

WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AND TOLERANCE FOR DISAGREEMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES WORKING IN BPO SECTOR

¹OUNNATHYA VASILI

¹Student – Under Graduate

¹Department of Psychology

¹St. Francis College for Women, Hyderabad, India

Abstract :

IndexTerms–

Introduction

Communication in the past decade has crossed various boundaries, not only with regard to government functioning, trade, but also businesses, employment, services, etc. Communication refers to the process of a human being responding to the symbolic behavior of other persons (Adler & Rodman, 1997). It is the process of conveying information from a sender to a receiver with the use of a medium in which the communicated information is understood the same way by both sender and receiver (Rubin, 1988). Communication can simply mean transferring information from one source to another human, animal, device, etc. The Cambridge Dictionary (2007) defines it as “an act of communicating with people” or “the process by which messages or information is sent from one place or person to another, or the message itself” or “Communication is also the exchange of information and the expression of feeling that can result in understanding”.

Effective or Strong communication helps in formation of social relations, bringing down of barriers between various communities, maintenance of clarity with regard to what is being said and understood, work related relationships, and every field which includes working/cooperating with another person. Communication need not be just vocal; it can be non-verbal, written, or symbolic/imagery.

Intrapersonal Communication: Intrapersonal communication means communicating with oneself (Lasch, 1995). It is an internal dialogue and may take place even in the presence of another individual. Intrapersonal communication has focused on the role of the self in the communication process that individuals communicate with themselves. (Quasiscience: communication, 2008)

Interpersonal Communication: Interpersonal communication refers to face-to-face communication between people (Dainton & Stafford, 2000). Interpersonal communication is the most common communication setting.

Small Group Communication: Small groups are commonly composed of a number of people who work together to achieve some common purposes. In a small group context, many more people have the potential to contribute to the group’s goals (Schultz, 1997).

Organizational Communication: Organizational communication pertains to communication within and among large, extended environments. This communication is extremely diverse in that organizational communication necessarily entails interpersonal encounters, public speaking opportunities, small group situations, and mediated experiences. Organizations, then, comprise groups that are goal directed (Daniels, Spiker & Papa, 1997).

Public Communication: Public communication occurs when a group becomes too large for all members to contribute. Hart (2005) comments of a major characteristic of public communication: the unequal amount of speaking, as one person or several people deliver remarks to the remaining members. This leads to a second characteristic of public settings: limited verbal feedback.

Mass Communication: Mass communication consists of messages that are transmitted to large audiences via broadcast and print media, such as newspaper, radio television and so on.

Intercultural Communication: Intercultural communication refers to the process of exchanging meaningful and unambiguous information across cultural boundaries, in a way that preserves mutual respect and minimize antagonism (Gonzalez, Houston & Chen, 2004). For this purpose, culture is a shared system of symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations and norms of behaviours. It refers to coherent group of people whether resident wholly or partly within state territories, or existing without residence in any particular territory. (Quasiscience: communication, 2008)

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Willingness to communicate can be defined as the probability of engaging in communication (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). Willingness to communicate can also be defined as “An individual’s readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons”. Willingness to communicate is one of the most important factors that enables the process of communication to take place smoothly. The concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) was originally conceived as a measure of how disposed native speakers of English were to engage voluntarily in classroom communication (McCroskey & Baer, 1985) but in the later years it has been brought into to general communication contexts. It is obvious that almost everyone is likely to respond to question posed directly but it is unclear as to how many are willing to communicate further or are ready to initiate a conversation to further the interaction. One’s willingness to communicate can be characterised by how well they know the person, common interests, interest in the person and the social setting where the interaction is taking place. On the other hand, avoidance is characterised by differences in interests, beliefs and in some cases, race or ethnicity. In a workplace environment, it is a requirement rather than an option for a person to be willing to communicate. Today, willingness to communicate with anyone and being able to converse freely with strangers is a skill that is often preferred by employers.

Disagreement

When two or people are communicating, it is evident that the conversation is characterised by multiple interests and opinions. In a lot of cases, conversations among people tend to have conflicting interest and beliefs. These conflicts among people are called **Disagreements**. The Cambridge Dictionary (2007) defines it as, “an argument or a situation in which people do not have the same opinion”. The Oxford Dictionary (2007) defines it as, “Lack of consensus or approval”. Disagreement need not just be conflicting interests, it can also be rejection, i.e., denying someone’s offer. Often conflicts and disagreement only arise when the parties involved in the conversation aren’t accepting of each other’s beliefs, interests, opinions and thoughts. Disagreements in the modern era are categorised on the basis of race, religion, political beliefs, finance and rights. People deal with disagreements in various ways which include aggression, blaming, name-calling and avoidance. Disagreements in workplace environments are not an alien situation. They arise as a result of miscommunication, personal conflict or in cases of difference of opinions. Multiple researches, studies, texts and studies have been made with regard to management of disagreement and conflict in workplace environment.

Tolerance for Disagreement (TFD)

Tolerance is defined as defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2007), “Willingness to accept behaviour and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them”. Tolerance is a concept characterised by disagreement. In a broad sense it can imply acceptance of various cultures, cultural norms, societal norms, rules and regulations, etc. Tolerance is something that is expected of in a society or groups in order to maintain order. **Tolerance for Disagreement** is one such concept which focuses on, up to what extent one can tolerate when other people disagree with what he believes is right or true. It is an ability to engage in a conversation or an interaction with those persons who have different opinions than the one that he possesses (John Spacey, 2016). A person who can deal with disagreement or conflict without experiencing high levels of anger or frustration tends to possess higher levels of tolerance towards disagreement. Tolerance for disagreement can vary vastly in people. The concept of tolerance for disagreement is often linked to levels of argumentativeness. People who are highly argumentative, i.e., as some people might describe them quarrelsome, tend to have lower levels of tolerance for disagreement. Lower levels of tolerance for disagreement is often characterised by anger, yelling, frustration, crying or any form of outrage when they are faced with disagreement.

Willingness to Communication and **Tolerance for Disagreement** are two such concepts that are linked to each other more often than not. They characterize the nature of the interaction, relationship between individuals partaking in the act and outcome of the interaction. It can be understood that a person who is willing to communicate with the others tolerance of disagreement can be high with the assumption that he or she has extensive interest in the topic or the person and is ready to negotiate, argue and understand the other with regard to the subject.

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Sector

BPO is an abbreviation for **Business Process Outsourcing**. In simple words, it means that part of outsourcing that involves contracting the operations and stands answerable for a business process to third party service-provider. In India, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is the fastest growing segment of the ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services) industry. Factors inclusive of financial system of scale, commercial enterprise threat mitigation, value gain, utilization improvement and superior competency have all result in the increase of the Indian BPO industry. Business technique outsourcing in India, which started across the mid-90s, has now grown via leaps and limits (Ganesh Bhojwani, 2017).

Review of Literature

A study was conducted by Kamlaitipattapong (2010) on ‘Willingness to communicate in a second language: A qualitative study of issues affecting Thai EFL learners from students’ and teachers’ points of view’. The theoretical framework of this study posits that WTC in the Thai EFL classroom context varies depending upon the immediate situation in the language classroom. Based on this theoretical framework, the study primarily investigates the students’ WTC in a second language within the classroom context. Also, it aims to understand what EFL teachers do in their teaching practices to promote students’ WTC and how these practices affect students’ WTC. The participants in this study were 29 undergraduate students, enrolled in five first level English speaking classes at two universities in Bangkok, Thailand. These students were selected from 84 students who completed a WTC questionnaire. The selection of the participants was based on their WTC scores. Five teachers from these classes also participated, three of whom were Thai and two were native English speakers. The proposed theoretical framework of the study was supported by the findings. Cultural orientation was found to be the basis of four identified variables underlying students’ WTC, classified as: Cultural Context, Social and Individual Context, Classroom Context, and Social and Psychological Context. Variables in the cultural context category highlighted two key principles underlying the norms of social interactions in Thai culture: the desire to establish a network of relationships and the need to maintain the hierarchical system embedded in the society. These two principles highlight the role of significant others over an individual’s decisions to interact or remain silent. In the social and individual context category, WTC was dependent on the role of significant others, as well as one’s personal characteristics and learning experiences. Within the classroom context, students’ WTC varied according to the influence of peer interlocutors, with whom the participants communicated. Also, teaching practices, reflecting language learning tasks and class management were found to affect students’ WTC. Finally, the social and psychological context comprised psychological variables (i.e., language anxiety, self-related beliefs, and goal orientations) that are affected by evaluations from significant others. Cultural orientation, emphasising the importance of significant others over students’ WTC was found to be relevant in all four WTC contexts.

A research on ‘An investigation of Willingness to Communicate, Communication Apprehension, and Self-esteem in the Workplace’ was conducted by Brittany Natalie Fulmer (2010). This project focuses on organization members that use communication as their principle tool for carrying out job duties and responsibilities. More specifically, this study examines the factors that impact the communication of inside and outside sales representatives. The goal of this research is to investigate willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, and self-esteem in daily life and in organizational settings. A total of 87 participants completed

questionnaires congruent with these three topics. Results suggest that differences in men and women and willingness to communicate in daily life or communication apprehension are not highly significant. Yet, there is a slight significance in differences when comparing sex and willingness to communicate in the workplace. A longitudinal study of self-esteem and goal success proved self-esteem was not a significant variable when discussing goal attainment within an organization.

A study was conducted by Hüseyin Özet. al. (2014) on 'Willingness to communicate of EFL learners in Turkish context'. This study reports on findings of an investigation into English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' (N = 134) perceptions of willingness to communicate (WTC) in Turkish context. The participants completed questionnaires on WTC, communication and affective factors. The findings revealed that 21.6% of the participants had high WTC, 13.4% had high communicative competence and 18.7% had high scores in communication apprehension. The results of structural equation modelling (SEM) also indicated that communication competence and communication apprehension were the strong predictors of WTC while motivational factors indirectly influenced WTC.

A study was conducted by Ivana Miloložac. al. (2014) on 'Tolerance for Disagreement in Students'. A Media university been founded in Koprivnica in the Republic of Croatia, offers three fields of specialisation: media design, media management and journalism. The sample of this study included 147 students enrolled in this university in 2012. The researchers wanted to determine the students' readiness to tolerate the standpoints of other people while disagreeing with them. The results show that the students of the Media university in Koprivnica tolerate disagreement during communication very well and that gender and age do not affect disagreement tolerance in any way.

'Examining the Relationship between Need to Belong, Tolerance for Disagreement, Attachment Style and Life Satisfaction' was a research conducted by Aoibhin O'Gallagher (2015) This study was conducted to assess to possible relationships between tolerance for disagreement, need to belong, attachment styles and if the relate to life satisfaction in an adult sample. Participants were (N=114) in total with (N= 67) females and (N=47) males. Independent samples t-test found there to be gender differences in need to belong ($M=-5.556$, $SE= 1.48$, $t(84.857) = -3.753$, $p < .0005$) and in tolerance for disagreement ($M= 4.08$, 98% CI [.132, 8.039], $t(112) = 2.047$, $p= .043$). Spearman's rho showed there was a negative correlation between need to belong and tolerance for disagreement ($R_s(112) = -.534$, $p < .0005$). A multiple regression showed it possible to predict life satisfaction from tolerance for disagreement, need to belong and attachment qualities secure, avoidance, ambivalence-worry and ambivalence-merger. ($F(6,107) = 8.201$, $p < .005$ adj. $R^2 = .28$). Spearman's rho's also showed correlations between attachment qualities and both need to belong and tolerance for disagreement.

A study conducted by Ms. Milli Baby (2016) 'Effect of Experiential Learning on Self-Esteem, Resilience and Tolerance for Disagreement'. This paper attempts to explore the role of experiential learning in groups on the participants Self-esteem, Resilience and Tolerance for disagreement. Sample consisted of undergraduate students (N=41) from a seminary located in Nagpur. The Pre-test result showed that over all, initial participant's responses fell within the normal ranges for self-esteem, resilience and tolerance for disagreement. Paired t test was computed for (N=41) who completed both the pre-test and post-test. These comparisons show a significant increase in means of self-esteem, resilience and tolerance for disagreement scores.

Research Methodology

Specific Objectives

1. To know if there is any relationship between willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement.
2. To know if variables like relationship with manager, type of shifts and relationships with people in their personal life impact their daily forms of communication and tolerance for disagreement;

General Objectives

1. To know if there is a relationship between certain independent variables like age, free hours available and willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement.
2. To know if there is any difference in willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement based on gender.
3. To understand if there is any relationship between selected subscales of willingness to communicate.

Hypotheses

H1: Levels of willingness to communicate and tolerance to disagreement are related to selected independent variables like age, free hours available, relationship with manager, type of shifts and relationship with people in personal life.

H2: Levels of willingness to communicate and tolerance to disagreement are related to each other.

H3: There exists a relationship between Willingness to communicate with friends and Willingness to Communicate in Group Discussions (sub scales of Willingness to communicate).

H4: There is a correlation between Willingness to communicate with strangers and Willingness to Communicate in Public Speaking situations (sub scales of Willingness to communicate).

H5: There exists difference in Willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement based on gender.

Population and Sample

The present study aims at those individuals who are currently working in any BPO sector (large or small) from the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. To get the sample, the researcher used random sampling method. The sample size has been determined by the institution as the research is conducted at an Under Graduate level.

Research Design

For the present study, the researcher used descriptive research design as it can reveal potential relationships thus setting the stage for more elaborate investigation later.

Data Collection

Data was collected from BPO sector employees following survey method. Surveys are usually questionnaires that are given away to them to fill personally.

Results

The mean score of willingness to communicate is 63.8 (SD= 22.1) and for tolerance for disagreement it is 41.8 (SD= 9.55). This means 49 per cent of respondents have medium levels of willingness to communicate and another 47 per cent are experiencing medium level of tolerance for disagreement in BPO sector. The correlation results indicate that there is a strong positive correlation between willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement ($r=.230$; sig. = 0.01). There is no correlation between independent variables relationship with manager, type of shifts and relationships with people in their personal life and willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement. However, age is negatively correlated with willingness to communication ($r=-.325$; sig. = 0.00) and tolerance for disagreement ($r=-.218$; sig. = 0.01). Another independent variable, free time available, had also been correlated with dependent variables. The results indicate there is a negative correlation between free time available and tolerance for disagreement ($r=-.175$; sig. = 0.041) and it is not related to willingness to communicate.

One more interesting finding in the present study is there exists a positive relation between Willingness to Communicate with friends and Willingness to Communicate in Group Discussions ($r=.166$; sig. = 0.05). There is also relationship between other subscales too. There is a positive correlation between Willingness to communicate with strangers and Willingness to Communicate in Public Speaking situations ($r=.822$; sig. = 0.00). The researcher used t-test to know if there is any difference in willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement based on gender. The results show that there is a difference in willingness to communicate with regards to gender ($t= 2.944$, $df= 98$, Sig. = 0.04) and there is statistical difference in tolerance for disagreement for the same. It can be interpreted that male has higher willingness to communication than female (**Male:** Mean= 70.03, SD= 20.2; **Female:** Mean= 58.3, SD= 22.08). Thus, it can be concluded that willingness to communicate and tolerance for disagreement do have an impact on the employees working in BPO sector.

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