Organizational Communication in Five Star Hotels and Experienced Problems

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate organizational communication in accommodation businesses. In line with this purpose a survey was conducted at the 5 star hotels located in Antalya/Turkey. As a result of the analysis of data gathered, demographic information of the hotel employees are given first then the means of statements related to organizational communication are interpreted. Also there is an open-ended question which is asked like "what are the other problems in your organization that you want to specify" and the answers of this question are included in the results section. According to our findings within the sample in 5 star hotels, organizational communication is not so well, and also other than problems of the communication that have emerged within the organization.

Keywords: Tourism sector, organizational communication, accommodation businesses, hotel businesses

Introduction

Communication has various definitions and descriptions in the literature. Writers have suggested that communication is the activity of exchanging messages or thoughts through speaking, pointing or writing while at a reciprocal dimension, they defined it as a message exchange process and they indicated that communication event happens when messages have been put across completely.   Communication has also been defined as the process of conveying a message containing information from a source to a recipient and has been indicated to be a term expressing the exchange of feelings and thoughts between people (Cüceloğlu, 2000; Adler & Elmhorst, 2002; Kaya, 2003; Koçel, 2001; Okay & Okay, 2005; O'Hair & Fredrich, 2005).

As an important issue for all people, communication situated on the basis of social life and forming the core of organizational structure. At the same time it can be expressed as a process that builds relationships between organizations and groups. There is the need for better communication because people in an organization should know and understand each other well, the work must be done better and the problems should be solved easier (Sabuncuoğlu & Tuz, 2001; Ruch & Welch, 2012). An effective organizational structure, certainty of authority and responsibility, structure and functioning of communication within the organization areimportant factors which play a role in the success of the organization. Communication which is the determinants of success in all organizations also in the tourism businesses is considered the main condition providing the coordination of organizational functioning. For an organization there are some conditions for being successful in communication environment. From these conditions there are the important ones listed below (Taylor, 2009).

- ✓ Quick decision making
- ✓ A competition-based vision
- ✓ A corporate culture which is different from rivals
- ✓ Exchange sensitive "management approach"
- ✓ İnitiative
- ✓ Network-based communication structure within the organization.

These six major issues are considered as important features to create value and strong corporate reputation. Thanks to these issues "total value" which is gained by the institution and differ from rivals is correctly perceived by the relevant public. As a consequence it can be said that for institutions the path of high competitiveness skill is being opened.

For a better understanding of the importance of communication for businesses it will be useful to mention some studies. From these studies Argle (1987), states that communication is one of the most important factors that affect the job satisfaction and when the necessary attention given to the communication it would be helpful both individually and organizationally. In another study, Goris et al. (1997) suggests that communication affected from job satisfaction and performance. Orpen (1997) conducted a survey on managers and he stated that job satisfaction and employee motivation are depend on the quality of communication. İn addition Rodwell, Kienzle & Shai (1998) pointed out that there are relations between communication, job satisfaction, teamwork and organizational commitment. Bambacas & Patrickson (2008) emphasized with their study that good communication between managers and their employees increases organizational commitment of employees. As it will be understood from these studies it could be said that communication is important issue for businesses and there is need to focus on it.

İn the tourism sector which has continuing competition, for businesses as they operate labor intensive the most important factor is people. Human power is extremely important in the tourism businesses especially for hotel businesses. İn the hotel businesses almost all the work is provided by people that is why communication is seen as an important issue for continuity and efficiency of organization. With using communication channels incorrectly communication businesses may not continue their activities regularly and correctly, because tourism sector serves the people. And people can be positively or negatively affected from all kinds of behavior, words and attitude which may influence their decisions (Şener, 2001; Öztürk & Seyhan, 2005). Communication is accepted as a vital issue for accommodation business. Thus, in this study it was aimed to determine how a level of communication and what is the other problems within organization. The study was held in Antalya which is considered one of the most important tourism destinations in Turkey. Five star hotels are chosen to implement the survey.

Literature Review

Organizational communication playing role in the success of the organization could be described as the most efficient process for the realization of common goals which could be seen as a reason to exist (Book et al., 1980). For the organizations the effort that they make to increase productivity may be achieved in theory but the employees are the factors that will help make it happen. Cooperation of employees will make it easier to strengthening communication within the organization also increasing production and productivity. At this point, important issue is to ensure that there is effective communication within the organization. Therefore, instead of punishing the negative behavior of employees trying to understand the causes of these behaviors and help correcting mistakes is important in developing better communication within the organization (Taurus & Kalpaklıoğlu, 2011).

Communication within the organization besides having a central role in the persistence of organizations it plays an important role in all organizational process (Kocabaş, 2005; Likert, 1993). With the lack of communication within the organization the success of any organizational action or management process becomes almost impossible (Schuler, 1995). In the organizations with adequate communication, it is expected from the members of organizations to understand and comprehend the aims of organizations and moreover; to have a tendency to act in a coordination and cooperation with the aim of achieving the goals (Aydın, 2000, p.45).

In the process of communication in organizations, exchange information with employees and paying attention to their opinions can make them more eager for their responsibilities. They may also contribute to their organizations internalize the vision to achieve the goals. İn other words, good communication in organizations can connect employees to the strategy and vision more than anything (Argentina, 2003, p.127). Consequently it can be said that organizations having effective communication within the organization become more dynamic. Good communication in organizations may show itself in various forms such as productivity, quality, sale increase, decrease in the error rate, reduction in customer complaints, increase in customer satisfaction and decrease in absenteeism rate (Robbins & Hunsaker, 2003).

Accommodation businesses can be defined as commercial and social enterprises which are consisting of multiple sections and in a close relationship with each other. With this definition, it can be said that close relationship is required close cooperation too. Especially in

hotel businesses, because of any bad behavior of employees customer dissatisfaction occurred may have negative affect on all services offered by the company. İn this regard, to improve efficiency among employees serving in different departments and keep the operation at the proper level requires good communication, coordination and assistance (Şener, 2001).

Brownell (1990) has pointed out the importance of employees and the obligation of the management to communicate effectively with their employees in accommodation establishments and has indicated that the need for effective communication skills could increase even more due to the newly emerging international quality of labor in tourism sector and continuous changes in customer demand. The author (Brownell) also emphasized the quality of "racing against the clock" which is specific to accommodation establishments as well as the increased importance of timely and clear communication between employees in this specific sector.

Employees' understanding and perception of the information related to the work to be done in accommodation establishments, and the clarity of employees' roles within the organization, in other words clear expression of the expectation of the organization from the employees play very significant roles in the relationship between employees and customers. The employee who has all the information needed for the work to be done would be able to increase the quality of service by managing relationships with customers more effectively due to increased self-confidence and would contribute to the positive perception of customers with regard to the service quality (Argenti, 2003; Slåtten et al., 2010; Demir, 2011; Zulhamri & Claina, 2012).

In hospitality businesses the significant amount of activities are carried out in a close relationship with the guests additionally disclosure about work which organizations do may create a positive attitude on employees and also can affect the quality of services offered to visitors. The employees who have high motivation and eager to work are producing high quality of service too. With this, the guests could choose the same hotel again and advise to other people. İn hospitality businesses, it can be said that finding creative solutions in short time and also create opportunities to improve skills is possible with effective organizational communication (Demir, 2011).

Methodology

For the present study, a literature review has been conducted before the questionnaire was implemented. The purpose of the questionnaire prepared in scope of the study was to analyze the communication process between the employees of accommodation establishments located in Antalya from a strategic perspective. Questionnaires were implemented on hotel employees. As a result of literature review, the studies of Kurt (2004), Yılmaz (2011) & Yıldız (2006) were used to prepare the questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted within the scope of the study before the final implementation. A two-phased process was used to conduct the pilot test. First, the statements were checked by 5 academicians who are knowledgeable in the subject in order to test the understandability of the questions. Second, the questionnaire was implemented on 50 employees of 5-star hotels in Antalya region. Once the understandability of the questions and the reliability of the scales were confirmed, the final implementation was carried out with the same questionnaire form. Later, data was gathered through questionnaire. Data was subjected to various analyses and the findings of the analyses were interpreted.

The questionnaire used in the study consists of three sections. In the first section, the demographic data of the participants which consist of age, gender, education level, working years in organization, duties within organization and the department is located. Second part consisted of 23 statements using five-point likert scale and these were oriented towards organizational communication. 5-point Likert scale was used in the questions intended for the participation level of the participants. In the last section there is an open-ended question which asked like "what are the other problems in your organization that you want to specify".

The population of the study was determined from employees who Works in different departments at five star hotels in the province of Antalya. The reason for selecting these hotels is; the high tourism potential of Antalya and consideration that this potential will continue to increase fort the next years. Consequently questionnaire was implemented on personnel of 5-star accommodation establishments located in the center of Antalya. Convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling method. Questionnaire was implemented on 356 persons in total working for 7 different 5-star accommodation establishments located within the provincial borders of Antalya. Cronbach Alpha values for all statements were calculated in order to define reliability of the scale and it was found to be 88 % (Table 1). The scale is reliable since the obtained value exceeded 70%.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	Statements
,880	23

Demographical Information

The related questions were subjected to frequency analysis to determine demographical characteristics of the participants and the results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Employees

Gender	n	%
Female	132	37,1
Male	224	62,9
Total	356	100,0
Age Distribution		
26 or younger	116	32,6
27-32	128	36,0
33-38	79	22,2
39 or older	33	9,2
Total	356	100,0
Education		
Primary school	60	16,9
High school	163	45,7
2-year college	62	17,4
Bachelor degree	69	19,4
Master/PhD	2	0,6
Total	356	100,0
Total working time in organization		
1 year or less	103	28,9
2-4 years	199	55,9
5 years or more	54	15,2
Total	356	100,0
Departments		
Food and Beverage	104	29,2
Housekeeping	67	18,8
Kitchen	57	16,0
Marketing	30	8,4
Maintenance	27	7,6
Front Desk	23	6,5
Accounting	23	6,5
Others	25	7,0
Total	356	100,0

According to the data, participants were 37.1% female and 62.9% male. Majority of the participants (68.6%) consisted of people who were 32 years old or younger. According to these results in can be said that accommodation establishments mostly prefer young age of workforce. Majority of the participant employees (45.7%) have high school education. There is %19.4 Bachelor's degree and only %0.6 master or PhD degree which means the education level of hotel employees is not high. According to Table 2 %28.9 of employees have been working one year or less, %55.9 2-4 years and %15.2 5 years and more. Lastly the departments that participants works are also given in Table 2. It can be seen from the Table 2 that the most crowded departments are Food and beverage (%29.4), Housekeeping (%18.8) and Kitchen (%16).

Average of the Given Answer of Organizational Communication Expressions

Table 3. Average of the Answers of Organizational Communication Expressions of Hotel Employees

Statements	N	Means	Standard deviation
I can easily reach information necessary for my job	356	3.89	.909
I can easily reach my superiors to convey them information, opinions and problems	356	3.88	1.083
I am not informed of the decisions taken	356	3.80	1.194
Reaching corporate objectives is more important than reaching personal ones	356	3.79	1.021
Interdepartmental communications within the organization are good	356	3.74	1.011
Instructions and information related to my tasks are conveyed to me by my superiors in a timely manner	356	3.74	.964
I am informed about the decisions taken related to the department I work for	356	3.73	1.065
Interpersonal communications within the organization are good	356	3.71	1.049
I try to participate in all kinds of organizations arranged for the personnel (meetings, seminars, etc.)	356	3.69	1.051
My superiors encourage me to convey them information, opinions and problems	356	3.68	1.080
I can easily convey my wishes, suggestions and complaints about the job or other matters to the management	356	3.67	1.062
Boards, warnings, mottos etc. on the walls show our working principles	356	3.60	1.095
Management informs us about the organization's vision, mission and targets	356	3.52	1.173
The power and responsibility separation between the departments have been done in a clear and precise way	356	3.51	1.052
My opinions are considered when decisions related to my task or to me are taken	356	3.47	1.206
Information within the communication system of our organization are kept confidential among those related people	356	3.45	1.077
Management informs us about the ways to follow in order to reach the targets	356	3.38	1.136
Vision and mission of the organization are adopted by everybody	356	3.38	1.199
The lack of communication between units causes malfunctions in the jobs conducted in a coordinated manner	356	3.28	1.095
Any unit, informs all the other units related to the operation it performs	356	3.22	1.062
I need to be in communication with units which are different from the ones I communicate with while performing my job	356	3.17	1.117
Decisions are taken with the participation of all units including sublevels	356	3.10	1.150
My task involves one single and specific job	356	3.03	1.191

In Table 3 it is seen that the average of statements which related to the communication between employees within organization is between 3.03 and 3.89. These finding shows that the participants in this study have communication problems within their organizations. Referring to Table 3, the statements named "My task involves one single and specific job" has 3.03 average which is the lowest. Therefore, with this result, it can be reached that the employees' responsibilities and duties are not specified in clear-cut line. The second lowest averaged statement is "Decisions are taken with the participation of all units including sublevels" (3.10). According to this average it could be said that coordination and communication between hotel units is not much potent.

As shown in Table 3, the statement has the highest average is "I can easily reach information necessary for my job" with an average of 3.89. Referring to this statement it appears that the employees working at the hotels which are involved to this study are having better access to information about their work but not in highest level. Considering that in order to implement high efficiency, the employees should have comfortable and fast access to the information related to their jobs. That is why average of the answers given to this statement is expected to be higher. The statement with the second highest average is "I can easily reach my superiors to convey them information, opinions and problems" with an average of 3.88. İt is important for workflow and problem solving to have faster access and communication network between employees and their superiors within organization. This is why communication between subordinates and superiors is expected to be faster and more efficient.

Table 4. Significance of Perception Test (ANOVA) According to Working Period of Employees

Means

Statements	1 year or less	2-4 years	5 years or more	F	P
My opinions are considered when decisions related to my task or to me are taken	3.37	3.40	3.89	3.998	.019*
I am informed about the decisions taken related to the department I work for	3.56	3.73	4.02	3.289	.038*
Instructions and information related to my tasks are conveyed to me by my superiors in a timely manner	3.59	3.77	4.17	6.854	.001*
The power and responsibility separation between the departments have been done in a clear and precise way	3.60	3.36	3.91	6.407	.002*
My superiors encourage me to convey them information, opinions and problems	3.41	3.77	3.83	4.663	.010*
I need to be in communication with units which are different from the ones I communicate with	2.93	3.21	3.46	4.374	.013*
Interdepartmental communications within the organization are good	3.53	3.79	3.94	3.527	.030*
Interpersonal communications within the organization are good	3.49	3.77	3.93	3.934	.020*
I try to participate in all kinds of organizations arranged for the personnel (meetings, seminars, etc.)	3.43	3.75	3.98	5.760	.003*

*P <0.05

According to one way Anova test in Table 4, significance is observed to be less than 0.05. Considering this value there is a significant difference for 9 questions, which measures perceptions of organizational communication according to the working time of employees. Accordingly, only in the statement "The power and responsibility separation between the departments have been done in a clear and precise way", the perception of the participants

with 2-4 years of working (3,36) dropped compared to those working for 1 year or less (3,60) and remained low compared to the participants with 5 years and more working period (3,91).In all of the remaining statement, increases of working hours of the participants also increase the perception of organizational communication. In other words it could be said that from the employees working at 5 star hotels involved in this study, employees who has started to work before others have more positive answers to the statements about communication within organization. This situation means that increasing working period provide to have better communication perception within the organization. According to this situation can be said that employees having longer working period are more familiar with the organization and their adaptation process is completed. They also have better bilateral relations. With all these reasons we can conclude that their perception of communication within organization goes in the positive direction.

Other issues that the hotel employees want to point out

In this section the answers given to open-ended question which asked like "What are the other problems that you want to specify within your organization" are categorized after descriptive analysis and given below.

1. Problems associated with communication

It is stated that many hitches were experienced between the departments and individuals that the distinction between work and friendship could not be made, that the works were done regardless of the number of people doing them and corporate values were not paid much attention. In addition, it is emphasized that the personnel that just started working were not informed regarding corporate values, that a personal mindset was adopted instead of a corporate one and not a good effort was put through for communication due to the fact that the main objective of the establishment is to earn money.

One of the important issues is that the communication in some hotels is carried out in writing via Outlook. Therefore, it is required that there are computers with Internet and Outlook access in the personnel areas, dining hall or in a separate section depending on the number of personnel in order for the personnel working in a sub level and not having computer all the time to reach the information more easily. Another problem raised about communication is that no information distribution whatsoever was being made with the corporation, that there were general communication problems between the chiefs and assistant chiefs in the departments and that was reflected negatively to the personnel.

2. General problems

Hotel employees complained that people in the tourism sector are employed with minimum wage and without looking for quality and that this affects communication. It is also stated that the existence of the units such as operation and communication coordination or the individuals that may carry out these duties within the existing units may make the work flow more regular. In addition, it is noted a demand was raised to play music in the dining hall, that social activities to relieve the personnel of stress were not organized and a personnel night was organized once a year, which was not deemed sufficient.

It is emphasized that the hotels do not care for the personnel, that the personnel do not ask for overtime payment and in addition, that overtime fees are not paid. Another topic deemed a big

problem by the hotel personnel is that the directors in the hotels prioritize the relative relations (falling out of the professional management mindset), get in touch more with some personnel and not caring about the intermediary managers. In addition, it was also stated that information sharing is insufficient and there is personal conflicts and ego among the team employees.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, the concepts of communication and inter-organizational communication were explained first and then the importance of inter-organizational was addressed. Another chapter addressed communication in the accommodation establishments. The study analyzed and interpreted the date obtained from the questionnaire conducted in order to examine the inter-organizational communication perceptions of the personnel working in 5-star hotel establishment in Antalya destination of Turkey.

It can be stated that the communication that the employees may encounter in the tourism sector may affect both the work performance and organizational performance (Uysal, 2003). The relevant literature shows that there is a relation between performance and communication. One of these studies by Stevens & Hisle (1996) tried to pinpoint the communication problems between the managers and employees. As a result, the lack of feedback and intercultural problems were determined to be among the problems that the managers had with their subordinates and communication problems between the employees and managers such as not being able to pass through the management layers, to talk to senior managers, and being in contact with the managers and/or establishment owners lacking occupational knowledge. Highlighting that effective communication is a must to overcome these problems, the researchers emphasized that the problems within the manager-employee communication severely affects the efficiency and performance. According to the findings of this research, it is observed (in Table 3) that the inter-organizational communication perceptions of the personnel working in the hotel establishments are not so high and generally in moderate levels. Therefore, it can be concluded that the inter-organizational communication in the 5-star hotel establishments in Antalya within the scope of the research are not very good and this may affect performance.

It can also be stated that the negative effects that the communication problems and misunderstandings may create should be paid attention to (Smith et al., 1996). Due to its structure, tourism sector has some different features compared to other sector. Along with issues such as hard working hours, seasonal characteristics; the communication issues that occur in the intercultural interaction may cause a dense amount of work stress. Consequently, work stress manifests itself as an issue that affects the work performance negatively (Ross, 1995; Tuna, 2004; Matyushchenko, 2006). The lack of good inter-organizational communication in the sector which also includes a stressed working environment may cause serious problems.

Another finding of the research is the fact inter-organizational communication perception increases as the working hours of the respondents increase (Table 4). This means that the hotel employees deem the inter-organizational communication better as their working hours increase. From this point, it can be stated that the personnel know their corporations better, the adaptation process is overcome and the relations get better as the working hours of the personnel increases, hence the positive direction of the communication perceptions within the

corporation. Another interpretation may be made as follows: It can be stated that the personnel adaptation process is slower in the 5-star hotel establishments in Antalya and new personnel deem the inter-organizational relation more negatively. This can be connected to the fact that the inter-organizational communication is more based on relationships in the hotel establishments within the scope of the research, lacking professionalism. Hence the answer given to the open-ended question ('Another topic deemed a big problem by the hotel personnel is that the directors in the hotels prioritize the relative relations [falling out of the professional management mindset], get in touch more with some personnel and not caring about the intermediary managers') supports this interpretation. Therefore it can be stated that the employees working longer have better relationships and accordingly, the inter-organizational communication is more positive compared to these employees.

It cannot be expected from an accommodation establishment without happy employees may please their guests. In addition, it is not possible to measure the employee satisfaction merely with money. Consequently, an environment where vertical relationships are replaced with horizontal relationships in the establishment organization, total quality management approach is implemented, communication is done right and communication satisfaction is ensured and where the employees can personally improve themselves (Şener, 2001, p. 60). Finally, considering the contribution of the tourism sector to the country economy, it can be stated that the tourism establishments are required to serve better and accordingly, efforts must be made to make the communication, which severely affects the performance, better.

In this study, the inter-organizational communication in the 5-star hotels in central Antalya is examined. Another study may examine the inter-organizational communication in the hotel establishment by making in-depth conversations with the employees via interview method. This may reach more clear and instructive results. In addition, the researchers may not only examine the 5-star hotels in the central area, but also reach all of the 4 and 5-star accommodation establishments and examine the inter-organizational communication. In addition, another local or foreign destination can be used for comparisons.

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