

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to determine the interpersonal communication problems of student assistants in Benguet State University. The study aimed to: determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents; to determine the communication tasks done by Student Assistants (SA) while working; to determine the communication problems of the SAs and to determine the suggestions for the improvement of communication problems of SAs.

The study used interview schedule to gather the information from the SA and supervisors.

In the communication work assigned to the SAs, the task of messenger tops the ranking and answering phone calls is the least mentioned by the SA respondents.

The task of messenger ranked first as the communication tasked assigned to the SAs followed by assisting students, entertaining visitors and answering phone calls.

Difficulty in speaking in English was the most identified problem by the SAs while the evaluators identified dealing with the faculty members where the SAs were assigned was there communication problem.

Four of the SA respondents said they don't have any communication problems encountered during their duties and half of the evaluators said that they don't see any communication problems with their SAs.

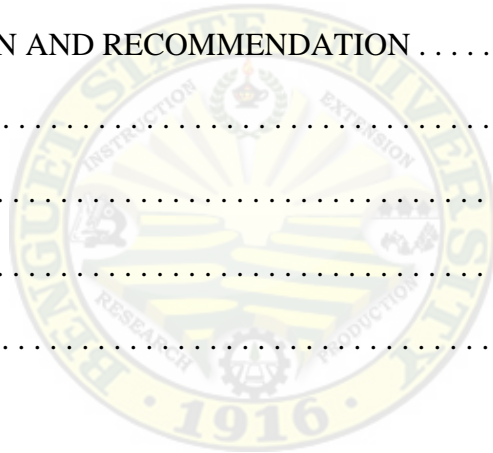
Exposure to oral communication was suggested by the SAs while their supervisors, 46.15% said that SAs should undergo interpersonal communication activities.



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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Communication plays a vital role in every living being. It is already a part of our day to day living that cannot be changed. Unconsciously, in a single span of a day, we may not notice that those simple interacting with others to share commonness, exchanging of ideas, joining group talks, talking to oneself and even a simple gesture from a stranger already defines communication.

Communication is essential in every aspect of living. In schools alone, communication is the only medium for interactions between students to others. In other places like work, communication also takes a major role and like other fields, interpersonal communication is commonly used.

In Benguet State University where a total population of 7000 students comes from different provinces of Benguet and other neighboring provinces, records from the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) showed that a sum of 94 students from different colleges were employed as to the second semester of school year 2010-2011. In BSU, they are called student assistants or SA.

From an interview to Sir Ramon Fianga-an (2011), Chief of Placement and Alumni Unit mentioned that SAs are generally to assist students especially that most of them are employed in the library. In other areas such as offices, they are responsible in cleanliness and organizing bulk of task and are mostly in the task of messengers of communication. Others also include the task of accepting concerns of clients and maintenance as a whole.



Seeing the duties and responsibilities of SAs, interpersonal communication takes a major role in their nature of work. Like any other works offered, it is crucial for a SA to have a sensibility in each task given. In lined with their field, it is important to see how interpersonal communication takes place since most of their tasks focused on interacting to people within their area.

Engleberg and Wynn (2008) mentioned that interpersonal communication occurs when a limited number of people, usually two, interact by using verbal and non- verbal messages to generate for the purpose of sharing information, achieving a goal, or maintaining a relationship.

Since the tasks of SAs were focused on interaction, the researcher looked into their interpersonal communication specifically their oral communication and their problems encountered.

Statement of the Problem

The study determined the interpersonal communication problems of student assistants in Benguet State University. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents?
2. What are the communication tasks done by SAs while working?
3. What are the communication problems of the SAs?
4. What are the suggestions for the improvement of communication problems of the SAs?



Objectives of the Study

The study endeavored to:

1. Determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents.
2. Identify the communication tasks done by SAs while working.
3. Determine the areas of communication problems of the SAs.
4. Suggestions to the SAs for the improvement of their communication problems.

Importance of the Study

The results of the study can be used by the OSA on assessing their SAs. Thus, it can be a basis in considering their SAs to undergo interpersonal communication activity related.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study includes the SAs of Benguet State University during the time of the study. The study was limited in identifying the areas of communication among SAs that needs improvement.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Communication

Communication is a process of creating or sharing meaning in informal conversation, group interaction or public speaking. The process includes participants, content, messages, channels, presence or absence of noise and feedback (Gamble and Gamble, 2005).

As people communicate, they are changed in some way by the interaction, which in turn influences what follows. In other words, communication has an effect and can be viewed as an exchange of influences. This means that communication always has some effect on you and on the person or people with whom you are interacting.

An effect can be emotional, physical, cognitive, or any combination of the three (Verdeber and Verdeber, 2002).

It is a process whenever someone observes or experiences behavior and attributes meaning to that behavior. It doesn't matter whether the observed or experienced behavior is intentional or accidental, conscious or unconscious. As long as what someone does or says (his or her symbolic behavior) is interpreted as a message- as long as the behavior of one person affects or influences the behavior of another- communication is occurring. Communication is our link to the rest of humanity (Gamble and Gamble, 2003).

Common Known Communication

Intra-personal communication. This implies individual reflection, contemplation and meditation. One example of this is transcendental meditation. According to the



experts this type of communication encompasses communicating with the divine and with spirits in the form of prayers and rites and rituals.

Interpersonal communication. This is direct, face-to-face communication that occurs between two persons. It is essentially a dialogue or a conversation between two or more people. It is personal, direct, as well as intimate and permits maximum interaction through words and gestures. Interpersonal communications may be:

Focused Interactions. This primarily results from an actual encounter between two persons. This implies that the two persons involved are completely aware of the communication happening between them.

Unfocused interactions. This occurs when one simply observes or listens to persons with whom one is not conversing. This usually occurs at stations and bus stops, as well as on the street, at restaurants, etc.

Non verbal communication. This includes aspects such as body language, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, etc., which also become a part of the communicating process; as well as the written and typed modes of communications (Anonymous, n.d).

Communication Skills

Communication skills is the ability or the skill to transfer one's thoughts, ideas and information from the sender to the receiver with the latter being understood the same effectively and efficiently is known as communication skills. It is one of the greatest skills of the soft skills and its importance is growing rapidly due to the rising complexities as a result of technological inventions (Rao, 2007).



It is an ability to use means of communication effectively, with regard for the needs of those involved. It should be emphasized that when one is talking (Dimbleby and Burton, 2007).

Communication skills help shape our personal, social, work, and professional relationships. Thus, it affects each facet of our lives especially the ability to create and interpret symbolic messages or behavior (Gamble and Gamble, 2002).

Communication Skills Identified

From the website of University of Sydney (2004), communication skills are classified in the following:

Oral communication. The ability to explain and present your ideas in clear English, to diverse audiences. This includes the ability to tailor your delivery to a given audience, using appropriate styles and approaches, and an understanding of the importance of non-verbal cues in oral communication. Oral communication requires the background skills of presenting, audience awareness, critical listening and body language.

Written communication. The ability to write effectively in a range of contexts and for a variety of different audiences and purposes, with a command of the English language. This includes the ability to tailor your writing to a given audience, using appropriate styles and approaches. It also encompasses electronic communication such as SMS, email, discussion boards, chat rooms and instant messaging. Written communication requires background skills such as academic writing, revision and editing, critical reading and presentation of data.



Non-verbal communication. The ability to enhance the expression of ideas and concepts without the use of coherent labels, through the use of body language, gestures, facial expression and tone of voice, and also the use of pictures, icons and symbols.

Non- verbal communication requires background skills such as audience awareness, personal presentation and body language.

Skills Training

Skill training assumes that lack of speaking skills causes us to be apprehensive. This method focuses on teaching people such skills as how to start conversations, organize ideas, and respond effectively to others (Phillips, 1991).

Student Assistant

Administrators of schools, colleges, and universities all over the country employ students (Cayaya, 1996). In Benguet State University, students can apply as student assistant where they are employed to different areas such as the school library, research, administration, etc. In BSU, those who wish to work as a student assistant should only have a 15 units of subject and having a four- hour each day of school days.



METHODOLOGY

Locale and Time of the Study

Benguet State University (BSU) offers affordable undergraduate and graduate education in agriculture, education, forestry and others. It also offers short courses in selected fields such as Agroforestry, Entrepreneurial, and Automotive Technology. It is the only institution in the Philippines that offers curricular program in semi-temperate agriculture in view of its climatic condition.

It is located in La Trinidad, Benguet (Figure 1) and it is five kilometers away from Baguio City. BSU began as a farm school in June 15, 1916 and gradually developed into a regional state university in 1986. At present, the school has eight colleges which are the College of Nursing, College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Home Economics and Technology, College of Agriculture, College of Teacher Education, College of Forestry, and College of Engineering and Applied Technology.

BSU offers Student Assistants to help students lessen some expenses in school. Application is available in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA).

Since most of the respondents applied once as an SA, the study was intentionally conducted from January- February 2011. This was to give justification to the SAs in the familiarity of their works.



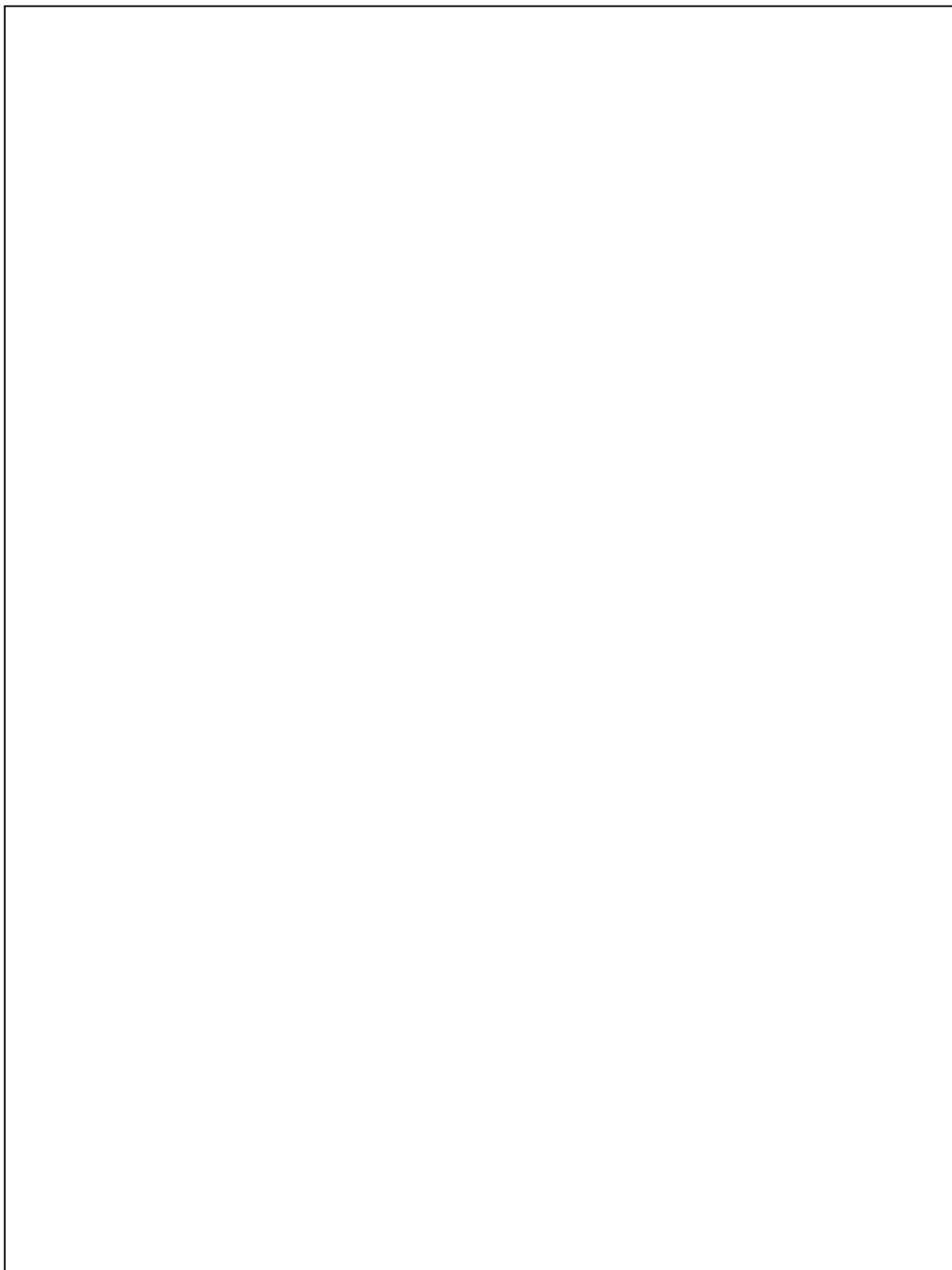


Figure1. Map of Benguet State University



Respondents of the Study

There were two sets of respondents chosen which were the SAs and their supervisors. Given the list from the OSA, the SAs were chosen using arbitrary method. Holding the list of SAs, the researcher counted by threes to pin point the chosen respondents and since some SAs were resigned and not reporting, the name next to the pinned name was chosen.

In the office where the SAs were employed, one faculty member was assigned as the supervisor to validate the statement of their SAs, wherein there were 30 SAs and 30 supervisors with a total of 60 respondents. Furthermore, there was one key informant of the study who is from the OSA who handles the SAs as a whole.

Data Collection

An interview schedule was used as a tool in gathering the needed information for the study. The researcher first had a one-on-one interview with the respondents and then to their supervisors. The questions were translated in Ilokano and Tagalog for the respondents to have a clearer understanding in the said questionnaires.

Data Gathered

The data gathered included the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, identified communication tasks done by SAs while working, determined areas of communication skills the SAs had encountered problems and suggestions for the improvement of communication skill problems of the SAs.



Data Analysis

The data gathered were tabulated and analyzed through descriptive analysis, frequency counts, percentages and ranking.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio- demographic Profile of the SAs

Table 1 shows the socio- demographic profile of the respondents.

Among the 30 respondents, majority (70%) were female while 30% of the respondents were male. This shows that most of the SAs of BSU are females. This is the same with the findings of Busitan (2009) in her study that majority of the working students who are service crews at McDonald's stores in Baguio and Benguet are female.

Result shows that majority (66.67%) of the respondents belonged to age bracket 18-20 years old, 30% of them belonged to age bracket 21-23 while the oldest was 24 years old.

The finding shows that majority (50%) were fourth years while 23.33% were students were third years. Majority (63.33%) were irregular students while 36.67% were regular students.

Majority (73.33%) applied once as a student assistant, 20% of them applied twice while 6.67% applied more than thrice. This shows that majority of the SAs were not familiar with their tasks.

Communication Tasks Assigned to the SAs

The communication tasks assigned to the SAs were presented in Table 2. These tasks were identified by the respondents and supervisors. The task of a messenger was the most communication task done by the SAs and answering phone calls is the least done.



Table 1. Socio- demographic of the SAs

CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY N=30	PERCENTAGE %
Age Range		
18-20	20	66.67
21-23	19	30.00
23-25	1	3.33
TOTAL	30	100
Sex		
Female	29	70.00
Male	9	30.00
TOTAL	30	100
Year		
1 st year	5	16.67
2 nd year	3	10.00
3 rd year	7	23.33
4 th year	15	50.00
TOTAL	30	100
Category		
Irregular	19	63.33
Regular	11	36.67
TOTAL	30	100
SA Experience		
One sem	22	73.33
Two sems	6	20.00
More than three sems	2	6.67
TOTAL	30	100

*Multiple responses



Table 2. Communication works assigned to the SAs

COMMUNICATION WORKS ASSIGNED	FREQUENCY N=30	FREQUENCY %
Messenger	18	60.00
Assisting Students	17	56.67
Entertaining Visitors	9	30.00
Answering Phone Calls	6	20.00

*Multiple responses

Messenger. The SAs identified the task of messenger as their most communication work during their duties. The respondents said that they deliver letters or documents to offices as they were assigned to do. The offices where documents are mostly delivered are in the Administration Office including office of the president, vice-president, etc; in the Office of the Students Affairs; and from one college to other colleges (e.g. College of Agriculture to College of Forestry).

One of the supervisors said, “We put in charge the SAs in the task of messenger. The reason why they are here is to assist us wherein they have to deliver the letter/s or document/s in the concerned offices and we instruct them what to do, most especially when it is urgent. We also tell them what to do in case the person is not in his office.”

Assisting students. The task of assisting students was identified as their next communication work. Since most of the students are assigned in the library, reading room and deans offices, they were to assist students especially in borrowing books/ theses.



A supervisor from the University Library mentioned that, “Aside from fixing and repairing books, including cataloging, one of the roles of the SAs is to assist students in locating books for the users and loaning of books.”

Entertaining visitors. Entertaining visitors was the next communication work identified. Like offices, visitors were also seen in the field, museum and marketing in which the SAs have to entertain them.

As mentioned by a supervisor, “when you say visitors from other places like those from field trips, let’s say from Bicol State University, it is our job to entertain them like telling them the background of the school and others but if we mentioned foreign students or to those who are taking up their Master Degrees, our SAs can already handle them and they can consult us if it is beyond their concern.”

Answering phone calls. SAs assigned to offices where telephones are installed, accept concerns over the phone if the faculty members are not available or out.

A supervisor from the college of CTE said, “When we are expecting calls and have a class or meeting at the time, *ibagakun ti ibaga da kaspangarigan, ay Jenny nu ada ti tumawag ket awanak* (for instance, Jenny if someone will call and I am not around) you take down notes on what are they going to say, but basically, I know they already know what to do in cases like that since the semester is almost over and they had accepted lot of calls already.”



Communication Problems Encountered
by SAs during their Duties

Table 3 shows the communication problems mentioned by the SAs during their duties. From the encountered problems identified by the SAs, it was categorized based on their oral communication problems. At the same time, evaluators were also asked to identify the communication problems of their SA.

The communication problems identified by the SAs were also identified by their supervisors which were dealing with faculties in the workplace and to other offices.

Difficulties in speaking English and the task of messenger were identified by the SAs while supervisors identified SAs not giving updates.

Majority (56.67%) of the SAs said that they have difficulties in speaking in English. Below were some statements from the SAs and supervisors.

One of the SAs said, “Speaking in English is my problem, because some visitors come here in the library to do research... We have to improve our English speaking.”

Another SA said, “On how I talk and on the language I’m using because usually the visitors and students are asking information to us and some of these visitors are foreigners and some of them are parents and some of them usually don’t understand English or Tagalog. It’s an advantage to know more language to cope up immediately on the situation.”

While her supervisor said that “*awan met ketdi ti makitak nga problema idiay panagsao na ta nu agsao kami ket nu agdamag isuna ti Ilokano ket sungbatak met ti parehas nga sao*” (I don’t see any speaking problems with her because when we talk and she speaks in Ilokano, I answer her in the same language).



Table 3. Communication problems encountered by the SAs during their duties

PROBLEMS	IDENTIFIED BY SAs		IDENTIFIED BY SUPERVISORS	
	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage %	Frequency (N=26)	Percentage %
Difficulty in speaking English	17	56.67	-	-
Dealing with faculty members	16	53.33	16	61.546
Dealing other faculty members in different offices	13	43.33	13	50.00
Messenger: Going to places of delivery	10	33.33	-	-
Doesn't give updates			1	3.84

*Multiple Responses

Sixteen of the respondents or 53.33% of the SAs said that dealing with faculty members is their next communication problem. This includes having problems with tasks not accurately done and talking to their supervisor as well.

One of the respondents said “*nu inbaga dan diay aramidek ket nu haan ko naawatan ket alanganen ak nga damagen en manen, kabutbuteng da met nga i-approach gamin, haha* (when I was told to do my task and I haven't fully understand the instruction, I am hesitant to ask again, I am afraid to approach them).



Another respondent said, “*Nu kasatnu kuma nga makisao ngay kenyada nga usto karkaro idia y bisita ken kenda Ma’am met lang nga nu mamingsan gamin ket maut- utal ak nu kasang-sanguk isuda*” (on how to speak to them properly especially to visitors and also to my boss because sometimes, I can’t talk to them straightly.)

From the supervisor, one of them said, “She must learn to give feedbacks if she did not understand the instructions, since she doesn’t asked for further clarification, I assumed she understood the instruction.

On the contrary, one of the supervisors said, “*okay lang met ta nu haan na (SA) maawatan ket idamag na met tanu maklaru-an*” (there is no problem because she asks for clarification).

Next seen problem by the SAs were on dealing with faculty members of other offices. Most or 43.33% of the SAs concern is on how to express themselves when asked to inquire something or when shuffled to other offices.

One of the respondents said, “*sabali ladta id ada ak idia y dati ngav naka- assign ak ta medyo hanak comfortable ditoy ngem awan gamin metten ti ipa aramid da idia y office nga ayan ko dati isunga adak ditoy*” (It’s still different to be assigned in the office where I am first assigned but since I don’t have any more tasks to do there I am here).

One of the supervisors said that especially when SAs were asked to inquire something to other offices- they were seen standing outside for a period of time before entering to ask, he added, “*ngem idi sinumrek metten ket bigla nga kadamag nu ada ni Dean, ni han man lang nag good morning sir*” (but when she entered, she didn’t even gave the proper greetings before asking).



Lastly, in the task of the messenger 33.33% of the SAs said that they did not know what to say to people around the place of delivery.

One of the respondents said that she was sent to deliver the letter sometimes and she didn't deliver well the message her boss gave her.

One supervisor from the CA said that one time, their SA did not wait for the papers to be signed by concerned offices, she just left the documents and did not come back to tell them what happened to the errand she was given.

Four of the respondents said that they do not have any communication problems encountered during their duties.

However, the supervisor of one of those four mentioned, "I didn't see any communication problems she encountered, only to her articulation especially that English is her major and she grew up in Mt. Province.

Suggestion for the Improvement of Communication Problems of SAs

Table 4 presents the suggestions for the improvement of interpersonal communication of the SAs as well as the suggestions of the supervisors.

Majority (53.33%) said that they want to be more exposed to oral communications to improve their speaking skills. Meanwhile, 43.33% said that they want to have training in interpersonal communications skills for the improvement of their tasks.

On the part of the supervisors, 46.15% said that SAs should undergo interpersonal communication activities. Two evaluators suggested that OSA should conduct pre-training on Interpersonal Press Relation (IPR) and office protocols. One evaluator



suggested that OSA should select the best SAs so that the hours paid to them are compensated with their output.

Meanwhile, 19.23% of the supervisors said that they should give feedbacks, like when they have not got the instruction right they should approach them because they cannot read the mind of their SAs.

Table 4. Suggestions for the improvement of communication problems of the SAs

Suggestions	Frequency (N=30)	Percentage %
Mentioned by SA		
Exposure to oral communication activities	16	53.33
Training in interpersonal communication	13	43.33
Identified by Supervisors		
Training in interpersonal communication activities	12	46.15
Should give feedbacks	5	19.23
OSA should select best SAs	1	7.89

*Multiple Responses



SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study focused on the interpersonal communication problems of student assistants in BSU. It was specifically to determine the socio- demographic profile of the respondents; identify the communication work used by the SAs; determine the communication skill problems by the SAs and to list down the suggestions for improvement of communication skills of the SAs.

All data were gathered through interview schedule and were analyzed through frequency counts and percentages.

There were 60 respondents for the study, 30 SAs and 30 evaluators. The SA respondents were chosen using arbitrary method. Majority (70%) were female while 30% were male. Majority (66.67%) of the respondents belonged to age bracket 18-20 years old. Most were irregular students and were fourth years. Most of the respondents applied as an SA once.

In the communication work assigned to the SAs, the task of messenger tops the ranking and answering phone calls is the least mentioned by the SA respondents.

Difficulty in speaking in English was the most identified problem by the SAs while the evaluators identified dealing with the faculty members where the SAs were assigned was there communication problem. Four said that they do not have any communication problems encountered during their duties and half of the evaluators said that they don't see any communication problems with their SAs. There might be a problem but not communication related but more on work related problem.



In the suggestions for improvement of the SAs communication problems, majority (53.33%) said that they want to be more exposed to oral communication to improve their speaking skills. Meanwhile, 43.33% said that they want to have training in interpersonal communications skills for the improvement of their tasks. On the part of the supervisors, 46.15% said that SAs should undergo interpersonal communication activities while 19.23% said that they should give feedbacks, like when they have not got the instruction right they should approach them because they cannot read the mind of their SAs.

Two evaluators suggested that OSA should conduct pre- training on Interpersonal Press Relation (IPR) and office protocols. One evaluator suggested that OSA should select the best SA so that the hours paid to them are compensated with their output.

Conclusions

1. Majority of the respondents were females, belonged to age bracket 18-20.
2. Majority of the SAs communication work was in task of messenger, assisting students and entertaining visitors.
3. Speaking in English and verbal communication were the main problems encountered by the SAs during their duties.
4. For the improvement of communication skills, SAs should undergo communication skill training specifically oral communication.

Recommendations

1. Communication skill building should be included during SA orientation.



2. OSA should conduct activities like training, seminars and workshops that will enhance the communication skills of the SAs.
3. Evaluators should try to help the SAs in overcoming their shyness.
4. Respondents should practice to improve their communication skills.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule Questionnaire

Benguet State University
 College of Agriculture
 Department of Development Communication
 Bachelor of Science in Development Communication

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS
 ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENT ASSISTANTS
 OF BENGUET STATE UNIVERSITY
 SY 2010- 2011

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR BSU Office of the Student Affairs (OSA)

1. Are there any communication qualifications of a student upon applying as an SA? If yes, specify.

2. Based on the feedbacks your office is getting every end of the semester, can you give your general statement regarding the communication problems observed from the student assistants?

3. Are there any training conducted regarding communication?

___ There is ___ There is none

If any, please specify:



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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS
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SY 2010- 2011

I. SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Instruction: Please answer the following blanks provided and check your answer in the choices given.

Name: _____

Age: _____ Year/Course: _____ Regular/Irregular Student _____

How many times have you applied as an SA? _____

II. INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

1. What are the communication works that you are doing in the office you are assigned. (Specify also other you do in lined with your work)



2. From the day you entered as a Student Assistant, have you noticed some communication problems you encountered within the office/ establishment you are assigned, if yes check your answers below you think you have encountered. (You can add in the space provided)

___ I am shy to talk to my employer since I haven't known him/her for a while.

___ When doing the task assigned, I simply nod as a response of yes.

___ Sometime, I made an incorrect task because I haven't got the message right from my employer.

In the task of messenger:

- ___ Sometimes I am having a problem to whom should I give the letter for instance since the person is out.
- ___ I don't know what to say to those people who are present in the office where I should deliver the letter.

Others: _____

3. Are there any specific activities or skills related to communication you would like to learn?



Benguet State University
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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS
ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENT ASSISTANTS
OF BENGUET STATE UNIVERSITY
SY 2010- 2011

Name of the Evaluator: _____

Name of the SA: _____

Office where SA is assigned: _____

1. From the day your Student Assistant have entered your office, have you noticed some communication related problems you encountered with him/ her?

Please check the problems I enumerated below, you can add in the space provided

___ He/she is shy to talk to the employer since he/ she haven't known you for a while.

___ When you assigned the task, he/she simply nod as a response of yes.

___ Sometime, he/she made an incorrect task because he/she haven't got the message right from the employer.

Others: _____



2. SAs are also in the task of a messenger, are there any feedbacks relating communication problems given by the offices.

___There is ___There is none

If yes, please specify:

3. Suggestions for the improvement of SA's communication problems (optional):

