

Exploring on the Strategies in Coping with the Intercultural Difficulties: Towards the Development of the Intercultural Communication in the Early Years of Education

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Abstract

People engage in communication in several ways, the words and actions of individuals are means of communication and the choice of words reflect the culture of the individual. Culture is a set of basic ideas, practices and experiences shared by the people in the group. Communicating with other individuals of different cultures is known as intercultural communication which deals with the interactions among speakers of different cultural backgrounds speaking a common language for the purpose of understanding. A workplace is one of the common places where communication functions both positively and negatively. It is a place where employees perform the jobs with the concept of organization toward goals as Larsson (2010) refers to it as a systematic established union of people. With the presence of different cultures forming the workplace will in many ways be both harmonious and conflicting sometimes that requires the employees to struggle and adhere to strategies in order to possess the ability to communicate well in an intercultural situation. The communication serves as the basis of communication in the workplace to keep the organization in place. Hence, Mariani (2013), states the importance of possessing the strategic competence, the mastery of communication strategies that may help enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for breakdowns while getting one's message across. In this manner, strategies in communication are employed for better understanding. The study analyzed how communication takes place in a workplace. It sought to find out the ways faculty members in a workplace communicate with one another along with the struggles and difficulties in understanding each other's culture. The study made use of descriptive qualitative design with an in depth analysis of the data following the communication accommodation theory through the short narratives of the respondents along with the profile. The result shows that communication in the faculty workroom is made effective and efficient through the process of understanding each other's culture. However, as conflict is unavoidable, it still exists in a working environment in one way or the other. As a reflection of the individual's culture, language seems to be one of the causes of conflict. Majority of the respondents are encountering difficulty in the workplace in terms of communication due to the intercultural situation while less than half of the respondents expressed that there is no difficulty communicating intercultural. The implication of the no difficulty may suggest that a common language among the colleagues create better and deeper understanding during interactions with speakers of the same language speaking in the same tone. This interpretation leads to the idea that language and practices are the root of conflict of the colleagues in the workplace. The results serves as awareness to individuals in a workplace as to how intercultural communication functions and how people engage into it.

Keywords: *communication, intercultural communication, workplace, working environment, communication strategies*

Introduction

In communication, the individual's choice of words reflects one's culture and origin. Wintergerst & McVeigh (2011) in (Jackson, 2014) define culture as products, practices and perspectives of a group of people. To others, culture is a set of basic ideas, practices and experiences shared by the people in the group. Hall (1976), states that culture is an iceberg. The part of an iceberg that is above the water line can be easily observed while the bulk of an iceberg below the water line which is hidden from other people's

view may not be known. The former include such things as manners of dressing, greetings, facial expressions and gestures, holiday customs, foods and literature. Meanwhile, the deeper or invisible aspects of culture take more time and effort to be recognized and understood. It deals with issues such as the importance of time, the role of the family, concepts of fairness or beauty, attitudes toward age, ideas about clothing and rules for polite behaviour.

The culture of each individual is an ever changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created and shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors which include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and also religion. It is an encompassing set of moral, ethical, and philosophical principles and beliefs that govern the way people live their lives and interact with others. Culture is significant in everyone's life since it is part of life. It involves the way people think, feel, and act and it is expressed through one's way of communication. Somehow, culture becomes a factor in communication which in turn at times becomes the invisible and unnoticed cause of arising conflicts. In eliminating this factor by breaking issues which serve as barriers, the communicative competence in an intercultural situation is necessary. In the event, achieving communicative competence creates opportunities in organizations and workplaces and even widens the individual's outlook. Interacting and working in a multicultural setting involves many challenges, disagreements and conflicts. But harmonious communication will eliminate conflicts and provide understanding among cultures in an organization.

Communication is part of the daily life and it serves as the vehicle for understanding each other's culture. Dewey (1985) defined communication as the process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession. The purpose of communication, according to Dewey, is to reach mutual understanding through acting together, rather than simply self-expression or persuasion. Dewey states, "The heart of language is not expression of antecedent thought but the establishment of communication in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by the partnership". To reach out to another person with words is to engage in a process of sharing meaning that involves participation on the part of the speaker and the listener. The meaning of concepts, ideas, and expressions is not universal, but is created within each person's mind as each person encounter the different challenges in life. Successful communication requires that people share the mental images called meaning. Collaboration provides meaning in communication requiring that all people be involved in the conversation actively and engage in the process with the intent of achieving mutual understanding.

Communicating with other individuals of different cultures is known as intercultural communication which deals with the interactions among speakers of different cultural background speaking a common language for the purpose of understanding. Adhering to a common language shows how culture affects communication thereby creating identity of individuals. As societies around the world become more diverse, the intercultural contact requires skill in communication for a meaningful living. The competence in intercultural communication demonstrates the ability of an individual to cope with common unexpected differences resulting from one's cultural background. Culture shapes the individual from the early to the present phases in life and influences the way each individual behaves, communicates, and acts and as to how the individual values and beliefs ascribe meaning to phenomenon according to Matsumoto & Juang (2008). Each person becomes aware of the commonness of behaviors and actions within each culture in the encounter with people who appears differently. Personal experiences will illustrate how misunderstandings can occur though the same language is spoken due to the interpretations of communicative messages that occur in many different contexts in an intercultural situation.

No matter where an individual is in the world, communication is important. But communicating across cultures could be difficult. Cultures actually have some different ways of communicating. Some cultures are informal, other cultures use a whole series of ritual greetings before having a conversation, while other cultures consider it rude to show up to a meeting on time. Nevertheless, all these cultures still have

something in common in spite of few differences. And it can be avoided through intercultural communication. Thus, there is a need to learn how to communicate interculturally just like a child in the language acquisition process. It requires learning a language as well as learning behavioural norms for good communication. However, it is quite different from a child learning a language since it is adults learning to communicate in someone else's culture. This is a challenge that affects the performance of the individuals and the entire firm in an organization or a team in a workplace to a certain degree.

According to Baker (2014), in a multicultural environment each individual needs to find out a solution to come up with clarity in communication. People belong to diverse cultures, and being in communication with each other requires each individual to be effective in order to avoid disagreements and conflicts to achieve the common goal. In order to create effective intercultural communication, each individual have to understand each other and find out the conflict that serves as the barriers. Intercultural communication is both in the form of verbal and nonverbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds. Inter means between and intercultural means from a culture, hence, intercultural communication is the communication between cultures. Sometimes, this is used to describe a single person trying to interact in a foreign environment but more often, it is a two way street, where people from both cultures are trying to improve their communication. Intercultural communication does not only entail language proficiency, rather a communication that requires the ability to understand language and beyond the language. Language and culture are related in terms of competent communication.

A workplace is one of the common places where communication functions both positively and negatively. It is a place where employees perform the jobs with the concept of organization toward goals as Larsson (2010) refers to it as a systematic established union of people. The universal characteristics of the organization are goal, people, structure, activity and culture. Alvesson (2002) points out that a group of individuals in an organization start out from a social structure and culture, of which the cultural attributed meaning will guide the thinking, feeling and acts of the employees. The social structure in a workplace refers to the behavioural patterns shaped within the interaction among the employees. Thus, with different cultures forming the workplace will in many ways be both harmonious and conflicting sometimes that requires the employees to struggle and adhere to strategies in communication in order to possess the ability to communicate well in intercultural situation. There may be difficulties that can be perceived in communication between people from different cultures in a work place. In conformity to the current trend of globalization, people are moving across national and cultural borders to an ever increasing extent. Consequently, people nowadays are confronted with an increasingly diverse workforce, as stated by Varner and Beamer (2011). From this view, studying about an intercultural communication in a workplace will be a good idea.

The individuals may not as often think of the impact that culture has on the behaviour of each individual in a workplace but expect others to understand the personality regarding behaviours, actions, and ways of communicating and reacting during misunderstanding. In referring to experiences in a workplace of intercultural situation, a study will point out how misunderstandings occur even though a common language is being spoken. Different interpretations of communicative messages may occur in many different contexts. People who are fully aware of the intercultural differences in a communication are mindful of strategies in communication in order to have harmonious relationship and communication with individuals from other cultures. This study will help provide explanation to this issue whether an individual apply strategies in communication for the sake understanding in the intercultural workplace and whether culture is a contributing factor or barrier in an intercultural environment.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Communication is a broad idea that embraces the skills of speaking, listening, interpreting, reading, and understanding both verbal and nonverbal expressions and messages. The interplay of communication and

culture is the form of the individual's socialization (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008). The language, together with one's ability to communicate is the human survival and the form of embracing challenges in the environment. Through communication, people are able to convey meaning through motives and solve conflicts. The language is the tool for communication but it does not limit to words and people from different cultures do not attach the same meaning to the words and actions thus the interpretation may not be the same as cited by Varner & Beamer (2011). In intercultural environment and workplace, the culture influences in the transfer of message, hence, communicating to people with another cultural background will differ from the communication of a certain culture. Luring (2011) states that communication is a mechanism through which groups are created, maintained, and modified. It is the basis of organizations and the organizations cannot be understood independently. In this manner, strategies in communication are employed for better understanding interculturality.

Swain (1984) in Mariani (2013), strategic competence is described both as the mastery of communication strategies that may be called into action either to enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for breakdowns in communication. It is the ability to successfully get one's message across. It enables language users to organize their utterances as effectively as possible to get their messages across to particular listeners. Strategies themselves have been referred to as a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express the meaning when faced with some difficulty according to Corder (1983) and it attempts as well to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication as stated by Bialystok (1983) in Mariani (2013).

The Importance of Work Communication

The significance of any activity at work can be measured by the amount of time employees spend at it, and by its impact on how effectively and efficiently the work is carried out for job satisfaction and career success for individuals as the results for organizations. By all these measures, it is likely that communication is the most important work activity, especially in modern, service-oriented, team-based organizations. In the world of work and organization, people nowadays acknowledge the central role of communication and there may be large literature devoted to it. In order to compete with modern organizations, there is a need to tap the creativity; expertise of the employees that places a premium on interpersonal communication. Communication can be defined as the collective and interactive process of generating and interpreting messages. Work communication is essential for coordinating activities and coordination is fundamental to organization.

Culture and Communication

To understand intercultural communication, Beamer (1992) emphasizes the role of decoding process and perception. Within the communication process, one is simultaneously a sender and a receiver of multiple messages. Perceiving a message starts with the recognition that signals have been sent out. Further, a selection is made by the receiver as to which signals are chosen to encounter and pay attention to. The signals are then structured into categories. This categorization is based on how an individual view the physical and social world, which is influenced by one's culture. In a final phase, meaning will be attributed to the perceptions which demonstrate the influences of culture even more. The meaning is culturally determined and will express the differences derived from the person's different life experiences and cultures. The different interpretations of signals is in accordance with the values and norms of one's culture, it may hinder the intercultural communication and give a different meaning to the message as intended. Matsumoto & Juang (2008) in Lindqvist (2012) indicated that a misinterpretation can make the message unclear, distorted or ambiguous and might even lead to misunderstandings and implicit negative judgments about the other person. However, several authors (Beamer, 1992; Matsumoto & Juang, 2008; Varner & Beamer, 2011) state that acknowledgement and understanding of cultural values in other cultures as well as in one's own is the answer to successful communication across cultures.

Cultural Differences and Communication at Work

In Lindqvist (2012), from about 1960, fairness concerns and pressure from minority groups led many countries to pass equal opportunities legislation. It became unlawful to discriminate against people in a workplace on the grounds of their ethnicity or gender. Over subsequent years, the coverage and demands of this kind of legislation gradually expanded. However, traditional equal opportunities approaches came to be criticized for denying differences. Equal rights necessarily came to mean that individuals are the same viewing people with equal rights while being different. Respecting and valuing diversity in the workplace indicate recognizing, valuing, and managing people's differences and about sharing power and communicating. Workplace diversity focuses on empowering people of all kinds to develop and contribute each other's unique talents to solving the business problems, rather than having employees give up the ethnic, gender, or individual identities to be successful. Heightened concern with diversity stems not only from the growing presence of women and minorities in the work force, but also from modern organizational strategies that require more interaction among employees of different functional backgrounds. The effects on performance were and still are unclear.

Workplace and Organization Culture

A workplace is the place where people can perform the jobs; it can be a home office in a huge industrial hall, or in conference rooms. Therefore, when referring to workplace one might simultaneously and unconsciously think of the concept of organization. A description of an organization given by Abrahamsson and Andersen (2005), in Larsson (2010), refers to a systematic established union of people with the aim to reach pre-given goals. The universal characteristics of the organization are goal, people, structure, activity and culture. The workplace or an organization is considered to have a culture of its own. Alvesson (2002) depicts the concept of organizational culture as an umbrella concept starting out from a joint way of thinking, containing a cohesive system of socially shared meanings and collective symbolism. In other words, organizations start out from a social structure and a culture, of which the cultural attributed meaning will guide the thinking, feeling and acts of the employees. The social structure refers to the behavioural patterns shaped within the interaction between the employees. Thus, with different cultures and social structures, organizations will in many cases be different from each other. The concept of organizational culture can be considered as a possibility to attain an understanding of the below-surface aspects of the organizational life. The incorporation of culture into organizations becomes salient, especially with the increased number of multicultural workplaces existing today (Alvesson, 2002).

Contact with other Cultures

Considering that culture is acquired, it is also learnable. However, the process of learning a new culture is not always easy (Jandt, 2010). As Berry (1997) puts in, people may enter the acculturation process voluntarily such as immigrants, whereas others experience contact with a new culture without having sought for it oneself like refugees or the people living in the host country. Communication is the indispensable and inalienable part of the adaption to an unfamiliar culture. It is in and through communication that the individual interacts with the environment and the cross-cultural adaption cannot take place without the interaction (Kim, 2005) in Lindqvist (2012). A model with strategies of acculturation process of Berry (1997) for intercultural adaptation contains important issues such as the cultural maintenance which is to what extent the characteristics and identity markers of one's home culture are considered important and worth maintaining to the person entering a new culture. Another is contact and participation, it refers to the extent an individual is motivated to be involved in the new culture or instead remain with people within one's own group.

Language

Kendall (2001) as cited in Davids (2013) states that language is used as a means for people to communicate whereby a set of symbols transfer ideas allowing people to think and communicate with each other. Both verbal and non-verbal language helps people to describe reality. The ability to use language to share experiences, feelings and knowledge with others are regarded as one of the most

significant human qualities. Language on the other hand has the ability to generate visual images in a person's head, such as "her face is as red as a tomato". Language also allows people to differentiate between themselves and others and to maintain group or cultural boundaries and solidarity.

Misunderstanding

Misunderstanding is a common barrier to communication in a multicultural environment of people with different cultural backgrounds whose values and beliefs vary. The variation in the different cultures results in high level of anxiety and uncertainty and end up into misunderstanding.

Norms and Roles

Norms are the culturally defined rules for determining the acceptable and appropriate behaviour. Individuals frame rules for themselves and also expect others to do so. Each and every culture has its own norms with acceptable and appropriate behaviour. People working in multicultural environment often fail to understand the norms of the other culture and act accordingly. Roles are a set of norms applicable to specific groups. In particular culture, different roles are assigned to men and women, children and parents or guardians, husbands and wives. These roles vary from one culture to the other culture and in a multicultural team one can find several violations of the roles. This further leads to anxiety and the communication process is interrupted.

Beliefs and values

Beliefs and values differ from person to person since the beliefs and practices of the individuals vary in several ways. In a globalized working community each and every person's beliefs and values depend on the culture a person belongs to. The cross cultural belief and value prevailing should be known to the person in order to communicate efficiently.

Stereotyping

Inadequate information about the people leads to unintelligent choices in the cross cultural communication. Cultural stereotypes exaggerate or overgeneralize on the perceptions about people, and may increase anxiety. Every individual enacts one stereotype on other individuals or group of people. Stereotypes are lack of knowledge about the group and usually become the major reasons for difference of opinions about the opposite culture and eventually lead to miscommunication

Ethnocentrism

Thinking about one's culture, the individual's group behaviour is the standard against all the other groups. One's cultural experience unintentionally makes one feel that the culture is distinctive. This ethnocentrism increases the level of the anxiety. In work places, the ethnocentrism is directly proportional to anxiety level. Multicultural team members face a lot of issues due to ethnocentrism.

Overcoming the Cross Cultural Barriers and Improving Cross Cultural Competence

Competence in communication in different cultures enables an organization to achieve objectives with due respect to values, norms, beliefs of the people as seen affected in the operation of the organization. Cross-cultural competence is defined as the ability to participate in a set of activities the core of which happens to a common communication code. This ability is aided by knowledge, skills and attitudes. Successful Development of cross-cultural competence rests on three pillars. These are the cross-cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural ability. The affectionate aspect of cross-cultural communication is identified as intercultural sensitivity. This aspect is developed in order to equip individuals with the ability to appreciate other cultures' differences. Through the development of cross-cultural sensitivity, an individual is able to grasp self-concept, neutrality and self-possession. The cognitive aspect of cross-cultural communication is known as the cross-cultural awareness. Intercultural awareness results in enhancing not only cultural-awareness but also self-awareness in the process. The cross cultural competence could be improved through cross cultural knowledge by training employees the

need to recognize and admit the existence of differences between cultures. Employees need the basic cross culture training to be aware of the cross culture in the work place.

Relative to the issues involved in intercultural communication, a study by Kunasegaran, Ismail, Rasdi, Ismail (2015), titled “Intercultural and Workplace Adaptation: A Case Study of Malaysian Professional Returnees” shows that intercultural and workplace adaptation is dynamic process which involves in-depth understanding of challenges at workplace and the supportive role. Organization culture is an open communication and trust elements were major important factors influence intercultural adaptation at the workplace. However, the findings indicate various types of cultural challenges such as cultural differences, career development, management practices and procedures. The study presents evidence of difficulties in a workplace consisting of different cultures. Meanwhile, it is clear in albeit Kim’s (2000) that integrative communication theory focused on expatriates as applicable and relevant to professional returnees as stated in (Ahn & Kim, 2015) and in terms of intercultural adaptation (Kunasegaran et al, 2015).

Tamam (2000) in his study “Intercultural Communication at Workplaces: Difficulties as Voiced by Local Expatriate Managers” with the aim that yields evidence and bring to surface the cultural differences which are consequential to communication effectiveness and work processes provides insight on how the intercultural difficulties is traceable to cultural differences are work out. Culture and language are the factors contributing to the intercultural communication difficulties and frustrations of the expatriate and the locals. The intercultural difficulties are attributed more to differences in verbal behaviour which are indirect, implicit, under communication against the direct which are explicit, and expressiveness and time orientation. The findings show difficulties in innovative, maintenance and production communication. However, there are more communication difficulties in the innovative communication including in problem solving and decision making situations. The expatriates face difficulties in soliciting ideas and opinion from the locals as well as getting locals to listen to innovative ideas.

Another study by Ergen (2010), “Workplace Communication: A Case Study on Informal Communication Network within a Communication” shows that effective and efficient workplace communication is based in the organization’s structure and culture which are interrelated. Concurrently, the management style defines the nature of communication climate revealing the formal and informal communication networks and how they operate within the organization. The management, in top or medium level, has the full responsibility to administer the communication process, to define the communication channels and to form the policies which should be followed, meaning, to create the communication’s framework. The framework and its implementation scale refer to the employees’ involvement, morale and concern, sense of belongingness, trust and performance. Informal communication is a vital element for any organization. It satisfies different human aspects and interacts with formal communication. Grapevine, rumour, gossip and breakdown of formal paths of communication, are integral components of a company, which may or may not get advantaged of the existence for the sake of its mission, aims and objectives.

Based on this different issues in culture and communication that intertwined with the individuals in a workplace and organization may suggest that communication is like the blood which an individual cannot control but somehow can be provided with a healthy body to live to break barriers and difficulties in an intercultural environment for a harmonious relationship and boost communication toward a successful workplace organization. This study aims at determining strategies in communicating in a workplace interculturally as a means of bridging difficulties in communication in a workplace and at the same time break the barriers that are considered factors in intercultural communication.

Research Objectives

This research study analyzed the different aspects in terms of workplace intercultural communication. It sought to find out the ways faculty members in a workplace communicate with one another along with the struggles and difficulties in understanding each other's culture.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What cultural differences do each faculty members experience among them?
2. Do the faculty members employ strategies to cope with their experiences of intercultural difficulties?
3. How do the strategies work among the faculty members for intercultural communication?

Theoretical framework

This study has been anchored on communication accommodation theory which identify how and when individuals accommodate their speech and nonverbal behaviour toward others during an interaction. The basic assumption of this theory is that, an individual accommodate others when there is a positive feeling to the other person. Individuals may change the ways of communication to accommodate others especially, when no significant differences is manifested between them and the others. The theory highlights that individuals adjust the verbal communication to facilitate understanding. Having established that language behaviours have diverse and complex implications for inter-ethnic relations, this theory consider how communicators fashion oneself via language. People are motivated to use language in different ways to achieve a desired level of social distance between the self and the listener. Each individual often accommodates verbally and nonverbally to others and are aware of others accommodating in return on many levels. Such experiences are common in settings such as the classroom, the courtroom, business and commerce, and other workplaces.

Conceptual Framework

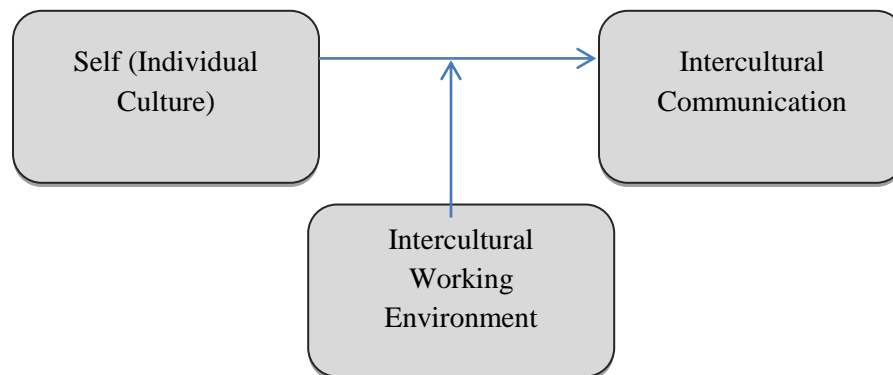


Figure 1 presents the flow of the study. The individual culture referred to the self is the independent variable in the study. The intercultural communication is the dependent variable since the individual's way of communicating with one another depends on the kind of communication employed with the presence of different cultures in the faculty workroom. The intercultural working environment is a variable that serves as the venue that affects the way the faculty members engage both in verbal and nonverbal communication. Each faculty member is conscious of the working environment thus the way each one behaves toward one another for communication purposes depends also on the way each individual deals with each other interculturaly.

Methodology

In answer to the questions that has been presented in the statement of the problem, an analytical approach following the communication accommodation theory along with the flow of the study was employed in the study to draw ideas based on the way the respondents engaged in communication interculturality in the faculty workroom. The analysis has led to the critical understanding of the communication each respondent possess toward one another.

Research Design

The study made use of descriptive qualitative design systemically. It described the data collected according to how each faculty members communicate with the fellows in the workroom. It required the researcher to critically understand by means of analysis in terms of the kind of communication and working environment existing among the faculty members of the department. Through critical understanding of the respondents' response to the questions posited in the questionnaires, it enabled the researcher to draw conclusions for the study.

Population and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling was utilized by the researcher in choosing the respondents for the study. The faculty workroom of the Department of Arts and Sciences of Zamboanga City State Polytechnic College was chosen as the area for the conduct of the study and the faculty members of the department since it is a place where communication is taking place daily. The communication is the product and outcome of the individuals in the workroom with different languages, beliefs, practices and attitudes according to the culture each individual comes from. The respondents for the study were the faculty members of the Department of Arts and Sciences in Zamboanga City State Polytechnic College both regular instructors and visiting lecturers.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher have conceptualized this study and presented to the course professor for approval. Upon approval, the researcher started with the data gathering and analyse the data in the light of the communication and working environment of the faculty workroom through narratives following three questions: What can you say about your communication with your colleagues in the faculty room?; Do you encounter difficulties in terms of communicating with your colleagues? If yes, do you employ strategies in communication and how? And; Do the cultures of your colleagues affect the way you communicate with each other? If yes, how does it affect communication? The data gathering was done inside the workroom where the teachers are working and engaging in verbal and nonverbal communication interculturality. The researcher employed critical analysis in finding out the communication and strategies employed in communication for understanding one another in the faculty workroom grounded on the theory employed in the study.

Instruments

The study relied on the narratives of the respondents for the in-depth analysis of the communication among the faculty members with strategies involved to better create smooth communication. A respondent's profile form were also distributed to respondents to collect information regarding personal information such as language, ethnicity, age, religion, and status of employment that contribute to the individual's manner and ways of communicating in an intercultural working environment.

Analysis of Data

Through the method of analyzing the intercultural communication of the teachers in the workplace with the aid of communication accommodation theory, the researcher analyzed the data to see whether the communication of the respondents where dependent on the individual's culture and to determine whether it affects the communication among the faculty members of the department. The individual profile of the faculty members collected helped supply adequate results for the study along with the in-depth analysis.

Results And Discussions

Bovee and Thill (2008), state that intercultural communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between people whose cultural backgrounds could lead to interpret verbal and non-verbal signs differently. Every attempt to send and receive messages is influenced by culture, so, to communicate successfully people will need a basic grasp of the cultural differences they may encounter and how they should handle it. According to Chen & Starosta (2005), cited in (Davids, 2013), successful intercultural communication is based on three factors: The positive feeling one possess at the affective level, including affirmation, self-esteem, comfort, trust and safety, the beliefs an individual brings into the intercultural encounter at the cognitive level, including expectations, stereotypes, uncertainties and misunderstandings of rules or procedures, and finally the action or skills one possess at the behavioural level that includes verbal and nonverbal communication skills in intercultural settings.

Intercultural communication is referred by Jandt (2010), as a face-to-face communication between people with different cultural backgrounds. People are aware of the importance of communication with someone of different culture. The intercultural communication is very important as it was before, since the society is a collection of cultures. The workplace consists also of different cultures and a possession of the employees expressing communication. Conflicts are something that can occur in a workplace or may not occur if there is perfect communication. Beamer (1992), on the same hand asserts that different signals are interpreted differently dependent on and in accordance with one's cultural language. In an intercultural encounter the intended message may not be the same interpretation of one with the other. And a different way of communicating might form the basis of misunderstanding if interpreted in the wrong way. To prevent misunderstandings and achieve a good communication in a workplace, an adjustment may deem necessary.

Lauring (2011) asserts that communication simultaneously creates and is the creator of an organizational culture. How the communication at a specific work place is constituted further guide the employees in the way to communicate. And according to Scott (2005), communication is about sending, receiving, and understanding information and meaning. He claimed that receiving and understanding are the most important operations in the communication process, since the response of the receiver defines whether the communication attempt is successful or not. He further defined two types of communication that are related to workplace communication; the effective and the efficient communication. Effective communication, when the message of the sender has a successful decoding from the receiver; and efficient, when the communication is done effectively at a low cost Scott (2005) cited in Lahti (2015).

This study shows that communication in the faculty workroom of the Department of Arts and Sciences of Zamboanga City State Polytechnic College is both effective and efficient. However, as conflict is unavoidable, there still to be a problem in a working environment with intercultural communication. As a reflection of the individual's culture, language is the common cause of conflict, though in this study it is not as complicated as in other working environment. Nevertheless, there still exists a problem that needs a solution. For instance, Teacher B answered the first question as it is fine communicating with the colleagues. But the answer to the second question was, there is difficulty in communication since there are colleagues who are not soft spoken and even harsh when talking and insensitive to the feelings of others. The tone of the language is rude and speaker seems impolite when talking.

Meanwhile, Teacher C shared a common experience. Accordingly, some of the colleagues communicate in unpleasant manner and named three colleagues but majority communicate in a good manner. And in spite of the little difficulty, Teacher C still manages to communicate for the sake of team work as one department. While Teacher D indicated, to avoid misunderstanding due to cultural background, as much as possible it is better not to engage in communication since there is really difference in the use of language for communication and different interpretations may result to conflict. The same explication made by Teacher H, there is difficulty communicating with others because of the culture a colleague belongs to. But the best thing to do according to Teacher H is to keep silent when the communication

sounds negative in order to avoid conflict. Teacher I on the same manner stated, there is difficulty in communication and the strategy is to understand and accept the culture of others. On the other hand, according to Teacher N communication can either be formal or informal with respect to age. There is not much difficulty with colleagues rather with the boss and difficulties are due to various beliefs. Teacher P also expressed difficulty in communication sometimes but applying a strategy such as understanding the personality because of the culture, communication will somehow be fine.

Finally, Teacher K contributed to the reason for encountering difficulty in communication as due to the practice of an individual and Teacher L confirmed this idea that different cultures use language in different ways which may seem unpleasant to the ears sometimes. But as one body working for a common goal, there is a need to exert effort in understanding the culture of others for harmony in the workplace. And the same is stated by Teacher M, there is really difficulty communicating with people of different cultures, hence, as a strategy Teacher M distant herself with other teachers to avoid conflict. Majority of the respondents answered as encountering difficulty in the workplace in terms of communication due to the intercultural situation while half of the respondents' population expressed that there is no difficulty communicating interculturally. The implication of the no difficulty may suggest that a common language among the colleagues create better and deeper understanding during interactions with speakers of the same language who speaks in the same tone. This interpretation leads to the idea that language is the root of conflict. The majority of the respondents' native language is Bisaya, and those respondents who stated that there is no difficulty in communicating with colleagues are also Bisaya speakers.

Aside from language, one factor attributed to communication difficulty in the workplace is the age. Those who answered facing and encountering difficulty are those aging twenties to mid-thirties. In other words, these teachers expressing difficulty are not yet adjusted toward the understanding of other's practices. And those teachers expressing that there is no difficulty are those aging above mid-thirties to fifties. These difficulties result from cultural differences as respondents stated that the manner of talking reflects one's culture in the faculty workroom. The practices surface as well as issue of conflict since other colleagues are insensitive to the feelings of others and lack of ethics which causes problem. Others behave very modest while others behave in a rude and harsh manner though the workplace consists of group of professionals. Perhaps, this is inevitable since the respondents interpret the actions and words of each other in a communicative situation differently. Through the communication accommodation theory that shows how and when individuals accommodate the speech during interaction, the study reveals that the respondents in the faculty workroom accommodate an individual in a communication when there is a positive feeling toward the person while others adjust to communication to facilitate understanding. This is evident for those respondents who chose to keep silent just to avoid conflict.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Workplace communication is complex and it affects organization's involvement. Although technology-aided communication has become so common and very influential nowadays, the face-to-face contact continues to be reliable and it is considered as the top priority form of communication among employees in a workplace. Personal contacts are believed to empower business relationships and help eliminate conflicts for a harmonious communication. In this study, the aim was to determine the kind of communication existing in the faculty workroom along with the strategies employed to create a more smooth communication without encountering conflicts. It has looked for indications of what seems to be the factors affecting communication resulting from the individual's cultural background. The results of the study serve as feedbacks to the intercultural communication in the faculty workroom that will contribute corrective inputs for information and even serve as guide for the teachers toward adjustment of the situation during verbal interactions. These are indications of how people perceive intercultural communication and the issues that differ among employees in the workplace and how it provide opportunities to freely talk and interact interculturally.

The result of the study will bring awareness to individuals in a workplace as to how intercultural communication functions and how a person are engaged into it. The cultural background becomes known to the employees in the process of intercultural communication as it influences one's behaviour in the workplace. Intercultural communication should be well understood since as expressed in the narratives of the respondents, the majority stated the difficulty in communicating with colleagues, hence, as part of strategy for a good communication and the avoidance of conflict, the respondents tend to be silent often and no longer engage in too much conversation. Within this phenomenon, there is a need to understand the constitution of meaning and what is ascribed from the verbal and nonverbal intercultural communication as Polkinghorne (2002) stated that the realm of meaning is central to human experience. However, meaning may not all the time be directly observable and associated with actions and interpretations of words and actions in the process of communication may vary since the individuals interpret differently. As Polkinghorne (2002) puts in, human lives is in a dynamic reality and changes are possible and meaning attributions also changes.

The organization and the workplace is an enterprise of culture, thus, it is expected that each individual accept each other's culture by understanding the person's values and beliefs and eventually respect it. To achieve this, the head of the department should commit to the idea of building the organization in the workplace a climate without conflicts and differences of opinions in spite of the different intercultural beliefs and practices. The outcome will bring improvements of communication interculturality and make the individuals in the workplace culturally competent involving in a lot of learning about other cultures and overcome the barriers as according to Delecta & Raman (2015), learning about other cultures with the ability to break barriers reveals one's personality of being culturally competent.

Furthermore, by studying the way individuals communicate interculturality in a workplace, people will be provided with the information that to be able to stick on intercultural communication effectively and efficiently, it is necessary to understand and possess knowledge about other's culture. However, the result of this study is limited due to few narratives collected. If the researcher would have gone to more narratives, more information would be provided. Nevertheless, it should not be confused with the result as misinterpreted or unreliable since the responses of the respondents are based on the experiences. As this study explicates the phenomenon of intercultural communication in a workplace, it is not an easy grasped. The individual ascribed to meaning differently since culture is influential in the behaviour and communication. To broaden the understanding of intercultural communication, a more in-depth research grounded on this study in a wider would be of great advantage. It would contribute to the knowledge applicable to the current issues in society with the increasing numbers of intercultural workplaces and organizations.

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