 3.53, school heads: 4.67), both leading to high area means. The greatest discrepancy appears in Communication Accuracy, where teachers rated it 2.94 (Moderately High) while school heads gave it 4.19 (High), resulting in an area mean of 3.56 (High). This suggests that teachers may experience more instances of misinformation or unclear communication than school heads.

Other dimensions such as reliability and timeliness also reveal gaps, with teachers assigning moderately high ratings and school heads giving very high or high scores, indicating differences in their experiences

regarding dependable and prompt communication. On the other hand, both groups rated media effectiveness and interaction frequency positively, with area means of 4.33 and 4.23, respectively, both falling under the "Very High" qualitative description. These results reflect a general satisfaction with the tools and frequency of communication, though they also highlight the need to bridge perception gaps particularly in accuracy, reliability, and timeliness to ensure more inclusive and effective organizational communication.

Problem 2. Are there significant differences between the teachers and school heads' perceptions of organizational communication along communication flow, knowledge sharing, communication barriers, communication accuracy, reliability, timeliness, media effectiveness and interaction frequency?

Table 2 presents the summary of the t-test results on the differences in perception of organizational communication between teachers and school heads, involving a total of 129 respondents. The analysis reveals that all aspects of organizational communication namely, communication flow, knowledge sharing, communication barriers, communication accuracy, reliability, timeliness, media effectiveness, and interaction frequency show statistically significant differences, with computed t-values ranging from 6.23 to 16.31. Each of these values greatly exceeds the critical t-value of 1.98, with corresponding p-values of 0.000, indicating a very significant level of difference in all dimensions. The overall computed t-value of 9.89 further confirms the substantial disparity in perceptions between the two groups. These findings suggest that teachers and school heads do not share the same views regarding the quality, effectiveness, and dynamics of communication within the organization. The very significant differences observed point to a communication gap that could hinder collaboration, decision-making, and the overall organizational climate. Addressing these perceptual differences through structured dialogue, inclusive planning, and continuous feedback mechanisms may foster better understanding and alignment between school leaders and teaching staff.

The significant difference is evidently shown with the school heads' perception on each of the components of organizational communication which is higher compared to the perceptions of teachers as to corroborate findings in table 2. It can be deduced that significant differences between teachers' and school heads' perceptions of organizational communication may be attributed with differences in communication styles, perceived effectiveness and competence which eventually contribute to varying perceptions of communication barriers in the organization. This can also be attributed with the differences in roles, needs, responsibilities based on Dep Ed's organizational structure as well as teachers and school heads expectations and perspectives on communication processes. Along communication style, a study in Zamboanga del Norte found that school heads predominantly employed assertive, open, and inclusive communication styles, which positively influenced teachers' communication satisfaction. However, teachers' satisfaction levels varied based on the school heads' communication styles, indicating that perceived barriers may stem from mismatches between the styles used by school heads and the preferences of teachers (Aranggo, 2023).

When teachers are satisfied with communication in the workplace, barriers in communication may not be obviously felt. In the study of Tuazon and Padiernos (2016), it was found out that teachers were generally satisfied with communication in their schools, suggesting that communication barriers might not be perceived as significant by teachers. However, the study did not delve into specific barriers, and the satisfaction levels could reflect teachers' adaptability or acceptance of existing communication practices rather than the absence of barriers. Effective communication competence among school heads enhances engagement and commitment, which are critical for successful implementation of school improvement plans. Paglinawan and Decir (2024) perceived communication barriers may arise when teachers feel that school heads lack the necessary communication skills, leading to disengagement and challenges in implementing initiatives.

The role of school heads' communication and management functions in shaping organizational trust dynamics within schools. According to the study of Pasoot (2024), effective communication practices by school heads were found to positively influence organizational trust among internal stakeholders. This implies that perceived communication barriers could erode trust and hinder collaboration between teachers and school heads.

With role and responsibility, teachers primarily focus on classroom management, lesson delivery, and student interaction. Their role is more student-centered, and their communication needs often involve directives, updates, and feedback related to their teaching assignments, student progress, and school activities. On the other hand, school heads or principals are responsible for overseeing the entire school, managing resources, setting goals, implementing policies, and maintaining the overall organizational climate. Their communication needs tend to be broader, involving decision-making, coordination of staff, and liaising with external stakeholders like the local government, parents, and education offices.

Table2
Summary of t-test Computation on the Difference in the Perception of Organizational Communication between the Teachers and School Heads (n=129)

Organizational Communication	Computed t-value	p-value	Remarks
Communication Flow	10.52	0.000	Very Significant
Knowledge Sharing	6.23	0.000	Very Significant
Communication Barriers	8.32	0.000	Very Significant
Communication Accuracy	16.31	0.000	Very Significant
Reliability	13.26	0.000	Very Significant
Timeliness	9.11	0.000	Very Significant
Media Effectiveness	6.43	0.000	Very Significant
Interaction Frequency	8.04	0.000	Very Significant
Overall	9.89	0.000	Very Significant

Critical t-value: 1.98 Degrees of freedom: 127

Teachers may further feel communication lacks immediacy and relevance to their day-to-day work, while school heads may feel communication is necessary for long-term strategic alignment and operational efficiency. Teachers may feel that communication is top-down and insufficiently addresses their immediate classroom needs, while school heads might feel the communication channels are functional but need more strategic alignment. These role differences based on organizational structure naturally lead to divergent views on effective organizational communication. Organizational structure has been recognized as a vital element that either facilitates or impedes knowledge exchange in the workplace, according to recent research on knowledge sharing (Asrar-ul-Haq and Anwar, 2016). The significance of organizational structure in the effective transfer of knowledge is underscored by recent research, which identifies it as a critical factor in knowledge sharing and transfer. According to Yeboah (2023), leadership is essential for fostering the transmission and sharing of knowledge within an organization. A leader's obligations include fostering trust among staff members and motivating them to engage with others.

Problem 4. What are the challenges encountered by the respondents regarding organizational communication in their schools?

The qualitative responses from the participants, as described in the previous chapter were generated through open-ended questions on the research instrument. On challenges encountered, a thematic analysis of the data was subsequently conducted in accordance with the procedures detailed by Braun and Clark (2006), from which, a list of six themes emerged in relation to these challenges. Apparently, the respondents or participants' responses in the quantified items of the instrument are influenced by the challenges they face in the communication process. Their capacity to comprehend and respond to information within a reasonable timeframe is impaired by communication issues, regardless of whether they are school heads or teachers.

Table 3 shows the six (6) themes representing the challenges experienced by the respondents/ participants

regarding organizational communication, the components of organizational communication involved and the implications on its immediate effect. The themes feature patterns of common problems arising from miscommunication due to varied interpretation or information shared, experiences in the delay of information and internet connectivity, inclusivity and feedback challenges as well as information overload and multiple communication channels. These contentions support the findings under table 1, identifying that among all the components of communication, accuracy, timeliness and reliability are areas for improvement.

The researcher considered the commonalities in the responses of the participants in the analysis of data. Hence, samples of responses were randomly selected. Following the presentation of table on challenges encountered are verbatim statements from the participants with the corresponding interpretations, implication and relevant related literature and studies.

Table 3
Summary of challenges encountered by the participants along organizational communication

Challenges/ Theme	Components of Organizational Communication Involved	Implications on its Immediate Effect
Miscommunication and Interpretation Issues	Knowledge sharing Communication barriers Communication accuracy Reliability	Failure in the accomplishment of tasks and implementation of school programs, activities and projects.
Delayed Communication and Internet Connectivity Issues	Timeliness Media effectiveness Communication flow Knowledge sharing	The productivity of teachers and the school is impeded because of the lack of updates on current information as well as technological delays.
Inclusivity and Feedback Challenges	Knowledge sharing Interaction frequency	Teachers' confidence is affected as they feel like their opinions are not acknowledged by the management.
Information Overload and Multiple Communication Channels	Media effectiveness	Key information is sometimes neglected because employees are overwhelmed with the amount of information received and the varous communication channels as comprehension of message is sacrificed.
Immediate or "ASAP" Reporting Pressures	Timeliness	Errors are made in the preparation of reports because employees are in a rush to submit it. Programs, activities and projects are not implemented properly and effectively because teachers have a minimal time comprehending the key points of policies.
Overlapping Responsibilities and Multitasking	Communication flow	Teachers and school heads take too much time in responding to communication due to various concerns. They become too preoccupied that they forget to share important information with their co-workers.

A prominent issue reported is **miscommunication and misinterpretation** of information. The participants frequently encounter situations where instructions from higher-ups are unclear, leading to varied interpretations and misunderstandings. This is supported by some statements from the participants as follows:

P32: *Sometimes, the information given by the higher-ups has a lot of interpretations when it is*

passed down to the lower units. Thus, creating a heated conversation during meetings.

P47: *Miscommunication is sometimes encountered in the organization that leads to misunderstanding because we have different understanding even on a simple chat or message from our principal.*

P93: *Sometimes there is miscommunication among colleagues that leads to misunderstanding and a gap among colleagues.*

The aforementioned statements result in confusion, errors, and in some cases, tension among colleagues in the workplace. The problem intensifies when instructions or memos pass through multiple layers before reaching the end recipients, leading to added ambiguity and conflicting interpretations.

P28: *There is a misinterpretation of memos which leads to it not being properly implemented.*

P17: *One of the most frustrating things about work is trying to communicate with someone who just doesn't seem to understand you. This results in confusion and conflict that arises when they aren't clear about what they mean and what they are supposed to be doing.*

Teachers are left to navigate unclear instructions, which affects their ability to implement directives confidently and collectively. Generally, this results to failure in the accomplishment of tasks and implementation of school programs, activities and projects.

P50: *Madalas may dagdag-bawas sa mga information na ipinaparating sa amin. Kapag wala kami connection sa internet we rely sa mga OICs pero iba naman ang sinasabi nila sa totoong nakalagay sa memo or sa gusto na mangyari ng school head kaya doon nagsisimula ang problema sa communication.*

P52: *Oftentimes, the reliability of information from our co-teachers is questionable.*

These responses are in line with the claim of Bahrain et al. (2023), who asserted that miscommunications arise when the sender's intended message is not precisely received or perceived by the receiver. Ambiguous instructions, imprecise communications, or specialized terminology that is not universally comprehensible might result in employees misinterpreting their expectations, hence causing errors and inefficiency.

Ganesh (2024) further contends that a prevalent cause of workplace miscommunication is the absence of clarity in communication. He asserts that vague or ambiguous language fosters misinterpretation. Unclear directions, inadequately organized emails, or intricate information might create possibilities for misinterpretation and confusion. The study of Meluso (2020) claimed that miscommunication costs can stem from misconceptions inside an organization’s communication networks, as well as from any networked engagement that fails to achieve a desired organizational outcome. He maintained that miscommunication extends beyond basic errors, because professionals may also employ strategic ambiguity, and that competitive environments increase the likelihood of strategic ambiguity compared to cooperative organizations.

The issues of miscommunication and misinterpretation persist, frequently resulting in conflict, misunderstanding, and division, despite the widespread use of communicative platforms and the accelerating pace at which messages are transmitted. Misinterpreted and miscommunicated messages have significant consequences, resulting in societal, professional, and personal discord. Relationships may be disrupted as a result of ineffective communication. The critical significance of effective, respectful, and clear communication is emphasized by these adverse effects (Varadi, 2023).

Delayed communication and internet connectivity issues also pose significant challenges. In the digital era, educational organizations rely heavily on online platforms for information dissemination. However, when schools in rural or low-signal areas experience unstable or slow internet connectivity, teachers are left out of

real-time updates and “ASAP” tasks, causing stress and operational delays.

> P45: *Nowadays, communication from the higher-ups is made faster through the internet, but for us, nahuhuli pa rin kami maka-alam sa updates especially on asap reports because we do not have a stable internet connection lalo kapag ang area ng classroom mo ay mahina ang signal mahuhuli ka talaga sa info.*

Teachers often receive updates only after hours or once they return home, which limits their ability to promptly respond to or prepare for required tasks during school hours. The delay creates a ripple effect, as affected teachers must catch up on communications after receiving the information, potentially impacting their primary responsibilities in the classroom.

> P101: *We experience delay of information due to poor internet. Sometimes, we can only receive updates online once we get home and connect to our internet at home.*

> P63: *Kapag nawawalan na kami ng internet connection hindi na kami updated, tapos biglang may ASAP report.*

> P37: *Dissemination of communication sometimes is late or teachers are not informed at all.*

Timeliness, as an immediate effect and the productivity of teachers and the school is impeded because of the lack of updates on current information.

> P3: *Communication received from top management sometimes is late to be received which results to late input.*

The issue of information timeliness is consistent with the research conducted by Zoonen et al. (2023), which concentrates on the mediating function of communication quality in the relationship between workplace isolation and trust. The authors noted that trust in vertical, or supervisor-subordinate relationships is significantly influenced by timely, accurate, and beneficial communication.

In the context of data timeliness, it is imperative to comprehend that data quality is not solely determined by the accuracy and comprehensiveness of data; it is also determined by its relevance at the time of the decision-making process. Therefore, timeliness becomes a critical dimension of information quality, particularly in fast-paced environments where decisions must be made swiftly and based on the most current information available (Faster Capital, 2025). Buhari and Athithan (2024) investigated the influence of internet connectivity on workplace productivity and identified a substantial positive correlation between improved productivity and high-quality internet connectivity. According to their study, employees who have access to reliable internet service report that they have experienced enhanced collaboration, reduced frustration, and increased efficiency.

This claim is related to the study of Akmad and Abatayo (2024) on the impact of inconsistent internet connectivity on the accessibility of academic resources and collaborative learning. The findings underscored that students' enthusiasm and capacity to participate were diminished by a poor internet connection, which led to communication difficulties and delays in the submission of their academic-related tasks. Further, their academic performance was adversely affected by the significant delays and increased tension that resulted from poor connectivity. On the other hand, students were able to access resources more swiftly, conduct research more efficiently, and submit their academic tasks on time when the internet connection was strong.

Another key challenge is the **lack of inclusivity and open feedback**. Several respondents expressed frustration over the restricted ability to voice opinions or provide feedback, particularly during meetings.

> P31*: Other parts or members of the organization sometimes are afraid to share suggestions, leading to side comments when the final decision is made or done.*

P22*: During meetings, ideas of teachers are not entertained; this leads to miscommunication.*

P97*: Opinions are not welcomed.*

P68*: Teachers are not encouraged to give opinions or suggestions. Plans are not welcome.*

P36: *As I observe, we are not free to voice out our needs and concerns because the school head is always in control; are we in a dictatorship school?*

When teachers feel that their insights or suggestions are neither valued nor encouraged, it fosters an environment of disengagement and can stifle creative solutions that might otherwise benefit the organization.

P112: *Madalas na when it comes to updates, kung ano ang sinabi ni school head, as stated ang ginagawa ko. Natatakot ako magtanong lalo na kung sa GC lang nag-inform ang principal dahil ang mga reply minsan ay harsh for me, na parang hindi ako maka-comprehend so sa halip na mapahiya with all the members of the GC ay nagtatanong na lang ako sa co-teachers ko kung ano ang intindi nila sa message ng head ko. Kapag naman face to face meetings ay ganun rin, kung ano ang sinabi ni head ay yun na. Kapag nag-suggest or nagtanong ka, minsan ay napapagalitan at napapahiya kaya huwag na lang.*

Additionally, feedback from teachers is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of communication practices; without it, school administrators are unable to gauge areas for improvement or understand the perspectives of those implementing policies on the ground. Eventually, teachers' confidence is affected as they feel like their opinions are not acknowledged by the management.

P123: *The challenge encountered for me regarding communication is the lack of feedback from teachers or employees, which hinders their ability to improve or adjust their work.*

P7: *Lack of feedback. Without proper feedback, it is hard to know if messages have been understood.*

Communication is an essential instrument for the dissemination of information, the development of comprehension, and the encouragement of collaboration (Sicilia and Palazón, 2023). In the context of inclusion, communication is essential for the purpose of fostering open dialogue among employees, confronting biases, and creating awareness (Wirawan et al., 2023). Employee engagement, which is defined as the affective commitment and participation of employees toward their work and organization, has also been acknowledged as a significant factor in the promotion of inclusion (Mutha & Srivastava, 2023). Engaged employees are more inclined to actively engage in initiatives that promote inclusion, contribute to a constructive work environment, and embrace diversity (Nguyen & Ha, 2023). Afridah and Lubis (2024) discovered that inclusive work environments are fostered by effective communication practices, which in turn enhance employee understanding, teamwork, and mutual respect. Additionally, the research demonstrated that employee engagement is a critical factor in the promotion of inclusion. By advocating for inclusive practices, providing feedback, and participating in diversity initiatives, engaged employees actively contribute to the development of an inclusive culture.

As inclusivity comes with feedback, Afridah and Lubis (2024) identified an organization's dedication to continuous improvement as evidenced by its active solicitation of feedback from employees regarding diversity and inclusion issues. A feedback channel is established by the organization by soliciting input and suggestions from employees, which enables the ongoing evaluation and adjustment of diversity and inclusion initiatives. However, Carles and Winstone (2023) observed that numerous managers and employees encounter difficulties in effectively providing and receiving feedback, despite its perceived advantages in the organization. Some managers refrain from providing feedback entirely, while others may provide feedback in a manner that is perceived as critical or unhelpful. Similarly, certain employees may experience feelings of defensiveness or lack of motivation when they receive feedback, while others may not receive sufficient feedback to enhance their

performance.

The **overwhelming volume of communication** received through multiple platforms is another burden highlighted by teachers. With messages flooding various group chats (GCs) and communication channels, educators report feeling overwhelmed and unsure about prioritizing the critical information. This communication overload not only causes stress but can also lead to essential messages being overlooked.

> P85: *One challenge that I considered is over-communication wherein there are so many GCs (Group Chats) that send information and messages that make me overwhelmed and it is hard for me to prioritize important information.*

> P51: *Information overload. With so much information circulating, important details can get lost and/or overloaded.*

The repetitiveness of some communications further exacerbates the issue, as the same information is sometimes reiterated through multiple channels, increasing the cognitive load on teachers who must scrutinize large volumes of data to locate pertinent details.

> P74: *Minsan ang daming pinapa-meeting ni head, tapos meron pa uling isesend na memo about it sa GC na naulit lang rin ang nilalaman.*

As a result, key information is sometimes neglected because employees are overwhelmed with the amount of information received and the comprehension of message is sacrificed.

> P39: *Communication through media is sometimes complicated because so many messages with different themes and topics arrive, and we read it instantly but cannot retain all information at once, so we get confused which ones to attend to first.*

According to Varadi (2023), information overflow is one of the concerns encountered during the communication process. He also believes that the incessant barrage of information in the modern world contributes to miscommunication. Messages are frequently compelled to be excessively concise due to the brevity required by platforms such as social media, which can result in a lack of essential context and miscommunication. The mere volume of information can overwhelm employees in an era of constant digital communication. Misunderstandings or the failure to recognize critical instructions may result from the loss of important details due to excessive communication "noise" (Ganesh, 2024). The repercussions of information overload are multifarious and can have a profound impact on individuals, both personally and professionally, affecting cognitive abilities. (Stanley, 2021).

This finding is supported by the study of Shahrzadi et al. (2024) who identified several parameters as contributing factors to information overload. These concerns include the quality of information, which encompasses the increase in information quantity (number and variety of information sources), low quality information (Relevance, Validity, Duration of half-life), an overabundance of irrelevant, contradicting, and incorrect information (Information pollution), and the complexity of information. Another parameter is task and process parameters, which encompass task interdependency, task complexity, and time constraint. An additional factor is organizational parameters, which pertain to the deficit in organizational information management. The final category is information technology parameters, which encompasses the excessive receipt of emails, as well as the development of new communication and information technologies.

Individuals are influenced by their social environment, utilize a variety of media channels, and interact with multiple communication partners for primary and secondary communication tasks when they participate in multiple communication channels (Reinsch & Turner, 2019). Challenges in organizational communication arise when there is a lack of a distinct flow despite the presence of multiple communication channels. When organizations employ numerous internal communication platforms without a structured communication flow, the

information is fragmented. Consequently, the field employees become perplexed due to the absence of a unified internal communication platform. They struggle to keep track of conversations and they may overlook critical duties. This results in missed deadlines, delayed responses, and repeated messages. Employees are also confronted with information overflow due to the overwhelming amount of data they receive through various communication channels. (Superworks, 2025)

The **pressure of "ASAP" reporting** compounds these challenges. Respondents cited a common demand for immediate submission of reports or updates, often impeding their teaching and preparation time. This urgent communication, sometimes expected outside regular hours, disrupts the work-life balance of teachers, who feel compelled to respond quickly to avoid repercussions or reprimands.

> P125: *With all these new technology, most of the time when it comes to reports in school, we have to do it ASAP even during Saturdays and Sundays which should be our family time and sometimes late at night.*

> P121: *Ang mahirap, all reports are ASAP, so you should be updated or on time in reading the reports to be submitted even if it is Saturday or Sunday.*

> P35: *One of the greatest problems in communication is that when a program needing an output and report is posted or communicated, kailangang mag-submit na agad, puro ASAP reports! Minsan, kapag na-inform kami ng Monday about a certain report, implementation na agad ng Tuesday or Wednesday. Unfortunately, even the time for teaching ay nagagamit na sa paggawa ng report dahil puro ASAP, at kapag hindi ka naka-submit agad ay nako-call up ang name ng school mo sa district GC (group chat).*

The ASAP culture leaves little time for teachers to review the requirements thoroughly, leading to rushed and sometimes incomplete submissions. This urgency, while aimed at quick responses, often results in data quality issues and additional stress on educators.

> P6: *Sometimes there are instances that unfamiliar reports were asked to do as soon as possible without any knowledge of the reports considering that (we are) newly hired teachers. Nevertheless, the challenge is still accepted.*

Generally, errors are made in the preparation of reports because employees are in a rush to submit them. Programs, activities and projects are not implemented properly because teachers have a minimal time comprehending the key points of policies.

> P88: *I remember vividly when DepEd memo No.1 on "Catch-up Fridays" was released. Memo was January 10 posted on DepEd, then we were informed January 11. Kick off and start of implementation is January 12 na! Ni hindi man lang nabigyan ng time na maintindihan ng lahat yung memo pero for implementation na agad. At nung January 12, umagang umaga pa lang ang ingay na ng district GC, naghahanap na agad ng reports ng kick off ng catch-up Fridays. Sa totoo lang nag-picture na lang kami para lang may ma-send. Iyan ang totoong nangyayari sa field. Para lang hindi mapagalitan ay nadadaya na ang ibang data for the sake of submitting on time and responding to "ASAP" communications for the sake of accomplishment.*

In a work environment that prioritizes immediacy, it is anticipated that employees will promptly respond to messages and requests, regardless of the time of day. This can result in exhaustion and tension (Orti, 2023). Laski (2024) asserted that while certain businesses or organizations require an immediate response, numerous scenarios that are considered to necessitate an instantaneous response would be satisfactory with an appropriate response turnaround. In general, it is imperative to reinstate a grace period for communications in numerous sectors of the industry.

The study of Kelly and Westerman (2014) investigated the influence of perceived immediacy on workplace communication. They examined a model in which the relationships between supervisor immediate behaviors and subordinate job satisfaction, motivation, empowerment, and exhaustion were mediated by perceived immediacy. The study established a clear causal chain consisting of supervisor immediate behaviors, perceived immediacy, and subordinate fatigue.

Finally, the issue of **multitasking and overlapping responsibilities** complicates teachers' ability to engage in effective communication. With the requirement to juggle multiple roles and respond to various communications, teachers find it difficult to focus on instructional responsibilities while staying up-to-date with administrative tasks. This multitasking approach dilutes attention, reducing the likelihood of error-free, productive communication.

> P25*: Overlapping activities can hinder the dissemination of instruction.*
>
> P30*: Busy teachers often struggle and find time to read and respond to communication.*
>
> P72: *Multitasking activities can hinder the dissemination of instruction and information properly.*

It is common for individuals to initiate or continue tasks while others are still in progress or awaiting completion, as a result of the demands of contemporary work. This behavior, which is referred to as multitasking behavior, is a coping mechanism for the multitasking demands that are one of the most significant stressors in modern environments (Zimber and Rigotti, 2015). Multitasking is frequently regarded as a badge of honor in the contemporary workplace, which is overflowing with distractions. Unfortunately, the inability to focus on a single task can result in inattention, which can lead to the neglect of critical information in internal communications (Ganesh, 2024).

In the same way, Amez et al. (2021) argue that the accuracy of information suffers significantly as multitasking becomes more prevalent. Prevailing research in multitasking suggests that it has a substantial cost, as it increases human error and reduces efficiency. Theoretically, the researchers contend that individuals are capable of completing multiple tasks simultaneously only when they are automated, and their preference for multitasking is a factor. These challenges underscore the need for a more structured and inclusive approach to organizational communication within schools. Addressing these issues could improve not only the quality of information exchange but also the morale and productivity of educators, fostering a supportive and efficient educational environment.

The insights gathered from the data reveal significant challenges that educators face in organizational communication within schools. Communication is essential in any institution, particularly in educational settings where teachers, school heads, and staff must collaborate effectively to maintain an environment conducive to learning and progress. The identified issues range from miscommunication and inclusivity barriers to technological constraints, all of which impact the smooth exchange of information and ultimately, the efficiency and morale of school staff.

5. Conclusions

As substantiated by the significant findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The level of organizational communication was perceived as high by both teacher and school heads.
- There is a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers and school heads on their organizational communication.
- The challenges encountered by the respondents regarding organizational communication involve: miscommunication and interpretation issues; delayed communication and interaction-related issues;

inclusivity and feedback; information overload and multiple communication channels; immediate or "ASAP" reporting pressures; and overlapping responsibilities and multiple tasks.

Recommendations - In the light of the significant findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered.

- The DepEd officials need to initiate measures to further improve the accuracy, timeliness and reliability of communication from concerned offices with those in the field to minimize misinformation and communication delay.
- School heads and teachers in particular have to enhance their organizational communication through appropriate feedback mechanisms. This can be achieved through conduct of meetings, encouraging open communication and formalizing the activity through proper channeling of issues and concerns to appropriate authorities or Dep Ed officials for appropriate interventions.
- Both school heads and teachers need to be aware of the areas of strengths as well as areas of weaknesses and differences of perception along organizational communication in order to instigate interventions within the bounds of their functions and responsibilities to ensure effective communication in the workplace.
- Schools have to prioritize communication management as part of their School Improvement Plan. Similarly, their Gender and Development (GAD) trainings have to include activities in enhancing the communication roles and strengthening communication competence of both teachers and school heads to bridge the gap in their respective perceptions on organizational communication.
- To further enhance the communication flow and address issues in accuracy, timeliness and reliability, the Schools Division Office of Nueva Vizcaya, through the division information officer, may revisit the compliance of schools to DepEd Memorandum 017, s.2021, or the designation of school information coordinators, who shall act as focal persons in ensuring efficient communication and dissemination of information within the workplace.
- To resolve the challenges encountered in school, education sector officials may consider recommendations provided by the respondents or participants such as provision of a strong internet connectivity and trainings on the use of digital communication channels to name some of the challenges in order to achieve accurate, timely, and reliable information sharing.

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