

A Study on Role of Communication Skills Among Management Graduates of Bhopal Region

Anubha Upadhaya¹, Dr. Atul Loomba²

¹Research Scholar, Rabindranath Tagore University

²Associate Professor, Rabindranath Tagore University

Abstract

Any business professional must be able to communicate effectively. Effective communication skills help to build positive relationships among employees in addition to facilitating the sharing of ideas with others. Nonverbal and verbal communication are equally important. As a result, the current study was conducted with the goal of emphasising the topic's importance to students. The study's goal was to find out how management students perceived the importance of the business communication course. This data was gathered from 100 management students in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, who attended both public and private schools. The non-probability convenience sampling method was used to select the sample. The study's research instrument was a five-point Likert scale-based questionnaire. SPSS version was used to analyse the data. 25. The study's findings suggested that, despite students' awareness of the course's importance, they were not taking full advantage of it. They lacked communication skills, particularly during group activities such as role playing and group discussions. This is due, in part, to the fact that most business communication students do not speak English as their first language. This demonstrates that students need to focus more on these areas in order to improve their communication skills. This will enable them to stand out during job interviews, business meetings, and public speaking. During business communication classes, students should be encouraged to participate actively in all activities.

Keywords: Communication, Communication skills, Management, Students, Management Students, Business Communication,

1. Introduction

1.1 Communication

Communication can traditionally be either verbal or nonverbal (Iksan et al., 2012). People's understanding of communication, on the other hand, suggests that it encompasses a wide range of domains, based on a rapidly evolving field. These domains include face-to-face interactions, digital literacy (including e-portfolios, email, texting, and social media), and virtual environments such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Each domain's communication protocols have different spelling and grammar rules, nomenclature, acceptable standards, intended audience, texts used for specific communication purposes, message length, and so on. "The act of conveying intended meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs and semiotic rules," is what we mean by communication. Communication can take place via an auditory, visual, tactile, kinesics, olfactory,

electromagnetic, or biochemical channel. Human communication is distinct in that it employs a great deal of abstract language.

It is now widely accepted that English is the "lingua franca of international business" (Charles, 2007), with the potential for communication to drive significant changes in organisations and their environments. Business communication, defined as communication used in business (Reinsch and Shelby, 1996), has taken on increasing importance in the current scenario. B-schools have evolved into centres that meet the communication needs of the next generation of business elite and teach them the fundamentals of sustainable development. However, as most business communication teachers are aware, getting business students to take business education classes seriously is difficult, which necessitates the need for an effective business communication course. In this case, it is critical to investigate how management students perceive the business communication course. What difficulties do the students face? Do students need to improve their skills? How well do they communicate right now? What are the advantages of taking a business communication course?

1.2 Need of Communication Skills

Communication abilities are critical to a student's future professional success. Communication skills are in high demand in today's competitive business environment and are regarded as the most sought-after quality in an educated individual. Students must be proficient in three communication skills: reading, writing, and attentive listening. These abilities are taken for granted because they sound so similar to the majority of communication skills. When it comes to reading and writing, the only thing that needs to be addressed is adjusting to one's increased age and concentration. These two characteristics can be used to improve writing, oral communication, and reading abilities (Khan, 2017).

Schools include reading and writing introductions, as well as discourses and reports, as part of the educational plan. These activities have been implemented in educational institutions such as schools and colleges to benefit the overall development of students. As a result, a student's management and expressive abilities are even more important. The fact that students lack the confidence to give speeches and presentations must be considered. Because of their importance in today's world, these abilities have been incorporated into the regular curriculum of many excellent educational institutions. People who are skilled at expressive expression can communicate their thoughts, feelings, and expressions to others and reach the people they want to hear from.

2. Literature Review

Monks (1997) reported on writing skill development in University Business School (Dublin) particularly for first year students studying in undergraduate business courses. The author studied in detail the students' understanding of library information system, how they improve their writing skills through assignments and how they evaluate their own work. The author described a study module which was developed long ago and introduces students to both academic and business writing.

Aly and Islam (2003) provided empirical evidence for level of communication apprehension in accounting programs. The study was conducted on two groups: those who were exiting the program and those who were entering the program. The results of the study showed that there was no significant

difference between the two groups. This raised questions on the quality of the accounting program in removing communication apprehension.

Knowles and Hensher (2005) emphasized that “the business education industry is in the midst of a war between two great powers: the market forces which are facilitating the widespread adoption of a customer-based approach to education and intransigent academics, determined to maintain professionalism in business education through a focus on research aimed at meeting the needs of a broad range of stakeholders, both now and in the future”. It is always an essential aspect of professional skill to apply critical analysis in decision making through scientific approach from the given problem or issue. Challenges on the MBA curriculum design and development are essential part of innovation in integrating more practical approach in delivering instruction towards the achievement of student outcomes relevant to the needs of the global market.

Beals (2008) suggested that self-marketing may bestow students with a set of competitive tools and skills that can be utilized not only upon graduating or when applying for employment but also throughout a lifetime of career changes and business arrangements which are expanding. As a result, during the past two decades, selfmarketing has become a widely popular subject in self-help.

Agarwal and Chintrashi (2009) conducted an empirical study of faculty’s perception of the business communication needs of students. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 93 faculty members of AICTE approved management institutions. The goal of the study was to reorient the academic system according to the findings of the study. It was found that the skills which were of more importance were less on the possession scale whereas the skills which were considered to be comparatively less important by the faculty were high on the possession scale.

Abbasi *et al.* (2011) established the importance of communication skills for the development of entrepreneurial skills as well as education. Thus, setting a place in market and helping an entrepreneur in development of relations with his community. People often neglect the significance of the four communication skills that should be developed in any entrepreneurial setting, without effective communication between individuals it is difficult to accomplish the basic need for interaction. These skills are already present in individuals but it depends upon their own volition that what they make of these skills. A right amount of confidence is needed when each skill is used so that one can smoothly sail the flow of business. The way they convey their message and the way they communicate are the most important traits of the entrepreneurially minded business students. So, to achieve this objective majority of the universities will have to work for developing better communication skills which will act as the base for the entrepreneurial skills.

Hassall *et al.* (2013) established a link between communication self-efficacy and communication apprehension (CA) in accounting students. The authors used statistical tests in identification of the connection between the two concepts and indicated the existence of a strong relationship. This strong relationship was identified not only in the overall relationship between self-efficacy and CA but was found to be as strong in their constituent components. The actuality of this relationship is vital due to the possible

development provided by it in terms of understanding the potential for redirecting efforts to alleviating and removing the barrier with ultimately leading to the development of communication skills.

Heide and Simonsson (2014) examined the practices and roles of communication professionals in relation to internal aspects of crisis communication. The impudence and value of communication professionals becomes evident. But did it necessarily mean that crises were situations when communication professionals worked strategically and practiced managerial roles? The study indicated that this was not the case – especially when it came to internal communication.

Hedman and Valo (2015) explored the communication challenges experienced by management teams (MTs) and suggested ideas for developing competent communication practices. Most of the communication challenges faced by MTs were related to the teams' meetings, where issues of participation, decision making and leadership were well intensified. The meetings were experienced as formal communication forums, where MT members did not always express their true opinions either because they were unable to do so or because other members of the team prevented it. Informal communication played a pivotal role in facilitating competent communication practices and trust.

McBain *et al.* (2016) researched the observances of tertiary students learning oral presentation skills from a wide variety of online and blended learning contexts across varied disciplines. It is this diversity of student experience which the instructors must consider if they are to support as many students in the overall cohort as possible in their learning. Understanding the fundamental aspects of what students think hinders or facilitates their learning means that the instructors are able to make multiple adjustments in their online teaching which address a range of both real and perceived issues.

Oussi and Klibi (2017) examine the business communication skills that accounting students see as having the highest importance for career success. The authors used a questionnaire sent to 180 students from three business schools to provide insights into the development of communication skills perceived important for a successful accounting career. The results indicate that all students were aware of the significance held by communication skills for a successful career in the accounting profession. However, they feel that their aptitudes are sometimes poorly developed, especially when it comes to proficiency in French (as a language of business in Tunisia) and written skills.

Pereira *et al.* 2019 found that the communication and thinking skills were considered as an important aspect for employability of European students in their respective fields. There is a deficit of skills among students in terms of interpersonal and entrepreneurial skills (Pereira *et al.* 2019; Wesley *et al.* 2017); problem solving skills of Indian context (Moorthi 2018). According to various studies in the field of soft skills Engineering students of Malaysia lacked in their soft skills (Deep *et al.* 2019; Tan *et al.* 2019; McGunagle and Zizka 2020). Presentation and communication skills of accounting graduates (Villiers 2010; Riyami 2021; McGunagle and Zizka 2020), critical thinking of Philippines Mathematics students (Tan *et al.* 2019), self-motivation and workplace skills of business graduates in Switzerland (McGunagle and Zizka 2020), leadership skills (NorthSamardzic and Cohen 2016), basic technology (Dura 2016; Ahmad 2019), and so on.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To assess how management students, perceive their communication abilities.
- To determine the factors that prevent students from demonstrating the necessary interest in communication classes.
- To suggest ways to help management students improve their communication skills.

4. Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. In the present study descriptive research design was used.

4.1 Sample Design

- 1) **Sample Area:** Management institutions of Bhopal Region
- 2) **Sampling unit:** Management Students
- 3) **Sample Size:** 100
- 4) **Sample Technique:** Non- probability Convenience sampling technique

4.2 Data Collection Method

Primary and secondary methods **were used for data collection.**

Primary data: It refers to the data that is collected first hand by an individual specifically for the purpose of facilitating the study is known as primary data. So, in this research the data was collected directly from the respondents through structured questionnaire.

Secondary data: Secondary data is the data that is readily available from other sources and has been already collected by someone is called secondary data. Such data are cheaper and more quickly obtainable than the primary data and also may be available when primary data cannot be obtained at all.

4.3 Research Instrument

Structured questionnaire was used as a research instrument for collecting the primary data.

4.4 Analysis pattern

For the analysis mean and standard deviation were used along with other appropriate statistical tools.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Reliability Statistics:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
1.000	1.000	23

The reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha which measures internal consistency of the items. In the current research, alpha coefficient was 1.000 (greater than the cut off value of 0.9) indicating perfect consistency among the items of the construct which means that the tool is reliable to collect the data.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics:

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
At the start, I concentrate on the main message.	2.6300	1.16909	100
Oral communication is important to me.	2.6300	1.16909	100
When I speak, I pay close attention to my body language.	2.6300	1.16909	100
I try to keep the audience's attention while I speak.	2.6300	1.16909	100
Pitch variation is essential for conveying my message to the audience.	2.6300	1.16909	100
I make certain that the last row backbencher hears my voice during the presentation.	2.6300	1.16909	100
Whether it involves a write-up or not, I speak at my own pace.	2.6300	1.16909	100
The starting and finishing lines are critical.	2.6300	1.16909	100
I begin with a light interest conversation mode.	2.6300	1.16909	100

I am capable of speaking with authority and confidence.	2.6300	1.16909	100
I deliver a wellorganized, dynamic speech.	2.6300	1.16909	100
A business communication course is essential for the development of communication skills.	2.6300	1.16909	100
The business communication course improves seminar participation skills.	2.6300	1.16909	100
A business communication course can help you improve your public speaking abilities.	2.6300	1.16909	100
A business communication course is essential for professional development.	2.6300	1.16909	100
I can take part in group discussions.	2.6300	1.16909	100
Participating in a speaking programme helps me improve my oral communication skills.	2.6300	1.16909	100
Business communication training is a waste of time.	2.6300	1.16909	100
It takes far too much effort to learn business communication skills.	2.6300	1.16909	100

Participating in group discussions leads to disagreements.	2.6300	1.16909	100
Distraction in the classroom during business communication class Students with poor communication skills may be reluctant to give presentations.	2.6300	1.16909	100
Too much noise is generated in the classroom, causing disruption.	2.6300	1.16909	100
When students have to give presentations, they are under a lot of pressure.	2.6300	1.16909	100

Table 1 shows that the overall mean value is 2.63, indicating that students generally disagree with the majority of the statements. While some statements elicited positive responses to the disagreement, others were deeply troubled. For example, the statement that business communication classes are important for communication skill development received a mean value of 2.63, indicating that students have a negative opinion of these classes. The fact that the students disagree with the assertion that the business communication course is a complete waste of time, on the other hand, demonstrates that they are learning something, which is why they do not consider it a complete waste of time.

Additionally, the table demonstrates the weaknesses of the students, such as their inability to speak with self-assurance in public, their inability to keep the attention of the audience, and their shyness when giving presentations. The causing of disruptions while participating in various activities in business communication classes was another issue raised.

6. Conclusion

Overall, students' perceptions of how important communication skills are and how well they use them varied somewhat. The students had fewer of the skills that were thought to be more important. Written communication skills are more common than oral communication skills, according to previous research (Pittenger, Miller, and Allison, 2006). Students in India and other nations lacked the ability to write, according to research. despite the fact that the majority of the business communication course's content focuses on writing skills. To comprehend this fact and act accordingly, additional research of this kind is required.

Business management students, according to the study, believe that business communication should be taught over two or four semesters rather than just one. Additionally, students stated that they did not take the classes in business communication seriously. They thought that the most important reasons were that students needed more time to work on their other classes and that improving communication skills took time. The diverse group of students were not sufficiently challenged by the course, and business communication classes in the majority of B-schools frequently transform into English-speaking classes were two additional significant reasons that emerged. Particularly when participating in group activities like role playing and group discussions, they lacked communication skills. At all B-schools, this appears to be critical feedback for business communication instructors.

7. Suggestions

To improve management students' communication abilities, the following recommendations must be implemented:

1. Students who are introverted and lack confidence should receive more attention from educators.
3. The purpose of group activities should be to teach students how to work together and coordinate their efforts.
4. Oral communication is the first point of contact, so it deserves our attention.

References

1. Abbasi, A., Altmann, J., & Hossain, L. (2011). Identifying the effects of co-authorship networks on the performance of scholars: A correlation and regression analysis of performance measures and social network analysis measures. *Journal of Informetrics*, 5(4), pp. 594-607.
2. Agarwal, S., & Chintranshi, J. (2009). Faculty perceptions of business communication skills and needs of management students. *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 7(3), pp. 297-312.
3. Aly, I. M., & Islam, M. (2003). Audit of accounting program on oral communications apprehension: a comparative study among accounting students. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 18(9), pp. 751-760.
4. Arruda, W. (2003). An introduction to personal branding: a revolution in the way we manage our careers, available at: www.reachcc.com (accessed 15 June 2017)
5. Beals, J. (2008), *Self Marketing Power: Branding Yourself as a Business of One*, Keynote Publishing Omaha, NB.
6. Belasen, A. T. (2007). *The theory and practice of corporate communication: A competing values perspective*. Sage.
7. Charles, M. (2007). Language Matters in Global Communication, *International Journal of Business Communication*, 44 (3), pp. 260-282.
8. Evans, E., & Cable, D. (2011). Evidence of improvement in accounting students' communication skills. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(4), pp. 311-327.
9. Hassall, T., Arquero, J. L., Joyce, J., & Gonzalez, J. M. (2013). Communication apprehension and communication self-efficacy in accounting students. *Asian Review of Accounting*, 21(2), pp. 160-175.
10. Hedman, E., & Valo, M. (2015). Communication challenges facing management teams. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 36(8), pp. 1012-1024.
11. Heide, M., & Simonsson, C. (2014). Developing internal crisis communication: New roles and practices of communication professionals. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 19(2), pp. 128-146.

12. Hopkins, C.D., Raymond, M.A. and Carlson, L. (2011). Educating students to give them a sustainable competitive advantage. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 33(3), pp. 337-347.
13. Ihmeideh, F. M., Al-Omari, A. A., & Al-Dababneh, K. A. (2010). Attitudes toward Communication Skills among Students' Teachers' in Jordanian Public Universities. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(4), pp. 1-11.
14. Iksan, Z. H. (2012). Communication skills among university students, *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 59, pp. 71–6.
15. Khan, S. (2017). *Education*. Mid-day. Retrieved from <https://www.pressreader.com/india/mid-day/20170503/282119226445210>
16. Knowles, L. & Hensher, D. (2005). The postgraduate business curriculum: the frontline in the war between professionalism and academic irrelevance. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 4(3), pp. 31-39.
17. McBain, B., Drew, A., James, C., Phelan, L., Harris, K. M., & Archer, J. (2016). Student experience of oral communication assessment tasks online from a multi-disciplinary trial. *Education+ Training*, 58(2), pp. 134-149.
18. Monks, K. (1997). Enhancing the written communication skills of undergraduate students. *Education+ Training*, 39(1), pp. 363-9.
19. Ohnishi, S., & Ford, J. H. (2015). Student seminar program for improving academic presentation skills for PhD students in science: The effect of language background on outcome. *International Journal for Researcher Development*, 6(1), pp. 57-76.
20. Oussi, A. A., & Klibi, M. F. (2017). Accounting students' perceptions of important business communication skills for career success: An exploratory study in the Tunisian context. *Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting*, 15(2).
21. Pittenger, K. K., Miller, M. C., & Allison, J. (2006). Can we succeed in teaching business students to write effectively?. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 69(3), pp. 257-263.
22. Reinsch, L. N., & Shelby, A. N. (1997). What communication abilities do practitioners need? Evidence from MBA students. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 60 (4), pp. 729.
23. Smith, G. (2005). Communication skills are critical for internal auditors. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 20(5), pp. 513-519.