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Running Head: Communication in an Engineering Firm: An Interview Study

# Voices from the Workplace: Exploring Communication Practices in an Engineering Firm through an Interview-Based Study

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## ABSTRACT

Effective communication is crucial for organizational success. This study explores communication practices within an engineering firm, to understand how communication models impact project dynamics and stakeholder relationships.

We adopted a qualitative approach, conducting face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with employees and executives. The firm's unique approach to construction projects makes it an ideal case study for understanding how communication influences this field.

This research aims to unravel the communication culture within the firm, including formal and informal communication channels, and how these practices affect workplace stability and effectiveness using communication models from past researchers, such as Organizational Culture Theory, the Transactional Communication Model, and the Interactive Communication Model. The findings can help reshape communication strategies in construction, fostering better stakeholder relationships and project success.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on communication in engineering workplaces by providing insights into communication practices and their impact on an organization's efficiency and stakeholder dynamics.

**Keywords:-** *Communication Practices, Construction, Miscommunication, Project Success, Organizational Culture.*

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general introduction and summary of the research topic, as well as the purpose and significance of conducting the study.

### *A. Background of the Study*

Effective communication is the bind that holds a company together. It is a necessary skill to achieve valuable performance and build successful teams. Communication and management are complementary disciplines that work together in parallel to ensure business success. Employees who communicate effectively have a great opportunity to contribute to their workplace (Bucăța, & Rizescu, 2017; Musheke, M. M., & Phiri, J., 2021; Shrivastava, S., & Prasad, V., 2019; Rahmat, N., Razali, N., & Awang, N., 2019).

### *B. Statement of the Problem*

Miscommunications are inevitable in every organization. Miscommunication in the workplace can hurt collaboration, relationships, and productivity. Language challenges, physical environments, and differences in verbal and nonverbal conduct can all contribute to this phenomenon. Studies suggest that communication challenges in multicultural workplaces might result from disparities in gestures and nonverbal politeness signals (Ribbens, 2022).

According to Awwad et al. (2016), as cited by Gamil, Y., & Abd Rahman, I. (2023), construction projects have their implementation approach, which can lead to unexpected disputes among construction stakeholders, ultimately leading to the project's failure. A survey conducted by Salvation (2019) discovered that employees in a specific company frequently suffer communication challenges, which leads to conflicts and misunderstandings within the workforce. Miscommunication is often the root of workplace conflict, poor employee morale, and turnover (Stubbe, 2017; Salvation, 2019; Malik et al., 2021). Moreover, without effective ways to handle miscommunication in the workplace, it can lead to uncontrolled circumstances that blow up internal conflicts among members of the same company and may lead to the organization's failure, according to Thepsiri (2015) and Turaga (2016), as cited by Maneerutt (2022).

### *C. Purpose of the Study*

We decided to interview the executives of the said firm and employees to gather data about their communication style and methods and assess whether their communication model is efficient for their field of work.

This firm is an engineering firm that has garnered our attention for its unique implementation approach in construction projects. By delving into communication practices within the firm through our interview-based study, we aim to unravel insights that could potentially reshape the narrative around stakeholder relationships, mitigate disputes, and pave the way for success in construction endeavors.

The focal point of this paper is to understand the communication model inside an organization that practices in the field related to our course. In this manner, we will conduct an interview in a semi-structured format that allows us to garner data that answers the research questions in an engineering-related organization. The collected data from the interviews will lead us to assess the effectiveness of the currently existing communication model in the organization as well as understand how communication affects a workplace or organization in multiple aspects.

### *D. Significance of the Study*

This research aims to delve deeper into the communication dynamics within the organization, focusing on understanding the unique communication culture, identifying patterns of communication flow, examining formal and informal communication models, and documenting specific instances to analyze the impact of communication on organizational stability and effectiveness. The research will explore how organizational culture influences communication practices, what channels and hierarchies characterize communication flow, how different communication models align with organizational goals, and how communication practices contribute to or hinder organizational stability.

➤ *To This Extent, Understanding The Communication In The Engineering Firm Will Help These Beneficiaries:*

- **The Engineering Firm** – This study will help the firm to analyze the communication pattern used throughout the years and to be able to reflect on past instances to help them avoid committing the same mistakes in terms of communication. Through this study, this firm will be able to define things that will help their organization to be more efficient, productive, and open to every employee. Thus, conflicts, delays, and any adverse effects are highly mitigated in the future.
- **Civil Engineering Students** – Civil engineering students will benefit from this study as they can use this as a reference on how communication is crucial, specifically in a construction firm. The collected data can be a tool for them to identify things to avoid and what to improve once they start working in a specific construction firm.
- **Future Researchers** – This paper will serve as the body of knowledge for future researchers as they can use it as a reference in improving this paper and also use this paper as their guide in understanding other communication strategies in other fields.

E. *Theoretical Framework*

This section contains the framework used in the study based on the previous theories about communication that exist.

➤ *Responsive Interviewing Model*

Rubin H.& Rubin I., (2019) stated that interviewing someone in an in-depth manner can be classified as Responsive Interviewing. This model focuses on the importance of the existence of the interviewer and his/her interviewee and must be both human and not some kind of recording device. Responsive interviewing emphasizes that an interview is a conversation. The interviewer may agree or disagree, ask unscripted questions, or express their opinions. The interviewer is viewed as both a researcher and a participant, and by participating in the conversation, s/he can encourage insight and contemplation. In gathering our data, we prefer to use face-to-face interviews rather than information from a recording device since this recorded data may contain some errors and be incomplete. We applied this theory as our foundation in data gathering to ensure the conciseness of the answers.

➤ *Organizational Culture Theory*

Edgar Schein's (1980) organizational culture theory has three elements such as artifacts, espoused values, and the basic underlying assumptions. These elements were used to present and discuss the data gathered through interviews and observation.

- **Artifacts:** It is the tangible aspects of the organization. Upon interviewing, we observed that most items in their workplace have their own logo. It includes their uniforms, trucks, and equipment. In addition, during our interview, the participant mentioned that all employees must wear uniforms while on the job.
- **Espoused Values:** According to Edgar Schein, this refers to norms, ideals, and rules of conduct, including their mission and vision statement. The employee mentioned conducting a toolbox meeting every two months where employees can raise their concerns regarding their projects. Also, during our online conversation, we inquired about the organization's vision and mission.
- **Basic Underlying Assumptions:** The basic underlying assumptions are the behaviors that were developed through time unconsciously in an organization. This is often difficult to identify since employees may accept them as a given or not be aware of them. The participants stated that their communication significantly improved over time. Moreover, the participant mentioned that the general manager encourages all team members to focus and listen attentively during meetings that became part of their organizational culture. However, our observation within their internal culture is described as rigid and shallow that led to less interactive communication.

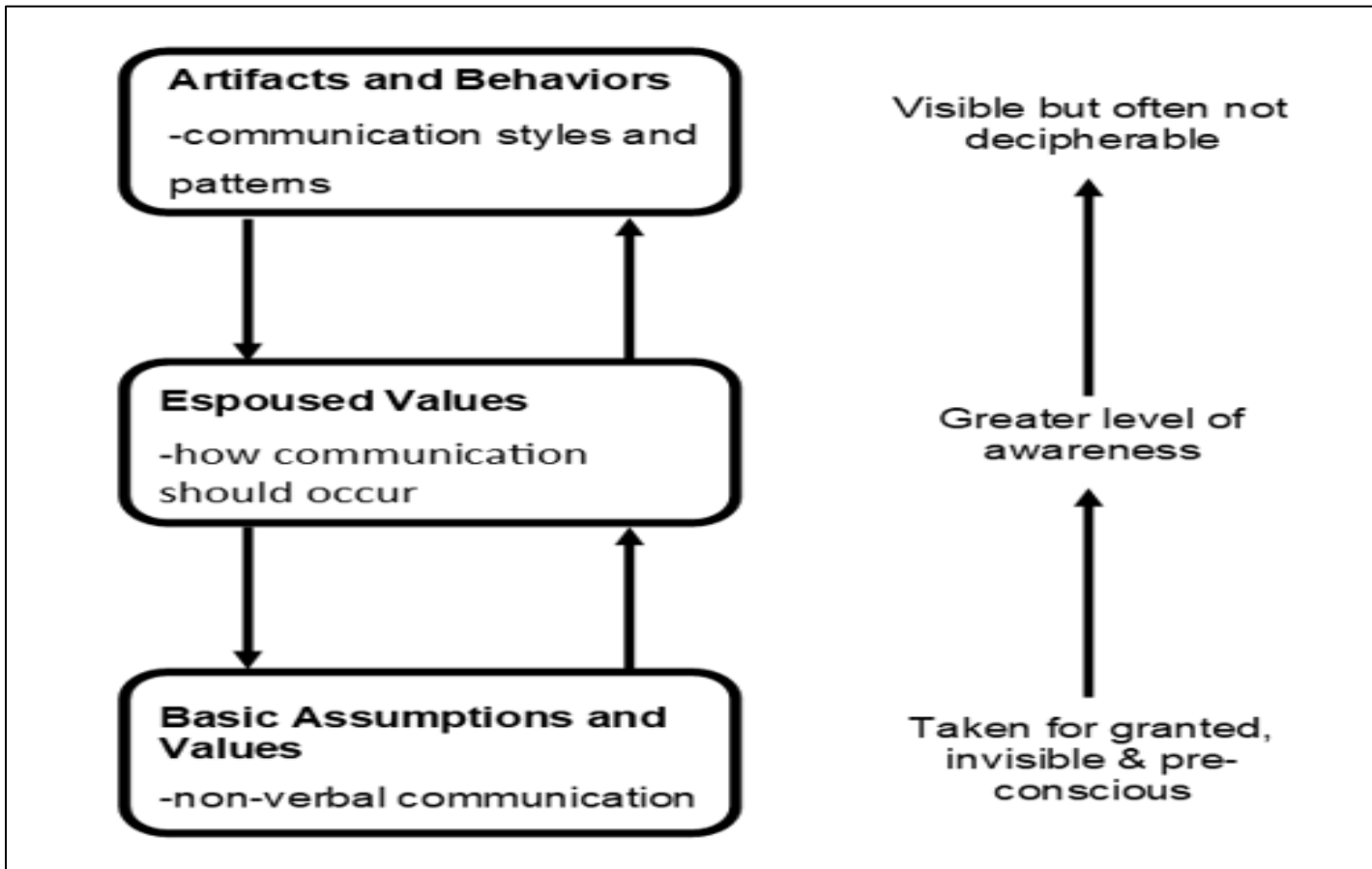


Fig 1: Theoretical Framework

*F. Research Questions*

The following research questions were used as a basis to observe and analyze the communication practices in our chosen engineering firm:

- How does the organizational culture of the institution shape and influence communication practices, encompassing values, norms, and shared beliefs among its members?
- What are the observed communication patterns within the organization?
- What communication model best describes the communication system observed in the organization?
- What communication practices were observed in the organization?

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the literature utilized in the study. It examines the past research conducted in this field to provide a better understanding of the present study.

#### *A. Communication in the Workplace*

Peason and Nelson (2000) defined communication as a process of understanding and exchange of messages. Communication ensures that everyone is heard. Communicating at work is a skill that can be strengthened by training in mindful strategies for communication. Learning these strategies can make people better at talking and become more effective communicators in their workplace interactions. (Bucăța and Rizescu, 2017; Shrivastava and Prasad, 2019)

In any organization, communication is crucial because it helps organizations build teams and improve performance. It helps people work better together, making decisions easier and leading to success. Adu-Oppong (2014) and Bucăța and Rizescu (2017), outline guidelines for aligning communication strategies with organizational goals, promoting open dialogue, and encouraging active listening to employees. Additionally, it emphasized how crucial it is for organizations to have clear and open communication. They stated that when employees communicate well, trust each other more, work together better, and enjoy their jobs more. When companies match how they talk with what they want to achieve and believe in, they create a teamwork and friendly environment. Communication leads everyone to work with confidence for the organization's success.

#### ➤ *Role of Effective Communication in Organizational Success*

Email is a common communication channel in the workplace, but many people mistakenly assume that simply exchanging messages means communication has taken place. According to Ruck, Kevin & Mary Welch (2012), successful communication occurs only when the sender's information is delivered to the recipient and the recipient clearly understands the message. Individuals should use appropriate questions, phrases, and cues to promote understanding.

Effective communication is an essential factor for the success of any organization, in addition to good leadership and teamwork. It enables better performance and decision-making, while ineffective communication can lead to conflicts and issues within the organization. According to Sanchez & Guo (2005), "Workplace communication is a means of transferring information in such a way that one can make oneself understood to the others". A recent study conducted to determine the impact of communication on project success found that certain variables can cause a project to fail. For instance, formal communication with coworkers may lead to the success of a construction project, while informal communication can result in positive outcomes. The study concludes that workers prefer to use informal communication during work as it allows them to express themselves better and build trust with their coworkers (Musheke, M. & Phiri, J. 2021; Malik, S. et al. 2021).

#### ➤ *Role of Communication in Construction Project Success*

Extensive research has been conducted over the years to study the success of construction projects and the vital role that effective communication plays in them. Alarcón & Ashley (1996) proposed the General Performance Model (GPM) to evaluate various possibilities for project execution and predict costs, schedules, and other performance impacts. According to a study by Bryson and Bromiley (1993), effective project communication includes internal communication.

A paper by Bahmani & Zhang (2021) emphasized the importance of improved and effective communication in natural disaster projects. "Communication throughout natural disaster recovery projects enables a better flow of information and easier identification of the stakeholder's real needs" (Bahmani & Zhang, 2021).

#### *B. Miscommunication in the Workplace*

In an organization, miscommunication can act as a barrier, hindering productivity, fostering misunderstandings, and interrupt the seamless flow of ideas and information among employees. Construction conflicts arise due to miscommunication, including delays in sharing information and using the wrong channels for communication, according to Gamil and Rahman (2017), as cited by Gamil, Y., & Abd Rahman, I. (2023). Conflicts that usually arise in construction projects include budgetary battles, disagreements on safety measures, communication breakdowns, or resource allocation issues. According to Badir et al. (2012), as cited by Wu, G., Liu, C., Zhao, X., & Zuo, J. (2017), construction projects are often uncertain and complex, involving different organizations working closely together, emphasizing the crucial role of good and effective communication. Poor communication throughout the construction project can cause rework, leading to delays, increased costs, and even project failure. The consequences of poor communication differ based on project size. Larger projects face a greater risk of complete failure due to the cascading effects of miscommunication. On the other hand, smaller projects might experience less severe consequences, potentially just delays or minor setbacks (Hussain, A. M. A., Othman, A. A., Gabr,



H. S., & Aziz, T. A., (2018). Even smaller projects can suffer significant reputational damage or lose client trust due to poor communication. Thus, effective communication is crucial for all project sizes to ensure efficiency and success.

➤ *Strategies for Resolving Workplace Conflicts*

Conflict is a normal part of communication. Hence, it occurs at work. Conflict, while not unavoidable or inherently harmful, is universal. Conflicts can take many forms and occur at all levels of the organizational hierarchy, including supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, as well as consumers, clients, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Thus, resolving conflicts inside an organization is a must before they affect the quality of projects made by the organization (Elgoibar et al., 2022). According to the book written by Coleman et al. (2014), cooperation in an organization is a must. The parties are more likely to succeed in interpreting their conflict as a mutual problem if they follow cooperative behavior standards even when in conflict and possess the abilities required for cooperation. Cooperative behavior follows the same rules as courteous, accountable, honest, empowering, and loving behavior toward friends or other group members. In addition, this book also discusses how basic values can help resolve conflicts in the workplace. The values that are aforementioned in the book are reciprocity, human equality, shared community, fallibility, and nonviolence.

This book suggests that conflicts can be lessened by achieving constructive conflict resolution values that underpin them.

*C. Cultural Influences on Workplace Communication*

Diverse culture is not new to an organization. In an organization, communication can be affected by employees coming from different cities. Guirdham, M., & Guirdham, O. (2017) explained that a significant and increasing portion of work communication involves interactions with individuals from diverse cultures and demographics. Decades of research show clear differences in how people from various backgrounds behave, impacting communication in personal and professional settings. Cultural awareness and adapting communication styles are crucial for boosting team productivity. According to Chandrakumara, Glynn, Gunathilake, & Senevirathne (2010), as cited by Imachukwu, O. T. (2014), the main challenge revolved around cultural and nonverbal variations among different geographical regions, impacting comprehension, relationships, and overall workplace effectiveness.

Hofstede et al. (2002), as cited by Akpa, V. O., Asikhia, O. U., & Nneji, N. E. (2021), suggest that organizational culture of a company can serve as an indicator for assessing its economic performance. Stewart (2007) indicates that profitability is vital for any organization, and a strong work culture is a proven way to achieve it.

*D. Understanding Organizational Culture*

All people around the world have their kinds of culture, which are the ones that form their perspectives in life and give colors to how they see the world. Even in the form of an organization, culture also exists and is practiced by the members of that organization. Organizational culture is considered one of the significant components of an organization, which can help develop the relationship between the members through enhancing trust and cooperation, fewer disagreements, and more efficient decision-making. Having a significant impact on various organizational processes, employees, and their performance, it also plays an essential role in integrating different company cultures within the corporate group structure (Kenny, 2012). Along with the organizational culture is its theory that explains how the culture can influence the whole organization. The management literature includes several theories of organizational culture but only the three of these are applicable for the workplace which are: Competing value framework that was proposed by Cameron and Quinn (2006), Four core dimensions of organizational culture by Harrison and Stokes (1992), and Three paradigms of organizational culture by Rodriguez and Gomez (2009). Based on the study of Akpa, V. O., Asikhia, O. U., & Nneji, N. E. (2021), they found that when employees keep practicing culture just like following norms and possessing values in line with their organization, it will enhance the execution of each employee's job duties and responsibilities leading to the goal of their organization.

*E. Communication Channel*

A communication channel is the technical aspect of communication that enables people to exchange information between the sender and receiver. It includes various tools for creating and understanding messages, such as signs, language (including body language), codes, and technical devices. (Sanina et al., 2017).

As stated by Kreps, as referenced by Muhamedi and Ariffin (2017), organizational communication involves members collecting essential information about their organization and its changes. Organizations use different ways to communicate information, like talking on the phone, sending emails, talking face-to-face, using social media, and more. These ways help them share important messages and work together better. They make communication easy and encourage people to give feedback and interact with each other.



➤ *Verbal Communication*

Verbal communication is a channel utilized by two or more people speaking to each other. Verbal communication channels include face-to-face interactions, telephone conversations, and meetings. This communication channel has a reputation for being the primary means of communication. The advantages of this communication channel are its immediacy, and richness but is, however, prone to misinterpretation (Dingwall et al., 2019).

➤ *Non-Verbal Communication*

Non-verbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures, play a large part in face-to-face communication. According to Mehrabian (1981), only around 7% receiver's comprehension of a message is based on the sender's spoken words; 38% is based on paralanguage, and 55 percent is based on non-verbal cues. Abstract things such as our mood and emotions can be conveyed through our facial expressions, and body language which play a role in conveying a message to another person (Dingwall et al., 2019).

➤ *Written Communication*

Written communication is conducted through textual messages. Some examples of this communication channel include email, letters, reports, and memos. These messages may be printed, handwritten, or appear on a screen. They are essential tools for asynchronous communication, long-distance communication, and documentation in an organization (Dingwall et al., 2019).

➤ *Digital Communication*

The three previously mentioned communication channels, Verbal, Non-Verbal, and Written, can be used in digital formats as well through the use of computers and the Internet. Some examples of digital communication channels are social media, email, instant messaging, and video conferencing. This technology has revolutionized communication practices in the digital age. This communication channel retains many of the characteristics of the principal channels but influences them in new ways (Dingwall et al., 2019).

*F. Analyzing Hierarchical Structures Impacting Communication*

Hierarchical structures can naturally be found in an organization. This allows for a smooth flow in the distribution of tasks and giving orders in the organization (Salthe, 1985). However, hierarchical barriers have been identified as one of the factors that obstruct communication within an organization (Sias, 2009). As concluded by a study conducted by Thakur (2023), hierarchical barriers were found to be the most significant communication challenge in a workplace environment. This suggests that free and unlimited communication may be hampered by the organizational structure (Thakur, 2023).

➤ *Upward and Downward Communication*

Effective communication is vital in any organization, both downward communication from upper management to lower-level employees and upward communication from lower-level employees to upper management. By promoting open and transparent communication, the organization can foster trust, increase morale, and improve overall productivity.

DeVito (2015) highlights five crucial communication characteristics—openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. In addition, Stoner (1996) categorizes organizational communication into lateral and vertical channels. Vertical communication, further divided by Werther, Gómez-Mejía (2001), and Davis (1996), includes downward communication. Downward communication involves the flow of information from higher organizational levels to employees, commonly used by managers to convey decisions or policies. This system plays a role in equipping employees with crucial knowledge about organizational conditions and support (Said, M., & Said, L. R., 2018).

Whereas, according to Kalogiannidis (2020), upward communication is an established process within an organization, whereby subordinates share crucial information with their managers or superiors. This communication flow, moving from the bottom to the top of the organizational hierarchy, is employed when subordinates seek opinions or information from their superiors. Studies show that upward communication is instrumental in influencing decisions at the top levels of management, fostering cooperation between employees and leadership. It also provides a platform for employees to freely express their opinions and feelings about their jobs and workplace issues.

*G. Examining Communication Models*

The process of sending and receiving messages by written or spoken means, such as speech or oral communication; graphical representations (such as infographics, maps, and charts); signs, signals, and behavior, is known as communication. A simpler definition of communication is "the creation and exchange of meaning." (Nordquist, 2019). Communication models help to simplify the process by visualizing every element of a communication interaction.

In the linear communication model, a sender encodes and delivers a message across an appropriate channel to a receiver, who deciphers it. It perceives communication as occurring in one direction, from source to recipient (Hamilton et al., 2019).

The interactive communication model combines elements of the transactional and linear models of communication, emphasizing the two-way flow of information and even the back-and-forth exchange of information between two individuals (Hamilton et al., 2019). Under the two-way transactional communication model, the sender and the recipient have equal responsibility for communicating messages that impact each other.

Lastly, communication is viewed as a two-way process involving feedback between the sender and the recipient in the interactive model of communication. According to this concept, a message is encoded and sent by the sender to the recipient, who decodes it and replies to the sender (Bilgin et al., 2021). Thus, the way that transactional, linear, and interactive models of communication perceive the exchange of messages between two or more individuals is the way that they differ from one another.

#### ➤ *Transactional Model*

According to Barnlund (1970), as cited by Ashman (2018), the transaction model of communication describes communication as a process through which communicators create social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. This approach recognizes that communication involves more than just exchanging information; it also includes forming relationships, building intercultural alliances, defining self-concepts, and participating in discussions with others to establish communities. In the transaction model, the roles of the sender and receiver differ significantly from those in other models. Participants in a communication encounter are also communicators rather than senders and receivers. The transaction model emphasizes that we are both sending and receiving information simultaneously. The transactional model is a crucial aspect of the paradigm because it allows us to understand how we can modify our communication while sending a message based on the feedback we receive from our communication partner.

The transactional model is commonly used in communication studies, emphasizing the complexities and variety of human communication interactions. Dean Barnlund, a communication expert, devised this concept in the 1970s. This approach highlights that communication is a dynamic and simultaneous process in which both the sender and receiver are active participants. It consists of these elements: sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback, and context. It is a simultaneous and ongoing exchange in which both the sender and receiver are active in encoding and decoding messages, feedback for the sender serves as a response for the receiver, and both communicators give feedback. (Mor et al., 2023).

Overall, the transactional model of communication emphasizes the collaborative aspect of communication, in which meaning is formed via interaction rather than forced or dictated by one person.

#### ➤ *Interactive Model*

In an organization, interaction is the lifeblood of collaboration, enabling seamless communication and fostering a cohesive work environment essential for facilitating the coordination and timely completion of tasks critical to project success. The interactive communication model sees communication as a back-and-forth process where people take turns sending and receiving messages, creating meaning through feedback in both physical and psychological contexts (Schramm, 1997). Ashman (2018), implies that unlike a one-way process, this model emphasizes the interactive nature of communication, where messages trigger responses, making it a dynamic two-way process. The inclusion of feedback and context makes this model more comprehensive. Instead of one sender, one message, and one receiver, there are now two people who take turns sending and receiving messages to keep the conversation going.

Interaction in the construction field is vital for several reasons. Firstly, effective communication fosters collaboration among team members, ensuring that everyone is on the same page regarding project goals and timelines. Secondly, real-time interaction allows for swift problem-solving and decision-making, critical elements in a dynamic construction environment. Lastly, a collaborative atmosphere enhances overall project efficiency and minimizes errors, contributing to the successful and timely completion of construction projects. Sulistiani, I., & Sipakoly, S. (2024), suggests that the Human Resources (HRD) department should prioritize this aspect in the recruitment process. Regardless of an individual's expertise, their ability to make significant contributions depends on their capacity to collaborate effectively with team members.

#### *H. Consequences of Communication Practices*

Communication practices in the workplace can have various consequences, both positive and negative, that significantly impact organizational dynamics and outcomes. Based on the research conducted by Hee, Kowang, Husin, and Ping in 2019, it is clear that good communication plays a vital role in achieving high performance and fostering strong working relationships within an organization. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize effective communication in the workplace. Trust among employees can build up if everyone spends time delivering clear communication. Hence, effective communication boosts employee productivity and binds employees together. It builds teams, increases employee performance, and, at the same time, reduces employee turnover in the organization.

According to Kapur (2020), the communication models play an essential part in successfully maintaining the communication processes. These models help employees communicate more effectively by providing ways to understand how communication happens. By using communication models, individuals can better organize their thoughts, choose the right words, and ensure that their messages are clear and understood by others. In essence, communication models serve as helpful tools that guide employees to communicate more efficiently and effectively in various situations.

As highlighted by Edwards et al. (2016), misunderstandings are a natural and inescapable aspect of communication. It means that misinterpretations and confusion can happen sometimes when people communicate. In some cases, misunderstandings may seem insignificant. However, in other cases, the outcome may be significant or can cause harm to the organization (Berger, 2001).

#### *I. Principles of Responsive Interviewing*

One of the best research instruments when you are conducting qualitative research is the interview. Unlike the other research instruments that have difficulty in developing deep questions just like questionnaires, interviews are able to gather in-depth information. This is because the interviewee can freely say what they want as long as it is related to the provided questions. Aside from that, usually the answers in an interview are not limited since the interview can also be in the form of open ended which means the questions can not basically be answered by yes or no.

One of the types of interviews is Responsive Interviewing. Responsive interview requires that the individuals involved (interviewer and interviewee), must be both human that have feelings, personality, interests and experience that will serve as their basis in performing question and answer (Rubin H.& Rubin I. 2019). As stated by Beaver & Busse (2000), interviews act as an important tool that can help assess the psychological state of every child in school. It is used to better understand their social and cultural context, elucidate stakeholders' worries, and to determine what intervention is required to solve their problems.

## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design, participant selection criteria, and data collection process utilized in the study.

### *A. Research Design*

The main objective of this study is to determine the communication inside an organization. We adopted a qualitative approach as Tenny et al. (2022) defines qualitative research as centered around posing open-ended questions that aim to comprehend the reasons behind a particular topic instead of relying on numerical data to conclude to explore the communication practices and understand the communication model in our chosen engineering firm to gather the information we needed to answer our research questions. Thus, we conducted face-to-face interviews with the company's stakeholders, including the employees, office engineers, and site engineers.

### *B. Selection Criteria*

Choosing an engineering firm for this study regarding communication practices aligns seamlessly with the study's objectives. The organization's direct relevance to the course, particularly within the engineering field, ensures that the findings contribute meaningfully to a nuanced understanding of communication practices. This alignment is further complemented by Savior Construction's unique implementation approach in construction projects, offering an intriguing dimension that promises valuable insights into how communication models impact project success and stakeholder relationships in the industry.

Additionally, by choosing this firm, it is anticipated that the research findings may change how stakeholder relationships are being portrayed, reduce conflict, and enhance the success of construction projects. This potential for impact makes the study more meaningful and relevant. In addition, the organization's willingness to participate in interviews signifies a collaborative and open approach, crucial for extracting necessary data.

Exploring the diverse communication practices within the realm of engineering and construction, it becomes apparent that this aspect holds the potential to provide a comprehensive understanding of organizational communication dynamics. Supported by the availability of relevant data, this study is poised to significantly contribute to unraveling the intricacies of communication within the specific context of engineering and construction projects.

The face-to-face interviews that we conducted, also considered responsive interviewing, were in line with the theory of interpretive constructionism first introduced by Herbert and Irene Rubin in 2005. The theory focuses on how the respondents view the situation studied by the researcher. The interviewee must interpret the reality based on their experiences and social contexts. In conducting our responsive interview, the participant often based her response to an event or scenarios that she experienced while working in the organization.

### *C. Data Collection*

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, which involved asking a set of questions that were prepared beforehand. These questions had enough flexibility to allow for adjustments and follow-up questions as needed. The main objectives of the questions were to understand the organizational culture, analyze communication flow, examine communication models, and document communication practices. By conducting interviews, observing, and reviewing related research and literature, we aim to obtain detailed information about Savior Construction's unique communication culture, communication flow patterns, communication models used, and real-world communication practices. A comprehensive understanding of how communication functions and affects the organization can provide valuable insights that will help us answer all the research questions.

## CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the interview and observation from Savior Construction. It includes the key themes about their communication culture, the obstacles that our chosen engineering firm faced regarding their communication, and the flow of communication observed within their organization through on-site observation.

### A. Organizational Culture

Here are the observed cultures inside the engineering firm based on the elements of culture in Edgar Schein's organizational culture theory:

Table 1: Elements of Organizational Culture

Elements of Organizational Culture	Instances of observed culture
Artifacts	<i>logos; trucks, equipment, and uniforms mandatory uniform</i>
Espoused Values	<i>mission and vision statement toolbox meeting</i>
Basic Underlying Assumptions	<i>attentive listening</i>

Following Edgar Schein (1980), organizational culture theory has three elements: artifacts, espoused values, and the basic underlying assumptions. These elements served as a reference for presenting the data gathered through interviews.

- **Artifacts:** It is the physical and tangible aspects of the organization. These are the artifacts they have mentioned during the interview. Upon reviewing their website, we noticed that most items displayed their logo. It includes their uniforms, trucks, and equipment. During our interview, the participant mentioned that all employees must wear uniforms while on the job.
- **Espoused Values:** According to Edgar Schein, this refers to norms, ideals, and rules of conduct, including their mission and vision statement. The employee mentioned conducting a bi-monthly toolbox meeting where employees can voice their concerns regarding their projects. Also, during our virtual discussion, we inquired about the organization's vision and mission.
- **Basic Underlying Assumptions:** The basic underlying assumptions in organizational culture are behaviors that are considered self-evident and unconscious. They are often difficult to identify, as employees may accept them as a given and not be aware of them. The participant stated that communication within their organization has significantly improved over time. Additionally, they mentioned that their manager regularly encourages all team members to listen attentively during meetings, which has now become an integral part of their organizational culture. However, our observation indicates that the internal culture of their organization is characterized by rigidity and shallowness, leading to less interactive communication.

### B. Miscommunication

The interviewee revealed that ineffective communication occurred due to unaddressed complaints raised by workers. Employees always want a free uniform and a pair of shoes once they obtain damages during their working hours. The organization practices have the first introduction of rules and regulations to the new employee before they get hired to avoid this factor of miscommunication. "*Nareresolve rin naman kasi basta meron dapat kayong patakaran kapag bago mag-umpisa yung tao*", he stated. The organization held a meeting on a specific date to clarify any issues. In addition to discussing rules and regulations, the meeting was also an opportunity for workers to raise concerns about their project manager or any problems affecting their work. Miscommunication and conflicts can arise when workers are uncomfortable with their project manager. Hence, the organization provided this platform to encourage open communication and solve these issues.

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### C. Observed Communication Flow

The communication flow observed in the engineering firm was vertical, downward, and upward. Orders are given from the company CEO or general manager, down to the office engineers, then to the project engineers, and to the foremen who will execute the order with their team.

Any occurrence in a site that concerns the higher-ups also travels vertically, upward. Reports from the foremen to the project engineers are conducted regularly through phone calls and messages. Any other concerns not needing immediate attention from the executives are reported and discussed during one of their toolbox meetings held every two months.

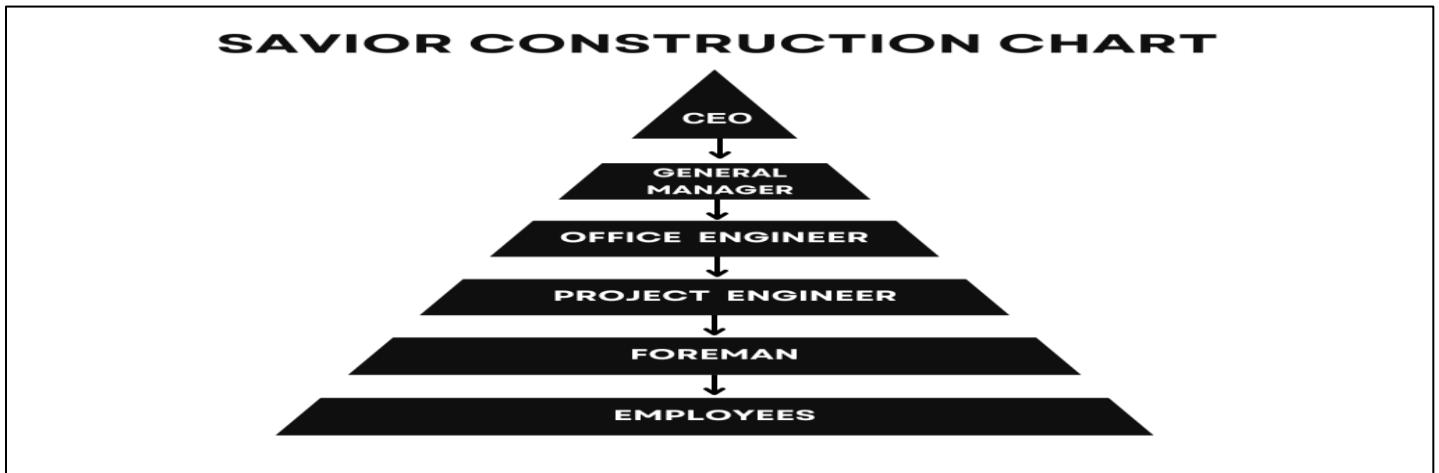


Fig 2: Organizational Hierarchical Chart

### D. Communication Models

More commonly observed in the organization was the transactional model. Specifically, it was a common occurrence between employees and executives of the company. One recorded instance of transactional communication was during a conflict in the workers' salaries. The employees found the pay too low for the amount of work they do. After a lengthy discussion, the two parties eventually reached an agreement. The company offered a wage increase but will remove some employee benefits, such as free meals.

On the other hand, the Interactive model was observed more frequently between the employees and peers of the same positions in the organization. Specifically, laborers were found to interact more often with one another, especially during breaks and after work hours.

### E. Communication Channel

Communication channels can improve the efficiency of communication with the proper use of it. As we observed and interviewed in the workplace of Savior Construction, we gathered information regarding their communication channel.

- **Electronic Device and Instant Messaging:** The use of electronic devices in the engineering firm is evident as the respondent stated that they conduct most of their exchanges of messages through phones to be more convenient. "We have 4 teams na gumagawa ng project lahat sila ay nagrereport sa opisina kung may problema o kung may kailangan iyon yung communication lang naman through electronic device." However, they do not have video conferencing in their offices due to a lack of knowledge on how to use it. "Kase ang para samin maliit lang naman kaming company talagang through meeting lang ang magiging communication kung magz-zoom di naman marunong mag zoom yung tauhan namin", the respondent stated.
- **Meetings:** The participant stated in the interview that they meet with every team to gather insights and concerns to resolve the arising conflicts as much as possible.
- **Written:** The participant also discussed how they communicate with their clients. It is through emailing the clients in the form of a formal letter.
- **Body language:** We asked the interviewee about the significance of the body language and the participant stated that, "Sa lahat tinitingnan yon, kung nakikinig ba, yung iba nakikipag meeting, tapon nang tapon ng bato don sa ano, lahat gusto namin kapag nag meeting nakatutok lahat sa nagsasalita." It is significant for them to listen attentively during meetings. Thus, it will not cause misunderstanding or misinterpretations in the dissemination of tasks.



## CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION

Upon analyzing the results, we have concluded that misunderstandings between two different positions - the head of the project and the workers cause communication problems within the organization. The likelihood of project failure increases when workers fail to work alongside their manager due to a lack of understanding. As a result, it is the higher-ranking official's responsibility to find a solution to the problem.

In terms of communication, the organization employs vertical communication where the message flows hierarchically either downwards or upwards. This flow of communication is an integral part of their organizational culture. The preferred mode of communication is informal or casual communication; it is similar to the findings of Musheke, M. & Phiri, J. (2021) and Malik, S. et al. (2021), where the aim was to determine the impact of communication on project success. In addition, the way the employees behave at work, just like how they are mindful and alert at the time of meeting, can also be classified as their culture. However, most were unaware of it because, as per the respondents, it is just a behavioral standard they must possess in their work.

In terms of communication channels, both verbal and non-verbal communication are present in their work. Verbal communication usually happens when they have a face-to-face meeting or when the workers talk with each other at work. Non-verbal communication usually takes place in the form of gestures, behavior, or facial reactions. Since most of the time, it is hard for them to understand each other on-site due to the noise produced by the machines and construction tools, sometimes they simply point at the thing to tell the others to work with it or to give it to them. You can also tell if the workers are uncomfortable working with others or with the project manager. The workers don't perform very well. In terms of technology as a channel for communication, they use smartphones to chat or call others but not all the time. According to them, they already talked about the plan personally or in a face-to-face meeting before they began with the project.

### *A. Limitations*

In this study, there are occurrences of limitations. We used semi-structured interviews and face-to-face observation in conducting our research study. After the interview and observation, we also conducted an online message interview to ask additional questions to complete the necessary data. Because of this, we experienced limitations in gathering our data due to a lack of access to information. The organization does not have websites, brochures, or any other sources of information about their organization; this resulted in too much time consumed for gathering information due to the reliance on slow responses of the participants online.

The participants in this study are limited since the organization has a small population. Hence, the data acquired were insufficient. It can also be observed that the participants were oblivious to the communication inside their organization; they prioritized professionalism over the casualty and interacting with each other. Moreover, another factor that influenced the answers was the formulated interview questions. It affects the answers due to a lack of context with the questions.

### *B. Recommendations*

This study has identified specific ways to enhance communication practices in the workplace. Based on this research, the following recommendations could help make communication more effective within the organization.

- It is advised to have more participants involved. It will help researchers get a more comprehensive understanding of the current communication practices within the organization.
- We recommend providing a brief overview of the topic to avoid unclear responses.
- In choosing the interviewee, one must be knowledgeable about their workplace and the whole organization.
- We recommend surveying the employees to acquire broader information.



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