



“An Empirical study on Communication as a barrier during COVID 19 Pandemic Period with reference to Mumbai region”

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Introduction:

Communication is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of ideas, feelings, intentions, expectations, perceptions or commands by speech, writing, and gestures and by other means between two or more participants. The process requires a source/sender who encodes information in the form of a message which is transmitted through a medium/channel to a recipient who then decodes the message and gives necessary response/feedback.

Effective communication occurs when messages are not distorted during the communication process and communication serves the purpose for which it was planned or designed. However when the desired effect is not achieved, factors which act as obstacles need to be explained with the intention to discover why the communication has been ineffective. These include filtering, selective perceptions, information overload, emotions, language, silence, communication apprehension or anxiety, gender difference and many other factors. These barriers to effective communication can retard or distort the message at any stage in the communication process. Effective communication involves conveying clear and concise information. As people from various work place we should question ourselves, how well have we been able to communicate to our colleagues and how can we better communicate in the future? The better the communication, the better would be their understanding.

Typical workplace communication barrier

Information overload

- Industry-specific jargon.
- Language barriers
- Differing communication styles.
- Cultural differences.
- Physical disability.
- Impatient or inactive listening.
- Vague or indirect message.

In the workplace, barriers to communication usually take one of these forms:

- Employee to employee
- Manager to employee
- Organization to employee

Literature Review:

Dr.Sarah Forbes from the University of Birmingham is the Author (year 2020) studied that WFH (Work From Home) Covid-19 project. And observed that WFH Project is made up of two distinct but complementary packages of work. One covering employee's experiences of homeworking during lockdown and one covering employers and managers experiences of homeworking during lockdown.

She also stated that Mothers have struggled to find time/space to work during lockdown. And Fathers have increased their childcare roles and have cited spending time with children and partner as some of the key positive aspect of working from home.

She concluded in her research that Economic and Social-Psychological Impacts In addition to the immediate impacts of COVID-19 for various workplace practices and arrangements, there is also likely to be a diverse range of social and economic costs of the pandemic for individuals, including those who lost jobs as well as those who remain employed. Unemployment and Layoffs. As entire industries such as travel, hospitality, sports, and entertainment were shut down by COVID-19, tens of millions of people in the U.S. alone filed new unemployment claims in early 2020. In addition to losing income, we know that individuals who are unemployed may experience a range of stress-related consequences including depression, anxiety, and physical ailments (Wanberg, 2012). Jahoda's (1982) latent deprivation model helps explain the negative effects of unemployment on psychological well-being by acknowledging that employment provides both manifest (e.g., income) and latent (e.g., time structure,

social contact, sharing of common goals, status, and activity) benefits. Financial deprivation can be particularly devastating, triggering a spiral of adversity that can affect the entire family (McKee-Ryan & Maitoza, 2018). Hopes related to COVID-19 unemployment have centered on an economic recovery unfolding fast enough that jobs lost to COVID-19 unemployment will largely be regained but that is far from certain.

Significance of the Study:

Within the various profession, communication skills are applied in the management and interaction with the work place inmates. In addition, communication skills are important for drawing the learners' attention, developing their motivation. The focus of this study involves an analysis of the peoples' perceptions regarding their communication strengths and weaknesses, to reveal their attitude – whether they feel that they are potential barriers to classroom communication, or is it, according to their opinion, the ineffective work place environment, the faulty means/medium of instruction, the inappropriate curriculum, the attitude of students, the lack of response and feedback and other such factors more responsible for ineffective classroom communication. An investigation of colleagues at work place self-perception is important as their beliefs influence their classroom practice.

The transmission of knowledge usually requires for enhancement of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of communication. Once we get a clear understanding of the attitude of people at work place, we can endeavour to address the problem. As colleagues at work place, our primary objective is to make the people conscious of their own barriers and later to enable them to identify the barriers their inmates may be facing. This would allow them greater ease in communication and help bridge the gaps that pose obstacles to effective communication process.

Research Methodology

The data has been collected from through primary and secondary source. The primary data was collected from 50 under graduate students. The secondary data has been collected from various ISSN and ISBN journals available for open access. The researcher has used convenient sampling technique. The Chi-square test used to test the hypothesis.

Problems of the study:

The study aims to determine the opinion of people at work place regarding barriers in communication, to evaluate the extent of communication barrier with respect to the different dimensions and to assess the difference in opinion regarding barriers in work place communication with respect to gender, locality (rural or urban), institution types (government or private) and location (Mumbai).

Sample Selection:

The population for the study comprised people around Mumbai, to test the research objectives, data was collected from various kind of workplace.

Due attention was given to the following matching criteria:

1. All the subjects of the study were people at various office /institution level.
2. People having a minimum qualification of Master's Degree.
3. People of the same socio-economic background at different work place at various levels.

Area of the Study:

The sample data are randomly collected form Mumbai city and its suburban areas

Research Design:

The data collection instrument was self-made questionnaire to study the opinion of people at work place regarding barriers in workplace communication.

It had two parts – the first part was general information schedule which contained colleague's demographic information.

The second part contained various aspects of barriers to workplace communication. Each statement had two options for response, according to the opinion of the people whether each statement was YES or NO.

Research objective:

- 1) To understand the communication barriers at workplace during covid 19
- 2) To examine the gender related communication barriers during covid 19
- 3) To study the challenges of communication barriers during covid 19

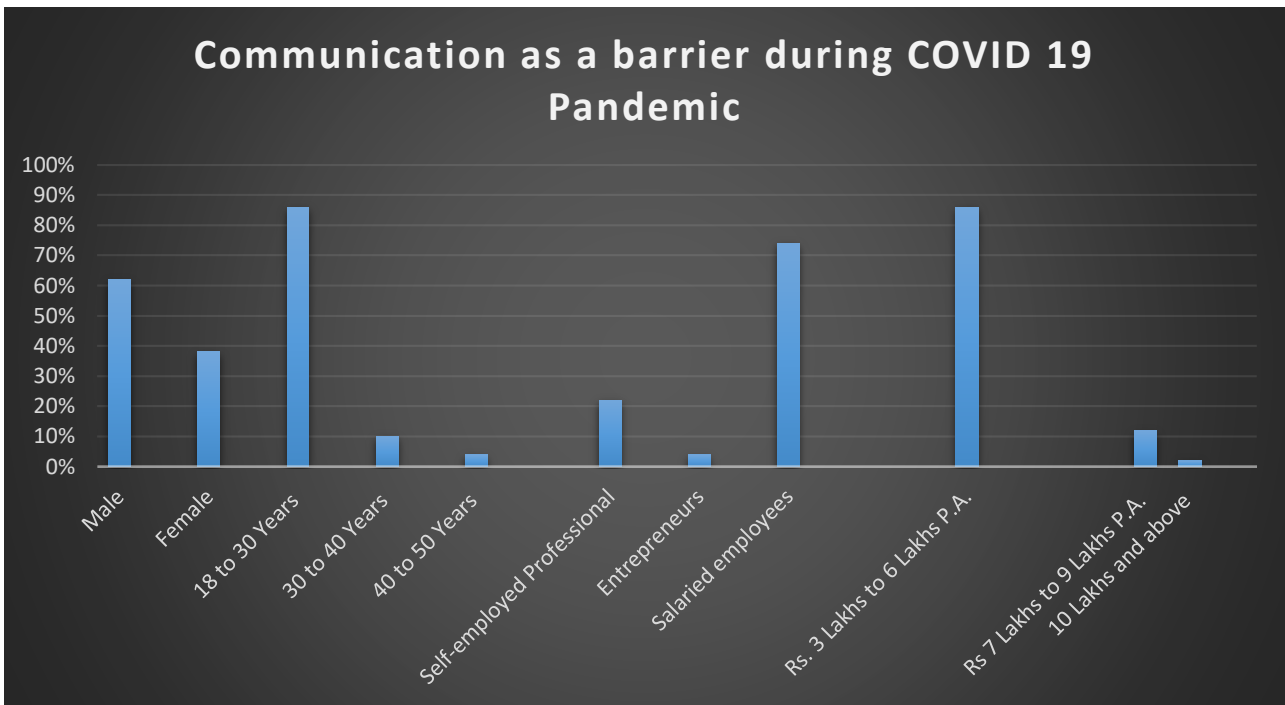
Hypotheses**The following hypotheses were framed for the study:**

- 1) There is no significant difference in the opinion between male and female colleagues regarding barriers to work place communication before and during Covid 19 outbreak
- 2) There is significant difference in the opinion between male and female colleagues regarding barriers to work place communication before and during Covid 19 outbreak

Table - 1

Age, Gender, occupation and Income wise Demographic Pattern of Communication as a barrier during COVID 19 Pandemic

Demographic Category of investor	Parameters	Percentage
Gender	Male	62%
	Female	38%
Age	18 to 30 Years	86%
	30 to 40 Years	10%
	40 to 50 Years	4%
Occupations (Employment)	Self-employed Professional	22%
	Entrepreneurs	4%
	Salaried employees	74%
Annual Income	Rs. 3 Lakhs to 6 Lakhs P.A.	86%
	Rs 7 Lakhs to 9 Lakhs P.A.	12%
	10 Lakhs and above	2%



Interpretation:

Table 1 shows, 50 numbers of respondents, 62% of the respondents are male, 38% of the respondents are female. 86% of the respondents from 18 to 30 Years age group and 10% of the respondents 30-40 years age group, 4% of the respondents 40-50 years age group

In our investigation we also found that 22% of the respondents are Self-employed Professional, 4% of the respondents are Entrepreneurs, and 74% of the respondents are salaried employees

In income parameter we found that 86% of the responded from Rs. 3 Lakhs to 6 Lakhs P.A. and 12% responded from Rs. 7 Lakhs to 9 Lakhs P.A. group, 2% responded are 10 Lakhs P.A

Chi-square to find out the preferences of male and female on Communication as a barrier during COVID 19 Pandemic

The formula for Chi-square (χ^2) is:
$$\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(\text{Observed values} - \text{Expected values})^2}{\text{Expected values}}$$

	Before Covid 19	During Covid 19	Total
Male	16	15	31
Female	12	7	19
Total	28	22	50

(Row total \times Column total)

Overall Total

MALE	$\frac{31 \times 28}{50}$ E = 17.36	$\frac{31 \times 22}{50}$ E= 13.64
FEMALE	$\frac{19 \times 28}{50}$ E= 10.64	$\frac{19 \times 22}{50}$ E= 8.36

E = Expected values

All Expected values are greater the 5 may proceed with Chi square test

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(16 - 17.36)^2}{16} + \frac{(15 - 13.64)^2}{15} + \frac{(12 - 10.64)^2}{12} + \frac{(7 - 8.36)^2}{7}$$

$$\chi^2 = 0.1156 + 0.1233 + 0.1541 + 0.2642 = 0.6572$$

$$df = (\text{Number of rows} - 1) (\text{Number of Column} - 1)$$

$$df = (2 - 1) (2 - 1)$$

$$df = 1$$

5% Critical value = 3.841

$$\chi^2 \text{ Critical Value}$$

$$0.6572 < 3.841$$

Interpretation:

In above study we investigate χ^2 is less than critical value therefore our null hypotheses accepted and it is also said that there is no significant difference in the opinion between male and female colleagues regarding barriers to work place communication before and during Covid 19 outbreak

Conclusion:

It is clear that communication is one of the most critical aspects for becoming an effective leader in any profession. We have explored the area of communication that is most crucial to a leader, listening. Although this is very crucial there are two subsets to pay attention to when trying to listen effectively

the ability to facilitate a conversation and the ability to ask the right questions to keep the conversation moving forward. In order to become an affective facilitator, one needs to have a combination of skills including listening and being able to integrate what is being said, into the conversation. In addition, the ability to question is also just as important.

In addition to effective communication skills we have also explored some barriers a leader should overcome. Avoid misunderstanding when a speaker is trying to communicate. If you do misunderstand, remember to be as polite as possible when asking the speaker to clarify their words or intentions. Interrupting can also pose a big challenge for a leader. This can have an adverse impact when trying to effectively communicate.

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