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## Research Article

### Examining Communication Patterns in a Construction Setting: An Interview-Based Study

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#### ABSTRACT

The fundamental concept of this study is to explore the communication dynamics of a general contractor institution. The study examines the organizational culture and communication flow to determine the communication model employed by the institution and document its communication practices.

This study employed a qualitative research approach to analyze the institution's communication dynamics in-depth. The researchers conducted an interview and documented and transcribed the responses. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from participants.

The findings of this study revealed that the general contractor institution operates under a hierarchical structure but strongly emphasizes respect during interactions. Their well-organized decision-making system allows workers to raise concerns effectively. The institution adeptly uses various communication channels such as Messenger, Viber, Text Message, and Email, adapting tones to specific contexts. Challenges include industry-specific jargon, language barriers, and the influence of hierarchy on feedback dynamics. The result showed that the communication models utilized by the institution are Schramm's model and the Shannon-Weaver model, which emphasize the importance of shared meanings, standard codes, and active participation in communication. Schramm's model highlights feedback and the need for a common understanding, while the Shannon-Weaver model addresses noise reduction and the cyclical nature of communication through feedback.

Overall, this study provides important insights into the communication dynamics of the general contractor institution and offers an overview of specific instances or events that have transpired within the organization.

**Keywords:** *Communication dynamics, Communication model, General contractor institution, Hierarchical structure, Organizational culture*

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## Introduction

Just as engineers construct bridges to connect different locations, they must also build bridges of communication to collaborate and connect effectively. This metaphorical bridge of communication is the foundation of engineering projects that succeed. According to Foster (2020), effective communication in engineering must be considered, as it determines whether a project will run smoothly or be hindered by delays and other challenging working circumstances. Thus, effective communication is essential for success in the rapidly advancing field of engineering. It serves as a medium where ideas are shared, strategies are developed, and solutions are crafted.

Furthermore, a general contractor institution manages various projects that necessitate effective coordination between different teams, clients, and stakeholders. It involves not only technical skills but also effective communication. According to the study of Safapour et al. (2019), effective communication improves project processes, speeds up required steps, and aids in successful completion of a project, while ineffective communication hampers project flows, decreases the processing pace of the project, and jeopardizes its ultimate success. Consequently, many construction projects have been delayed or even abandoned owing to disputes, misunderstandings, and contradictions between construction partners (Gamil & Rahman, 2022). Therefore, the significance lies in communication within this institution. It serves as the backbone of operations, allowing for idea exchange, issue resolution, and successful project execution. According to Lee and Kim (2018), effective communication contributes to construction projects being completed on schedule, within budget, and with outstanding safety records, as well as building confidence and strengthening teams through positive feedback loops. In addition, effective communication ensures that all team members, from site workers to project managers, are aligned with the project's objectives and progress. Communication remains the lifeblood of any projects, as discussed by six out of twenty-five authors (Sukasuka et al., 2022). To achieve project success, team members must collaborate, share,

collect, and integrate information and knowledge. Choksereesuwana and Wisankoso (2023) also found that communication among employees has a significant impact on teamwork. Hence, through effective communication, alignment with the project's aims and progress is maintained among team members.

However, the communication dynamics of a general contractor in civil engineering remain primarily unexplored, often overshadowed by the profession's technical aspects. As a result, this study aims to understand the communication culture, challenges, and flow of the engineering institution. It intends to examine the communication model utilized by the institution and document its communication practices. This study employed a qualitative research approach to conduct an in-depth analysis of the institution's communication dynamics. The researchers conducted an interview and documented and transcribed the responses. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from participants.

## Methods

### *Research Design*

The study aims to explore communication dynamics in civil engineering institutions. The researchers used a qualitative approach to conduct an in-depth analysis of the institution's communication dynamics to achieve the study's objectives. This method allows the researchers to collect information about the institution's communication flow and culture and examine the communication models used by the institution to document its communication practices. According to Olmos-Vega et al. (2023), when gaining perspectives on a topic in particular and understanding a situation, experience, or event from a personal standpoint, qualitative approaches are occasionally applied in conducting research.

### *Research Participants*

This study included workers from engineering institutions: one is the project engineer, who holds the highest position on the site, and the other is a checker, who verifies the quality and compliance of the construction

work, materials, and documents, as well as inspects the project's safety and environmental standards. This study used purposive convenience sampling, in which participants were actively chosen based on their qualities, expertise, and experiences, as well as their practical availability, willingness, or ease of access. Participants were interviewed at the construction site and office at their convenience.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The study is conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines that govern research. The researchers requested the participants' permission to interview and take photos and recordings. The researchers used nicknames to protect the participants' identities and maintain anonymity. Data was collected from the workers through semi-structured interviews using open-ended and follow-up questions to gather additional responses. The interview took place in person, and the researchers recorded and transcribed the responses. The information gathered from participants was then analyzed and interpreted using the most appropriate procedures to examine the communication dynamics within the institution.

### **Data Analysis**

The researchers conducted a thematic analysis of the data collected. According to Neuen-dorf (2018), thematic analysis is a method in which themes emerge gradually from the interactive examination of messages, which results in a typical thematic structure. The qualitative data analysis began with finding such participants who were eligible based on belonging to any engineering institution. In addition, the researchers collected information from respondents in an open and honest manner, so that the findings could be trusted. Thus, it can be deduced that thematic analysis provides in-depth information about specific themes which can be used in this study.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **2.1 The Organizational Culture of General Contractor Institution**

This institution's organizational culture can be divided into three main themes: (1) Hierarchical Communication Patterns, (2) Norms of

Interaction and Reflecting Values in Organizational Discourse, and (3) Decision-Making Culture in the institution. These themes seek to explore the various aspects of organizational culture that are shaped by communication practices within the institution.

#### **2.1.1 Hierarchical Communication Patterns**

According to the participants' responses, organizational structure exists within the institution, so the communication patterns employed by the institution are hierarchical.

*"Ngayon 'pag may kailangan o concern ang owner sinasabi sa project manager ta's papameeting siya ngayon, ngayon ina-address niya sa lahat naming project engineer. Ngayon yung project engineer siya ngayon yung nagre-relay sa under ko 'yan. Papunta sa checker siya, sa subcon sila tas sunod diyan yung in charge sa maintenance 'yon yung pinaka flow. Kasi ito, line of authority 'to si owner hindi pwede dumirekta sa mga skilled ... Kilala sa site ang flow ng communication syempre manggagaling kay owner 'pag may utos si owner o utos si project manager sa site may concern sasabihin sa akin syempre ako ngayon magre-relay sa lahat ng nasa ibaba. Ngayon gaya niyan si owner nag-relay siya sa project manager si project manager magre-relay sa lahat ng PE niya."* [Project Engineer]

(Now, whenever the owner has a need or concern, it is communicated to the project manager, and then a meeting is called. It is then addressed to all of us project engineers. The project engineer, in turn, relays it to those under me. It goes to the checker, then to the subcontractors, and next to the person in charge of maintenance; that's the main flow. Because this is the line of authority, the owner cannot go directly to the skilled workers... The flow of communication on the site is known, of course, it will come from the owner. If the owner or the project manager has an order or there is a concern on the site, it will be told to me, and of course, I will then relay it to everyone below. Like now, the owner relays to the project manager, and the project

manager will relay to all his project engineers.)

The response outlined the process of organizational communication within the institution. When the owner raises an issue, it is first communicated to the project manager, who then holds a meeting to brief the project engineers on the matter, after which the project engineers disseminate the information down the chain to their respective teams. Through these established communication patterns, the institution ensures that concerns are effectively communicated at all levels of authority. This structured approach to communication allows for the precise and systematic relay of information, ensuring that even those at the bottom of the hierarchy are informed and able to respond appropriately. As a result, organizational structure influences the institution's communication flow and decision-making processes. Similarly, in the study of Codex (2024), a lack of hierarchy and direction in an organization can lead to information overload because everyone is involved in decision-making, and the absence of distinct authority might cause conflict resolution to be complicated.

### 2.1.2 Norms of Interaction and Reflecting Values in Organizational Discourse

The feedback from the participant indicates that there are implicit norms and expectations within the organization that dictate the dynamics of communication between individuals and within groups.

*"...kausap mo pinakamaliit dapat nakikipag-usap ka, oo may respeto pa din. Syempre hindi ka re-respetuhin ng tao kapag hindi mo sila nire-respect... ito sample, sample kunwari na syempre yan mga tao, hindi karaniwan 'yan ano e kaya nga sila naging construction worker, hindi ko naman sa inaano... syempre, medyo hirap, pangalawa maraming iniinda 'yan e, problema sa pamilya... Pero ngayon kunwari na sample, pwede ko naman siya kausapin, pero syempre with respect, with ano with... unang-una with respect, pangalawa yung maayos tayo makipag-usap a... tawag dito a... yung parang yung, yung*

*walang ano, yung... yung walang ano, walang ano tinitignan, walang ano state difference na tinitignan."* [Project Engineer]

(When you talk to someone, even if they have the least authority, you should still communicate with respect. Of course, people won't respect you if you don't respect them... Here's an example, let's pretend that these people, they're not ordinary, that's why they became construction workers, not that I'm belittling them... Of course, they have hardships, and secondly, they bear a lot, like family problems... But now, for instance, I can talk to him, but of course with respect, with... first and foremost with respect, and secondly, we should speak properly... it's called... like, without any... without any, without looking at any, without considering any state differences.)

The participants emphasize the importance of showing respect during interactions, particularly with those in positions of lesser authority. They point out a mutual understanding that respect is a two-way street: failing to show respect to others frequently results in not receiving it in return. As a result, respecting others is a professional expectation within their organization and a personal standard that they apply in their daily lives. This established standard of mutual respect shapes the organizational culture, encouraging effective communication and cultivating more substantial positive relationships among workers. The dynamics of the institution are viewed through this respectful lens, resulting in a harmonious and respectful work environment for all. This theme relates to the study of Saleem et al. (2020), which found that a supportive work environment provides its employees with transparent and open communication, work-life balance, training and development, recognition for hard work, and a strong team spirit.

### 2.1.3 Decision-Making Culture in the Institution

Based on the response of the participant, the decision-making culture of the institution is

influenced by several factors, including organizational culture, communication practices, and the nature of the construction industry itself.

*"...kung communication ako hindi ako pwede kumuha, kagaya niyan si subcon hindi ako pwede dumiretso dito sa ano sa under nila. Kasi sila naman yung may hawak no'n. Ayun kasi yung right flow ng authority... example ito may concern si ano yung mga tao si... "Boss yung mga ano natin yung buhos natin sablay may naging problema," kunwari na pinormahan namin nag-honeycomb, ano yung honeycomb, nag-ampaw. Tapos sasabihin naman niya kay foreman ngayon pabalik naman ah, pabalik kasi dito sila yung gumagawa diba. Pabalik naman sasabihin nila kay foreman, si foreman naman ngayon rereport kay subcon, ngayon naman si subcon rereport sa 'kin. 'Pa'no natin maano yan, paano natin mare-rectify 'yan?'... hindi siya pwede dumiretso sa 'kin kasi maba-bypass yung under nila kasi ayan yung pinaka line of authority."* [Project Engineer]

(...if I'm in charge of communication, I can't just take over, just like that, the subcontractor can't go directly to those under them. Because they are the ones who hold that responsibility. That's the correct flow of authority... for example, there's a concern from the people like... 'Boss, our pouring was off, there was a problem,' let's say we formed it and it became honeycombed, what's honeycombed, it became puffed rice. Then he will tell the foreman, now back again, back because they are the ones doing it, right. Back again they will tell the foreman, the foreman will now report to the subcontractor, now the subcontractor will report to me. 'How do we address this, how do we rectify this?' ... he can't go directly to me because it would bypass those under him since that's the main line of authority.)

According to the participant's responses, those with the least authority are not permitted

to make decisions independently due to the hierarchical structure. However, this does not prevent them from being heard. They can communicate their concerns up the chain of command, ensuring that the person in charge of making final decisions takes them into account. This systematic approach to communication follows a clear line of authority while still allowing every member's voice to be heard. This organization's decision-making process is orderly and involves multiple steps, beginning with input from the least authorized individuals and leading to decisions made by those at the top. This organizational culture and established communication practices shape the decision-making process, which is standard practice in the construction industry. As outlined by Hassanzadeh (2020), the structured approach to decision problem-solving can enhance decision-making and communication, as detailed in the examination of the relationship between organizational culture and employee competence.

## **2.2 The Flow of Communication Within the Institution**

The flow of communication in the general contractor institution can be categorized into four major themes: (1) Exploring Channel Diversity in Construction, (2) The Tone of Communication, (3) The Use of Jargons, (4) The Power of Non-Verbal Cues, (5) Feedback Loops. These themes aim to explore the communication flow within the institution that contributes to effective communication.

### **2.2.1 Exploring Channel Diversity in Construction**

According to the responses of the participants, the institution uses various channels to communicate such as face-to-face interaction, written communication, and the use of technology, specifically smartphones.

*"kunwari na sample, si subcon nag-report, 'Engineer wala na tayong materyales,' syempre thru phone 'yon. Ngayon tatawagan ko, tatawagan ko ngayon si ano, si checker, ano yung kulang. Ngayon si checker, 'pag tinawagan ko ngayon si checker kahit thru verbal lang, magbibigay siya sa 'kin ngayon ng report, ano*

*kailangan mong report? Yung request kunwari na ano-ano, kailangan na ano, na ano in a written form... Ayan kasi report na kailangan na maja-justify sa mga request nila para... Syempre para nagtanong si... Nagtanong ang opisina namin "ano eka, ano eka yung supporting documents do'n nila sa ano... ayan, ayan yung written. Verbal yung usapan pero may... feedback na written ano... written form" [Project Engineer]*

(Let's say for example, the subcontractor reports, 'Engineer, we've run out of materials,' obviously over the phone. Now I will call, I will now call the checker, what's missing. Now the checker, when I call the checker even just through verbal communication, he will give me a report, what report do you need? The request for example, what's needed, what's needed in a written form... That's because the report needs to justify their requests for... Of course, our office asked 'what did you say, what are the supporting documents for their... there, that's the written one. The conversation was verbal but there is... feedback in a written form... written form.)

"Sa site kasi 'di ba minsan na-assign ka sa malaking site ta's minsan yung container o 'yung office no'n malayo. Eh 'di naman basta basta mapupuntahan yung office 'pag ano... nasa site ka, kasi... yung oras, ano... sayang lang ta's minsan mainit talaga. 'Yon gumagamit kami Messenger o kaya Viber, minsan ano rin yung normal na text... pero minsan kasi dito... yung file din need i-send. Sa'min, sa e-mail namin sine-send... pwede rin naman Viber pero sa'min, mas nasabay na kami mag-send ng file thru email." [Checker]

(When you're assigned to a large site, sometimes the container or office is far away. It's not easy to just go to the office when you're on-site because of the time and the heat. So, we use Messenger or Viber, and sometimes regular text messages. But here's the thing—files also need to be sent. In our case, we send them via email. Viber works too, but

we've become accustomed to sending files through email.)

Based on the participants' feedback, the institution utilizes various communication channels combining face-to-face interaction, traditionally written reports, and modern technological tools, specifically smartphone applications such as Messenger, Viber, text messages, and email. This diverse mix of communication channels ensures that messages are effectively conveyed, considering different contexts and preferences within the institution. Thus, the institution promotes a dynamic and adaptable communication environment by combining personal interactions, written communication, and digital communication with smartphones. In line with this, Todd's (2022) study showed that the institution can create better communication by embracing channel diversity.

### 2.2.2 The Tone of Communication

The tone of communication is crucial in setting the right atmosphere for collaboration and understanding. The tone of communication in the general contractor institution can be divided into three sub-themes: (1) The tone of communication with clients, (2) The tone of communication with workers, (3) The tone of communication with other professionals. The feedback from the participants indicates that both formal and informal were utilized depending on the situation and the person they are communicating with.

#### 2.2.2.1 The tone of communication with clients

*"Iyon nga yung sinasabi ko dapat adaptive ka eh. Syempre 'yon sample kunwari na more on formal 'yon minsan mag-uusap kayo puro English, syempre ikaw ngayon dapat mag-adapt sa kanila although parehas lang din ah ako naga-adapt sa mga tao 'pag andito sa site pero syempre 'pag mga kliyente, dapat mas ikaw yung... 'pag aaralan mo muna syempre 'yon nga dapat mas ano kasi 'yon eh mas higher ano ng community" [Project Engineer]*

(That's exactly what I'm saying—you need to be adaptive. For instance, when

you're conversing with someone who primarily uses formal English, you should adapt to their style. Even though I also adjust when I'm on-site with people, it's crucial to be even more adaptable when dealing with clients. Take the time to understand their preferences. After all, you want to align with their expectations, especially considering their higher position in the community)

#### 2.2.2.2 The tone of communication with workers

*"Medyo may iniinda, may iniisip, may ano syempre minsan nakakagamit ka ng formal na ano, pero hangga't maari kontrolin mo kasi sa lahat ng kausap mo di ba? Dapat ano ka lang unang una, malumanay, alam mo ang sinasabi mo, pangalawa ano pa ba a... minsan 'pag medyo, medyo seryoso na yung ano mag-aano ka rin naman magbibiro biro ka din ng onti...Syempre kung lagi kang formal magsalita magda-doubt kasi yung tao eh. Ba't ba to laging galit ba't ba to laging high tone syempre yung trabaho 'di maaapektuhan pero yung relation mo doon sa kausap mo minsan makakaapekto rin 'yon may output din na tatamarin yung tao eh. "Ito kung utus-utusan naman ako nito pasigaw padarag, 'di ko na ika susundin to," 'di ba o kaya "aalís na ako," syempre ano 'yon 'pag negative yung binigay mong input negative din yung output sa'yo no'n pinaka balik sa'yo no'n kaya dapat 'pag tayong engineer more on ano tayo more on calm... calmness pangalawa more on solution making tayo 'di tayo yung dapat naninisi 'di tayo yung dapat nag-aano dapat pa nga minsan 'pag yung tao pupuriin mo pa e." [Project Engineer]*

(Sometimes, you carry concerns and thoughts. Of course, you occasionally need to use formal language, but as much as possible, you should control it when talking to anyone, right? First and foremost, be gentle, know what you're saying. Secondly, what else... sometimes, when things get a bit serious, you can also crack a joke. If you're always formal in your speech, people might doubt you. Why is

this person always angry? Why the constant high tone? While it won't affect your work directly, your relationship with the person you're talking to can be impacted. There's an output, and sometimes people become demotivated. For instance, if someone shouts orders at me, I won't follow them. Or I might say, 'I'm leaving.' It's like this: if you give negative input, you'll receive negative output. It comes back to you. So, as engineers, we should focus on being calm and solution oriented. We shouldn't blame others or engage in finger-pointing. Sometimes, it's even better to praise someone.)

#### 2.2.2.3 The tone of communication with other professionals

*"Company owner din ako e may maliit din akong firm ako naman ang may-ari naman bukod dito sa trabaho ko na 'to. So kahit naman ako ang may-ari... ano kapag seryoso formal kapag 'asa labas kami, ayon puro biruan na puro ano ayon lang naman." [Project Engineer]*

(I'm also a company owner, and I have a small firm. I'm the owner aside from my work here. So even though I'm the owner... when things get serious or formal, especially when we're outside, it's all jokes and light-hearted banter.)

The participants' responses highlight the importance of tone of communication in interdisciplinary communication. It is evident that the institution strategically uses both formal and informal tones, adapting them to the context of interaction. In professional situations, a formal tone is used to convey seriousness and respect. An informal tone is used in scenarios to foster relationships and reduce tensions. As a result, using the right tone in the right situations and the right individual improves the institution's communication strategies, making them more effective professionally while supporting a positive and engaging workplace culture. In comparison to the study of Saiewitz (2018), in a professional setting, it is often to communicate with others in a formal tone to maintain professionalism.

### 2.2.3 The Use of Jargon

Based on the responses of the participants, there was variation in their responses due to a combination of the language barrier and the use of jargon.

*"kunwari na kagaya natin ibang kausap sa site hindi naman lahat engineer e, although naiintindihan yung ano yung... ibang terminologies syempre, actually, mas madami pa nga silang alam na terminologies e sa sa case kasi natin ikaw ngayon ang, kagayo niyo kayo bago kayo ang mag-adapt sa mga ano nila para magkaintindihan kayo. Pero yung as per book kunwari na, kunwari na a... ito na lang sample anong term 'to... minsan kasi may term sila, may gap sa terminologies kagaya niyan, minsan kagaya niyo mga malalalim na Tagalog yun kasi ang unang naintindihan ng mga ano term ng mga ano e... matatandang ano e, ngayon syempre paano ba ma-address 'yon, paano ko ba ina-address yon. ..Yung kasing ano course natin maraming terminologies syempre pa'no mo maiintindihan, hindi mo dapat nababasa lang, dapat nakikita mo naano mo. nae-experience mo ano ba 'yon, para sa'n ba 'yon, ano ba silbi no'n 'yon. Para in case sa susunod na ma-encounter mo, oo, alam mo na. Sample ano ba o platada ano yung platada ano yung platada? 'Di iba nakalagay sa book, plastering, 'pag sinabi sa tao ang plastering hindi naman nila naiintindihan 'yon e. Yung hamba, sample hamba ano yung hamba, 'di ba ayon yung pinaka framework ng door sa may gilid minsan hindi nila alam na ano kunwari na sinabi mo door jamb, hindi nila alam na door jamb, karaniwan kasi ano e... between terminologies sa English tsaka Tagalog e." [Project Engineer]*

(Suppose, like us, you're talking to someone on-site who isn't necessarily an engineer. Although they understand some of the terminology, there are still many more technical terms they're familiar with. In our case, you're the one who needs to adapt to their language for mutual understanding. But let's consider the

textbook version. For instance, let's take a sample term. Sometimes, there's a gap in terminologies, similar to how some deep Tagalog words are understood initially by older folks. Now, how do we address that? How do I approach it? In our course, there are numerous terminologies. It's not just about reading; you need to see and experience it. What's its purpose? What's its significance? So that when you encounter it next time, you'll know. For example, what's a 'platada'? What does it mean? Sometimes, it's different from what's written in the book. 'Plastering,' for instance—when you mention it to someone, they might not grasp it. And 'hamba,' what's that? Well, it's the framework around the door on the side. Sometimes, when you say, 'door jamb,' they don't recognize it. It's common because of the differences in terminology between English and Tagalog.)

The participants indicate that using technical words can be confusing to the person. Communication can be difficult due to jargon and the language barrier on site. For instance, engineers often use specialized language to describe, while workers often use various technical words to describe specific objects. Also, reading books is not enough to truly understand such things; It takes first-hand experience to identify and comprehend things more effectively. They explained that by experiencing, they can identify and comprehend more effectively. Therefore, the individuals in the institution should be mindful of their use of language and adopt it to ensure effective communication with others. In line with this, implementing regular meetings and overcoming language barriers in the institution can promote effective communication (Al Shamsi et al., 2020).

### 2.2.4 The Power of Non-Verbal Cues

Based on the responses of the participants, nonverbal signals are also used in this institution's communication to help employees comprehend what other employees are trying to convey and they occasionally require a visual reference.



“Ayon kasi minsan alam mo yung term sila hindi nila alam kailangan nila ng visual ano visual kagaya niyan sample ‘yan pa isa komo asa site tayo o kagaya niyan tuturo no’n o sukatin mo nga yung ano, ‘yang ano na ‘yan ‘yang dulo to dulo sa kanila, para sa kanila ano ‘yan both ends lang ng project ‘yan pero sa terminologies parehas abatement ng tulay na ‘yan ‘di ba abatement A, abatement B ‘di ba? Minsan ano, minsan may gap na ano kailangan minsan may visual reference o ano ba yung ano lalo na kapag naguguluhan ka. Kunwari na si boy A may tinatanong alin ba diyan yung concern mo o turo mo sa ‘kin ito kunwari na tinuro niya yung part ng project na yan, o sige alin diyan yung sa part ng project o ano ang nagiging issue ‘yon yung... yung karaniwang ano namin.” [Project Engineer]

(Sometimes, you know, the team members might not fully grasp the technical terms. They need a visual, something like a sample. For instance, when we’re on-site, we might point things out or measure certain aspects. Those endpoints, both sides of the project, are clear to them. But in terms of terminology, it’s like ‘abatement’ for that bridge, right? Abatement A, abatement B. Sometimes there’s a gap, and visual references become necessary, especially when things get confusing. Let’s say Boy A is asking which part you’re concerned about. You can show him, for example, the section of the project he’s pointing to. So, which part of the project is the issue? That’s our usual challenge)

“Pag maiingay kasi ano... parang... ‘di mo kasi talaga maririnig yung kausap mo lalo kapag malayo. Kaya ‘yon, kailangan talaga ng senyas ‘pag maingay o kaya gumagamit ng mga... ng mga crane o driller. Hindi naman... ‘di basta yung imbento yung senyas na ‘yon, inaaral nila yan... nag-aaral sila TESDA course, kaya nakukuha talaga nila yung tamang pag senyas sa pag-menor ‘pag gano’n... ta’s ano kasi, matagal na din naman silang

magkakasama kaya kabisado na nila isa’t isa, gano’n.” [Checker]

(When it is noisy, you know... like... you really cannot hear the person you’re talking to, especially if they are far away. So that’s why you really need signals when it’s noisy or when using things like cranes or drillers. It’s not like... the signals are just made up, they study them... they take TESDA courses, so they really learn the correct signaling for directing... and you know, they’ve been together for a long time, so they understand each other well, that’s how it is.)

According to the participants’ statements, using different non-verbal cues in the institution helps the workers communicate effectively and avoid misunderstandings. In certain situations, hand signals or signs are utilized, particularly in noisy settings, while machinery is operating, or when there is a great distance between two workers. Because the organization uses non-verbal signals, its employees overcome their diverse backgrounds in terminology by employing visual references to explain new terms to others. According to a study conducted by Mohammadi et al. in 2022, effective communication in the construction industry can be challenging due to the diverse backgrounds of participants. One of the barriers to effective communication in this industry is nonverbal communication. To overcome this barrier, it is essential to have a high level of nonverbal communication when working with diverse participants.

### 2.2.5 Feedback Loops

Institutions’ hierarchical structure significantly affects feedback loops, as indicated by participant feedback.

“Pag may... concern naman si project ngayon ako naman yung pabalik naman yung ginagawa ko, binabanggit ko sa project manager, si project manager naman ngayon nililikom niya ang data para mareport sa owner, dito sa owner yung head ng company.” [Project Engineer]

(When there’s a concern about the project, I’m the one who goes back to what I’m working on. I mentioned it to

the project manager, and now the project manager is compiling the data to report to the owner—the head of the company.)

Considering the participant's feedback, it becomes evident that the hierarchical structure of an institution significantly influences the dynamics of feedback loops. The organizational hierarchy shapes how information flows, decisions are made, and responses are received. Communication in the institution follows a top-down approach, causing feedback to be filtered, delayed, or even stifled. Pfrombeck et al. (2022) also found that the prevalence of hierarchical structure within an organization has an influence on the decision to speak up as well as appraisals, attributions, and responses to that voice.

### 2.3 The Communication Models Adopted by General Contractor Institution

The communication model is a crucial element for effective communication. The choice of communication model depends on the institution's culture, communication flow, and the context of communication. Based on the data gathered, it is evident that the institution employs various communication models, such as (1) the Shannon-Weaver Model and (2) Schramm's Model). However, effective communication in the institution involves more than choosing the suitable communication model. It also involves adapting to each project's unique challenges, ensuring successful completion.

#### 1. Schramm's Model

Schramm developed this communication model. It highlights meaning as shared by a common code through which meaning revolves. It shows the importance of feedback and understanding during shared experiences. Schramm (2001) denotes that sharing understanding between sender and receiver is essential for conveying and decoding messages effectively.

*"... sinasabi nila biga pero syempre kung titignan mo sa terminologies ang tagwag do'n capping. Syempre tama nga naman biga 'yon kasi mukang biga e. Pero sa term ng project na ginagawa namin capping o 'ano bang part 'yon, sige nga turo mo,' o minsan pi-picturan para*

*magkaintindihan both sides."* [Project Engineer]

(They refer to it as 'biga,' but of course, if you look at the terminologies, it's called 'capping.' Of course, it makes sense to call it 'biga' because it looks like one. But in terms of the project we are working on, it is called 'capping' or 'what part is that, go on show me, pinpoint it,' or sometimes they take a picture to understand each other from both sides.)

This scenario perfectly illustrates a key principle of Schramm's model: the significance of shared meanings. The conversation about 'biga' and 'capping' underscores the necessity of establishing a common code, which in the statement is taking a picture or pinpointing the capping. The act of showing or taking a picture as a form of feedback is a practical example of how communicators can overcome barriers of understanding, ensuring that the message not only is received but also is interpreted correctly within the shared field of experience. This proves Schramm's position that for communication to be efficient, both the sender and receiver have to actively participate in the process through common codes and feedback to negotiate possible differences in their fields of experience, thus arriving at a common meaning.

#### 2. Shannon-Weaver Model

The Shannon-Weaver model, introduced by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, is a fundamental framework in the linear communication theory that describes message transmission through a channel from sender to receiver. Shannon and Weaver (1949) outlined the key elements found in this model:

1. Sender - The one who initiates the message.
2. Message - The information to be relayed.
3. Channel - The medium utilized during transmission.
4. Receiver - The one who decodes the message.
5. Noise - Interfere with the message during transmission.
6. Feedback - The receiver's interpretation of the original message.

*“Pag nag-uusap kasi kami sa site malay mo dito... maingay kasi nga may dini-drill do’n, ta’s dyan sa baba. Medyo hindi nagkakarinig, maingay yung equipment ta’s malayo kami minsan sa kausap, pero kailangan namin maparating yung gusto namin na... gustong sabihin nga kaya ‘yon kailangan talaga ng senyas o kaya medyo lakasan mo... lakasan yung boses. Minsan dyan din sa barracks, kahit tanghalian namin ‘di nag-aano... trabaho, minsan maingay pa din dyan kasi tabi rin ng kalsada, ‘yon dapat iniintindi mo talaga sinasabi ng kasamahan mo para masa... makasagot ka.” [Checker]*

(When we talk on the site, you never know... it is noisy because there is drilling going on over there, and then down below. We hardly hear each other; the equipment is loud, and sometimes we are far from the person we want to communicate with, but we need to convey what we want to say, so we really need signals or maybe just raise our voices. Even in the barracks, during our lunch, when we stop working, sometimes it is still noisy because it's also next to the road, so you really must pay attention to what your colleague is saying to be able to... respond.)

The statement above is related to the Shannon-Weaver model, particularly with noise and feedback under the communication process. The setting of a noisy construction site automatically means that noise is set to come into the piece in a literal sense that affects messages' ability to get transmitted clearly between the sender and the receiver. It tries to overcome this kind of noise by means of strategies such as using signals or even speaking out louder in order that the message might reach. In this kind of scenario, the model focuses on what can be done so that effective ways could be found that would really be of great help in reducing the level of noise and increasing the level of clarity in communication. Further, the statement "pay attention to what your colleague is saying so you can respond," underscores the need for feedback even in the linear

communication process, stating that communication is cyclical in nature, with feedback being a prominent feature toward ensuring the reception and understanding of the message.

## Conclusion

As shown from the data presented, the researchers have come up with the following conclusions:

1. The general contractor institution functions under an organizational structure that encourages hierarchical communication patterns. Despite this hierarchy, the organization places a high value on respect during interactions, including communicating with people of lower authority. This emphasis on respect helps to strengthen relationships and, as a result, improves communication. Additionally, the institution has a well-organized decision-making system. Workers can raise their concerns higher up the chain of command, ensuring that those in charge of making final decisions consider them. These findings highlight how different aspects of organizational culture influence communication practices within the institution.
2. The institution employs various communication channels, including face-to-face interactions, written correspondence, and technology-based communication (such as Messenger, Viber, Text Message, and Email), to facilitate information exchange and collaboration among team members. Notably, it adeptly navigates formal and informal tones, adapting them to specific contexts. While a formal tone conveys seriousness and respect, an informal tone fosters relationships and eases tensions. However, the institution faces several challenges: industry-specific jargon can impede effective communication, language barriers require sensitivity and patience in multicultural work environments, and the hierarchical structure significantly influences feedback dynamics. Unfortunately, the prevalent top-down communication approach can filter, delay, or stifle feedback.

3. The general construction institution relies on a more flexible communication approach than a single model which the institution employs, such as the Shannon-Weaver and Schramm's models. Schramm's

method leads one to conclude that, for communication to be successful, both process participants should negotiate by using agreed-upon codes and providing feedback about any possible differences in their experiences. While in the Shannon-Weaver model, it highlights the need for feedback since communication is cyclical. It guarantees that the message is comprehended and raises the communication's level of clarity. Moreover, selecting the correct communication model is insufficient to ensure efficient communication inside the institution. To have a satisfactory result, one should adapt to the different challenges posed by each project.

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