

**Designing and Implementing ODI to Improve Communication and Coordination:
A Case Study Standard Manufacturing Co., Ltd., Secretarial Section**

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Abstract

This is a research project with a proposed ODI to improve the communication and coordination between the secretarial section and other departments. The researcher designed an appropriate OD Intervention to improve communication and coordination. The first intervention was designing a manual and provided training to the departments who coordinated directly with the secretarial section. The second intervention involved communication training for the secretarial section. This study used quantitative research method. It consisted of two sets of questionnaire used for secretarial section and other departments. The statistical analysis was applied to analyze the data to obtain the mean, percent, and standard deviation. T-Test was used to measure the effect of the OD interventions between the pre and the post sessions. The OD interventions were implemented in three weeks. The results of the findings reveal that the designed interventions significantly impacted communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments. The training for improving communication skills at secretarial section also had a significant effect.

Key Words: communication, coordination, supportive role

Introduction

The secretary has a supportive role in the workplace. Nowadays, effectiveness of organization is needed to support the higher competition. The researcher, as a secretary to CEO was interested in improving the communications in terms of verbal, non-verbal, and written, and coordination in terms of workflow and time speed. As the secretarial section works closely with the CEO who takes action for authorizing and approving all documents and processes in organization, the researcher saw this opportunity to design and implement ODI for better results..

The study was conducted at the Standard Manufacturing Co., Ltd. The company mainly produces chemical products like household cleaning products, air freshener, insecticides in aerosol products, car care products, and cosmetic products.

Research Objectives

- To determine the current situation of communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments.
- To design and implement the appropriate OD Interventions that will improve communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments.
- To determine the initial impact of OD Intervention on communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments.
- To determine the difference between Pre and Post OD Intervention on communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments.

Research Questions

1. What is the current situation of communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments?
2. What is the appropriate OD Interventions that will improve communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments?
3. What is the initial impact of OD Intervention on communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments?
4. What is the difference between Pre and Post OD Intervention on communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant initial impact of ODI on improving communication
Ha1: There is significant initial impact of ODI on improving communication
Ho2: There is no significant initial impact of ODI on improving coordination
Ha2: There is significant initial impact of ODI on improving coordination

Review of Literature

The purpose of communication is for the senders to make the message sent to the receivers clear and have the same understanding. Communication will be successful with the senders and receivers have the same understanding (Aljilani A. 2012). Effective communication is a building block of successful organizations.

Types of Communication

This research referred to these types of communication namely: verbal, non-verbal, and written (Aljilani A. 2012). Communication when effective will help organization increase productivity, improve the atmosphere at work, and can decrease the turnover rate of employees (Holt M. & Media D., 2015).

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication means using voice, words to communicate by face-to-face and via phone. It is very important to know how to make good verbal communication in order to get the work done and foster good relationships between senders and receivers. The Queensland Government published how to make good verbal communication by using positive language, using “I” statement rather than “You” statement. For example; *“I need to get more information”*, not *“You need to give me more information.”*

Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal is a communication without words (CR Education). It is a body language that can transfer information from senders and be interpreted by receivers. Using body language create meaningful of communication, then it is important to using positive signs such as eye-contact, polite movement, and etc.

Written Communication

Written communication means all words that are written and sent to other sides. In this study, the researcher focused only on emails between the secretarial section and other departments. Ashley D. Manker shared the advantage and disadvantage of written communication that makes the researcher aware of the results when designing the intervention. The advantages were: no need for personal contact saves money, and written proof. The disadvantages were delay in communication, lack of secrecy.

Coordination

Coordination is important in arranging job tasks as a secretary. Actually a good coordinator can also perform well as an administrator or even a manager since he/she would need to handle the stress and unexpected issues that may occur during coordinating with colleagues (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 2013). The researcher prioritized coordination to be an area needed to be improved in terms of workflow and time speed. The importance of coordination is to make things flow together and also making jobs done on time all before the time ends perfectly are can make more productivity.

Workflow

Cook R. (2007) described that workflow as making major improvements in the organization that mixes humans, machines, documents and other information. Cook also explained that workflow is about thinking out how the process would flow at work that is to make people interact efficiently. Workflow can also decrease the delays which damage customer relationship. In the secretarial section, efficient workflow as possible supported the smooth operations of the organization.

Time Speed

Aside from the workflow of the process, time is what secretarial section be should concerned with fast service. Slow coordination causes delays which makes the organization ineffective (Bass, 2015)

Improving Communication

Talomson (2014) presented the Mediation Role of Trust on the Relationship between Virtual Communication and Knowledge Sharing and the Initial Impact on ODI: A Quasi-experimental Study of the Thailand Appreciative Inquiry Network (AI Thailand), where ODI was implemented providing training to the leader of organization and using new tools to increase virtual communication between AI Thailand and its members. The first tool was a new website attached to AI Thailand website. The other tools included the web board, Facebook, and Virtual Communication activities that made the members feel more interested. The study was concerned with the reality that hi-tech environments influence people.

Improving Coordination

There is a limited source of researches which has been done about improving coordination in organization. An article published by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, (2000) on Improving Coordination, Disaster Preparedness Training Program presented the spectrum of coordination activities, identifying barriers to coordination, and coordination techniques. The article did not show whether the techniques supported improving coordination or not, but this could clarify that coordination is thought of and people in organization would like to improve it for better work.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study shows communication skill, coordination skill, and customer satisfaction were two variables, consisting of communication skill coordination skill.

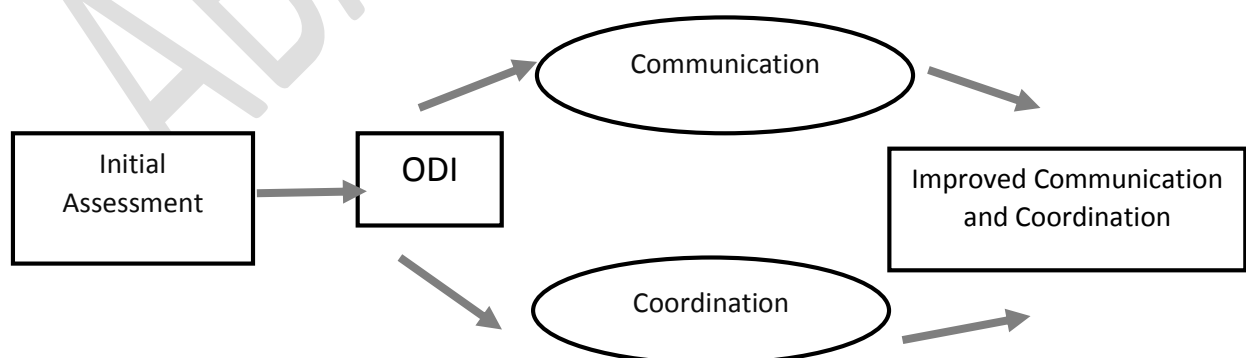


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Respondents

The Respondents who answered the pre and post questionnaire were from same group of 48 persons from the manager level, supervisor level, and staff level. This group of people also participated as trainees who used the designed manual.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed with the following details.

Demographic information of respondents

The demographic information of respondents in this study included gender, education background, length of employment, and position as shown on the following tables.

Table 1
Respondents' Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	12	25.0
	Female	36	75.0
	Total	48	100.0

Table 2
Respondents' Education Background

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Below Bachelor's Degree	13	27.1
	Bachelor's Degree	31	64.6
	Master's Degree or above	4	8.3
	Total	48	100.0

Table 3
Respondents' Length of Employment

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-5 years	30	62.5
	6-10 years	9	18.8
	more than 10 years	9	18.8
	Total	48	100.0

Table 4

Respondents' Position

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Department Manager	7	14.6
	Department Supervisor	8	16.7
	Department Staff	33	68.8
	Total	48	100.0

Table 5

Assistant to secretary's Demographic

Gender	Education Background	Length of Employment	Position
Female	Bachelor's Degree	1-5 years	department staff

RQ1: What is the current situation between secretarial section and other departments?

The highest average mean from pre-questionnaire survey of other department part was divided in to 2 parts which were communication and coordination. The highest average mean for communication was 4.83 (SD = 0.975) "Secretarial section uses proper language for communication". The lowest average mean was 4.25 (SD = 0.957) "Secretarial section is able to manage the conflicts with other departments".

For coordination the statement of "When seeking any assistance from secretarial section, they consistently provide good cooperation" got the highest average mean at 4.92 (SD= 0.919) "Agree". The statement "I will inform the secretarial section every time when I am not be able to participate the management review meeting" got the lowest average mean at 4.67 (SD = 1.038) "Agree".

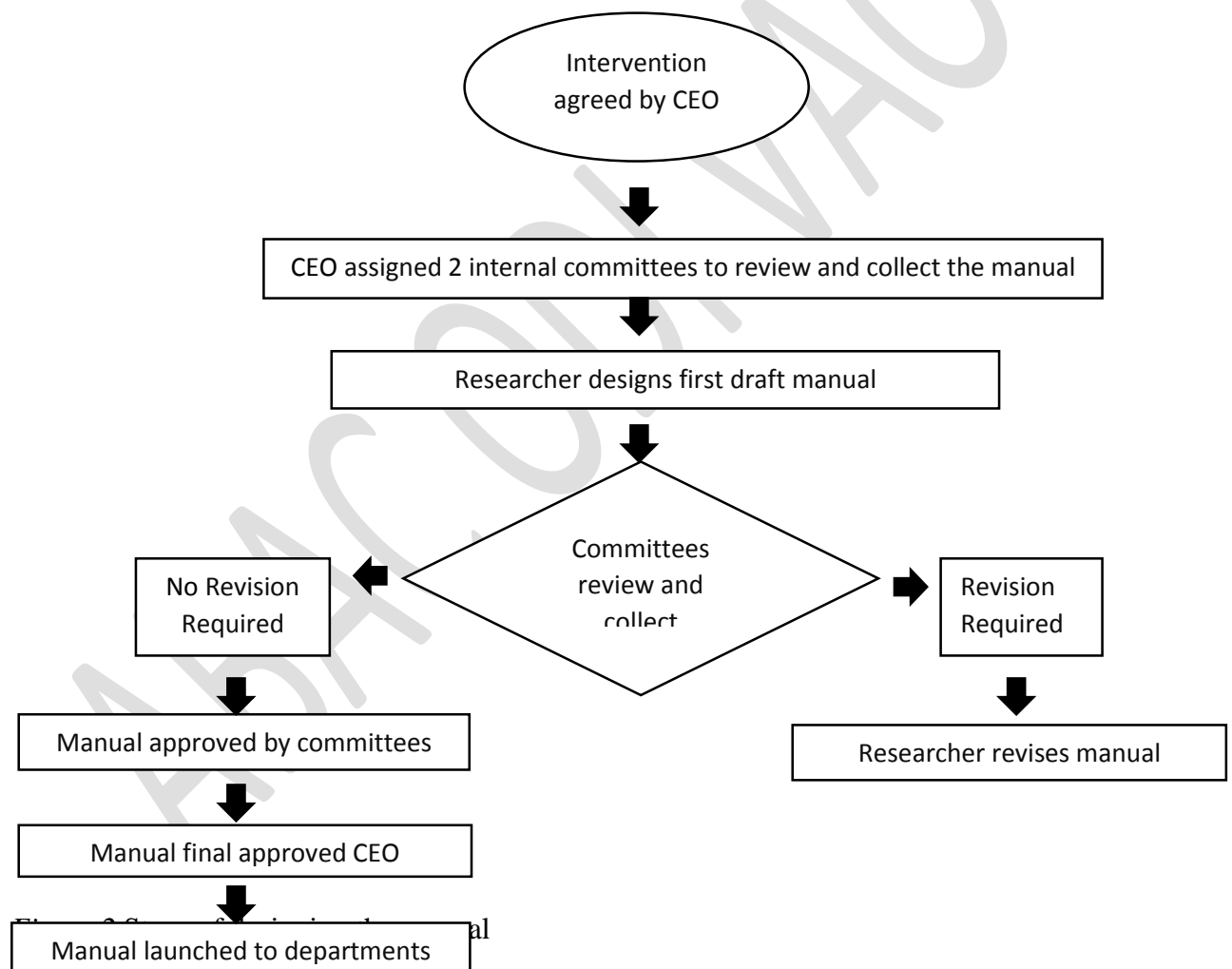
Aside from the findings of current situation of the other departments, the current situation of communication and coordination that the assistant to CEO described her own understanding for each statement was also analyzed. The highest average mean for communication was "I have the willingness every time when communicating with other departments" at 5.0 "Agree" rating scale. The lowest average mean was "Communicating via email is an effective way between other department and me as the sender and recipients" 3.0 "Somewhat Disagree" while other departments thought that this statement was scaling in "Agree".

The current situation of coordination, the highest average mean was 5 labeled "Agree" in 4 statements which were "I acknowledged the procedure of reserving meeting rooms well", "I acknowledged the procedure of reserving CEO's time schedule well", "I acknowledged the procedure of submitting documents for CEO's signing or approval well", and "I always send the schedule of the management review meeting appointment via email in advance". These statement were the jobs that the assistant to secretary

mainly takes responsibility for. On the other hand, other departments ranked these 4 statements as “Agree” but the average means were still lower than what the assistant to secretary obtained.

RQ 2: What is the appropriate OD Intervention that will improve communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments?

The appropriate ODI was to design a manual or a work process for secretarial section and other departments to use as guidance when working together.



After the manual was approved by the CEO and the two committee members, the researcher as a trainer started to launch the manual to 15 departments and gave 1 copy for the secretarial section as a trainee. The manual was given to the department managers with the explanation from the researcher how to use the manual.

The manual also contained the last page of the blank space for the comments or feedback from the trainees. The follow-up session was made once a week to make sure that all departments understood the manual and followed the flowcharts regularly. The Manual had been with the departments for 3 weeks before Post OD Intervention session. A training session on communication was also conducted.

RQ 3: What is the initial impact of OD Intervention on communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments?

Table 6

Initial impact communication (Other departments and secretarial section)

Questions		N=49
		P. Value
1	Secretarial section is able to disseminate complete information by face-to-face, telephone, and email.	0.27
2	Secretarial section understands why and what they communicate to the recipients.	0.37
3	Secretarial section uses proper language for communication.	0.14
4	Communicating via email is an effective way between secretarial section and me as the sender and recipient.	0.08
5	Secretarial section is able to manage the conflicts with other departments.	0.09
6	I can feel the willingness of secretarial section every time when communicating with.	0.14
7	Secretarial section listens to me and asks questions every time when things are unclear during the communication.	0.27

Table 6 shows that there is no initial impact of OD Intervention on communication as the results from the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

Table 7

Initial impact coordination (Other departments and secretarial section)

Questions		N=49
		P. Value
8	I acknowledged the procedure of reserving meeting rooms well.	0.02
9	Secretarial section arranges an appropriate meeting room for me	0.57
10	I acknowledged the procedure of reserving CEO's time schedule well.	0.07
11	Secretarial section promptly checks the CEO's time schedule and gives feedback to me.	0.21
12	I acknowledged the procedure of submitting documents for CEO's signing or approval well.	0.02
13	Secretarial section always gives importance to my urgent requirement for document approval.	0.02
14	Secretarial section always explains clearly when the CEO asked for document revision.	0.03
15	I always receive the schedule of the management review meeting appointment via email in advance.	0.04

Questions		N=49
		P. Value
16	I will inform the secretarial section every time when I am not able to participate the management review meeting	0.03
17	When seeking any assistance from secretarial section, they consistently provide good cooperation.	0.12
18	Secretarial section coordinates quickly, actively, and efficiently with other departments	0.02

Table 7 shows that there was an initial impact of ODI on coordination.

RQ 4: What is the difference between Pre and Post OD Intervention on communication and coordination between secretarial section and other departments?

Table 8 *Summary of the differences between Pre and Post OD Intervention*

Variable	Mean		SD		Rating Scale		Wilcoxon (P. Value)
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
<i>N</i> =49							
Communication	4.59	4.72	0.20	.018	Agree	Agree	0.02
Coordination	4.78	5.02	0.07	0.08	Agree	Agree	0.00

Table 8 shows that there is an impact of the OD Intervention on communication and coordination for the secretarial section and other departments

Conclusion

The designed intervention was effective in conclusion as measured by the results from the Pre and Post questionnaire survey. In the meantime, both secretaries had got an opportunity to improve communication skills in terms of verbal, non-verbal, and written. The researcher did not collect the manual back from the departments as the researcher agreed that it is applicable and useful for the organization as the work progresses.

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