A STUDY OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED IN PERIOD OF COVID-19 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IT COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT
The Covid-19 epidemic was unlike anything previous calamity in recent times, affecting practically every organisation on the earth. It is imperative for the organisation to prioritise internal relations at this time. Any business's success is dependent on its ability to communicate effectively. A motivated workforce requires effective communication. Employees that are engaged are significantly more likely to display the dedication and commitment essential for comprising a total in any company. Employee communication is important because it contributes to higher levels of employee engagement, which is associated with better organisational growth. Suddenly, Covid-19 altered the way corporations connect with their employees. Many modifications were forced upon companies, and many more are currently being implemented. The focus of this research paper is to investigate the corporate communication practices implemented by IT companies to ensure smooth internal communication throughout this challenging period.
Keywords: Covid-19, Corporate Communication, Information Technology (IT)

Introduction

Organizations all across the world were plunged into such turmoil during the COVID-19 crisis that many weren't sure the organization would survive. Many organisations around the world have faced issues because of the coronavirus outbreak. If businesses and organisations are to overcome the problems faced by this outbreak, they must have sophisticated communication channels that underscore the relevance of following the health protocols established by the Centers for the World Health Organization and Disease Control. (Gandica, Talwar, Thungon, Pyrtuh & Kumah, 2021). Internal and external communications are part of the company's corporate communications strategy to promote and prioritise employee wellness during the COVID-19 epidemic. The COVID-19 handling team was formed to coordinate with all parties by using various communication mediums based on the employees' needs, such as WhatsApp, email, announcement boards, and independent screening cards, as well as engaging with external parties by phone, email, and WhatsApp (Mardiana, Annisarizki & Putri, 2020).

Employees are an organization's most significant stakeholder and serve as community ambassadors. Communication outside the organisation will be more challenging if they aren't informed and don't grasp what's going on. Several organisations are using a variety of ways to interact with their customers and staff during the COVID-19 epidemic. For video conferencing, companies can use email, social media, or other third-party services. Texts, emails, phone calls, teleconferencing, voicemails, and handwritten notes are examples of verbal, written, and electronic communication. Because most life sciences organisations are unable to make face-to-face contact with their employees, sending an email, a phone call, or a text message may be the next best alternative. Because these interactions are permanent, recorded, and searchable, it's critical that they follow a company's policies, processes, and training because the outcomes may differ from typical face-to-face meetings. Because of the constraints imposed by the virus in terms of health risks, the informal mode of communication is a more appropriate mode of communication and the primary means by which organisation members can obtain the intended material and keep themselves informed (Marjan , Bojadjiev and Vaneva, 2021). The goal of this study is to learn about the corporate communication practices used by IT companies during pandemics.

Literature Review

Employee involvement has grown in significance in the current epidemiological environment as a result of COVID19. In this scenario of lockout, seizing the leading spot even without consent of subordinates would be an impossible standard. Throughout this difficult time, organisations realize how critically engaged and motivated people are important for their success. Therefore, organisations must really be prepared to preserve their employees' contentment and engagement using employee engagement in the scenario of a crisis (Chanana and Sangeeta, 2020). The ambiguity surrounding the current pandemic's repercussions and the potential for more ripples of contamination should spur government officials to create emergency measures in case of further

breakouts (Boiral, Brotherton, Rivaud, Guillaumie, 2021)   For management, this has a number of repercussions. On the one hand, businesses will be able to use our research to see what communication tactics other similar businesses have employed in the context of COVID-19 and even if they are like their own (Mata, Pedro & Buil, Tamar, Campillo, María, 2021). A strong communications plan, according to guidelines, should incorporate an awareness of data (Hyland-Wood, Gardner & Leask, 2021).

Research Methodology
Research design is the specification or development of methods and procedures for collecting the required data to structure or solve problems. It's a set of small decisions that, when combined, form a precise master plan for the study's execution. This study is descriptive in nature, and it tries to investigate how IT companies in and around Pune communicate during a pandemic.

1. To recognise various aspects of the study issue, a comprehensive literature review is carried out.

2. Select the data of IT companies in and around Pune.

Statement of Problem
The Pandemic breakout compounded the difficulty of communicating with people at work. As far as achieving a business goal is concerned, corporate communication is very important. It's particularly helpful in determining IT organisations' communication practises because they're dealing with work from home in this critical period.

Objectives of the study:
The major objective of this research is to gain more knowledge about the communication strategies used by Pune-based IT companies.

Hypotheses
H1: There is a significant difference in communication methods used before and after Covid in IT companies in and around Pune.

Scope
The study's scope is confined to corporate communication methods employed in and around Pune City's IT companies.

Data Collection
Employee information is gathered using a structured questionnaire by using snowball sampling method. This questionnaire was distributed to 50 employees from various IT companies, and 20 people have responded. This research is based on the responses of 20 employees from various IT companies in and around Pune. The data is of a primary nature. The secondary data for this study was gathered from a variety of materials, including study reports, books and articles, and research papers published in online journals.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Business Updates	No. of Respondents	
	Before	After
Always	10	10
Sometimes	3	4
Once in a While	3	2
Rarely	1	1
Never	3	3
Total	**20**	**20**

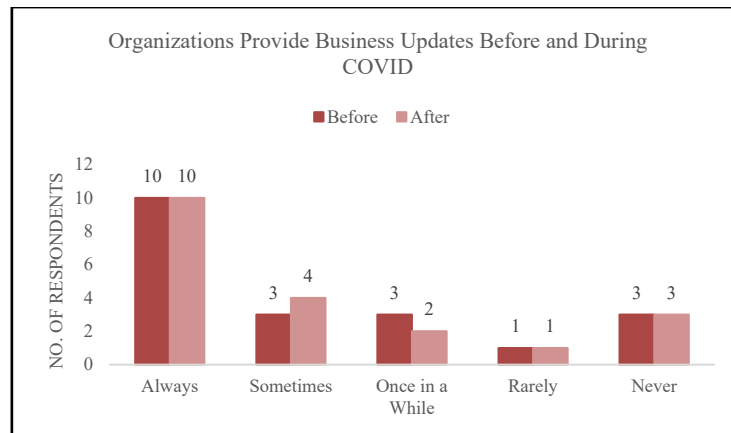**Table 1 Organizations Provide Business Updates Before and During COVID**

Fig. 1: Organizations Provide Business Updates Before and During COVID

There is no significant variation in the business updates provided by the organisation before and after COVID, as shown in Table. 1 and Fig. 1. Both periods are remarkably similar.

Comparison of employee practices implemented by IT companies before and during pandemic.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Transparency regarding the organization's principles, policies, and procedures (before)	4.75	20	.550	.123
	Transparency regarding the organization's principles, policies, and procedures (during)	4.65	20	.587	.131
Pair 2	Performance Appraisal (before)	4.65	20	.671	.150
	Performance Appraisal (during)	4.60	20	.681	.152
Pair 3	Communication (before)	4.75	20	.550	.123
	Communication (during)	4.70	20	.571	.128
Pair 4	Healthy and Secured Environment (before)	4.70	20	.571	.128
	Healthy and Secured Environment (during)	4.75	20	.550	.123

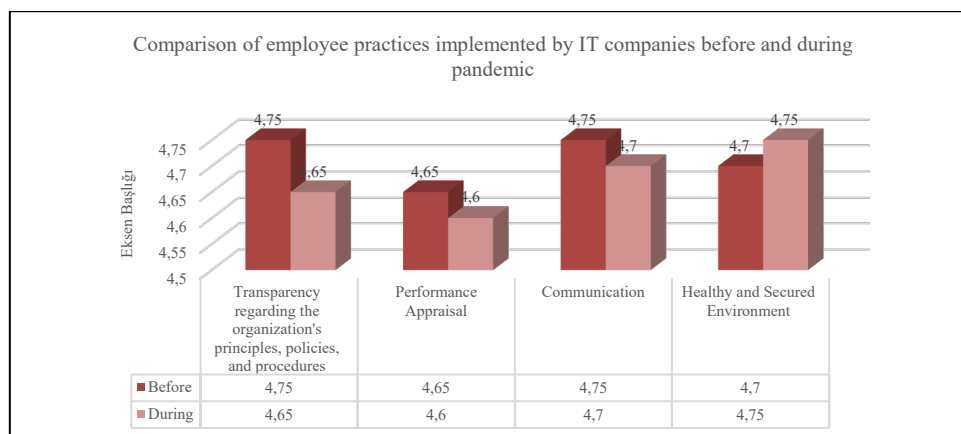**Table 2. Paired Samples Statistics**

Fig. 2: Comparison of employee practices implemented by IT companies before and during pandemic.

		Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1	Transparency regarding the organization's principles, policies, and procedures (before) Transparency regarding the organization's principles, policies, and procedures (during)	.100	.308	.069	-.044	.244	1.453	19	.163
Pair 2	Performance Appraisal (before) Performance Appraisal (during)	.050	.394	.088	-.134	.234	.567	19	.577
Pair 3	Communication (before) Communication (during)	.050	.224	.050	-.055	.155	1.000	19	.330
Pair 4	Healthy and Secured Environment (before) Healthy and Secured Environment (during)	-.050	.224	.050	-.155	.055	-1.000	19	.330

Table 3. Paired Samples Test

Table 2, 3 and Fig. 2 illustrate the results of the paired samples t-test, which reveal that the IT companies' procedures before and during the pandemic period did not differ significantly. In the before pandemic the mean scores ranges from 4.65 to 4.75 whereas the during mean score ranges from 4.6 to 4.75. The p value is more than .05 ($p < 0.05$) related to four features of the employee practices which shows that there is no difference in before and during employee practices which is implemented by the IT organizations.

H0: There is no significant difference in communication methods used before and after Covid in IT companies in and around Pune.

H1: There is a significant difference in communication methods used before and after Covid in IT companies in and around Pune.

Comparison of means of communication is preferred by IT companies before and during pandemic.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Face to Face (before)	3.35	20	1.599	.357
	Face to Face (during)	2.80	20	1.508	.337
Pair 2	Phone Call (before)	3.70	20	1.174	.263
	Phone Call (during)	3.90	20	1.373	.307
Pair 3	Email (before)	3.80	20	1.361	.304
	Email (during)	4.15	20	1.309	.293
Pair 4	SMS/Messengers (before)	3.55	20	1.356	.303
	SMS/Messengers (after)	3.80	20	1.576	.352
Pair 5	Video Call (before)	3.35	20	1.268	.284
	Video Call (after)	3.80	20	1.196	.268
Pair 6	Zoom/Google/WebEx Meetings (before)	3.50	20	1.192	.267
	Zoom/Google/WebEx Meetings (during)	3.90	20	1.252	.280

Pair 7	Intranet (before)	3.35	20	1.565	.350
	Intranet (during)	3.60	20	1.392	.311
Pair 8	Social Media (before)	3.50	20	1.357	.303
	Social Media (during)	3.55	20	1.432	.320
Pair 9	Other (before)	2.85	20	1.461	.327
	Other (during)	2.90	20	1.683	.376

Table 4. Paired Samples Statistics

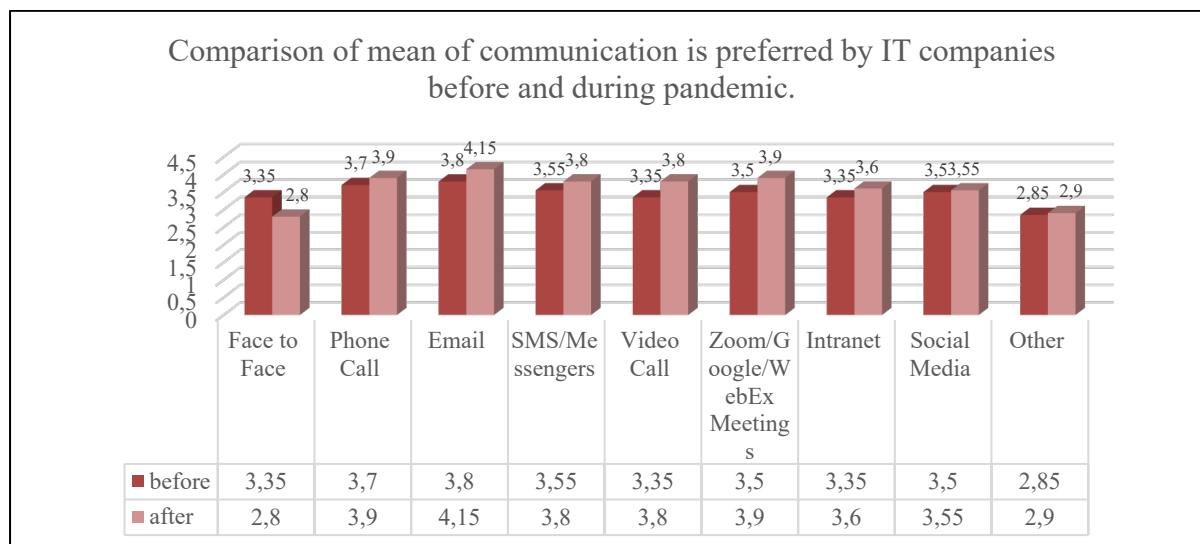**Fig. 3: Comparison of means of communication is preferred by IT companies before and during pandemic.**

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Face to Face (before) Face to Face (during)	.550	1.605	.359	-.201	1.301	1.532	19	.142
Pair 2	Phone Call (before) Phone Call (during)	-.200	.696	.156	-.526	.126	-1.285	19	.214
Pair 3	Email (before) Email (during)	-.350	.988	.221	-.812	.112	-1.584	19	.130
Pair 4	SMS/Messengers (before) SMS/Messengers (during)	-.250	.639	.143	-.549	.049	-1.751	19	.096
Pair 5	Video Call (before) Video Call (during)	-.450	1.146	.256	-.986	.086	-1.756	19	.095
Pair 6	Zoom/Google/WebEx Meetings (before) Zoom/Google/WebEx Meetings (during)	-.400	.821	.184	-.784	-.016	-2.179	19	.042
Pair 7	Intranet (before) Intranet (during)	-.250	.639	.143	-.549	.049	-1.751	19	.096

Pair 8	Social Media (before) Social Media (during)	-.050	.999	.223	-.517	.417	-.224	19	.825
Pair 9	Other (before) Other (during)	-.050	1.605	.359	-.801	.701	-.139	19	.891

Table 5. Paired Samples Test

The result of the paired samples t-test is presented in Table 4, 5 and Fig. 3 which shows that the means of communication is preferred by IT companies before and during pandemic. The mean score ranges from 2.8 to 4.15, whereas the before mean score ranges from 2.85 to 3.8. The p value is more than .05 (p<0.05) related to all means of communication is preferred by IT companies before and during pandemic except Zoom/Google/WebEx Meetings shows that there is no difference in before and during use of communication. However, Zoom/Google/WebEx has a p value of less than.05 (p0.05), indicating that there is a difference between before and during.

In the situation of a pandemic, nearly all of the respondents stated that no other means of communication were used. According to them, all of the communication methods indicated in the survey are adequate for communicating with employees.

Conclusion

The organisation may converse more efficiently and effectively both during an outbreak and in everyday situations by empowering employees to express, maintaining honest conversations with workers, and adopting effective communication strategies into operation. Employee communication methods, styles, and traits have altered as a upshot of the epidemic, and will endure in the foreseeable. The means of communication used in the period of covid-19 and before it is relatively similar, according to the study. The use of these tools has risen by a certain amount.

Findings & Discussions

According to the analysis the business updates supplied by the organisation before and after COVID are surprisingly similar. Employee practices implemented by IT organisations before and during the outbreak have likewise been seen to make no effect. There were no differences in how respondents communicated before and during the pandemic. However, the p value for Zoom/Google/WebEx Meetings is less than.05 (p0.05), showing that there is a difference between during use.

Scope of Further Research

The investigation of primary data revealed that there is a need for a more in-depth study of the tools utilised by IT companies during the period of covid. As a result, future studies with greater sample sizes will make significant contributions to the discipline. It is also necessary to investigate the influence of these tools on HR communication strategies as well as employee communication.

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