The Manifestation of Socio-Cultural Components in the Informal Oral Communication Practices of the Teaching and Non-Teaching Personnel in the Philippines: An Ethnographic Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Communication is immensely dynamic in the 21st century as evidenced by the fast-changing communication mechanisms. However, global trends show that oral communication skills are still considered among the most desired skills that employers are seeking in the workplace. Thus, there is a need to explore the manifestation of the socio-cultural components of the personnel, namely: behavior, attitude, and etiquette in their oral communication practices particularly the informal manner, as the components bear a significance when

they engage in such form of communication interaction. Direct observations of thirty-eight episodes of the teaching and non-teaching interactions of the personnel were noted followed by a Focus Group Discussion with seven selected personnel that validated the results of the observed manifestation of their socio-cultural components and likewise explored other underlying factors that shaped and developed their socio-cultural components. Behavior (facial expressions) and etiquette (voice tone) components mainly dominated in their interactions, yet the attitude component is also significant to them. The manifestation of these components is situational given their respective upbringing during childhood as a major perceived aspect that established these components. A desirable manifestation of these components is encouraged when engaging in informal oral communication interactions so to become a competent communicator in the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 21st century, communication has been drastically dynamic, making human connection fast and easy in the global context through the aid of various communication tools. Communication shapes and is shaped by a range of contexts such as geographically co-located work as examined in the mission of International Communication Association (ICA). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognizes the prevalence of intercultural dialogue which has now become an inevitable reality in today's modern society. Furthermore, global trends show that communication skills specifically oral communication skills are considered among the top and most desired skills that employers are looking for in the workplace (Rittiman, 2015; Rapacon, 2015; & Jackson, 2014). Indeed, communication is highly indispensable in any context. Global competitiveness and increased knowledge sharing have accelerated the importance of oral communication skills where it dominates assurance of learning standards (Jackson, 2014). As society becomes more globally connected, the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries has gained increasing prominence (Matthews & Thakkar, 2012). However, the ability to communicate effectively does not come easily to many people; indeed, it is a skill that requires practice (Agarwal & Garg, 2012).

Informal communication in organizations is highly important considering its many benefits including the development of new interpersonal relationships, awareness of others' activities, and information exchange (Yuan, Setlock, Cosley, & Fussell, 2013). In addition, Temby, Sandall, Cooksey, and Hickey (2016) found that informal communication is an essential factor in facilitating inter-agency collaboration. Informal communication in work settings is defined as voluntary talk that does not have to solely work or task focused (Fay, 2011). Furthermore, Zhao (2012) concluded that this type of communication provides opportunities among employees for exchanging work-relevant information, initiating potential collaboration, maintaining awareness of workplace context; and supports social functions such as transmission of office culture and maintenance of common ground and a feeling of connectedness between co-workers.

Conversely, Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2014) emphasized that employees regularly discussing their work experiences with those outside the organization make everyday talk within the organization shapes its identity while employing powerful effects on external perceptions. On the contrary, Baker and Warren (2015) found out the existence of clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities in an organization as a nuisance to considered, constructive, and collaborative conversations. Similarly, as pointed out by Baker (2015), others inhibit conversations although some conversations support organization enhancement. Nevertheless, Baker and Warren (2016) pointed out that the interactions which enable people to work together are experienced through dialogue and conversation, both direct and indirect and using a variety of means and formats. Conversations – formal and informal, simple and detailed, short and long – shape and reflect the culture or organizations and the teams and groups within them as attested by the authors.

However, a need to conduct further research in the field of oral communication is still called for considering the limited researches in this area (Crosling & Ward, 2002; Brink & Costigan, 2015; Rhoades, 2016; & Siriwardane & Durden, 2014). Similarly, the International Federation of Communication Associations (IFCA) claimed that there is a very limited exchange of communications research between both developed and developing countries. Moreover, there is a compelling gap in soft communication skills in the entry-level workforce as claimed by Gibson and Sodeman (2014) and Mahasneh & Thabet (2015). Furthermore, Laurie Brenner, a published author in Career Trend, revealed that lack of listening, questioning and feedback are among the top communication problems in the workplace that create misunderstandings and confusion. Thus, the aforementioned arguments

are clear indicators of the need to further explore the socio-cultural factors of oral communication in the workplace.

Moreover, studies reported that cultural diversity serves as a challenge in oral communication (Lum, Dowedoff, Bradley, Kerekes, & Valeo, 2014; Marra, King, & Holmes, 2014; Henderson, Barker, & Mak, 2016). Several studies have also shown the influence of diverse socio-cultural factors (e.g., language, attitudes, norms, values, and beliefs) in communication (Uyanne & Oti, 2012; Zamanzadeh Rassouli, Abbaszadeh, Nikanfar, Alavi-Majd, & Ghahramanian, 2014; & Gut, Wilczewski, & Gorbaniuk, 2017). The employees who compose the organization's workforce possess diverse socio-cultural backgrounds which affect the way they communicate especially in informal communication that is done casually.

Ismail, Tuspekova, and Mustaffa (2018) emphasized that investigating oral communication in relation to one's self and the scope that molds one's attitude towards a language is deemed important. Hence, given the aforementioned premises, socio-cultural factors indeed play a crucial role in the informal oral communication practices in the workplace setting. In the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines – Claveria which is currently absorbing the transition from being a former state college for 33 years to being a university, the practice of informal oral communication is very evident as this form of communication dominates in all units and offices. However, it has been observed that the personnel both teaching and non-teaching possess varying ways in their informal oral communication practices which at times, a shared understanding is not met which affect the work output. Unlike the formal type of communication which is composed of formal communication channels based on the individual's role in the organization (Nwogbaga, Nwankwo, & Onwa, 2015), the informal oral communication form is being done voluntarily in the workplace like chatting with a colleague or transacting official matters in an informal way of oral communication. Moreover, Nwogbaga et al. (2015) emphasized that the informal communication is not managed or planned in any organized fashion but based on social contexts and emotional disposition. Rather, it is more relaxed, casual and tends to be spread by word-of-mouth quickly throughout a department or organization because it is not restricted to approvals and an established path of distribution. Similarly, Oteyza, Balmoria, and Sabularse (2018) pointed out that good communication climate in an organization promotes relationship building aside from being a means of transferring ideas and information.

A workplace filled with diverse attitudes, behaviors, and etiquettes of the personnel that manifest their informal oral communication interactions may not often promote a shared understanding and may also lead to a chaotic workplace unless the personnel is empowered to appreciate the significance of communication competence towards good rapport with everyone in the workplace. This concept will prove that a person's attitude, behavior, and etiquette can still be enhanced when knowledge and awareness on communication competence be instilled particularly when engaging in informal oral communication interactions in the workplace that will eventually build and sustain a good rapport as a claim in this study.

It is on this premise that the study aims to explore the manifestation of the socio-cultural components in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel; manner of manifestation of the socio-cultural components in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel; perceived factors that shape and develop the socio-cultural components of the personnel when they engage in informal oral communication practices...and the perceptions of the personnel in their engagement in informal oral communication interactions.

FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on Safina's investigation of socio-cultural competence and Crosling and Ward's study on the forms of oral communication practices.

Safina (2014) investigated the stages and methods of socio-cultural competence forming which is considered to be a complex phenomenon. This include - *Linguistic-cultural* – knowledge of lexical items with the socio-cultural semantics (e.g., greeting, forms of address, and farewell, in oral and written speech); *Sociolinguistic* – knowledge of the language features of social classes, different generations, genders, social groups; and *Cultural component* – knowledge of cultural peculiarities of English-speaking countries, their habits, traditions, standards of behavior, etiquette and the ability to understand and use them appropriately in the communication process, while remaining a carrier of another culture. This study focused only on the cultural component aspect particularly on behavior and etiquette including the attitude of the personnel which will be explored as to how these factors manifest their informal oral communication practices.

Moreover, a study of Crosling and Ward (2002) in oral communication examined the forms of communication practices such as *making informal work-*

related discussions, following instructions, giving feedback, and engaging in informal social conversation. Moreover, the researcher added *following up on work-related matters* as a form of communication practice. These forms of informal oral communication practices were adopted in the study.
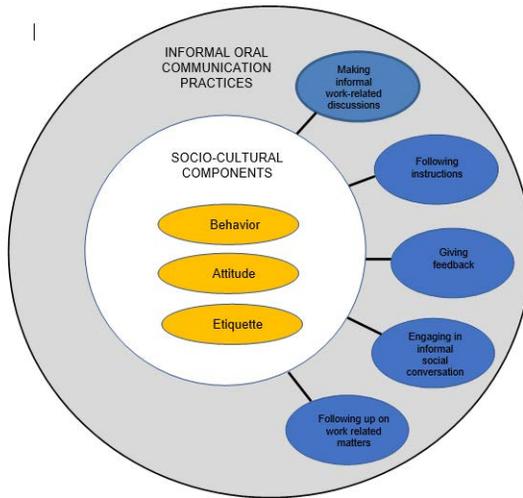

Figure 1. The research paradigm

Hence, Safina and Crosling and Wards' studies served as anchors that guided in conducting the study. As such, the manifestation of socio-cultural components on the informal oral communication practices of the personnel at USTP-Claveria is determined. Adopting Safina's socio-cultural components and Crosling and Ward's forms of communication practices could lead to an enhanced and enriched communication in the workplace with focus on the informal oral communication practices.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study explored the manifestation of the socio-cultural components in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel at University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines – Claveria. It sought to explore the following: 1) manner of manifestation of the socio-cultural components in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel specifically when making informal work-related discussions, following instructions, giving

feedback, engaging in informal social conversation, and following up on work-related matters; 2) perceived factors that shape and develop the socio-cultural components of the personnel when they engage in informal oral communication practices; and 3) the perceptions of the personnel in their engagement in informal oral communication interactions.

The textual data gathered through direct observations on the manifestation of the socio-cultural components of the personnel in the pre-determined communication interaction episodes were used in validating further the observed primary components that dominated in their communication interactions through a Focus Group discussion. Moreover, the data gathered in the Focus Group Discussion were used as bases for analysis on the manner of the informal oral communication interactions of the personnel given their diverse behavior, attitude, and etiquette.

METHODOLOGY

The collection of data immediately started first with thirty-eight (38) direct observations of episodes in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel. The researcher conducted direct observations for two months and two weeks which started in the fourth week of October 2017 until the first week of January 2018. The researcher utilized the non-participant observation technique.

Each observation of episode was recorded through the use of an episodic observation log. The researcher took down notes of each of the observations indicating the date of observation, time and duration, participants involved, topic(s) discussed, scenario and the observations of the socio-cultural components, namely: attitude, behavior, and etiquette of the respective personnel during the conversation. The observation log contains reflective notes about what the researcher has realized or learned from the communication transactions observed. This act in qualitative research is called *memoing*.

After obtaining the direct observations, the researcher coded the textual observations using the NVivo 10 software, a qualitative data analysis tool. Through the nodes that "provide ' simple to work with structure' for creating codes and discovering themes (Zamawe, 2015; p. 3)", the thematic analysis was carefully accomplished. The coded observations and themes of the observed manifestation of the socio-cultural components of the personnel in their informal oral communication interactions were then used by the researcher in the formulation of questions for the Focus Group Discussion.

Before the conduct of FGD, the researcher drafted a letter of request to conduct the FGD to select teaching and non-teaching personnel of USTP Claveria addressed to the University Chancellor which was acted upon by the Officer-in-Charge. Once approved, the informed consent was then sent by the researcher to seven selected university employees representing the teaching, and non-teaching personnel who favorably responded to join the focus group. As soon as the number of target participants was achieved, the FGD was set according to the convenience of all individuals involved.

Prior to the conduct of FGD, the researcher oriented the participants first on the ground rules during the duration of the discussion. The purpose of the study was also discussed briefly to them including the core constructs considered in the study. Meanwhile, the discussion was led by the researcher who acted as a facilitator at the same time with an interview guide questions to the participants along with an audio and video recorders that captured the whole process of the FGD specifically the verbatim statements of the participants. The discussion took an hour, and the documentation was transcribed for three to five days. For the results analysis, coding and thematic analysis for qualitative data were applied by the researcher using the NVivo 10 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study explored the manifestation of the socio-cultural components in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel at the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines – Claveria. It sought to explore the following: 1) manner of manifestation of the socio-cultural components in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel specifically when making informal work-related discussions, following instructions, giving feedback, engaging in informal social conversation, and following up on work-related matters; 2) perceived factors that shape and develop the socio-cultural components of the personnel when they engage in informal oral communication practices; and 3) the perceptions of the personnel in their engagement in informal oral communication interactions.

The researcher found out that conversing with colleagues freely and sharing their ideas on work-related matters is a common episode when the personnel are engaged in informal work-related discussions and informal social conversations. Yet, the conversations were not smooth sailing at times when discussing work-related matters as observed. Moreover, the researcher also recognized a friendly

demeanor when the personnel are engaged in conversations that involve following instructions, making informal work-related discussions, and giving feedback through their facial expression, gestures, and voice tone during the interaction as observed as well as for being comfortable with one another by the personnel when talking. In addition, the researcher also observed that the personnel were being relaxed in a manner most of the time when engaged in informal social conversation and talks involving work-related matters since they can casually talk and express themselves in these types of interactions.

The manner of responding to a given situation per experience is a factor that matters to the personnel. They attested that attitude is the major factor that matters most in their communication interactions. As clear in the following perspectives from the personnel, discourses on attitude and why it matters in informal oral communication interactions:

> *Attitude is the most important aspect and supposedly should also be the factor above all that every front liner should possess. Unfortunately, attitude causes hindrance sometimes to communicate with our co-employees and to the students as well because we cannot read a person's mind and for who he or she really is* (Participant 1, non-teaching personnel).

> *Our behavior and etiquette are products of our mindset – our attitude. I always believe that the attitude is raw and you cannot, I mean you can fake a times, but again and again, along the way, you will go back because the foundation of your behavior is fake* (Participant 2, non-teaching personnel).

> *Even myself, I have an attitude that will really show up at times when us girls tend to have a hormonal imbalance, and it is a big factor because when that day comes, you cannot control it. It will really come out no matter if you are in the workplace* (Participant 3, teaching personnel).

> *Attitude is already innate in us* (Participant 6, teaching personnel) *Communication between the boss (laughs a bit) and me because it is also necessary that you as the subordinate will also be approached in a proper way, thereby establishing a good working relationship* (Participant 7, non-teaching personnel).

Hence, the importance of a favorable attitude during interactions is significant (D'souza, Devi, & Sheilini, 2013; Shankar, Dubey, Balasubramanium, & Dwivedi, 2013; Savio & George, 2013). Moreover, the rawness of attitude is drawn from the attributes of attitudes like "sincerity and sympathy" which had the most effect in communication (Pournamdar, Shameli, & Shahrakipour, 2017).

On the other hand, the researcher found out that non-verbal cues serve as indicators of the mood of the personnel during an interaction which relies upon the type of interaction or topic that they engaged with. It mainly showed when verifying work-related instructions where a confused and inquiring facial expression emerged, during informal social conversations where a smiling and happy facial expressions were displayed, and serious or calm facial expressions appeared mostly when giving feedback, following up on work-related matters, and making informal work-related discussions.

In addition, the researcher observed that the manifestation of eye contact was not constantly displayed all the time since some personnel were also occupied with other tasks and they are looking somewhere while thinking as they engage in the conversation. Meanwhile, the researcher noted hand gestures when the personnel were emphasizing a point during the conversation as support to their statements to aid in reaching an understanding related to a topic being discussed. It manifested in following instructions, making informal work-related discussions, and giving feedback. The researcher also noticed a pause in talking when the personnel engaged in informal social conversation, informal work-related discussion, and giving feedback. The researcher also noted that listening emerged where feedback is involved in the conversation and when the topic interests the personnel during informal social conversations. The observed behaviors that emerged in the episodes relied upon the kind of situation that the personnel encounter and their respective duties in the workplace as attested by the participants. Indeed, behavior conveys meanings and intentions that are rationally free of deception and alteration as shown in interpersonal relationships (Leathers & Eaves, 2015). Moreover, the manifestations of behavior in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel affirmed that the reliance on direct observation and careful description of behavior are the most important characteristics of human behavior approach (Feldman, 2013).

The observed behaviors that emerged in the episodes determine the mood of the personnel in the conversation as evidenced by the following perspectives from the participants:

Mostly some of the students, their first impression immediately when a frontline staff is not smiling is that the personnel is strict (Participant 1, non-teaching personnel).

*A teacher is often expected to be always smiling, or even when a student says "Hi" or make greetings, a smile is expected (*Participant 3, teaching personnel).

When you are extremely pressured to accomplish and finish things, you are being rushed to these things, and you tend to somehow be heightened due to being pressured which will somehow change your behavior. For me as a teacher, this is not the only thing that I am doing because I tend to check papers whenever I have free time and I tend to prepare for my lessons, and I need to divide my time, allocate a small amount of time for another task. Somehow, it makes you alter your behavior, proper behavior, and etiquette as a professional (Participant 4, teaching personnel)

Sometimes due to plenty of tasks, you get stressed which causes change in your behavior (Participant 6, teaching personnel).

The foregoing perspectives indicate that behavior which is a nonverbal part of communication conveys meanings and intentions that are rationally free of deception and alteration as shown in interpersonal relationships (Leather & Eaves, 2015). Moreover, the manifestations of behavior in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel affirmed that the reliance on direct observation and careful description of behavior are the most important characteristics of human behavior approach (Feldman, 2013).

The researcher majority observed varying voice tones while talking in the episodes of informal oral communication practices ranging from mild/soft, moderate to loud voice tone. It mainly indicated the etiquette factor of the personnel in their informal oral communication conversations. However, flaws in the manifestations of proper voice tone and etiquette can happen which relied upon the kind of situation that they encounter and other factors which can trigger a raise in voice tone as attested by the participants. The researcher also noticed that politeness emerged when following instructions and making informal work-related discussions while being professional was manifested in following

instructions and giving feedback which holds true in the observations. Hence, the situation itself influence the etiquette of the personnel which is culturally and situationally variable (Snowden & Glenny, 2014). Moreover, lack of etiquette as demonstrated by the raise in voice tone could certainly lead to a negative result as pointed out by Beresford (2014).

However, flaws in the manifestations of proper voice tone and etiquette can happen as evidenced by the following perspectives from the personnel:

*I observe proper voice tone, but then it depends upon the approach of the student or a client since there are clients who suddenly raise their voice in which we misinterpret their approach. In response, you as a front liner will get offended (*Participant 1, non-teaching personnel).

Usually, we cannot avoid that there are people who are different like just what Ma'am (participant 1) said when you just wonder why the person suddenly raises his or her voice when in fact, you are just trying to ask something. We have to approach in a proper way. We should always be polite especially when asking questions so that the personnel concerned will provide what we ask. We should choose to be proper in delivering our statements even though there are attitude problems of other people. My point is if someone asks a question in a proper manner, it should be responded in a proper manner too rather than yelling immediately as a response (Participant 3, teaching personnel).

During meetings, what I have observed was that voices are raising and we, who heard it were like "Are they okay?". "What happened?" (Participant 4, teaching personnel).

Your voice tone will also rise especially during the conduct of orientation program to the students since they cannot help to also make their own "barrio" discussions, thereby not listening anymore to the speaker. We cannot avoid that since it is part of our life being a front liner. (Participant 5, teaching personnel).

When your ego is hurt, sometimes a raise in voice tone cannot be avoided especially if the manner of approach is too much for you to handle (Participant 7, non-teaching personnel).

The foregoing perspectives illustrate that situation influence the etiquette of the personnel which is culturally and situationally variable (Snowden & Glenny, 2014). Moreover, lack of etiquette as demonstrated by the raise in voice tone could certainly lead to a negative result as pointed out by Beresford (2014).

The manifestation of the socio-cultural components of the personnel in their informal oral communication practices were mainly rooted from their childhood upbringing in the family. It is the foundation of their character and for the person that they are. The following perspectives from the personnel participants summed up the main foundation which shaped and developed their informal oral communication practices:

> *Our parents raised us in accordance with what matters most to them – the honor/praise that they get from other people in raising us - their children. The honor in terms of raising us their children to be good and proper and disciplined despite hardships* (Participant 1, non-teaching personnel).

> *I am very less in emotions. I do not listen to my emotions because I was brought up in a very strict kind of family, very disciplined* (Participant 2, teaching personnel).

> *One reason why I am not hesitant or afraid to approach anybody regardless of their respective position as long as it is done in a proper way and regardless if the personnel has a strict attitude is because my mother taught me to remember that if I did not do anything wrong, I should not be afraid because I have no fault* (Participant 3, teaching personnel).

> *Our family is the very first factor that influences our attitude as we grow up and the very foundation of molding us as an individual which I can attest through my parents who constantly guide me and the rest of us, their children* (Participant 6, teaching personnel).

> *My parents taught us their children to respect and be polite. To shape and develop our personality particularly in the way we communicate and interact with other people, it should start at home* (Participant 7, non-teaching personnel).

The foregoing perspectives indicate that an individual's learning and values formation along with the guidance of elders such as parents is developed from childhood where internalization and processing of the information gained from communication with other people happen as exemplified in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (Panhwar, Ansari, & Ansari, 2016).

On the other hand, the inner qualities of a person are also considered one of the factors that shape and develop the informal oral communication practices of the personnel. Considering the daily engagement of the personnel participants in informal oral communication interactions in the workplace, a mix of experience and observations that they had were drawn from them to which the character has been summed up as a factor that molds their informal oral communication interactions as evidenced in the following perspectives:

Even if a child has been taught a lot and guided in his or her learning at home, it will still boil down to who he or she really is as a person (Participant 3, teaching personnel).

I know my attitude. I know how I behave in this context or in this situation but, I should develop my character based on what should be perceived of me especially that I am a teacher (Participant 4, teaching personnel).

A character holds true as one of the perceived factors because we all want to show our life to others. Moreover, character is the main factor that can be seen easily by people (Participant 6, teaching personnel).

The foregoing perspectives boils down to stressing one's qualities and self-awareness towards increasing the communication competence (Lim & Park, 2014). Furthermore, shaping and developing a person's informal oral communication practices can also be attributed through the events or instances encountered in one's life. It emphasizes that one's communication practices are honed through negative experiences which challenges one to overcome it. It emphasizes the importance of interactions as experienced through dialogue and conversation (Baker & Warren, 2016). Meanwhile, education is also considered by the personnel as an outside factor that shaped and developed an individual's informal oral communication practices. Being educated mainly enhances the individual's ability to relate with people through communication interaction with others (McQuail & Windahl, 2015).

The engagement of the personnel in their informal oral communication interactions is mainly perceived on a case-to-case basis. It boils down to the kind of situation that they encounter. As the participants constantly engaged in informal oral communication interactions in the workplace, they attested that the manifestations of attitude, behavior, and etiquette are indeed present in the informal oral communication interactions with emphasis on the behavior and etiquette. In their sharing of thoughts and ideas, some participants respectively attested the importance of attitude and the product of attitude which is one's behavior. Statements on the manifestations of these socio-cultural components in informal oral communication interactions emerged:

As a front liner, mindset should be observed at all times. As a front liner, you should be cool. An individual should be flexible per experience. In the office, if I will respond to my boss in a way that she will not definitely like, conflict between us will certainly arise often (Participant 1, non-teaching personnel).

I'm not so really focused on the behavior. I just simply express but not so much on observing how I use my senses. I am very less in emotions. I always work for this reason (points to his head), reason and reason (Participant 2, non-teaching personnel).

Usually, in a workplace, a person is expected to be aware of the three (attitude, behavior, and etiquette) because these three factors respectively go along with each other. Otherwise, there will be an imbalance and people will regard you differently because there are only two descriptions-good and bad, especially for teachers, not just in terms of how good you are in delivering the lessons but also on how you are going to communicate with your students. (Participant 3, teaching personnel).

For me, behavior and etiquette go together. It cannot be separated. It depends on the situation that you are in especially when you are pressured. I have once experienced, the ones we had Ma'am (referring to the facilitator), with the budgetary requirements, in which I always come by here and then I had to come back again to fix the supporting documents that need changes. When you are extremely pressured to accomplish and finish things, you are being rushed to these things and you tend to somehow

*be heightened due to the pressure, it will somehow change your behavior. Somehow, the situation itself alter the behavior and etiquette of the person as a professional when pressured (*Participant 4, teaching personnel).

It makes your voice tone rise especially with the students who are coming to the office for their INC's. Your voice tone will also rise especially during the conduct of orientation program to the students since they cannot help to also make their own "barrio" discussions, thereby not listening anymore to the speaker (Participant 6, teaching personnel).

Sometimes, when you are approached immediately, and you are directly given instructions like "Hey, do this," I become frightened and will immediately respond like "Huh?" (Participant 7, non-teaching personnel).

Meanwhile, the participants attested that establishing a good relationship and linkage was the main advantage when they engage in informal oral communication interactions in the workplace. Delivery of service to clienteles was also found to be another advantage. Nonetheless, there are a number of downfalls somehow when engaging in informal oral communication interactions like distancing oneself from other people, the need for personal space, becoming disrespectful to other people, and adjustment when faced with people with negative socio-cultural components.

CONCLUSIONS

The socio-cultural components in the study are crucial aspects of the informal oral communication practices of the personnel. Behavior and etiquette as the dominant elements that were observed and manifested in all of the informal oral communication practices of the personnel affirmed the fact that one's conduct and decorum are easily recognized in oral communication interactions. The attitude element implied that one's behavior and etiquette are the manifestations resulting from one's attitude or mindset when engaging in any informal oral communication interactions. On the other hand, the perceived engagement of the personnel in their informal oral communication interactions is situational as it greatly relies upon the scenario that they encounter. In other words, a favorable manifestation of the three components may not be constantly demonstrated

when engaging in informal oral communication interactions given that nobody is perfect. However, the study wanted to impart that being a part of an academic institution workforce, one should observe a desirable behavior, attitude, and etiquette when engaging in informal oral communication interactions in the workplace as the workforce creates an image for the university in one way or another. Setbacks may happen at times in the communication process but the manifestation of the socio-cultural components in it can be positively enhanced by being a competent communicator.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies such as workplace communication protocols with an emphasis in informal oral communication indicating courtesy, tact, and respect to everybody in the workplace and activities such as seminar-workshops or trainings relative to communication competence and personality enhancement should be crafted and implemented through the Human Resource Management Unit of the university. The foregoing recommendations are believed to enhance and enrich the informal oral communication practices of the personnel in the workplace especially that the USTP system is applying for international standards evaluation particularly the International Organization Standard (ISO) for its quality of service and clientele satisfaction.

On the other hand, the teaching and non-teaching personnel should also be guided to be aware of the manifestations of their attitude, behavior, and etiquette in their informal oral communication practices to maintain a good relationship with their colleagues and promote a shared understanding in the workplace. For the students, they should observe good practices in their informal oral communication and be aware on the manifestations of their attitude, behavior, and etiquette when talking especially when transacting to the different offices in the university. By doing so, it will give them an edge when they become employed. Lastly, further research and exploration should be done on the manifestations of the socio-cultural components in the informal oral communication practices of the personnel using bigger samples and wider contexts and the results of the study may be used as a reference for future studies in exploring further the manifestations of the socio-cultural components in communication practices considering different venues and environments.

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