

Fundamentals of Organizational Communication

Prepared by

Dr. Walid El Leithy

Chapter 5



Chapter 5



Chapter 5

Individuals in Organizations

This chapter is designed to contribute to knowledge by defining and describing concepts of motivation and identifying the primary characteristics of a diverse workforce, including supervisor, employee, and peer relationships. We develop sensitivity competencies through awareness of individual predispositions for organizational communication behaviors and by understanding issues of trust, emotion, and diversity in interpersonal relationships. We develop skills by applying knowledge and sensitivity competencies to a variety of individual organizational experiences. Finally, we develop values through awareness of the relationship of communication to organizational identification, work performance, personal needs, and interpersonal effectiveness.

Chapter
5

Introduction

- An individual's organizational experiences result from the attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and abilities the individual brings to the organization; how the organization seeks to influence the individual; and what types of organizational relationships the individual develops.
- Each person brings to an organization his or her personal needs, predispositions for behavior, communication competencies, expectations, and skills.
- Individuals also develop relationships with supervisors, peers, employees, customers, and vendors that become primary information sources about all aspects of organizational life.

Chapter
5

Introduction

- Donald Campbell (2000) described the emergence of the notion of the proactive organizational member. According to Campbell, proactive individuals are interpersonally effective, exhibit task and job competence, are expected to be committed to their work, and engage in taking initiative.
- Communication experiences with supervisors and peers are so influential that they contribute to the quality and quantity of an individual's work.

Chapter
5

Introduction

- The research of J. David Pincus (1986) has related quality and quantity of work—job performance—to perceptions of organizational communication experiences. In particular, quality of supervisory communication and information exchange within peer groups has been significantly related to revenue and workload measures of the overall organization.
- In other words, individuals who are satisfied with organizational communication experiences are more likely to be effective performers and to be satisfied with their jobs than those who have less positive communication relationships.

Chapter
5

The Intrapersonal Experience

- Most of us want to identify with the organizations for which we work. We want to be thought of as good performers with high work standards. Certainly, most of us want to be satisfied with organizational communication as well as other aspects of our jobs.
- Among the primary influences on our relationships with supervisors, peers, and all employees are the individual characteristics we possess, characteristics that can be described as our intrapersonal experience or as some would describe our personal identity.
- Our intrapersonal experience is composed of our personal needs, self-concept, predispositions for behavior, communication competencies, and expectations.



Chapter 5

Motivation

- motivation is the term used to describe intrapersonal experiences that influence behavior. We don't see the motivation, but we see behavior. We infer unseen internal reactions have motivated that behavior.
- Social scientists take many different approaches to describe the somewhat ambiguous concept of motivation for behavior. Abraham Maslow, for example, contended behavior is influenced by internal needs. He thought needs such as safety and security, prestige, and self-actualization are more important in understanding an individual's behavior than influences in the external environment.
- Frederick Herzberg, on the other hand, described behavior as a result of both internal and external motivators.
- and B. F. Skinner viewed reinforcement from the external environment as the primary influence for behavior



Chapter 5

Hierarchy of Needs

- According to Maslow (1954), individuals focus attention on needs that are not met and are motivated to seek satisfaction of those needs. Maslow described needs in an ascending hierarchy beginning with physiological needs, followed by safety and security needs, love and social belonging, esteem and prestige, and self-actualization.
- Physiological needs are the basic body needs of food, sleep, sex, and survival. Although these needs vary from individual to individual, Maslow contended that until these needs are reasonably well met, individuals do not focus their behavior on higher-level needs. From an organizational perspective, many physiological needs are met by the regularity of a paycheck, which provides food and basic physical survival.
- Maslow believed the satisfaction of safety and security needs also varies from individual to individual. What constitutes freedom from physical harm and security to one individual may not represent that same safety to another.
- Love and social belonging needs are met through family affiliations, friendships, and a variety of peer groups that provide social support and affection.

Chapter
5

Hierarchy of Needs

- Maslow described esteem and prestige needs as the desire for self-respect and the respect of others. Esteem and prestige are both internally defined and influenced by perceptions of what is prestigious to others.
- Self-actualization is at the top of Maslow's hierarchy. According to Maslow, self-actualization is the belief that one has satisfied his or her full potential and is engaged in activities for which he or she is uniquely suited.
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has several important implications for communication behavior. The theory implies individual communication behavior in some way reflects an assessment of need satisfaction.
- The individual who communicates insecurity about his or her acceptance in a work team may be focusing on low fulfillment of love and social belonging needs. A supervisor, according to Maslow, is unlikely to be able to motivate this individual by describing the prestige associated with a new job assignment that further removes the individual from peer approval.

Chapter
5

Motivation Hygiene Theory

- The Motivation–Hygiene theory of Frederick Herzberg (1923–2000) emphasizes the influence of both internal and external factors in explaining human behavior. Herzberg’s (1966) theory proposed that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not polar opposites.
- In other words, what produces dissatisfaction in the work environment, if corrected, will not necessarily produce satisfaction or motivation.
- His research suggested environmental factors (hygiene factors) such as status, interpersonal relations, supervision, policies, working conditions, and salary all influenced whether workers were dissatisfied. For example, if salaries were too low, dissatisfaction was predictable. If salary adjustments were made, however, satisfaction or motivation would not necessarily occur, although dissatisfaction might be lessened. The factors he found to be motivational were work itself, achievement, growth and responsibility, recognition, and advancement.
- Herzberg’s Motivation–Hygiene theory suggests dissatisfaction can be relieved by satisfactory communication and action directed toward hygienic work factors. Motivation, however, will not be achieved by such communication. Motivational communication is more likely to be effective when directed to achievement, recognition, challenging work, increased responsibility, and growth and development.

Chapter
5

Rewards Theory

- B. F. Skinner (1904–1990), in contrast to both Maslow and Herzberg, proposed that human behavior can be motivated and is influenced by rewards in the individual's environment. According to Skinner (1953), behavior reinforced through positive feedback or tangible rewards will be perpetuated, whereas behavior that does not receive positive reinforcement will be unlikely to continue.
- When applied to the organizational setting, the paycheck is a form of feedback that reinforces behavior expectations.
- Skinner's theory does suggest that communication about rewards will be motivational only as long as rewards are linked to specific behaviors. In other words, if behavior is to be influenced, communication must be directed at specific behaviors, and linkages must be understood by people the organization seeks to influence.

Chapter
5

Social Information Processing Theory

- This theory proposes people's needs and attitudes are determined by the information available to them at any given time.
- Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) suggested three basic determinants of attitudes or needs: (1) the individual's perception of the job or task characteristics, (2) information the social environment provides to the individual about what attitudes are appropriate (i.e., social information), and (3) the individual's perception of the reasons for his or her past behaviors.

Chapter
5

Social Information Processing Theory

Salancik and Pfeffer identified four ways in which social information influences attitudes: (1) overt, evaluative statements of coworkers directly shape individual worker attitudes; (2) frequent talk among coworkers about certain dimensions of the job and work environment focuses attention on what is considered to be important or salient in the work setting; (3) information from coworkers, or social information, helps an individual worker interpret and assign meaning to environmental cues and events in the work setting; and (4) social information influences the way an individual interprets his or her own needs. Thus, Salancik and Pfeffer argued job attitudes are a result of social information in the work setting coupled with the consequences of past individual choices.

Chapter
5

Predispositions For Organizational Communication Behavior

- Predispositions for oral communication, for example, have been found to be related to our occupation choice, job satisfaction, productivity, advancement, and job retention. Thus, we infer that communication predispositions and preferences influence behavior and are therefore important for individual organizational experiences.



Chapter 5

Communication Apprehension

- Generally defined as an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with others, CA has been found to be meaningfully associated with such important organizational outcomes as occupation choice, perception of competence, job satisfaction, advancement, and job retention.
- . In other words, individuals with high communication apprehension are more likely than others to be in jobs with low communication requirements, to believe themselves less competent than others, to exhibit lower job satisfaction than their counterparts, and to not advance in their organization as their technical skills might suggest they could.

Chapter
5

Leadership and conflict Preferences

- In addition to different levels of apprehension, individuals differ in their desire to lead others and in their perception of what is effective leadership. Individuals also differ in how they approach conflict. Leadership and conflict preferences have been theorized to influence choice of communication strategies and tactics in leadership and conflict situations.

Chapter
5

Communication Competency

- Individuals' perceptions of their communication competencies—knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values—influence their organizational experiences. When individuals believe their competencies are lower than those of others, that fact may well limit the responsibilities they will accept.
- On the other hand, individuals who assess their competencies as comparable to those of others may willingly accept new responsibilities as challenging and worthwhile.
- Perception of competency is, of course, related to communication apprehension and leadership and conflict preferences, but it is also related to past experiences, the presence or absence of particular skills, and deliberate attempts to improve competencies.

Chapter
5

Interpersonal Experiences

- Much of our time in organizations is spent interacting with other people. A variety of interpersonal communication relationships is important for individual job involvement, satisfaction, identification, commitment, and productivity.
- As you might expect from the discussion of the intrapersonal experience, predispositions and preferences influence the types of interpersonal relationships individuals establish.
- The relationships supervisors and employees and peers establish are governed not only by individual predispositions, but also by important task and social considerations as well as increasing diversity in the workplace.
- DeWine and Frank Barone (1984) suggested “perceived organizational communication relationships are considered to be the most important contributor to job satisfaction as an organizational outcome.”

Chapter
5

Forming Interpersonal Relationships

- We base our understanding of people on what we know about their membership in a specific group, culture, or role and make predictions about communication on general versus individual, specific information.
- versus individual, specific information. Our effectiveness in interpersonal relationships relates to our awareness of differences and similarities in groups and our willingness to test the accuracy of our understanding.
- In addition, effectiveness relates to our ability to accept differences as legitimate and important for organizational effectiveness.
- Relationships are key to our socialization both as we enter an organization and throughout our work life.
- Interpersonal relationships in organizations are formed for important task and social considerations. Unlike our personal relationships, the organization actually structures for us many interpersonal encounters necessary for task accomplishment. To become effective in these diverse relationships, it is important to understand how we are attracted to others and how the impressions we form influence our communication behaviors.



Chapter 5

Forming Interpersonal Relationships

- We are attracted to others by physical and personality characteristics. We attribute, for example, more positive characteristics to those we identify as more physically attractive than to their less attractive counterparts.
- Research also indicates we are most likely to find attractive those individuals who are similar to us in attitudes and beliefs and in relatively close physical proximity.
- The organizational requirement to work with those very different from us and in both close and distant proximity challenges us to examine how we form impressions and how we evaluate the competencies of others. In other words, do we evaluate as more competent and worthy of trust those organizational members who are most like us and with whom we have frequent contact? What are the implications of such an evaluation?
- In addition to evaluations based on similarity and physical proximity, we tend to like most of those individuals who reward or reinforce us. We prefer people who compliment rather than critic

Chapter
5

Forming Interpersonal Relationships

- In general, however, research suggests we are most likely to form positive impressions of those who we find physically attractive; have similar attitudes to ours; and are of the same race, religion, age, and general social class.
- y. J. C. Bruno Teboul and Tim Cole (2005) suggested that “in organizational settings, humans strive to develop relationships with the highest complementary and highest similar (partners) available.
- We are more likely to establish satisfying interpersonal relationships based on similarity than relationships characterized by differences. The implications for organizational effectiveness are obvious. Fully competent organizational members must not limit themselves only to the familiar but must be open to establishing satisfying and effective interpersonal relationships with both similar and dissimilar others



Chapter 5

Supervisors and Employees

- The supervisor–employees (subordinate) relationship can be described as the primary interpersonal relationship structured by the organization. Because it is formed to support task and job requirements, almost everyone in an organization—except perhaps at the very top of the hierarchy—is involved in such a dyad.
- Both supervisors and employees bring a wide variety of personal characteristics and predispositions to their relationships. The interaction of these characteristics influences the satisfaction each person feels with the other and helps determine the overall effectiveness of the relationship.
- Research suggests an employee's perception of the supervisor's ability to listen, respond quickly to employee messages, and be sensitive and understanding is the strongest predictor of satisfaction with both work and supervisor. Employees' satisfaction with their supervisors also has been found to be directly related to their perception of their own personal communication competence



Chapter 5

Nature of Communication between Supervisors and Employees

- Other studies support the importance of communication competency for the supervisor– employee relationship. Numerous studies report supervisors who are high in communication apprehension are not as well liked as those lower in apprehension, and highly apprehensive employees are not as likely as others to seek supervisory positions.
- In general, we can say relationships between supervisors and employees are influenced by a wide variety of communication behaviors; the predispositions, preferences, and abilities of both supervisors and employees; and overall work environments.
- Supervisors may spend from one-third to two-thirds of their time communicating with employees. Research also suggests employees want and seek interaction with their supervisors. In fact, employees are more likely to seek both formal and informal help from their supervisors than from peers or their own employees



Chapter 5

Communication from Employees to Supervisors

Paul Krivonos (1982) summarized many of the findings about upward communication in the following four categories: (1) employees tend to distort upward information, saying what they think will please their supervisors; (2) employees tend to filter information and tell their supervisors what they, the employees, want them to know; (3) employees often tell supervisors what they think the supervisor wants to hear; and (4) employees tend to pass personally favorable information to supervisors while not transmitting information that reflects negatively on themselves. Supervisors contribute to distortions in upward communication when they respond negatively to input and do not seek feedback..

Chapter
5

Supervisor Influence

- The relationship between a supervisor and an employee is influenced not only by the amount of openness and support between the two but also by the amount of influence the supervisor has in satisfying the employee's needs.
- Markku Jokisaari and Jari-erik Nurmi (2009) reported levels of supervisor support were directly related to employee role clarity, job satisfaction, and changes in salary levels. Employees reporting high perceived supervisor support also reported role clarity and job satisfaction that was greater than employees perceiving lower supervisor support.

Chapter
5

Performance Expectations and Feedback

- The quality of the supervisor– employee relationship also relates to the expectations of the supervisor. Donald Campbell (2000) identified common supervisor expectations important for employees: job and task competence, interpersonal effectiveness, organizational orientation, enterprising qualities, and personal integrity.
- One of the important characteristics of supervisor–employee communication is the frequent gap in information and understanding between what the supervisor perceives and what an employee believes to be true.
- Once an individual is employed in an organization or becomes responsible for the supervision of others in the organization, the performance appraisal interview becomes one of the most important communication events that contribute to individual development and overall organizational performance.
- Although formats vary extensively with specific organizational appraisal systems, the general purpose of the performance appraisal interview is to exchange between a supervisor/manager and individual contributor information about the adequacy of performance and to establish needs for development



Chapter 5

Mentors and Mentee Relationships

- Another type of relationship frequently developed between supervisors and employees is the mentor-to-mentee relationship. This relationship is based on mutual trust and respect and the desire of the mentor (usually a supervisor/manager or another person higher in position or senior in longevity with the organization than the mentee) to assist in career development for a specific individual.
- The mentor engages in coaching and advice extending beyond immediate job requirements to include information on how to be viewed as a successful contributor to the organization and how to make decisions likely to result in favorable organizational recognition.
- Research consistently has supported the importance of mentoring for career advancement. Unfortunately, much of this research suggests mentors are most likely to select for mentoring those individuals who are similar to the mentor. These findings present challenges for an increasingly diverse workforce



Chapter 5

Peers

- Although secondary in importance to supervisor–employee relationships, peer relationships are an important part of an individual’s organizational experiences. Relationships with peers are characterized by both task and social interaction: peers communicate job information, advice, evaluation of performance, and personal feedback.
- Peers help us learn about the culture of the organization, share tasks, and trouble-shoot work-related problems. Peers often engage in socializing outside the work environment and share in a variety of important life events.
- As with supervisor relationships, peers are important for motivation, commitment, creativity, and overall satisfaction. It is fair to say that most of us will spend more time with our peers than with our supervisors



Chapter 5

Peer Friendships

- We found that peer friendships experienced three primary transitions: from coworker/acquaintance-to-friend, friend-to-close friend, and close friend-to-almost best friend.
- The coworker-to-friend transition was perceived to be caused primarily by working together in close proximity, sharing common ground, and extraorganizational socializing. Communication at this transition became broader, yet remained relatively superficial.
- The friend-to-close friend transition was associated primarily with problems in one's personal and work experiences. Communication at this transition became broader, more intimate, and less cautious.
- The close friend-to-almost best friend transition was associated primarily with life events, work-related problems, and the passage of time. Communication became less cautious and more intimate.
- Generally, workplace friendships are believed to provide overall positive benefits for organizational members. Studies have associated workplace friendships with improved workplace performance, reduced stress, favorable perceptions of personal support, a positive work environment, and the ability to engage in change and innovation.

Chapter
5

Negative Peer Relationship

- It is important to recognize peer relationships can be negative. Patricia Sias and Tara Perry (2004) described five primary factors contributing to poor peer relationships and actual relationship deterioration: problem personality, distracting life events, conflicting expectations, promotion, and betrayal.
- The promotion of one individual to authority over the other and betrayal of trust or the withholding of important information also are contributors to deteriorating relationships.



Chapter 5

Customers, Clients and Vendors

- Individuals also form important interpersonal communication relationships with internal and external customers or clients as well as vendors or suppliers of the organization.
- These relationships are based initially on task concerns but frequently emerge into social support relationships as well. Customers generally are considered to be those who purchase products or services from an organization while clients are those who are in a professional advice or service relationship with the organization.
- Vendors are individuals or entire organizations who provide products or services to organizations other than their own.
- Customer, client, and vendor relationships are based on exchanges of information about products, services, timing, delivery, quality, and cost. These relationships often are established through telemediated channels but remain important to the goals of all the parties involved in the relationship.

Chapter
5

Communication Networks and Interpersonal Relationships

- Cynthia Stohl (1995) suggested networks can be described at four interdependent levels: personal, group, organizational, and interorganizational.
- Peter Monge and Noshir Contractor (2001) explained: “Communication networks are the patterns of contact between communication partners that are created by transmitting and exchanging messages through time and space.”

Chapter
5

Network Links

- Richard Farace, Peter Monge, and Hamish Russell (1977) identified three general properties of the links found in organizational networks: symmetry, strength, and reciprocity.
- They described a symmetrical link as persons equally exchanging information during an interaction. In other words, the network is symmetrical when both parties have approximately the same amount of give-and-take. Symmetrical links are common among peers when interacting about work problems or social interests.
- The opposite of the symmetrical link is the asymmetrical link, in which one individual gives more information than another. Common organizational examples of asymmetrical links are supervisors giving directions to employees or instructors lecturing to students. In most cases, more information is sent from supervisors to employees and from instructors to students than the other way around.

Chapter
5

Network Links

- The network property of strength refers to the frequency and length of interactions among linked individuals. Strong links communicate more frequently than weak links and usually have longer periods of interaction. The strength of communication links predicts who is influential among organizational members. The stronger the communication link among people, the greater the chances of linked individuals influencing one another's behavior.
- The final property, reciprocity, describes the level of agreement among organizational members about their network links. In other words, do individuals agree or disagree about the type of link they have with one another?

Chapter
5

Network Roles

- Individuals perform diverse roles in networks. Common roles such as liaisons, bridges, gatekeepers, participants, nonparticipants.
- Liaisons link or connect groups with common information without being members of either group.
- Bridges link groups together by having membership in two or more groups.
- Both liaisons and bridges engage in what is described as boundary spanning. Boundary spanning occurs when one holds a role in a particular organization and is also responsible for linking or representing that organization to the external environment and to other organizations. Boundary spanning also occurs when individuals have multiple group memberships, requiring them to represent one group or groups to others.



Chapter 5

Network Roles

- Gatekeepers are positioned in networks to control the flow of information through a communication chain. Gatekeepers routinely receive information and determine whether to transmit that information to the next link or links in the chain. Managers are gatekeepers in relation to their employees. Administrative assistants are gatekeepers because they filter messages and may even determine who can reach their bosses. Employees can keep problems from their managers in a gatekeeper role. Anyone in the network can function in this role.
- Finally, there are the network participants and nonparticipants. Participants are individuals who participate in linked communication behaviors but who are not usually in liaison or bridge roles. They are typically seen as members of the group but not influential to other groups.
- Nonparticipants are formal members of groups but do not affiliate with others in the group to the extent that participants do.



Chapter 5

Diversity and Interpersonal Relationships

- Most organizations employ men and women of different ages, ethnicity, race, sexual orientations, religions, physical and cognitive abilities, social and occupational classes, and values. Most of us will form as many interpersonal relationships in organizations with people who are different from us as with those with whom we have much in common.
- William Johnston (1987), in the Hudson Institute's famous Workforce 2000 report, described U.S. workforce diversity by five demographic facts: (1) the population and overall workforce are growing more slowly than at any time since 1930; (2) the number of younger workers is declining as the average age of the workforce and population rises; (3) women will continue to enter the workforce in record numbers; (4) minorities will be a larger proportion of the new labor force; and (5) immigrants will increase their participation as workers at the highest level since World War I. Johnston referred to these trends as facts based on the globe's known demographic profile

Chapter
5

Trust and Interpersonal Relationships

- Most people consider trust a critical factor in all types of interpersonal relationships, including those established in organizations. Although a somewhat ambiguous term, trust can be viewed as positive expectations about the behavior of others based on roles, relationships, experiences, and interdependencies.

Chapter
5

Workplace Emotion, Balance, and Interpersonal Relationships

- All of us can relate to emotion and interpersonal relationships. We also know emotion is part of workplace interpersonal relationships. Understanding the various types of workplace emotion and how they relate to balance between the personal and professional contributes to our abilities to understand complex organizational environments.



Chapter 5

Technology and Interpersonal Relationships

- Most of the discussion to this point has focused on interpersonal relationships with people with whom we have face-to-face interactions. Although these relationships are vitally important, we have just illustrated that the virtual work environment is creating new challenges and experiences.
- Technology has changed and is changing literally all types of relationships in which we engage. We no longer work only with those with whom we have face-to-face contact. We work across time zones, different languages, cultural differences, and geographic locations. We work with people without extensive information about their backgrounds, values, or experiences.
- For organizations today and more tomorrow, basic communication competencies include abilities to use electronic mail, computers, voicemail, fax machines, the Internet and World Wide Web, group decision support systems (GDSS), a variety of management information systems, and video and computer conferencing. In thinking about the use of complex technologies and interpersonal relationships.

Chapter
5

Increasing Interpersonal Effectiveness

Thus far, intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences common in organizational life have been examined in an attempt to understand how motivation influences communication behavior and how dyadic relationships are formed and shaped through communication. The importance of our own personal communication competency and our perception of the competency of others as it relates to satisfaction with interpersonal relationships and overall job satisfaction has been described. Yet the specific skills that individuals can use to improve communication effectiveness have not been identified. Now comes a discussion of the importance of cultural intelligence and valuing diversity for all types of organizational relationships.



مجموعة جامعة
الجميع الذكية
للتعليم القابضة

MIDOCEAN
UNIVERSITY



Thank You

