

## Effective institutional communication within the framework of institutional learning and its applications in educational institutions (A qualitative study)

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### Abstract

The institutional communication combines between administrative communication within the institution (employees to management and vice versa and between the employees each other or between different departments and each other) and connection of the institution with the outside society (contact all groups working with the institution, such as parents and civil society organizations). This research aims to identify the media and institutional communication methods used in the educational institutions. Through this paper we will find more than one comparison between governmental and private schools regarding the ways of implementing the institutional communication. There are several ways to achieve effective institutional communication such as: communicate with the internal and external audience, activate the role of personal communication, institutional use of modern technology and evaluation of the communication process. Invest in human resources, develop communication skills and enhance their institutional learning concepts will contribute to the activation of a successful institutional communication.

**Keywords:** institutional communication, educational institutions, Ain Shams University, Canadian international college

### Introduction

#### Definition of Institutional Communication

The communication which combines the internal administrative communication in its three forms (upward - downward - horizontal) and the connection of the institution with the surrounding external community and remains governed by the available circumstances and possibilities surrounding the institution, in order to achieve the objectives of the institution and the desired goals.

The research aims at identifying the media and institutional communication methods used in public and private educational institutions as one of the institutional education tools. Ain Shams University as a representative for government universities and the Canadian International College, representing private universities were selected in Cairo governorate to implement the study during the academic year 2014.

#### Types of institutional communication

##### First: communication within the institution

- The upward contact from employees to management,
- The downward contact from management to employees,
- Horizontal contact between employees and each other or between different departments.

##### Second: Communication outside the institution

It is the contact with all groups working with the institution, such as students, parents and civil society organizations.

#### Steps to achieve effective institutional communication

First: Communicate with the internal public.

Second: Communicate with the external public.

Third: Activate the role of personal communication

Fourth: Institutional Use of Modern Technology

Fifth: Evaluation of the communication process.

**First: Communication with the internal public** (human investment in the field of communication) will achieve through:

**i) Provide training courses in the field of communication and teach how to use modern technology to optimize the use of the objectives of the institution.**

It is noted that educational institutions used to collect samples for its studies from public and private universities that have independent departments of information technology and used them in the announcement of the vision and mission of the institution - activities of the institution - to communicate between students, faculty members or the management of faculties.

**ii) Improve staff-management relations through open channels of communication.**

Private universities are distinguished from the public universities in the diversity of open communication channels between employees and faculty within the university. The use of communication channels between the Internet and the availability of Wi-Fi - and social networks to the extent that "WhatsApp" application is used as a virtual means of education and learning in classrooms while governmental universities lack multiple channels of communication due to the high costs of their use by universities.

**iii) Prepare qualified staff to be able to learn any change in methods or environment by providing them with necessary information in advance.**

Private universities were characterized by the use of

technology for internal communication more than governmental universities which relied on paperwork to provide their employees and employees with any instructions or information.

**iv) Promote social relations among employees through enhancing communication between them.**

Private universities have also been marked by this feature more than government universities, which still follow the traditional way of promoting social relations through organizing journeys.

**v) Study job satisfaction of the employees of the institution to know their needs, evaluate the communication programs addressed to them and encourage any position that would enhance the level of job satisfaction.**

The results of the study showed that private universities seek job satisfaction to find the satisfaction of their employees twice a year to overcome all that would frustrate the employee or affect them psychologically so as not to affect the performance of the job while the governmental universities were not concerned at all to measure job satisfaction of the employees of the members Faculty or staff, which is sometimes reflected negatively on performance of the work.

**Second: Communicating with the external public**

**i) Identify the categories of audiences that the organization deals with and determine the type and form of appropriate communication for each category.**

Private universities have been interested in this because the external audience is one of the main sources of income for universities. Therefore, private universities take into consideration the use of all means and methods of communication to communicate with the external audience, students, parents and postgraduate students.

While governmental universities have not been interested in this and are still using traditional methods of communicating with the outside audience.

**ii) Engage with media through all forms of communication such as press releases and media interviews and deal with them transparently.**

The governmental universities in this regard have excelled over the private universities as Ain Shams University has a central department for public relations and media. Its functions include continuous communication with the media and providing it with all activities and events within the university, while communication with the media in private universities has been absent because there is no media department or media center to cover university news and to communicate with different media institutions.

In this regard, we propose to select a group of media professionals to be members of the Board of Directors in order to ensure real media coverage of the activities of the institution.

**iii) The institution is keen to strengthen the relationship with the community in social responsibility.**

The importance of social responsibility activities between governmental and private universities is equal to the fact that

it is one of the criteria that ensure the quality of education and learning, the educational institutions have a range of activities such as:

- Eliminate illiteracy of adults.
- Participate in national projects.
- Awareness campaigns
- Health campaigns and other activities that have emerged equally between governmental and private universities.

**iv) Measure feedback studies for each category dealing with the institution.**

Private universities have given this aspect importance in the continuous measurements of the reaction of the public to deal with them to ensure the continued satisfaction with the services provided by the governmental universities ignored this element. Any measurements of the reaction did not appear during the study period but it only depends on the complaints submitted through the official page of the Faculty on social networking sites.

**Third: Activate the role of personal contact: By**

- Meetings: Private and governmental universities are equal in that element as there are regular meetings such as departmental councils, colleges committees and college councils. In addition, there are periodic informal meetings between faculty staff and assistants.
- Interviews and meetings in governmental universities more than in private universities.
- Field visits:
- Conferences: Government universities have held conferences more than private universities.
- Exhibitions: Private universities play a greater role in exhibitions to present their academic programs and as a form of marketing to the universities or their mental image to the public.  
In addition to recreational activities that help to support human relations.

**Fourth: Institutional Use of Modern Technology**

- Through the so-called virtual organization.
- The presence of the institution on the Internet and the exploitation of its website in:
  - Establish discussion groups in universities for their staff that are exist in private universities and are not exist in governmental universities.
  - Interactive communication with the external audience, which characterize private universities for governmental universities.
  - Provide all forms of modern technological communication within the institution.
  - Private universities used applications of communication such as Facebook, Yahoo, Skype, WhatsApp while government universities didn't try to do so.
  - Creation of a documentary archive on the website of the institution, private universities have overtaken the governmental universities.
  - The interest in providing visual documentation through documentary films for all special events and news carried out by the institution. Private universities excelled in governmental universities in this regard.

**Fifth: Evaluation of the communication process**

The importance of evaluation of communication messages addressed to the masses of the institution of interest in the concept of reputation management, which helps in ranking of global ranking compared to other institutions operating in any country, and we can clarify the importance of evaluation as follows:

- Achieves a high degree of job satisfaction for the internal audience.
- Continuously improves the organization's mental image for its internal and external audiences.

We can note of the results of the study the interest of private universities more than government universities in continuously evaluating the process of communication within the institution and its appropriate follow-up and reliance on results in improving the performance of institutional communication, while government universities do not care about this except in a formal way only.

**Importance of assessment**

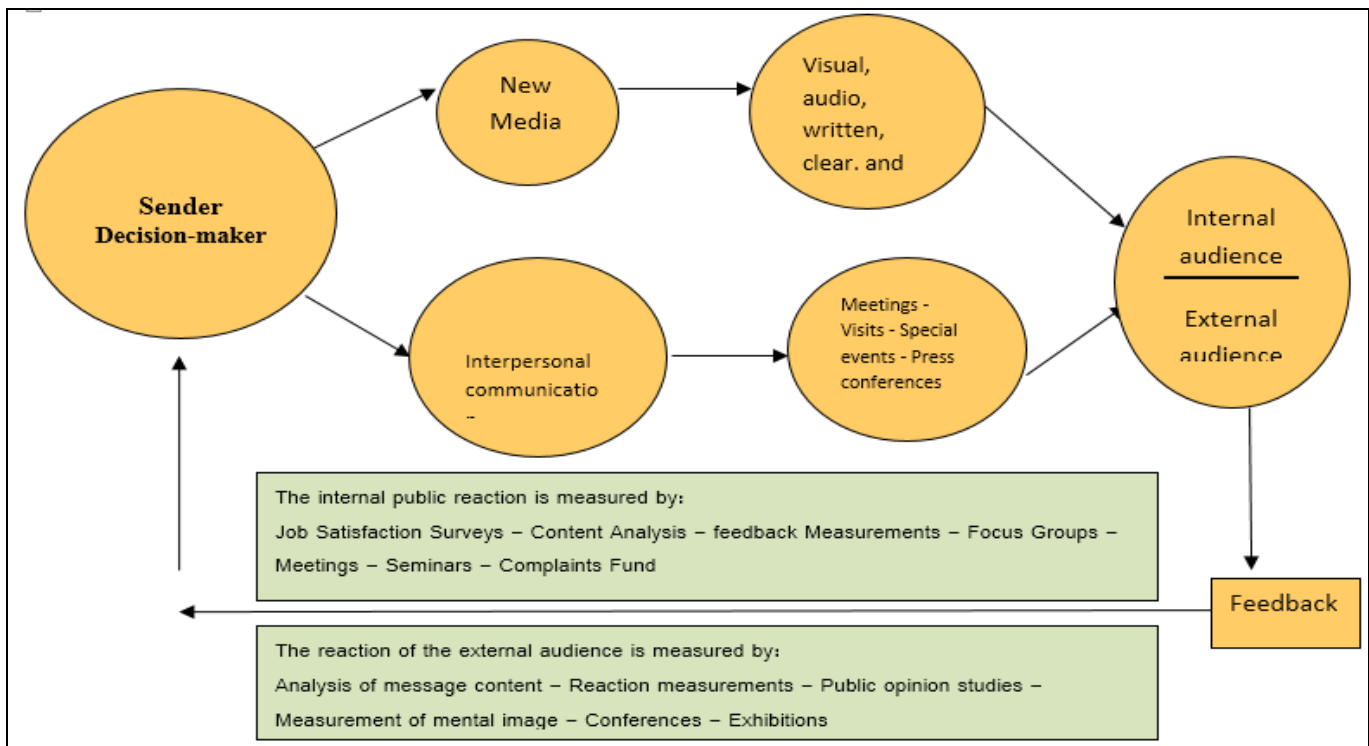
- Helps to achieve more affiliation with the institution and

deal with it, both at the internal and external audiences.

- Builds a high degree of trust, credibility and mutual credibility between the institution and its audiences
- Create a stereotypical image of the institution and all its goods or services within the context of the surrounding community.

**Methods of assessment**

- Content analysis for internal and external messages in private universities and absent of governmental universities.
- Public opinion studies conducted in private universities and absent in governmental universities
- Feedback analysis for the internal and external audiences of the institution.
- Focus groups are conducted periodically in and out of the institution to measure the mental image in private universities. There is no meeting with any focus groups within governmental universities.



**Fig 1:** A proposed communication model for effective institutional communication

**Recommendations**

- Invest in human resources, develop communication skills and enhance their institutional learning concepts.
- Provide working environments characterized by an era of communication openness and the use of all means of communication to transfer knowledge and experience without restrictions.
- Periodic assessment and updating of communications plans.
- Reliance on two-way communication.
- Strengthening and renewing the organization's presence on

the Internet.

- Activate the role of media and public relations departments in identifying and diagnosing problems and persuading the members of the institution to take all new happenings.
- Create departments for visual documentation with the nature of the information age, which is characterized by immediacy and what is known as visual information.

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