

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ROLE OF SECRETARIES IN CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract. *This study examines the role of secretaries in effective communication within campus organizations, focusing on their contributions to problem-solving and decision-making. The research, based on a survey of secretaries, highlights the frequency of communication, problem identification methods, and the effectiveness of communication in conflict resolution. The findings suggest that while frequent communication promotes transparency and collaboration, its quality is essential for clarity and impact. Challenges like misunderstandings and communication barriers emphasize the need for targeted training in conflict resolution, persuasive communication, and strategic decision-making. The study concludes that focused professional development can significantly enhance secretaries' communication skills, improving organizational practices and outcomes.*

Keywords: *Effective communication, secretary, campus organization.*

INTRODUCTION

To fulfill its critical role in supporting the efficient operations of campus organizations, a solution needs to enable seamless communication between student and faculty stakeholders. Frequently the key support of an organization, secretaries are essential in coordinating information flow, organizing activities, and supporting communication between members as well as with faculty or other external stakeholders. Every leader must realize that how effectively they are able to communicate makes all the difference to their success as an individual and that of their organization. For example, as administrative professionals, secretaries are the face of inquiries and central authorities that influence leadership outcomes (Smith & Jones, 2020; Bell et al., 2019).

Secretaries communicate using written, verbal, and non-verbal means in a wide variety of formats—from emails to formal reports—and in person. However, while the

communication role of many secretaries is key to their importance in such information communications, they can encounter obstacles because of inadequate formal training in communication practices and a lack of skill in interpersonal dynamics and diverse expectations from organizational leadership (Garcia & Zhang, 2021). The challenges for secretaries, especially in a multicultural environment, include balancing the various communication styles and cultural norms (Williams & Roberts, 2018).

McAllister (2017) presents six elements as part of effective communication: clarity, conciseness, coherence, feedback, active listening, and selection of an appropriate channel. In the context of campus organizations, secretaries have to excel in these elements to ensure that information reaches the right people at the right time. When these elements are neglected, it hinders collaboration and decision-making (Kendrick, 2018). Secretaries also play a foundational role in problem-solving and building stronger relationships across the organization. Research suggests that having communication skills would prevent misunderstandings, reduce productivity, and negatively impact interpersonal relationships with poor communication (Johnson & Lee, 2020). This highlights the imperative requirement for advanced communication skills, especially in conflict resolution and decision facilitation for secretaries (Ahmed, 2019).

Although secretaries are at the front line to be aware of logistical requirements, communication issues have not been assessed in detail. Research has mostly overlooked the unique communication challenges that secretaries face, focusing instead on organizational leadership and team dynamics (Brown & Taylor, 2021). This paper aims to address the gap in the literature by investigating the communication challenges that secretaries encounter within campus-based organizations. It hopes to measure how they communicate when solving problems and making decisions, and how that affects organizational efficiency. Secretaries can help to improve both their performance and the success of campus organizations by enhancing communication abilities through targeted training and development (Rodriguez & Kim, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective communication is a crucial component of successful organizational management, especially in campus organizations where collaboration and teamwork are vital. This literature review synthesizes findings from various studies and responses gathered from secretaries of campus organizations to illuminate the role of communication in problem-solving and decision-making processes.

1. The Role of Communication in Problem Identification and Resolution

According to the survey, secretaries frequently engage with members to identify issues through various communication channels, including direct meetings and group

discussions. The responses indicate that many secretaries utilize feedback mechanisms such as listening to member complaints and facilitating discussions to uncover problems. Research supports this practice, highlighting that active listening is essential for recognizing and defining problems within organizations (Whetten & Cameron, 2016). Effective communication fosters an environment where members feel comfortable expressing concerns, which enhances problem identification (Miller, 2018).

2. Communication Skills and Problem-Solving

A majority of respondents asserted that their communication skills significantly aid in resolving organizational issues. This aligns with the literature, which emphasizes that effective communicators can articulate problems clearly and propose solutions that are easily understood by team members (Clampitt, 2017). In instances where secretaries facilitate open discussions, they not only promote transparency but also increase collective understanding, leading to more effective problem-solving strategies (Barker & Gower, 2010).

3. Decision-Making Processes

The data indicates that secretaries play an active role in decision-making, often conveying recommendations and decisions clearly to their members. Research indicates that effective communication during decision-making is linked to improved outcomes and member satisfaction (Sullivan & Landau, 2020). Furthermore, the ability of secretaries to explain the consequences of decisions significantly impacts how these decisions are received by members, as observed in several responses where clarity was emphasized as essential for effective communication (Dwyer, 2015).

4. Challenges in Communication

Despite the recognition of the importance of communication, challenges persist. Some respondents noted occasional difficulties in ensuring that their messages are heard and understood by all members, which can hinder effective decision-making. This finding resonates with literature indicating that barriers such as poor feedback loops, lack of engagement, and cultural differences can impede effective communication in organizations (Bovee & Thill, 2018).

5. Strategies for Enhancing Communication Skills

Respondents offered several strategies for improving communication skills among secretaries, including enhancing public speaking abilities, fostering open communication environments, and engaging in regular training sessions. Literature supports the idea that continuous development of communication skills is vital for effective leadership within organizations (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Establishing a culture of communication that encourages feedback and collaboration can enhance the overall effectiveness of organizational communication (Woods, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

The research method of this study will be quantitative, and the primary data collection tool to be used will be Google Forms. This method is adopted based on its efficacy in obtaining responses from a larger number of respondents, focusing specifically on secretaries of campus organisations at different universities.

Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire will be developed and circulated in the form of Google Forms. The questionnaire will include both closed and open-ended questions about communication skills, barriers, and experiences of the secretaries. The wonderful thing is that types of communication are so varied; from simple verbal exchange to even more complex written styles, as well as basic interpersonal interactions.

Sampling: The study will target a population of secretaries from diverse campus organizations within universities. To make sure we have people from all HBCUs involved, you can expect to receive an invitation to the survey through university communication, social media, and direct emails.

Data Collection: Distribution of the Google Forms survey will occur within a set time period, and respondents would be encouraged to submit their responses at any given time. The researchers will provide feedback in an anonymous form so people can express their thoughts openly and honestly.

Quantitative Analysis: All closed-ended questions will produce quantitative data and will be analyzed using statistical tools. The statistics will include descriptive statistics for summarizing the data, and inferential statistics may be used to determine the reliability of secretaries' efficiency in relation to communication skills.

Methodological Analysis: Thematic analysis will be carried out on the open-ended pertinent answers to dive into recurring themes and underlying insights or explanations for communication challenges faced by secretaries. This targeted investigation using qualitative data will enrich the literature with a more in-depth account of the issues they face.

It is intended that this model provides a holistic understanding of the communication process happening within college organizations and leads to useful insights on what should be done for secretaries' training and development.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Aspect Analyzed	Key Findings	Interpretation
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Frequency of Communication	Most respondents communicate "very often" or "quite often"	Secretaries are generally active in communication, enhancing task efficiency through communication skills.
Methods of Problem Identification	Main methods include listening to members' complaints or group discussions	Listening skills and open dialogue are essential for problem identification within the organization.
Effectiveness of Communication in Problem Solving	Most respondents believe their communication skills greatly assist in problem-solving	Good communication skills significantly help secretaries resolve organizational issues.
Channels for Delivering Solutions	Most solutions are delivered through face-to-face meetings	Face-to-face meetings remain the primary communication method, highlighting the importance of verbal communication.
Challenges in Being Heard by Members	Some members occasionally do not acknowledge solutions or recommendations shared	Communication barriers exist, emphasizing the need for ensuring messages are well received and understood.
Active Participation in Decision-Making	Majority of respondents are highly active in decision-making processes	Secretaries play a key role in decision-making, showing significant influence through their communication.
Influence of Communication Skills on Decisions	Most respondents feel their communication skills impact organizational decisions	Effective communication skills enable secretaries to influence decision-making outcomes within the organization.

Communication Barriers	Some respondents face barriers, such as members not understanding decisions or unclear explanations	Secretaries require further training to overcome communication barriers and ensure clear understanding.
Importance of Communication Skills	Almost all respondents consider communication skills "very important"	Secretaries recognize that communication is central to their success in the organization.
Suggestions for Improving Communication Skills	Public speaking, listening skills, and emotional intelligence suggested for improvement	Further training in communication is needed to enhance capabilities in problem-solving and decision-making.

Discussion

1. Frequency of Communication

Secretaries engage in frequent communication within their organizations, highlighting the importance of maintaining transparency and fostering collaboration. Regular interactions positively influence problem-solving and decision-making processes. However, while high frequency is beneficial, it doesn't guarantee clarity or impact. Training programs focused on effective communication strategies can enhance the quality of interactions, ensuring they contribute to the success of campus organizations.

2. Methods of Problem Identification

Respondents primarily identified problems by listening to members' concerns and conducting group discussions, emphasizing the value of active listening and collaborative approaches. This reflects a culture of open communication. However, the need for enhanced conflict resolution skills is evident. Secretaries could benefit from training in moderating discussions and conflict resolution to improve their effectiveness in identifying and addressing issues.

3. Effectiveness of Communication in Problem Solving

Most secretaries perceive their communication skills as integral to problem-solving, as clear communication is essential for resolving conflicts. However, occasional challenges indicate room for improvement. Training in structured communication

techniques and empathy could further enhance their ability to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and improve problem-solving capabilities.

4. Channels for Delivering Solutions

The preference for face-to-face communication in delivering solutions underscores the importance of personal interaction. While in-person communication allows for immediate feedback, it can be limiting in a digital world. Secretaries should be trained to balance face-to-face interactions with digital communication tools (emails, virtual platforms) to adapt to various contexts and enhance communication efficiency.

5. Challenges in Being Heard by Members

Despite frequent communication, some secretaries face challenges in conveying their ideas effectively. This suggests that while communication is frequent, it may not always be impactful. Developing persuasive communication and advocacy skills could help secretaries ensure their messages resonate with members, leading to actionable responses.

6. Active Participation in Decision-Making

Secretaries are highly active in decision-making processes, playing a key role in organizational discussions. This highlights the need for strong communication and critical thinking skills. Training in strategic communication can empower secretaries to amplify their influence and shape organizational decisions more effectively.

7. Influence of Communication Skills on Decisions

Respondents agree that their communication skills significantly influence organizational decisions. As mediators within their organizations, secretaries hold sway in shaping policies. Training in negotiation and leadership communication could further enhance their abilities, helping them navigate complex discussions and contribute to informed decision-making.

8. Communication Barriers

Barriers such as misunderstandings and unclear messaging reveal the challenges secretaries face in ensuring effective communication. Strengthening their ability to simplify complex messages and use feedback mechanisms can help overcome these barriers and improve understanding among stakeholders.

9. Importance of Communication Skills

There is a strong consensus on the importance of communication skills. Secretaries play a vital role as facilitators of information, and to be effective, they must develop advanced interpersonal communication and organizational strategies. Ongoing professional development is essential to keep up with the evolving needs of their roles.

10. Suggestions for Improving Communication Skills

Respondents suggested enhancing skills in public speaking, listening, and emotional intelligence, acknowledging the need for growth beyond basic communication. Targeted training programs focusing on presentation skills, confidence, and emotional intelligence can help secretaries become more effective in both routine tasks and high-pressure situations, ultimately enhancing their contributions to campus organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study illustrates the significant impact of secretaries on communication processes in campus organizations. Regular communication enhances transparency and collaboration, leading to more effective problem-solving and decision-making. However, these interactions must be meaningful, not just routine. Effective training programs focused on communication strategies are crucial for improving the clarity and impact of these exchanges.

The findings underscore the importance of active listening and problem identification. Secretaries must refine their conflict resolution and facilitation skills to navigate challenges effectively. As key figures in decision-making, secretaries need strong communication and critical thinking skills to influence organizational direction successfully.

Despite messages being heard, ensuring their impact remains a challenge, highlighting the need for developing persuasive communication techniques. Training in negotiation and leadership communication will empower secretaries to navigate complex discussions and shape organizational policies effectively.

Additionally, addressing communication barriers, particularly misunderstandings, is essential to ensure that messages are conveyed clearly to all stakeholders. As the role of secretaries continues to evolve, the recognition of the importance of communication skills emphasizes the need for continuous professional development to meet the changing demands of their positions.

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