



# THE ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

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### A B S T R A C T

In this digital era, the development of Information and Communication Technology has changed the way people communicate. Marked by the booming of smartphone in previous years, ICT quickly becomes a trend in both daily and work life. It is also created a new way for organization to convey its messages. This study discusses about that matter. Based on qualitative methods, this research covers about the utilization of Instant Messenger and Video Conference in Internal Communication at SIBBC Consulting Organization, a Swiss-based consulting organization. The aim of this research is to look and gain a deeper insight about the uses of ICT. The theories used as a basis are organizational communication, internal communication, information and communication technology, and the effectiveness of communication. The data collected by doing an in-depth interview to five (5) subjects and observation results by the writer. The study finds that the use of Instant Messenger and Video Conference for internal communication were assessed positively and able to facilitate the needs of communication in the organization. The challenges in this study were the difficulties to reach the manager-level to get their in-depth feedback for the use of the ICT.

### INTRODUCTION

Communication has always been an important aspect within an organization. How can an organization go towards the goals and run effectively, if it could not communicate well with all members within it? Speaking in this context, communication is allowing each member and each part to have a common understanding and be able to work together towards the main objectives. It is already a common knowledge that a communication is always run through a media. Such as face-to-face, using telephone, or chatting application. This media becomes a tool that can convey an information to the receiver as what the sender intended for.

In previous years, before the internet is developed like now, an organization is using conventional channels such as meeting,

workshops, seminars or a written channel (newsletter, memo, reports) to convey a message. Broadly speaking, we could easily find a certain organization media to communicate internally, as this media could be found in every organization. Even until now, a conventional media always has a portion to play within an internal communication system in the organization.

Nowadays, in the digital era, the internet has changed a trend to communicate. As the increasing trend at information and Communication Technology (ICT) or new media marked by the booming of smartphone in the previous years, ICT quickly becomes common in the term of communicating within daily life and work life. As stated in a survey by International Data Corporation (IDC), smartphone sales in Indonesia grew by 13 percent each year and in the first quarter of 2017 already reached of 7.3

million units sold. This is showing that new media has a strong appeal in the thought of users.

In addition of that, in top ten application survey by Nielsen Indonesia at January 2017, it shown that Instant Messenger, Electronic-mail, and Social networking are a great interest to the public in Indonesia. (2<sup>nd</sup>. WhatsApp, 3<sup>rd</sup> Blackberry Messenger, 7<sup>th</sup> Line, 5<sup>th</sup> Gmail, 6<sup>th</sup> Youtube, 9<sup>th</sup> Instagram, 10<sup>th</sup> Facebook). We could easily know that the public already shifting to a new way to communicate.

According to Gibson (2011) and Katherine Miller (2015), both of them defines that this could be happen because of unique characteristic of new media when compared to the conventional media. As a new media allow users to send messages faster as it is almost instant and clear the limitation of time and space as the users could easily send a message to another users that maybe live in different place with the senders.

This new trend caused many organizations to change the style of their communication. It was not unusual to find an organization that runs their communication with new media such as Instant Messenger, Electronic-mail and Social media. For example, The Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesia Studies in short ACICIS, a Non-profit organization in Indonesia on educational sector use Instant Messenger and Electronic-mail to keep in touch (giving report, share information) with their members (Also applies to higher up). The implementation of new media in their communication making them more dynamic and fast-responding as they are also separated miles away from each other if in project.

There are several other researches covering an ICT uses within an organization. Such as in a Thesis by Annisa Risecha Junep (2015) which studied “New Media and Organizational Communication (Case Study Utilization of E-mail, Yahoo!Messenger, Lync, and Internal Portal in Internal Communication at PT.Datacomm Diangraha at year 2012-2014”, conclude that new media is simplify the communication process and sharing of information within organization. It also makes the process even more efficient than before. This conclusion also supported by another research by Hajah (2016) entitled “The Effect of Instant Messenger Usage to Internal Communication (Study in The Ministry of Communication and

Information Technology of Republic of Indonesia, Directorate General of Resources and Equipment for Post and Information Technology)”, found that there is a significant and positive effect by the implementation of Instant Messenger to internal communication. Moreover, positive response are coming from the employee as Instant Messenger was able to accommodate them.

Another research regarding new media also conducted by Praswiti (2012) that studies “The effect of Effective Utilization of Information Technology to Employee Productivity at People Management Division PT. Industri Telekomunikasi Indonesia (PT. INTI) Persero Bandung”, shows that the utilization of Information Technology have a positive response and significantly affecting the employee productivity. There is also same studies that shows a identical finding, a studies by fajri (2011) which studied “The Impact of Utilization of Information Technology Toward Employee Performance at Planning Consultant Agency in Surakarta”, found that Information Technology have a positive impact to the performance.

All the research that have been stated by the writer, intended to show how this study could be different between the other previous research above. All the studies were showing a result that ICT offers the organization easier way to maintain and improve their internal communication. This research not only discussing such findings, but also give insight regarding the uses of ICT for internal communication within an organization.

Another reason why the writer decided to research about this topic, it turns out in the implementation of ICT in internal communication, there are many factors that comes to plays a part. According to the journal by Venkantesh et.al. (2016), it shows that many factors affect the uses of ICT within an organization. Such as cultural, environment, technical. It is also the hope that this study could provide more understanding on those factors.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To be able to gain a deeper understanding regarding the utilization of ICT in Internal Communication, the writer will summarize the theories used as a basis of this studies. The theory

focusing on Organizational Communication including the process and the 4 direction, The Internal Communication, The Information and Communication Technology, and how to see the effectiveness of internal communication.

### **Organizational Communication**

According to Gibson & Hodgetts (1991), Organizational communication is the process of sharing information or knowledge among members of the organization in order to achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In other words, organizational communication is a process to coordinate and divide the task to achieve organizational goals. Robbins (2014) describes this process as follows: there will be a user (Sender) making a message, encode the information and send it through a channel. Then the message will be received by another users (Receiver) and will be interpreted. As the receiver conceive the message, then he/she will send a feedback to the sender. All of this process will be affected by noise or external factors.

There are two dimensions in organizational communication which could be distinguished from the aspect of the related parties. The first dimension is external communication, a communication that intended for parties outside of the organization. The other dimension is Internal Communication which is a form of communication for a party within the organization which will be further described in the next section.

### **Internal Communication**

Dan Lattimore, Otis Baskin (2014), explain that internal communication is a communication system between members of the organization. This internal communication goes both ways and every member are free to participate in the process. This explanation is strengthened by Cornellison (2014) who said internal communication as a communication by the member of organization to the organization itself, and Julia Wood (2014) also add that internal communication is communication by members of organization that discuss about the things that exist within organization such as work and chat between members. To summarize all the explanation above, Internal Communication is a communication process to coordinate between

each member in an organization. This communication can be intended to divide the task, share information, and coordinating with purpose to achieve organizational goals.

To have a better understanding of Internal Communication, there are 4 direction in organizational communication within every organization. According to Robbins (2011), These four directions are:

### **Upward Communication**

As clearly stated in the name, this direction takes place from subordinate to superiors. Through upward communication, subordinates can convey a message or share information to the manager. The examples of this form are: (1) Daily reports about task, the condition of team; (2) Every complaint, suggestion or ideas regarding anything within the organization to the manager; (3) Discussion about works, interpersonal relation among members; (4) Downward Communication

Often called as communication from superiors to subordinates, this form of communication goes from member with higher position to the member under that position. Generally, the form of this is (1) Task instruction and work-related information; (b) an organizational information, such as daily activities, and policies; (c) General follow-up; (d) Motivation and discussion to or with subordinates.

### **Horizontal Communication**

The horizontal communication takes place between members with same position. This communication is important as it is to coordinate and unify each member functions. The example could be: (1) Task coordination, such as dividing the work, share information, and discussing about the assigned task; (2) To resolve a conflict; (3) To Share information; (4) To Create a good interpersonal relationship between members; (5) To maintain the common understanding.

### **Diagonal Communication**

A form that occurs on different parts and levels. This is could be: (1) Requesting a suggestion and inputs from other sections; (b) Means of resolving conflicts that cannot be resolved through other communication form.

## Information and Communication Technology

Wood (2014) stated that ICT is a tools or media that capable of recording, moving, and working with information such as telephones, and new media like smartphone. In addition, according to Ruben & Stewart (2014), ICT enables faster message transmission than conventional media, and allows for communication between users despite time and geographical differences.

It then can be concluded that ICT helps the flow of information from one user to other users by minimizing the distortion of time and geographical. In other words, it helps to improve the communication process to be more effective and efficient. Based on many surveys such as (Nielsen Top-ten, Jakpat 2016) regarding the ICT, the writer can summarize that Instant Messenger, Video Conference, E-mail, Social networking are commonly used in organization nowadays.

## Effective Communication

A way to communicate that can deliver a message or information in accordance with what sender expected could be defined as effective communication.

According to Walter Lippman in the book by Effendy (2005) effective communication is a communication that have a right way so the content from the communication can be conveyed and understood by the recipient of the message.

In 2005, there was a case study by Towers Perrin about effective communication. The case study was held in a form of survey to 25,000 employees from different industries around the world with aim to defines effective communication from an employee perspective. They found out that a communication could be seen as effective by the employee if the communication: (1) Can inform and strengthen the plans of the organization; (2) Provide information to members; (3) Able to motivate members to advise management on organizational issues. (4) Can be a medium for discussion; (5) Ensure the information sharing.

This could mean, the finding is the need that the employees want from a communication channel. This is why ICT would be the way for an organization to accommodate those needs. There is a way that can be used to see if the

channel was able to meet the needs and whether the communication is effective. As stated by Tubbs and Moss, the measurements are: (1) Can be used to make an understanding in which an effective communication will be able to convey the message and understood clearly by the recipient in accordance with the intent of the sender; (2) Can be used to create a comfortable atmosphere to create a good interpersonal between members, it could said as effective communication; (3) Can be used to influencing other people thoughts; (4) The success of a communication can be seen from the ability to persuade someone; (5) Maintain a good social or interpersonal relations; (6) While communicating, we have to ensure that we have good relation with other people whom we trying to communicate. This is because with a bad relationship, a communication will not run in accordance with our expectations (7) Can be used to influence one's action.

The effectiveness of communication can be measured by the presence or absence of influence on the actions of a person who gets the message.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research method is a means to explore and deeply understand a phenomenon. The process involves interviews, conversations, observation and documentation to make a description of a phenomenon. This is supported by Gibbs (2008), who explain that qualitative research aims to deeply understand, describe, and explain a phenomenon. This method was used by the writer, as the writer aim to get deeper and detailed data about the uses of communication technology in internal communication.

In this study, the case study approach was chosen to explore, identify and gain a deeper insight on the uses of communication technology in internal communication. As stated by Schramm in Yin's book, a research with case study approach will produce an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. Therefore, this approach was suitable for the studies.

## Subject of the Studies

Swiss International Business Boot Camp (SIBBC) is a project by a Swiss Consulting Institute maintained by Zurich University of Applied Sciences - School of Management and Law (ZHAW). The student that taking part in the

project will be working on a consulting project for a Swiss Company in Indonesia. The interesting thing is the organization relies heavily on ICT (Instant Messenger and Video Conference) to maintain their internal communication. This is one of the reasons why the writer decided to choose this organization as the main subject of these studies.

Another reason is, the organization consists of the people from Indonesia and Switzerland. This means that the writer can see the phenomenon from the point of cultural view.

### **Data Collecting Technique**

The data on this research was collected using an in-depth interview, and observation technique. These data collecting techniques are fits for this study, as the aim is to provide a deeper understanding about the uses of Instant Messenger and Video Conference as a means of ICT within an organization. There are 5 (five) people from the organization that are interviewed by the writer. These interviewee(s) are chosen by the writer based on their roles and position within SIBBC. The collected data from observation will only be used to compare the data that gotten from interviews. The observation is the experience when the writer is work as one of team leader at the organization.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The utilization of ICT in the internal communication of an organization is always believed to have a positive influence on the performance and effectiveness of the organization. This could be true as those facts are also found in this study and also supported by the previous research. ICT was able to deliver messages faster and clear the barrier of time and geographical differences. This could be seen when the member of SIBBC was able to complete the given task and maintain their internal communication even though they are separated by distances, different timeframe and working from separate place.

As had been studied by Sias, Pedersen, Gallagher & Kopaneva (2012), the use of E-mail and Instant Messenger can strengthen interpersonal relationship between member in the organization. When asked about this matter, all the interviewee agreed that the uses of Instant Messaging and Video Conference could improve

their interpersonal relations with other team member in SIBBC. This would happen when both applications were used with intention to get close and know more about other team member, sharing and telling a stories, jokes or news.

In addition, other studies by Day, Paquet, Scott & Hambley (2012), shows that ICT introduce an easier way to maintain the flow of information within the organization. The writer found out that there is also same pattern with these findings. The use of Instant Messaging and Video Conference is allowing member to look or recap again the given information, result of the meeting, the news as soon as they need it. This is because the information within those applications are easier to emphasized by the sender and could be noted by the receiver themselves.

Another finding that could be found in this study is that there will be a tendency of information excess within the organizational. This is mentioned in the study by Jones (2002). Indeed, some interviewee stated that the repetition of information can be seen in the application. Such as same information, in the different application. Sometimes the excess in information could make team member feels overwhelmed and pressured, as they can also getting a wrong interpretation. For example, once happened in the Instant Messaging application, the team member could get wrong instruction as the information within the application are too much. It is really hard for them to scroll over to the top again and try to read slowly each statement and phrases. However, this can be prevented by appoint one person who oversees the information flows within the application and sorting out the flow of information.

According to the research by Golden & Fromen (2011), there would-be low-quality communication happening between in the subordinate who often communicate to the superiors with ICT compared to face-to-face. A different but similar thing found in this study. The interviewee said that the communication using Video Conference are similar like directly meet with the person, as it is also occurred in real time, can recognize each other, and able to see the expression. Even though it has similarity, the lack of physical figures can lead to the decrease of communication quality, as the both parties will

not actively be listening to each other (easily to get distracted).

In spite of that, the respondent said that the difficulties experienced while using the Instant Messenger and Video Conference for Internal Communication are arising from external factor. As in accordance with a journal by Venkantesh et. al (2016). To get an easier way to understand this, the writer has summarized those factors based on the findings into:

### **Technical factors**

Technical always means of equipment, supplies and environment. This factor heavily affecting the use of ICT for internal communication. As communication could not go well with poor internet connection, inadequate smartphone or a noisy background. This is seen in the uses of Video Conference in SIBBC. Sometimes slow internet connection in Indonesia often make a problem as sometimes the voice and the video cannot be heard nor seen by the other team member.

### **Content Factors**

Content is an important thing within communication. Therefore, members have to ensure that the content could easily understood by other members. In Instant Messenger, Content need to be short, clear, not ambiguous and have good arrangement. While on the other side, the content for Video Conference have to be delivered comprehensively, and clearly. In addition, as in the SIBBC, avoid using complex language and are rarely used in communication to avoid misunderstanding.

### **Cultural Factors**

The SIBBC is an organization composed of members with different cultures (cross-cultural). Of course, then the language, mindset, perception will vary in each team members. For example, there may be differences in way to communicate (within work life and daily life) from members who are from Switzerland with members from Indonesia. Some informants mentioned a difference in style of work, as stated by them that their team member from Swiss are more goal-oriented while team member from Indonesia are more laid-back and relation-oriented.

That's why the ability to communicate between cultures becomes a concern as well. Some cases occur when the information submitted by Indonesian team member to Swiss team member or vice versa, are sometimes difficult to understand by the recipient of the message because of different mindsets and perceptions.

### **Time Factors**

SIBBC is an organization that runs at different time-zone (Switzerland is GMT +2 whereas Indonesia GMT +7). Every member supposed to know and understand about this matter. For example, to not send messages at night except the urgent things.

### **Individual Factors**

Every individual in the organization has a different understanding of ICT. This study found that there are individuals who prefer face-to-face communication (conventional) and some choose to communicate through ICT. This is due to the differences in experience and perception of it, because of that an organization need to consider this when implementing ICT in the internal communication, as ICT need to be arranged in such way so that each member feels comfortable with it, and the communication could run effectively.

### **Social Factors**

Social is another factor in utilizing ICT within the organization. Individuals with certain environments will prefer to use ICT that suits with their environment. Commonly used application makes members easier to use it for internal communication, this is the main reason why SIBBC choosing Instant Messenger and Video Conferencing application as their means of internal communication. In addition, the organization need to put balance in the use of internal communication. Puts too much emphasis on the work side in the ICT, it will make member reluctant to use it for communicate and vice versa if too relaxed, the members will tend to be undisciplined. Therefore, a suitable organizational environment should be taken care of.

Furthermore, based on the findings. The writer formulates a way how to improve and ensure for effective use of Instant Messenger and

Video Conference for internal communication. In doing internal communication through Instant Messenger, organization need to make sure the content is short, clear and in detail without using a word that are hard to understand. Especially in sending a message related to work instruction. Do not send too much message in shorter time frame, this is because the tendency of members to miss in reading a stacking chat message. It is also important to pay attention to the tone of a message, avoid the use of inappropriate words or punctuation such as capitalization and exclamation marks unless it is necessary to use it. . This is due to the perception people may differ in reading the message. Language should also be considered especially in the cross-cultural environment. Avoid using elusive, or complicated words in the content of the messages.

While in communicating through Video Conference, make sure to deliver the message comprehensively, clearly and detailed. This application is perfect for discussing job matters that require lengthy discussions, this is because team member are easy to respond rather than in a Instant Messaging. As stated before, technical factors is greatly affecting the quality of message in it. Similar with Instant Messenger it is advised to pay attention to the uses of languages.

Based on the findings and analysis conducted, ICT was able to facilitate the needs of communication. As found in SIBBC, a communication that run through Instant Messaging and Video Conference able to effectively convey messages, creating and maintain interpersonal relations and also influencing member opinion and action. These can be seen as almost every communication activity done through the Instant Messaging and Video Conference.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted in this study, it is clear that the use of Instant Messenger and Video Conference for internal communication in SIBBC is a success. Both applications were able to facilitate their needs of internal communication In shorts, the ICT provides benefits in their internal communication.

There are several factors that need to be taken to account if organization wishes to

implement ICT to their internal communication such as Technical Factors, Content Factors, Cultural Factors, Time Factors, Individual Factors, and Social Factors.

As the use of ICT will always be growing in coming years, the next study can cover about the use of social media or other application for internal communication. They also examine further of those factors.

In overall, the use of ICT such as Instant Messenger and Video Conference for internal communication were assessed positively and able to facilitate the needs of communication in the organization. Even if there are obstacles that occurring, it is more likely to be caused by external factors outside the ICT itself. On top of that, ICT is great to be implemented in an organization as it already proved to make internal communication to be more effective and efficient.

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