

ABSTRACT:-

Employees play a very important role in building an organization. They have the most significant contribution to be made through their communication skills. Every employee whether manager, clerk, data entry operator, give their invaluable time to the organization. More than 9-10 hours in a day is spent in office work. It becomes mandatory for the employees to share their opinions, views and experiences among their peer group. Employee relations is an important component of human resource management practices followed in all types of industries, private and public. Communications at work place has to be maintained in a sophisticated and decent manner.



Employee relations and communications has received the attention of managers in the recent years. With the increase in MNCs, globalisation of the economy has put pressure on the top management to involve employees in decision making and problem solving strategies. The underlying theme of this report is that managing the employment relationship remains central to good HR practice. The emphasis of employee relations continues to shift from institutions to relationships, but employee relations skills and competencies are still critical to achieving performance benefits. The focus now needs to be on gaining and retaining employee commitment and engagement.

A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR IN HYDERABAD AND SECUNDERABAD



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KEYWORDS:

Communication skills, Employee relations, Globalisation, MNCs, Decision making, Employee commitment and engagement.

Golden Research Thoughts

INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal relationships at work can contribute in subtle yet visible ways to career and job success. There is a direct correlation between happiness, motivation and productivity and having friends at work. Forty-six percent of professionals worldwide believe that work friends are important to their overall happiness. In fact, 67 percent of the millennials are likely to share personal details including salary, relationships and family issues with co-workers. In India, millennials said that relationships at workplace impact them in a positive way, making them feel happy (62%), motivated (56%) and productive (44%) while 28% in the age group of 55-65 said friendships with colleagues have no bearing on their work performance.

Employee relations and communications have a very important role to play in building healthy atmosphere at work place. It helps in inculcating a feeling of oneness and unity among workforce. To encourage free flow of ideas, suggestions and opinions from employees, it is necessary for the managers to have an open channel of communication among the staff members. Irrespective of the type, size or nature of the organization, the Human Resource manager should play a role of facilitator to build positive employee relations.

MEANING AND DEFINITION OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Employee relations refer to a broad concept of trust, confidence and mutual understanding between the employer and employee at workplace. Communications refer to the network for free and frank exchange of suggestions and views among the management and the employees. Both the concepts are independent and interdependent.

For fostering good relations among employer and employee, communication plays a central role. Similarly, for the success of communication at organizational level, it is important that the manager and employee share trust and confidence in their mutual relationship.

For the success of one, the availability of other is mandatory. An organization is known for its pool of human resources rather than just profits. Human resources are regarded as the most talented and knowledgeable factors of production. Without their active participation and involvement, no organization can survive in the turbulent market competition.

IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

The present research has highlighted the importance of good employee relations in business:

- Managers view the participation of employees as a tool to increase productivity.
- The informal climate at workplace is strongly associated with employee satisfaction.
- Employee commitment and engagement are linked to superior business performance.
- Electronic media plays important role in project teams and joint consultation.
- Lack of enthusiasm by managers and employees acts as a constraint in employee relations.
- The psychological contract model, suggests that HR practices strongly affect the way people feel about their work. Employees' trust in the organisation, their sense of being fairly treated and the extent to which they believe their employer has delivered on the implicit deal between them, affects their attitudes towards job satisfaction, commitment, work-life balance and the state of employee relations.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

The need and importance of employee relations and communications arises from the basic fact that "Human resources are like natural resources; they're often buried deep. You have to go looking for them, they're not just lying around on the surface. You have to create the circumstances where they show themselves." –Ken Robinson. The time has come where the managers should regularly gauge how the employees are feeling about their company, aligning their individual, personal dreams to the larger business vision.

AIM OF THE STUDY:

The aim of the report is to

- profile the decline in formal industrial relations work in organizations
- describe some of the current work that HR professionals carry out under the heading of employee relations
- stimulate debate about some key issues for HR professionals

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the role and importance of employee relations and communications in public sector.
2. To study the role and importance of employee relations and communications in private sector.
3. To make a comparison between the extent of employee relations and communications between public and private sector.

HYPOTHESES

Ho: There is no difference between public and private sector with regards to extent of employee relations and communications.

Ha: There is a significant difference between public and private sector with regards to extent of employee relations and communications.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Scope of the study

The present study was conducted in 16 companies from Public and Private sector organizations in and around Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The nature of industries included manufacturing, service and banks.

Population of the study

The population of the study includes 28,650 employees working in the organizations chosen for the research study.

Sample

The sample included 220 employees working in the department of Human Resources having more than 5 years of experience.

Sample size

The sample size includes 50 employees working as Human Resource Managers in the organizations chosen as the sample for the study.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Primary Data

The primary data were collected through Delphi method, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). An explanation of the research instruments is presented below.

Delphi Technique

To gather opinion of experts in Human Resource Management Delphi Technique has been put to use.

Questionnaire

Based on a review of relevant literature and personal interviews with HR managers in the field, the final form of questionnaire was prepared.

Mode of Questionnaire Development

Multiple choice questions were employed with Likert scales so that respondents could indicate the 'intensity' of their attitude towards each aspect of their job. The Likert scale had a range of options from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' where 1 stands for -Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly Agree.

Structure of the Questionnaire

A detailed explanation, and a copy of the questionnaire, is available in Appendix I. Section (A) Demographic Information This part sought respondent’s demographic details: age, gender, the state they work for, their experience and qualifications. Section (B) Employee Relations and Communications.

Secondary Data

Secondary data has been collected from journals, magazines, books, articles , websites etc.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis and interpretation is divided into two sections. Section I includes the demographic issues covered before embarking upon actual analysis of the data. Section II is pertaining to Data Analysis. The sample selected for the purpose of the study is on:-

For the purpose of study a sample of 16 organizations have been selected of which 9 fall under private sector category and the remaining 7 are public sector companies.

For the purpose of data collection a sample size of 50 respondents were chosen consisting of 27 from private sector and 23 from public sector organizations as shown below:-

	Top Level Managers	Middle Level Managers	Total
Public	7	16	23
Private	9	18	27
Total	16	34	50

Demographic profiles of the respondents such as gender, age ,educational qualifications and work experience has been taken as shown below:-

The first factor considered was gender. As seen from Table. 1; 18 employees were females and 32 were males constituting 36% and 64% respectively. The demographic profile is Diagrammatically presented at Figure.1

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Males	32	64
Females	18	36

Table.1. Classification of the respondents on the basis of gender (N=50)

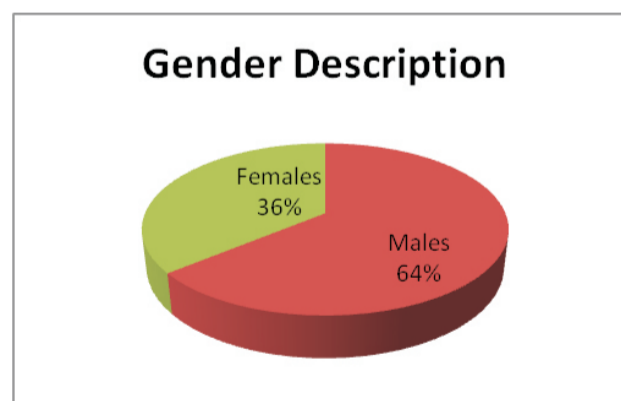


Figure.1: Classification of the respondents on the basis of gender (N=50)

The pie chart shows incidentally the minimum qualification of the respondents is degree. The second factor in demographic variables is work experience. The work experience is broadly grouped into 3 groups ,ie., Group I is less than 10 years, Group II is 11-20 and 21- 30 to III group.The number of employees frequency and percentage can be seen from Table 2

Total Work Experience in years	Frequency	Percentage
0-10	8	16
11-20	22	44
21-30	20	40

Table2. Classification of the respondents on the basis of work experience (N =50)



Figure.2:Classification of the respondents on the basis of work experience (N =50)

It could be seen from the Figure.2. that 8 employees have work experience ranging from 0-10 years and constitute 16 % of total number of employees. 22 employees have work experience ranging from 11-20 years and they constitute 44% of sample. The remaining 20 employees have work experience ranging between 21-30 years. Incidentally they constitute 40% of the total sample.

The third factor considered in demographic variables is educational qualifications which show the level of proficiency of the respondents.

Educational Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Degree Level	4	8
P.G. Level	45	90
Ph.D Level	1	2

Table.3 Classification of the respondents on the basis of educational qualifications (N =50)

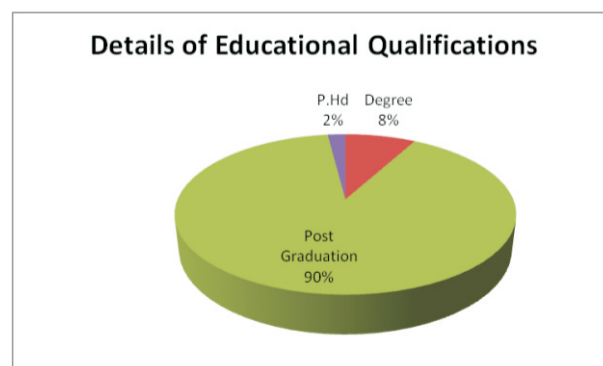


Figure.3. Classification of the respondents on the basis of educational qualifications (N =50)

As evident from the Table.3. the respondents were classified in three categories based upon their educational background. 4 employees constitute 8 % in the category of graduates and 45 responded who happens to be post-graduates and are 90 % of the total respondents. Lastly one doctorate constitute 2 % of the sample.

The fourth factor is grouping of ages of the respondents into three categories [see Table.4]. The table shows 20 per cent of employees come under the group 25-35 years, 56% of employees who from the bulk of employees are of age group 36-45 years and the remaining 24 % fall under the category of age group 46 and above. The distribution of employees based age groups can be Seen from Pie chart.[Figure.4]

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
25-35	10	20
36-45	28	56
46 & above	12	24

Table.4. Classification of the employees on the basis of Age group (N=50)

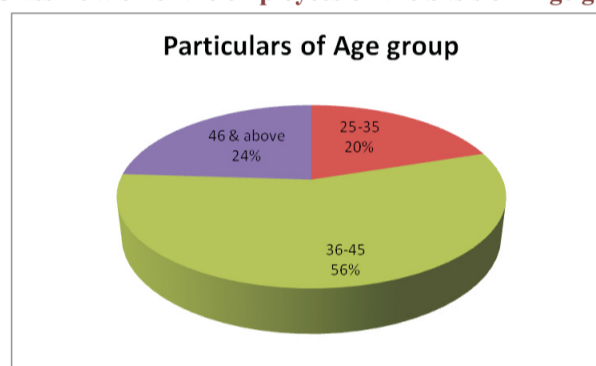


Figure.4. Classification of the employees on the basis of Age group (N=50)

To support the objectives of the study the following question has been analysed to know the level of responses from the employees.[Please check the ANNEXURE I for the list of questions].

How efficient your HR Department is in maintaining cordial relationship among its employees?

Sector	Strongly disagree[SDA]	Disagree[DA]	Neutral[NU]	Agree[AG]	Strongly agree[SA]
Public[%]	0	2.3	14.2	54	28.5
Private[%]	0	0	4.1	39.5	56.2

Table.5 Views of employees on Employee relations and communication

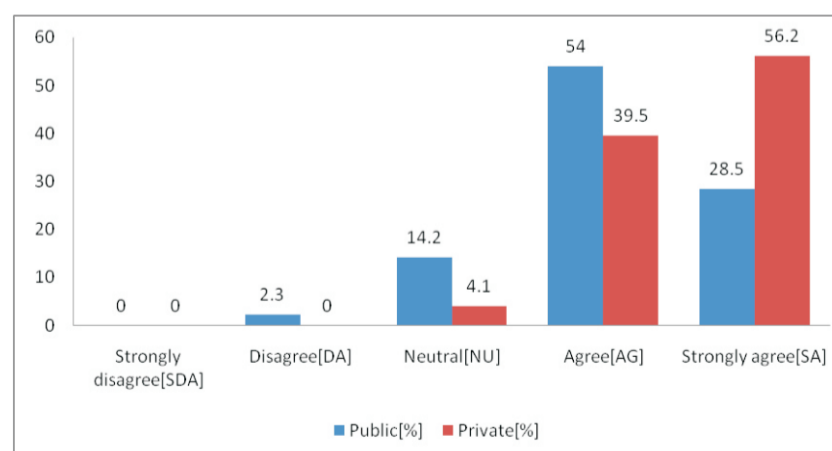


Figure.5: Level of agreement on Employee relations and communications in percentages

Figure.5. depicts in public sector 28.5% strongly agree whereas in private sector 56.2% of respondents strongly agree employee relations and communications are efficient in their organizations.

	Public [mean]	Private [mean]	T-Statistic [p-value]	Remark	Chi-square	Remark
Q.How efficient your HR Department is in maintaining cordial relationship among its employees?	3.1	4.5	2.02	significant	10.7	significant

Equation.1. Independent Sample T-Test W.R.T. Level of agreement on the Employee relations and communications

Calculated chi-square value 10.79 >9.49, Under test statistic, the calculated “t” value is 2.02.is greater than 1.79. Accept Ha. Reject Ho.

FINDINGS:

Employee relations and communications have been found more sound and effective in private (m=4.5) when compared to its public counterparts (m=3.1). Long lines of hierarchy in public sector act as a barrier in effective communication between manager and subordinate. Moreover, communication is apparently often one way process. As can be seen in the above data analysis and interpretation, the extent of employee relations is more effective in private sector when compared to public sector. Good communication is very important to maintain relations with employees, clients and customers and the stakeholders. Stakeholders play an important role as advocates, sponsors, partners and agents of change. Much has been written about employee –employer relationship and their alignment with the stakeholders’ needs in private sector . Many famous companies like Toyota, Apple, LG ,to name a few ; have built strong reputations based on clear, cohesive values and cultures. They have dedicated relationship managers and strategies in place to improve and develop employee relations. However, employee relations and communications with stakeholders in the public sector still lags behind.

SUGGESTIONS:

Good communication is vitally important to stakeholder management. In particular, communication needs to be a two-way process. Stakeholders want to feel that their views are listened to and acted upon – or to know why their advice has not been used. Public sector organisations should listen to their stakeholders, most need to give timely feedback to stakeholders how they are acting on their views. The findings, more and more, particularly among senior employees reveal that they want regular, short and pithy communication. It is also imperative that communications should be relevant and useful. Stakeholders want communication to be responsive to their needs and linked to their agenda. Increasingly, stakeholders want to receive communication via email, but this should be in addition to regular informal and formal communication such as phone calls and meetings. Informal communications in particular are central to maintaining strong relationships.

Conclusions: Employee relations and communications has become a tool for employee engagement. The time has come to materialize this concept. However, for an employee relations’ specialists, it is a ‘bigger picture’ altogether with a strategic perspective. It means being familiar with skills, techniques including mediation and communications. It offers a framework for analyzing employee attitudes and behaviours. Employees should align their aspirations with those of organizational objectives. However, this may also mean, asserting employee interest and agenda in a strong and effective manner. This may not fit well with a management culture still based on ‘command and control’: it’s a genuinely transformational message. But without some significant progress in this direction, both high-performance working and strategic business partnering are unlikely to succeed.

FURTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTED:

The idea of the psychological contract is fundamental to most models of the link between people management and business performance (including those adopted by Purcell and Sirota). Further research may be needed that looks inside the ‘black box’ and addresses how trust,

fairness and delivery are successfully managed by organisations, despite the financial and

commercial pressures that threaten to undermine them. These issues can, of course, also be found reflected (or submerged) in traditional industrial relations thinking and practice, but the critical shift in recent years has been to a clear focus on the performance effect. Despite the dramatic changes in the institutional framework and players discussed above, the basic psychology of the workplace moves more slowly and needs continuing care and attention if the organization is to raise its management performance.

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ANNEXURE I

Part A {Respondent Details}

Name: _____ Gender: _____
 Designation: _____ Age in years: _____
 Organisation: _____ Educational qualifications _____
 Total work experience in years: _____

Part-B

How efficient your HR Department is in maintaining cordial relationship among its employees?

1	Do you agree in your organization there is one position responsible for overseeing and coordinating all employee relations and communication activities?	1	2	3	4	5
2	Do you agree your company has policies that state the organization's employee relations philosophy?	1	2	3	4	5
3	Do you accept all these policies should be condensed in employee handbook?	1	2	3	4	5
4	Do you agree there should be formal orientation for new employees?	1	2	3	4	5
5	Do you agree employees should be given opportunity to exchange information with superiors as well as assimilate information being transmitted from top down?	1	2	3	4	5
6	Do you agree there should be forums that allow for regular interaction and information exchanges between employees and management?	1	2	3	4	5