

Work Itself and Communication on Employee Engagement Case Study: The Students under CEMP Project

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Abstract. This research aims at investigating the influence of Work itself and communication on employee engagement toward the students under Creative Entrepreneurial Marketing Project (CEMP). The researcher used purposive sampling as the methods to survey 187 people. The questionnaires are used as the tool. The statistics used for analysis are standard deviation and multiple regression analysis. The result of the research showed that work itself and communication affects the work engagement of the students. The communication of the receivers had the most impact on engagement, followed by the channel of communication, source and work itself, respectively, with the statistical significance at .05.

Keywords: Work Itself, Communication, Work Engagement.

1. Introduction

Bangkok University is one of the most distinguished universities in Thailand. It was founded on 25 December 1962, and has since been producing graduates who are highly successful both at national and international levels. The philosophy of Bangkok University is to produce graduates with knowledge as well as merits, who have creativity, quality, leadership and entrepreneurial spirit so that they can catch up with the changing world and live happily.

The faculty of Business Administration started at the same time of the foundation of the university. Its curriculum aims at providing students with chances to practice under the real situation, as well as develop their own skills, and learn to use the technology so as to be qualified graduates both in the aspects of academics and experience, and be ready for the business administrator in the world of new business administration, and be respects by both private and public sectors.

In order to fulfill the vision of the University, focusing on Creative Thinking and Creating Entrepreneurial Spirit for our students, the faculty of Business Administration provides the learning process under the program called Creative Entrepreneurial Marketing Project: CEMP. The project provides the students of Marketing, Finance, and Computer Business with a chance to create their own business, starting from designing products and packages, creating brands, planning marketing communication, as well as creating market strategies so that their products are successful in the real markets.

Under this project, students are divided into 12 business teams. Each team consists of executives including team manager and vice team manager; and operations including sales, finance, and information technology department. From the previous CEMP, students have faced many problems. These problems are that the lack of skills to work on the assigned tasks, insufficient communication, lack of teamwork and coordination. This is because the students are from different majors, thus they have little work engagement. This affects the performance of the project.

This research showed that work engagement is essential. Moreover, work itself and effective communication have the impact on work engagement. Bakker concluded the result from the research employee engagement and found that not only does employee engagement impacts the performance, but it also leads to the engagement to the organization and improve work relationships [1]. Furthermore, the leader of the organization plays a role in encouraging work engagement. This must begin with putting the right man on the right job. Also, clear communication will make employees understand the expectation of the company and thus bringing out the good performance to meet the expectation. In other words, this is because of

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effective communication [2]. Meanwhile, Alfes and *et. al* indicated that the balance between the valuable and appropriate work has an impact on the level of work engagement[3].

This research was conducted to investigate the influence of work itself and communication on work engagement of the students so that the concerned parties can use the result of the research as a working norm for creating better projects.

2. Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to investigate the influence of work itself and communication on work engagement of the students under CEMP.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Work Itself

Work itself means challenging and interesting work that ones can be responsible for and achieve [4]. This research used the thought and theory called Motivational Factors of Federick Herzberg. This theory is concerned with the work having positive impacts on work satisfaction, thus resulting in a better work performance. After studying the relating theories, the researcher found that work itself and the motivation of employees are highly related, encouraging employees to work efficiently [5].

3.2. Communication

Communication means the process of sending or exchanging of information, thought, or opinion from one person to another. According to this definition, there must be source, receiver, message, and channel of communication in the process [6]. This research used the thought and theory of communication relating to the 4 elements of communication (SMCR) proposed by David K. Berlo[7]. The researcher also investigated other relevant researches and found out that Kriangsak carried out the study on the development of the efficiency of communication in the organization. He found that organizations currently use printed media for the channel of communicating information and news internally. He recommended that order to improve communication within the organization where there are many layers of communication and there might be the missing or distortion of the message, the organization should attach the hard copy of the information, not just communicating verbally. In order to improve the communication, the organization should also provide personnel being responsible for information technology. This will help improve internal communication. Essentially, there should be channels of communication to reach those not regularly working in office via mobile network such as WAP and SMS. Also, there should be EXTRANET and VPN to connect the communication system, making it faster and more convenient. Equally important, there should be the training for developing staff to use the new technology and equipment[8].

3.3. Work Engagement

Work engagement means the relationships between the employees and the organization. It's the attitude or the feeling the members have toward the organizations, feeling that they are connected, acknowledged, and be part of the organization. Therefore, they have faith and loyalty to the organization, together with the willing to bring out the best to achieve the objectives of the organization. They also want to maintain the membership of the organization, and perform the behaviors indicating that they are part of the organization and ready to be dedicated to the set targets, as well as strongly motivated to keep the relationship with the organization [9].

The researcher used the thought and theory on employee engagement of The Gallup Organization proposed by Dr. George Gallup. The theory focuses on the attitudes of the employees that influence employee's morale and the overall performance of the [10].

The researcher investigated relevant studies and found out that the factors relating to positive employee engagement are the policy of the organization, the challenges and independence of work, compensation and benefits, work security, types of work, work opportunity and career path, work atmosphere and relationship, employee development, as well as leadership and administration [9].

4. Methodology

4.1. Population and Sampling

The populations in this project are the interns in marketing, finance and information technology department under CEMP. They are the 3rd students of marketing major under Outstanding Student Program: OSP, and the 4th year students from marketing, finance and computer businessmajor of the faculty of business administration, Bangkok University. The total numbers of the students are 196[11].The size of the sampling in the research is equal to 187 populations and purposive sampling was used in the research.

4.2. Tools

The questionnaire is divided into 3 parts. Part 1 asks the general information of the recipients, such as sex, age, year of education, major, study performance (grade point average), product brand of the team, position and duty in the team. Part 2 asks the current situation of the communication in the team [8][12][13].Part 3 asks the engagement in the team[13], [14]. The questions in part 2 and 3 use the 5 rating scales of Likert scale for measuring the levels of opinions[15].The recipients can choose from 1, meaning least agree, to 5, meaning most agree.

The researcher checked the reliability of the questionnaires using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The reliability of the questions on the communication is equal to 0.833 and the reliability of the questions on engagement is equal to 0.793. The value of reliability over 0.70 indicates that the questionnaires are reliable, thus suitable for the survey field [16].

4.3. Statistics Used for Information Analysis

In analyzing the information, the statistics used in this research are mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression analysis by Enter method to find the influence of work itself and elements of communication on employee engagement.

5. Result

In surveying 187 recipients of the questionnaires, the proportion of male and female recipients is almost equal (50%). The majority of the recipients are 21 years old (56.7%), 4th years students (73.3%), marketing major (74.3%), grade point average of 2.51-3.50 (73%). The positions in the team are executives (12.8%) and operations, including marketing department (64.2%), finance department (11.8%), and information technology department (11.2%), respectively.

5.1. Work itself, communication and employee engagement of the students under CEMP

When considering the engagement of the intern students, it turned out that their overall engagement is high ($\bar{x} = 3.96$, S.D.= .491). The students in the executives team has the highest engagement score ($\bar{x} = 4.21$, S.D.= .458), followed by the students in the operations team ($\bar{x} = 3.92$, S.D.= .486). As for communication, it turned out that the students perceived the channels of communication as the most important factor ($\bar{x} = 3.97$, S.D.= .554), followed by receivers ($\bar{x} = 3.89$, S.D.= .522), sources ($\bar{x} = 3.85$, S.D.= .582), and messages ($\bar{x} = 3.72$, S.D.= .404).

Table 1: The result of linear regression in the form of multiple regression analysis on the influence of work itself and communication on the engagement of the intern student

Variables influencing work engagement	B	SE	β	T	Sig.
Communication Source	.158	.052	.187	3.04 3*	.003
Channel of communication	.187	.062	.212	3.04 3*	.003
Receiver	.346	.061	.367	5.66 7*	.000
Types of assigned work	.229	.076	.156	2.99 3*	.003
R ² = .511 ; adj R ² = .498 ; F=37.897 ; P < .05					

* the statistical significance at .05

The linear regression in the form of multiple regression analysis using Enter method showed that engagement can be explained by work itself and communication with the statistical significance at .05 ($F=37.897$ and $Sig. = .000$). By this the work itself and communication can explain the variance of engagement at 49.80 per cent (adj R Square = .498), the remaining 50.2 per cent are the result of other variables not used for consideration as shown in table 1.

When investigating the statistical significance of the coefficient of all independent variables, it turned out that communication and work itself influence engagement at the statistical significance of .05. By this, in terms of communication, receivers have the greatest impact on work engagement ($\beta = .367$), followed by channels of communication ($\beta = .212$), sources ($\beta = .187$), and work itself ($\beta = .156$).

6. Conclusion and Discussion

The result of the research is aligned with those found by Rangsan Uammee that work itself is related with employee's motivation to work for the organization, thus encouraging employees to bring out the best performance to achieve the goals of the organization [5].

It also agrees with the research by Salwana Hasanee about positive factors relating to employee engagement, which included that work itself impacts employee engagement with the organization, and that the leaders or the executives of the organization have more engagement than other general employees [9].

As for communication, the result of the research is in line with that of Kriangsak Chedeepaeng, who investigated the development of effective communication within the organization. The research found that each organization should have the appropriate medium for communication. Also, in order to have correct information, the communication should be clear and be in written form. Moreover, there should be personnel being responsible for the communication [8].

Overall, considering the performance of the students under CEMP, the researcher found that the executives or the management of each team are directly encouraged by project advisors (professors) by means of regular formal meetings where the team leaders need to give a presentation of their performance every week.

In the meanwhile, the operations in each team do not directly get information, news, recommendations, and encouragement to have engagement in the assigned job from project advisors, but informally from the team managers who are their peer students, thus being uncomfortable to communicate where orders are necessary. This makes it difficult to achieve the goals of each team.

7. Recommendations

- The result of the research should be applied; put the right man on the right job. For example, selling should be the duty of students from marketing major.
- There should be the adjustment in communication to be more modern and efficient. The team manager should have a way in communicating or ordering in written forms using e-mail, social media, or mobile application. They also should recheck the understanding.
- There should be factors that respond basic needs, create relationships and engagement in the team. For example, there should be a time-frame and a clear target, as well as a rewarding system for those who achieve the sales target.

8. Recommendation for Further Use of the Research

- There should be a continually annual research on CEMP.
- There should be research on factors influencing the engagement of the students under CEMP, such as work engagement.
- More simulation result compared the other method will be showed in the further study.

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