

Exploring Managerial Communication Principles: Insights from the Kamba Ramayana

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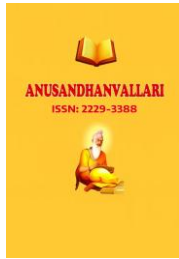
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Abstract: This paper investigates the role of effective communication in Management as exemplified in the Kamba Ramayana. Indian epics, Ramayana and Mahabharatha are filled with deep lessons for leadership and communication. While the Kamba Ramayana has been widely studied from poetical and literary perspectives, limited research has been made in connection to management and communication attributes. This study examines the communication practices embodied in the Ramayana era and draws parallels with contemporary communication strategies, to highlight its continued relevance and application in modern management and leadership contexts. Drawing on the framework of the 7 Cs of communication - Completeness, Compact, Consideration, Concreteness, Clarity, Courtesy, Correctness, this research explores how these core principles of effective communication are demonstrated through key episodes and dialogues in the epic. This research specifically focuses on Hanuman's interactions, analysing his role as an effective communicator in episodes such as his introduction to Rama and Lakshmana, the conversation with Sugriva, his mission to Lanka and his arguments in favour of accepting Vibhishana. Using the hermeneutic method, selected verses were analysed and interpreted to uncover the communicative competence embedded in Hanuman's interactions. These scenarios illustrate how Hanuman exemplified all seven communication principles in his messages. This paper explores the link between ancient literary forms and modern management techniques, emphasizing how narratives such as the Kamba Ramayana provide enduring lessons for effective communication in leadership and management. This interdisciplinary approach underscores the relevance of structured and empathetic communication in enhancing leadership effectiveness. This paper also emphasizes the importance of adapting these timeless communication principles to contemporary organizational challenges, demonstrating their practical value in today's dynamic management environments.

Keywords: Management, Effective Communication, Leadership, Kamba Ramayana, Hanuman



Introduction

From olden days to modern management, effective communication plays an important role. Communication can be put in simple words as the process of sending and receiving information. But, effective communication is not just passing on the information, it is an important leadership trait. “Effective communication ultimately happens when the sender's message is efficiently received by the intended audience without misunderstanding.” (Pearce and Locke, 2023). It is vital to deliver the information in the way that others can understand and comprehend the information. This includes the use of proper tone, language, words and paying attention to the non-verbal communication. The communication is ineffective if it is not properly received and understood by the receivers. A leader should make sure the information is passed on to the team in the right way, in the right time and it is understood in the proper way. Leadership communication involves communicating to the team in the way that every team member or follower is able to comprehend the message that has been conveyed and is accurately received. Effective communication builds trust and relationships within the team. Unclear messages create misunderstanding and results in conflict or creates confusion within the team. It is essential for a manager to understand how to communicate accurately. “The Art of Communication is the language of Leadership”, says James Humes. “Good Communication is the basic quality of Management and Leadership.” Successful communication happens only when the receiver understands the exact meaning of the message sent. (Sharma, 2020, 6.1 The True Meaning of Communication section). It is important to know and understand the situation of the receiver before starting a communication. This plays an important role in building harmony within the teams. The speaker should know the objective of communication and the effects of the actions that can result from the message delivered. As perter Drucker says, “Listen to the unheard” observing and hearing what is not said is important. Communication is the way to build trust in relationships (Schermerhorn and Bachrach, 2021). By bridging ancient wisdom and modern management, this paper explores the importance of communication in management by comparing the specific stanzas of Kamba Ramayana.

Methodology

This study presents an in-depth analysis of the Kamba Ramayana to explore how the epic illustrates effective communication as a core element of leadership and management. Using the hermeneutic method, the research interprets selected verses to uncover how communication practices within the text align with contemporary communication principles in management. Special attention is given to Hanuman and how seven Cs of communication are demonstrated in his speech. The hermeneutic approach allows for a contextual reading of the text, interpreting meaning from the words spoken along with emotional and ethical dimensions. This method enables a nuanced understanding of how ancient narratives embed leadership and communication values relevant to modern organizational and managerial frameworks.

Kamba Ramayana

Kamba Ramayanam is written in Tamil by the Tamil poet, Kambar between 9th -12th century. It consists of six chapters which are known as “Kandam”, which explains a specific part of Rama’s life. The chapters are Bala Kandam, Ayodhya Kandam, Aranya Kandam, Kishkintha Kandam, Sundara Kandam and Yuddha Kandam. These Kandas are sub divided into “Padalam”. Kamba Ramayana abounds with management concepts which can be used and applied in today’s world. As John Adair says, historical examples combined with the theoretical knowledge serves as best practical applications. The learnings from Kamba Ramayana can be applied in various fields which includes psychology and management. As said by Dr. V. Irai Anbu (2018) in the book Effective Communication – The Kambar Way, the Kamba Ramayana serves as a interesting repository of management insights. This paper selected and analysed the stanzas which are relevant to management concepts with particular focus on effective communication.

Results and Discussions

The Ramayana, one of the ancient epics, highlights the importance of effective communication through its characters. The purpose of communication in management is to move you and your team forward toward your stated goal. (Kaminoff, 2016, 13. How to Communicate with the People You Manage section). In Kamba Ramayana, it can be observed that Dasaratha, Hanuman and Rama great communicators who convey their thoughts and decision with minimum words and clarity. The conversation between the characters in Kamba Ramayana, emphasize on these Communication skills. The communication efficiency of Hanuman is studied in this paper with relevance to 7 C's of communication. It is a framework that is designed for effective communication in organisational settings. They include completeness, compact, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy and correctness (Sharma, 2020). This paper explores these attributes of effective communication in Ramayana, analysing how the characters of Ramayana demonstrate these skills while communicating. By analysing the stanzas relevant to this, we get deep insight into how effective communication shaped leadership and management in the past. Kamba Ramayanam (Tamil) by V. Ilavazhudhi (2021), Kamba Ramayana (English Translation of Tamil Ramayana of Sage Kampan) translated into English by Shanti Lal Nagar (2023) and P.S. Sundaram's translation of Kamba Ramayana in English are used as handbooks for this study.

(i) Kishkindha Kanda

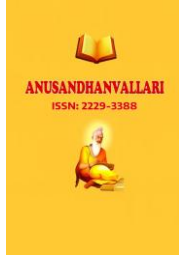
Hanuman was the epitome of effective communicator in the Ramayana. In Kishkinda Kanda, Sugriva was hiding from his brother Vaali out of fear. When Rama and Lakshmana arrived in Kishkindha, in search of Sita, Sugriva was suspicious and scared. He wondered if they were sent by Valli. Knowing that Vaali is strong, Sugriva was cautious of any strangers entering that area. When Rama and Lakshmana arrived in Kishkindha during their search for Sita, Sugriva noticed them from a distance. He was both intrigued and anxious. Sugriva suspected that they might be the spies sent by Vaali to find and kill him. To find out more about them, he sent his minister Hanuman. Hanuman is known for his intelligence and great communication skills. Sugriva instructed him to go down and speak with those two strangers, to find out the details of them. He asked Hanuman to find out who they are, why they are there and whether they pose any danger.

Hanuman disguised himself and approached Rama and Lakshmana. When he saw Rama and Lakshmana, he was unsure who they were. As he approached Rama and Lakshmana, Hanuman observed them closely. He noticed they are exhausted yet had composed expressions, they are powerful and can observe the sorrow hidden in their eyes. Using his deep emotional intelligence, he concluded that they must be noble individuals undergoing great hardship, likely searching for something very dear to them.

After observing and paying attention to every detail including their body language and facial expressions, Hanuman decided to approach them. Rama asked Hanuman who is he and where is he from, to which Hanuman replied,

*“O Lord, your body a rack of raincloud
And for eyes two lotuses no snow can put out –
Cruel and deadly to all women –
I am the son of the Wind God
Borne to him by Anjana, my name Hanuman (15)*

He introduced himself which included his name, his lineage and values. This helped Rama and Lakshmana to feel ease and build immediate trust. Hanuman's self-introduction is carefully crafted to reflect both his identity and his intention.



He introduced himself as Anjana's son and mentioned his name as Hanuman. Then he added the purpose of his visit. He stated that he is working for Sugriva, the son of Sun god who got alarmed seeing them which was the reason of him being there.

*"I serve the sun's son, residing on this mountain,
Who saw you coming, and slightly alarmed,
Sent me to find out concerning you",
Said he the fame on whose shoulders
Was enough to dwarf any mountain. (16)*

When Hanuman introduced himself to Rama and Lakshmana, Rama said to Lakshmana that he had met the epitome of the communicator who can communicate with abundant knowledge. Rama admires his intelligence in communication. Rama said,

*"My bowman brother! Doesn't his speech reveal
That there is nothing in this world
By way of knowledge he has not learnt,
Nor any part of the Vedic sea
He has not plumbed? Who do you think
Is this Lord of Language?
Is he Brahma or Siva?" (18)*

Rama said to Lakshmana that Hanuman's speech reveals his intelligence and knowledge. He admired Hanuman's communication skills and mentioned him as the epitome of communication.

In the Friendship Patala of Kishkindha Kanda, Hanuman introduced Rama and Lakshmana to Sugriva emphasizing their greatness and their values to build trust between Sugriva and Rama. Hanuman revealed that they are the sons of King Dasaratha. Hanuman spoke of Rama's valour, mentioning his defeat of the fearsome demoness Tataka and her son. He also explained the reason for Rama's exile that he had come to the forest in obedience to Kaikeyi's command, which shows his unwavering commitment to duty and righteousness. He said,

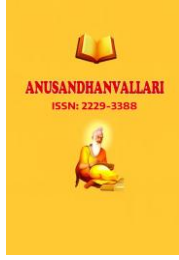
*"They will give you their favour; the end has come
Right now for Vali, our inveterate foe.
Wise one, come and meet them",
Said that dexterous counsellor well-versed in the codes. (15)*

Listening to the words of Hanuman, Sugriva went with him to meet Rama. Hanuman's words helped to build trust in Sugriva about Rama and Lakshmana. Similarly, Hanuman gave the details about the greatness of Sugriva and explained why Sugriva was hiding from Vali.

(ii) Sundara Kanda

In Sundara Kanda, Hanuman reveals himself patala, when Sita was about to end her life, Hanuman reveals himself by informing her that he is the messenger of Rama which saved her life. He informed her that Rama, along with the monkey army of Sugriva are searching for Sita.

*"I am here by Rama's command.
Countless others in search of you
Are scouring the world. My past penance,
Has, Lady, brought me to your feet." (23)*



In 'The Return to Rama' Patala, after successfully locating Sita in Lanka, Hanuman returned to Rama and delivered the long-awaited news with great devotion and clarity.

*"Seen have I the jewel of chasity
In southern Lanka mid the sea;
Lord, be rid now of doubt and sorrow,"
Said Hanuman to the hero Rama. (25)*

He informed to Rama that Sita is alive, she is the jewel of Chasity and in captive in Lanka. Hanuman also conveyed Sita's message, including the token she had given, a piece of her jewellery which served as proof of their meeting. His message brought immense relief to Rama, reaffirming his determination to defeat Ravana and bring back Sita. Hanuman's communication was informative and filled with emotional sensitivity, reinforcing his role as a loyal messenger and a master of effective communication.

(iii) Yuddha Kandam

In the Yuddha Kandam, in the "Vibshishana takes Refuge patala", Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, was exiled from Lanka for opposing Ravana's conduct and asking him to leave Sita. He came seeking refuge to Rama. His arrival at the monkey camp was unexpected and sudden which led to mixed feelings. Rama didn't make any hasty decisions. He, as a leader, consulted his trusted advisors and commanders seeking their opinions on Vibhishana's refuge. Rama gave everyone in his team a chance to voice out their thoughts and carefully listened to it.

Most of them, including Sugriva and Jambavan expressed strong doubt about him that Vibhishana should not be accepted. They feared that Vibhishana, being a Rakshasa and brother of the enemy, could be a spy or a traitor.

Rama asked Hanuman his thoughts to which Hanuman responded with respect for others' opinions but presented his own insights clearly and logically. He began,

*"What these pure-minded have said with confidence
Is bound, O King, to be good advice.
And yet there is a thing I would say.
I do not share their distrust of him,
For which I wish to state my reasons." (86)*

Hanuman then gave evidence-based reasoning to support his belief in Vibhishana's sincerity. He recalled how during his mission to Lanka, when Ravana ordered him to be killed, it was Vibhishana who courageously intervened and argued against harming a messenger. This shows Vibhishana's adherence to dharma. Hanuman noted that Vibhishana's palace lacked any sign of indulgence in evil. Instead, everything he observed in his presence pointed toward righteousness, devotion, and a longing for truth.

*"So," he concluded, "I am of the view
That he has come to us for our good." (102)*

Hanuman's speech showed clarity, courtesy, empathy and coherence. His words had the power to empathize and build trust when critical decisions have to be made.

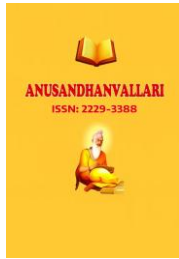
Findings

The 7 C's of communication is a set of seven key principles that enhance effectiveness in communication. In organisational setting, these principles to reduce misunderstandings and improve the quality of message. These 7 Cs of communication can be clearly observed in Hanuman's conversations throughout the Ramayana, making him an exemplary communicator in Ramayana. Below are the key insights.

- (i) *Completeness*: The message should contain all the necessary information. Incomplete messages can lead to unnecessary misunderstanding. Communication must be constructive and it can be used as a powerful management tool (Kaminoff, 2016). Hanuman exemplifies this throughout his interactions. We can see a complete message with all the details while communicating. In Kishkintha Kanda, when introducing himself to Rama, he included all the details from his name to lineage. While informing this, he clarifies who sent him, why he was sent and what is his role. Similarly, when introducing Rama to Sugriva and Sugriva to Rama, Hanuman included all the necessary information. He described the bravery of Rama to Sugriva and explained to Rama why Sugriva is hiding from Vali with full details. Message must include who, what, where, when, why and how to be complete (Sharma, 2020). In Sundara Kanda and Yuddha Kanda, we can see the completeness in Hanuman's conversation with others. For managers and leaders, complete communication fosters transparency and mutual trust.
- (ii) *Compact*: Conciseness is expressing the message with minimum words without changing the meaning. In organisational setting, this technique is popularly mentioned as 'Keep it short and simple'. Not overloading the information is the key to achieve compact while speaking or writing (Pearce and Locke, 2023). It is a crucial skill for managers and leaders as it helps to save time and confusion. A leader who can speak messages concisely, look confident and efficient. After locating Sita, he returns and gives Rama a short but powerful update. This concise message assures Rama of Sita's safety and her chastity. It also contained the urgency of action in a single message. He also handed over Sita's jewel as proof. As mentioned by Soma. Valliappan, when Hanuman returned from Lanka and met Rama, Hanuman cleared all Rama's doubts in a single message (Valliappan, 2018). Hanuman highlights effective communication is about conveying the right message with minimal use of words.
- (iii) *Consideration*: It is the act of placing oneself in the receiver's position before communicating. It involves understanding of receiver's needs and expectations which helps to tailor the message accordingly. The emotional tone of a leader is very powerful (Goleman, 2006). Being considerate in communicating connects the leader to the team or followers. Hanuman exemplified this by tuning into the emotions of those he communicated with. When Hanuman approached Rama and Lakshmana in Kishkindha Kanda, he first observed them deeply before speaking. When he saw Rama's grief, he spoke with empathy. When addressing to Sugriva, he explained Rama's and Lakshmana's values and their adherence to dharma. In the Yuddha Kanda, during the Vibhishana's refuge episode, Hanuman showed remarkable consideration for both Rama's leadership position and the team's concerns. He respected the concerns of others before stating his viewpoint. Leaders must adapt their communication style based on their team's mindset and needs. This skill of a leader helps them to deliver messages without conflict.
- (iv) *Concreteness*: Effective communication does not involve random statements. The message must be supported by facts and the corresponding details. Backing up the message with proper facts helps

the receiver to understand the message clearly. This creates trust which is the key ingredient for maintaining relationship through communication (Adair, 2011). Hanuman's communication was always backed by tangible observations and facts. When introducing Rama to Sugriva, he provided all the information about Rama and Lakshmana. He detailed his conversation with who they are, why are they here and their achievements. This helped to build trust in Sugriva about Rama and Lakshmana. Similarly, when Sita was doubtful about Hanuman if he was sent by Ravana, he mentioned how Rama met Sugriva and explained about the friendship between Rama and Sugriva. He also showed Rama's ring which backed his message. While mentioning his views about Vibhishana, he described the purity of Vibhishana's palace along with his values. Effective leaders support their decisions with data and observations, grounding their communication to enhance credibility.

- (v) *Clarity:* Clarity in communication involves the speaker ensuring that the message is delivered in a straightforward and clear manner, leaving no room for confusion or misinterpretation by the listener. It ensures that messages are conveyed precise and accurate. An effective leader should communicate in a clear and concise manner, providing only the necessary information with a minimal use of words. Hanuman consistently exemplifies this quality throughout his interactions in the Kamba Ramayana. When Hanuman first approached Rama and Lakshmana in Kishkinda Kandam, despite being in disguise, Hanuman speaks with clarity and courtesy. His self-introduction was clear and meaningful. He immediately establishes credibility and trust through his conversation. There was no hesitation in introducing himself. Then he moves on to the purpose of the visit. This explains that Sugriva sent him, to know about Rama and Lakshmana and he is the minister of Sugriva. His speech was structured and carefully tailored to the listener's expectations, which demonstrates a strong understanding of communication principles.
- (vi) *Courtesy:* The message should be communicated in a respectful and polite tone. It reflects speaker's respect for the listener's perspective. The social intelligence of the speaker plays a vital role in communicating a message in a courteous way. Empathetic accuracy and primal empathy involve understanding how others feel and think. Full attention in listening without interruption helps the speaker to focus on the mindset of the receiver (Goleman, 2006). Hanuman never interrupted while communicating. He was kind while communicating. When disagreeing with Sugriva and others about Vibhishana's refuge, he acknowledged their wisdom before offering his different opinion. He offered reasoned arguments without dismissing the feelings of his peers, understanding that building consensus is key in team-based leadership. Another instance of courtesy in Hanuman's speech can be found while he introduced himself to Rama and Lakshmana. Though sent by Sugriva to assess their identity, Hanuman doesn't begin with suspicion or interrogation. He understood they were in search of something they have lost through their body language and facial expressions. He read the fatigue and sorrow on their faces and adjusted his approach accordingly. Not paying attention to non-verbal signals makes it difficult to communicate effectively. This can be a barrier for good communication. (Schermerhorn and Bachrach, 2021). Hanuman introduced himself with great humility and helped to form friendship with Sugriva.
- (vii) *Correctness:* For the sender to express the message clearly to the receiver, words must carefully be chosen. (Schermerhorn and Bachrach, 2021). Communication must be correct which includes grammar and the language usage. This approach enhances the clarity of the communication. Attention should be given to the fluency of the language and the proper pronunciation of the words.



In the Kishkinda Kanda, Hanuman introduces himself to Rama and Lakshmana with a carefully composed self-description. His speech was composed in fluent and a grammatically precise way which impressed Rama that he praised Hanuman as the epitome of a learned and articulate speaker. This is a strong endorsement of correctness as a foundation for trust. In the Sundara Kanda, when Hanuman returned from Lanka to convey news about Sita, he considered Rama's emotional turmoil. Instead of bluntly stating facts, Hanuman chose words filled with assurance. Rather than giving a dry report, Hanuman soothes Rama's heart by healing him while delivering the message.

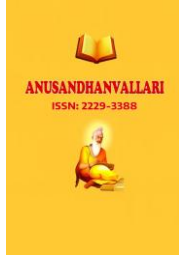
Good communication fosters a positive work environment building trust in an organisation. By adhering to the seven C's of communication, leaders can reduce confusion and misunderstandings within the team. The Kamba Ramayana contains numerous insights into management and communication that align with contemporary management concepts. This study specifically focused on analysing aspects of communication, leadership and management as reflected in the text. A significant limitation of this research is that the Kamba Ramayana is composed in classical Tamil, which may present difficulties for scholars who are not proficient in the language. Furthermore, as with many ancient texts, the poetic nature of the text invites multiple interpretations on the themes of communication, leadership and management.

Conclusion:

This study demonstrates how the classical text, the Kamba Ramayana, offers valuable lessons on effective communication. Consistent and transparent communication is crucial for leaders to maintain strong team dynamics. By examining significant episodes such as Hanuman's initial encounter with Rama, Rama's meeting with Sugriva, Hanuman's return after finding Sita and Vibhishana taking refuge, the research emphasizes the fundamental principles of effective communication in management. Hanuman's skill in adapting his messages to the audience's perspective highlights the reason he is being regarded as an exemplary communicator in the Kamba Ramayana. The seven Cs of communication are clearly reflected in his dialogues and interactions. The study highlights that successful leaders are those who respect others' viewpoints, cultivating a culture of mutual respect through communication. These qualities are directly relevant to modern organizational settings, where effective leadership demands clear and comprehensive communication. This paper focuses on selected elements of communication and management drawn from the Kamba Ramayana. Future research could expand upon this by comparing different versions of the Ramayana in other cultural epics to deepen our understanding of ancient insights and their applicability to contemporary management and leadership models.

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