



## **Addis Ababa University College of Commerce**

### **Assessing internal project stakeholder communication practice: the case of Addis Ababa chamber of commerce and sectorial association (AACCSA) projects**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

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## DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE

I hereby declare that this research project work entitled “Assessing internal project stakeholder communication practice: the case of AACCSA projects” is my own work and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any approval.

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This is to certify that this MA project work entitled, “Assessing internal project stakeholder communication practice: the case of AACCSA projects” as carried out by Beruk Tebebu Taddesse under the supervision of Dr. Abdurazk Mohammed, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Project Management complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## Definition of terms

Internal stakeholders- project management team members

List of abbreviations

AACCSA - Addis Ababa chamber of commerce and sectorial association

PMI -Project Management Institute

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### *Abstract*

*A study conducted by Monteiro de Carvalho, (2013) showed that even though communication management is very important for the success of a project, it did not get enough attention by project managers. When we see this kind of research results done somewhere else, it triggers curiosity to look in to our countries current practices. Therefore the purpose of this project work is to examine the practice of communication between project manager and internal stakeholders and to see whether there is project failure or not. In addition to these, this research tries to see the challenge and opportunities in communication management in Addis Ababa Chamber Of Commerce and Sectorial Associations (AACCSA) in doing project management activities. This research used different instruments to evaluate the current practice in project communication management. One of the instrument was developed by Karolina (2015), to evaluate communication effectiveness, the rest of the questionnaire were designed by the current researcher to understand the project communication planning activity, whether there is project failure or not, and to identify the challenges and opportunities in the project communication management practice. In addition to the questionnaire, interview is used to get better insight about the topic and for the purpose of triangulating, which will increase the validity of the research. The data gathered through questionnaire, and interview indicate that the project communication management is effective and well managed. However, there are some failed projects when they are measured using scope change, time and budget overrun as criteria. The result of the research also shows, there are areas in the project communication management that need improvement.*

*Keywords: communication management, communication effectiveness and communication planning.*



## Chapter One

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

The importance of effective communication to the success of projects is well known. Project management success in an organization is highly dependent on an effective organizational communication. Organizational communications capabilities have great influence on how projects are conducted. Effective communication by project manager is needed with both internal and external stakeholders in order to achieve project success through facilitation in decision making (PMI, 2013).

It is not enough to have a communication plan alone as Karolina (2015), described it. Rather it requests having a good individual contact with team members, nurturing positive interaction, and obeying basic rules of unambiguous and constructive communication. Meanwhile we cannot forget the weight that should be given to communication plan, communication management and communication control. Papke-Shields and co-authors (2010), in their research on the use of project management practices and its relation to project success, opined that practices related to communication are not given enough attention, even though communication practices are critical for the success of the project.

## 1.1 Statement of the problem

Studies show that there is a contradiction between what the project communication manager expected to do and the day to day practice in project communication management knowledge areas. For instance a study conducted by Monteiro de Carvalho, (2013) showed that even though communication management is very important for the success of a project, it did not get enough attention or the communication processes and practices are not pursued or prioritized by project managers. Conboy, (2010); Stoica & Brouse, (2013) indicated that many project failures are a product of inappropriate communication management.

According to the preliminary interview done by the researcher on April 15, 2019 with the project team members, the researcher could able to capture those problems in AACCSA in areas like in identifying project successes, which motivates the researcher to do this research.

So the purpose of this study is to examine the practice of communication between project manager and internal stakeholders and to look whether there is project failure or not. In addition to these, this research tries to see the challenge and opportunities in communication management in AACCSA in doing project management activities.

## 1.2 Research objective

### 1.3.1 General Research objective

The research will try to answer the general question, ” *How does communication between a project manager and internal stakeholders take place and what are the challenges and opportunities in communication?*”

### 1.3.2 The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the practice of project communication between project manager and internal stakeholders in AACCSA, and to see its effectiveness.
2. To look project effectiveness by looking whether there is overrun or not.
3. To find out challenges and opportunities in project communication in the context of projects in AACCSA.

## 1.3 Research questions

1. What does the practice of project communication between project manager and internal stakeholders in AACCSA look like, is it effective?
2. What is the level of project effectiveness?
3. What are the challenges in project communication in the context of projects in AACCSA?
4. What are the opportunities in project communication in AACCSA projects?

#### 1.4 Significance of the study

Since it is a descriptive study, it is significant in showing the real progresses and lags of knowledge areas in project management practice in one company in Ethiopia, especially for projects in the service sector, and contributes as a secondary data for future Meta-analysis and other studies. It can also serve the management as a feedback to improve the practice. And it uses previously developed instrument used to measure the effectiveness of communication. In doing so, it can also be used as a pilot research for further nationwide future investigations. In addition to this, it is an application of previously developed model to measure communication effectiveness.

#### 1.5 Scope and limitation of the study

Due to its focus in one company practice in specific knowledge area and it is descriptive we cannot generalize it to show the whole picture of project management practice outside of the company.

#### 1.6 Organization of the study

The study is organized in to five chapters. Chapter one will focus on introduction, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study. Chapter two will bring review on related literature. Chapter three is dedicated for research design and methodology. The next (chapter four) will focus on result and analysis and the final chapter (chapter five) will give summery and conclusion.

## Chapter Two

### 2.0 REVIEWS ON RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Project success and communication management

In literatures the relationship between effective project communication management and its effect on project success has been clearly demonstrated. If the project team has to work to achieve project objectives there needs to be effective communication management underneath all other project activities. This demands the project manager to understand communication and manage it effectively. Otherwise it will lead to project failure (Muszynska, 2015).

The research done by Femi, (2014) confirmed that, there is a relationship between effective communication and workers' performance, productivity and commitment. The study recommended that managers will need to communicate with employees regularly to improve workers' commitment and performance.

Projects and project management becomes common in everyday business. Delivering the project at the right time, the right quality and the right budget needs the right type of project management. From many project management areas project communication management has a vital role for the success of the project. However, the presence of many principles, methodologies, ICT tools and supporting systems about the project communication management did not help to stop projects from failing or getting in to serious problems, since it does not give guaranty for appropriate project communication management (Muszynska, 2015).

Communication management has a crucial role for the success of the project. Though its role is not given enough weight by stakeholders on one hand and the project management methodologies are not followed by the project manager on the other hand (Monteiro de Carvalho, 2013).

Communication is not only important for following the project objective but also for tracking what goes wrong in communication, what are the risks for the project, etc. (Muszynska, 2015).

## 2.2 Proper and effective project communication management

Proper and effective project communication management helps in timely production, gathering, dissemination, storage, accumulation and placing in order of project information. Open and clear communications are mandatory in all levels of organization for project success. (Muszynska, 2015)

The study conducted by Muszynska, (2015) to identify real-life project communication management practices and to analyze and summarize this knowledge shows that, proper and effective project communication is not only about preparing project communication plan, creating, collecting, distributing, storing project information, and allocating tasks for project team members and other project stakeholders, rather it should also include superior individual interaction with team members, growing constructive correlations, and creating unambiguous and constructive communication.

## 2.3 Project communication planning

Like the project plan, the project communication plan is a necessary and important part of the project. It is obvious a plan is only a guide to actions, it cannot substitute action.

According to a research done by Ksenija Culo, (2010) effective communication plan should give answers to the following questions: Who do we need to communicate with? When do we communicate? How do we communicate? What needs to be communicated? How often do we communicate status? When do we meet as a team? When do we communicate with key stakeholders and in what fashion? What type of media should we use and when? What is the purpose? What about team communications, internal or external? How about the leadership in teams?

Project communication is the responsibility of everyone on the project team. The project manager, however, is responsible to develop the project communication management plan (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

Ksenija Culo, (2010) argues that improper communication planning will cause problems such as hindrance in message delivery, delivery of sensitive information in to the wrong hand, or absence

of communication with the right stakeholders. A communication plan allows the project manager to prepare for efficient and effective methods of communication in advance.

## 2.4 Factors related to communication effectiveness

### 2.4.1 Communication technology

Technology is one of the factors to be considered when we chose how we communicate with the team. The presence of modern technologies gives us many options to choose as vehicles. The choice of these technologies should be based on assessment on the kind of difficulties that confront the stakeholders (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

First the type of audience, the type of information need, how urgently this information is needed should be analyzed before choosing the type of technology. Although modern technologies can give us accesses to collaborate and store a large amount of project data, the choice of it should consider whether the technology feet the needs and capabilities of the audience. If not, the technology invested will be left out of use. In this regard the choice of the technology must depend on its acceptance by the stakeholders, its endorsement, and incorporate to the system already in use (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

### 2.4.2 Communication Objective

Each and every communication activity has to have objective. All the resource spent to make the communication happen will be wasted, if the communication is unintended and without purpose. When the communication plan is prepared it should keep the objective in mind. In short communication need objectives otherwise it is useless to communicate in the first place. And it is obvious that the overall objective of the communication has so many things to do with the project success. A time and other resources of the project should not be wasted on maintaining unnecessary communication in the first place. This issue should be addressed in the process of preparing the communication plan or through revising the communication plan periodically (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

### 2.4.3 Communication channels

When the project manager comes to the point of choosing the communication channel, s/he needs to consider points like, whether the project communication will deliver the appropriate

information to the appropriate stakeholder in a timely manner. There is also a need to follow the communication plan to make sure that, all members of the project team understand and be ready for their responsibilities to communicate with external stakeholders. The number of potential communication channels or paths has to be taken as an indicator of the complexity of a project's communications.

These communication channels can be grouped in to vertical, horizontal and diagonal communication channels. The number of potential communication channels can indicate the complexity of the project. The total number of potential communication channels is  $n(n-1)/2$ , where  $n$  represents the number of stakeholders. Thus, a project with 20 stakeholders has  $20(20-1)/2 = 190$  potential communication channels. It is at the initial communication planning stage, that the project manager will decide who communicate with whom and who receive what information.

#### 2.4.4 Responsibilities in communication

Each individual participate in the communication process has a responsibility if effective communication has to occur. When someone send a message, the sender of the message is responsible for the making the message understandable, comprehensive and comprehend very well by the receiver. The receiver of the message also has a responsibility for confirming the message is received in its original form. In addition to this the receiver is expected to understand the message and give confirmation about the receiving of the information (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

#### 2.4.5 Receiver of the message

The communication plan is expected to answer who is going to receive the message. If unintended individual or group gets confidential information the consequence could be devastative. Stakeholders in the project have different interest and objective to fulfill, which leads to different demand for communication. Therefore, the project manager is responsible to maintain the balance between keeping individuals motivated on one hand and protecting confidential information on the other hand.

#### 2.4.6 Communication Frequency

The rate of communication with specific stakeholder should be specified in the communication plan beforehand. However, it can be changed based on the needs of stakeholders. If there is any

need to increase how many times the communication needs to take place, it can be adjusted during implementation stage as many times as needed (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

#### 2.4.7 Barriers or obstacles to project communications

Some of the source for the problems in communication can be originated from organizational politics, organizational culture, language, micromanagement, and information overload (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

Communications management is all about a timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and disposition of project information. Effective project managers spend a great deal of their time (about 90%) communicating with internal or external project stakeholders. This is the type of dedication the project needs from the project manager to make both the communication in particular and the project effective (Ksenija Čulo, 2010).

#### 2.5 Types of Communication

According to Martinez, (2017) communication in the project can be categorized in to different type based on project perspective, organizational perspective, formality perspective, and channel perspective. These different kinds of project communication have to be addressed very well in order to create effective project communication. From project perspective communication is classified into internal, which happens between team members or external between project team members and stakeholders. From organizational perspective project communication is classified into vertical, which is either upward or downward communication, horizontal, communication between peoples in the same organizational level or diagonal, communication between different functional and organizational level based on how organizations are structured. The project manager needs to handle this different kind of communication skillfully and manage the communication in order to succeed in the project. From formality perspective communication is classified in to formal, which includes reports, presentations, and media releases or informal, which includes emails, social networks and ad-hoc discussions. From channel perspective project communication is classified into verbal or non-verbal, written or oral, face-to-face or through telephone.

From these different options the project manager can select a specific channel based on factors like, the reason for communication, type of stakeholder, type of information.

A research by Holzmann & Globerson, (2003) done on project effectiveness emphasize, effective communication is mandatory for project success and is can be achieved only by building effective communication system and a project manager who is dedicated to protect this system until the project is completed. This research is done by mixing project management knowledge with organizational communication knowledge. A quantitative instrument is designed to evaluate project communication effectiveness. The research developed a model for evaluating communication effectiveness, by assigning a numerical value to the communications process of a project, for comparison. A model for evaluating communication effectiveness in the research is composed of nine results of project communications processes and four evaluation criteria of organizational communications. The nine results of a communication, which is produced during the project life cycle, are communication management plan, project records, project reports, project presentation, performance reports, change requests, project archives, project closure, and lessons learned. The four evaluation criteria of organizational communication are completeness, timing, accuracy, and volume. Equal weight is given to each of the communication output in the research and evaluated against the four evaluation criteria.

The research tries to evaluate the communication effectiveness in general using questionnaires and assess the four evaluation criteria on the communication output using 36 questions and has high validity and reliability values.

The research used 222 questionnaires, which is too much questions. Even though this research measures communication effectiveness, and has some similarity to my research, it is a little bit complex and not convenient (222 questionnaires) to use its methods. Therefore, its methods are not used in my research.

The research done by Femi, (2014) on the relationship between communication and workers' performance in some selected organizations in Lagos State, Nigeria supports the assumption that the researcher is based on. It uses questionnaire to collect the data and the result of the study shows that a relationship exists between effective communication and workers' performance, productivity and commitment. And it recommends to managers to communicate with employees regularly to improve workers' commitment and performance. This research is worth to be stated

because it adds another dimension to the communication in project, but it is not directly related to this research, since it does not measure effectiveness of the communication.

The research done by Henderson, (2008) to measure the impact of project managers' communication competencies found that project managers' competencies in decoding and encoding communication significantly contribute to team member satisfaction and productivity. Moreover, geographic distribution has an unexpected and significant role in how project managers' competency in decoding and encoding communication, which in return affect team member satisfaction and productivity.

The research done by the same researcher previously (Linda S. Henderson, 2004) shows a significant communication to performance relationship. Both of these researches contribute to a better understanding of communication in project management and show again, how communication is important to the project and project management, but both have a different objective to my research objective.

According to Jana et al (2012) focused on the project communication management, communication in the project is a very important factor for the success of the project and one of the biggest problem that threaten the success of the project is project communication. This research like the researches stated above, are not directly related to my topic. However, the researcher preferred to look in to it, since it elaborate how communication affects project success.

The research on cross-cultural communication behavior by Jiang and Pretorius (2011) in projects shows a significant difference between Chinese and South African project managers in their communication behavior in three project activities. However, there seems to be no significant difference between their communication behaviors in the contract process. The finding of the research can be taken to show how communication can be affected by cultural difference between stakeholders.

In a research on communication management in project teams (Karolina M. , 2015) it is shown that the presence of numerous groups of principles and methodologies on communication management and availability of ICT tools and systems did not help projects from failures. The study also revealed that communication also need to have good personal relationship with team

member, creating positive relationship and maintaining clear and positive communication in addition to preparing a communication plan, creating, collecting, distributing, storing project information, and identifying responsibilities for project team members and other project stakeholders.

The research collected factors that can affect communication effectiveness and structured its questionnaire based on it. The first group of factors is dependent on the sender. These are: timeliness, correctness, specificity, accessibility, choosing the proper medium, using multiple medium, simplicity, purpose clarity, goal achieving, and formal- informal balance. The second group of factors is dependent on the receiver or the receiver has more control on them. These are: engagement, which is about whether the receiver will put effort or not, and personality,

Researches done on communication, try to relate communication effectiveness with project success on one hand and try to measure communication effectiveness on the other hand. However, from these researches, the majorly of them done somewhere else, outside of Ethiopia. We come across with a small number of researches done on projects in Ethiopia. And even from this small number of research, no such a significant amount is done on communication management. The author of this research concludes that there is a shortage of research conducted to show the practice of project communication management and effectiveness in Ethiopia.

## 2.7 Gap in Literature

The gap in the literatures indicates lack of research that shows the day to day practice of project management communication practice in Ethiopia.

## 2.8 Conceptual framework

**Communication practice**

Communication plan.

Manage & control communication.

**Communication efficiency**

Measure efficiency using Karolin, (2015) model.

**Project success**

Measure success using time, cost overrun and as criteria's.

**Communication challenges**

**Communication opportunities**

## Chapter Three

### 3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METEDODOLOGY

#### 3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROCH

The researcher have used mixed research approaches to achieve the research objectives. Qualitative data collection and analysis is used to know individual team members' perspective on general and specific research questions. In addition to this quantitative data collection and analysis technique is used when such type of data is available in the progress of the research, to get a deeper understanding on the research topic.

It is a descriptive research, which describes the existing phenomena as it is, since the main objective of this research is to assess the current practice in the area of communication. By descriptive, it only question how the project manager is communicating with the rest of the team member and how each team member is communicating with his/her teammates.

#### 3.2. Data source

Both primary and secondary data collected for analysis. The primary data were collected by interviewing the project manager and selective project team, and using questionnaire, whereas the secondary data ware used when the documents of the project report and other related materials referred.

#### 3.3.Population and Sampling technique

The population as well as the sample of this research is the whole project team and the project manager. Census is appropriate for this research because the size of the population is very small. A total of nine people participated in this research from both the project team and other functional managers, who is involved in the project management.

#### 3.4.Data gathering instruments

Since it is already planned in the research design to use both qualitative and quantitative research technique, the data gathering reflect this by using multiple data gathering instruments. These are questionnaire, interview and document analysis.

#### 3.4.1. Questionnaire

The justification for using questionnaire is that it will enable collection of large amount of data in short period of time, like the time we have in this research. The questionnaire is a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions. The close-ended questions were meant to measure the overall communication effectiveness of the company. This part of the overall questionnaire is adopted from the previous research done by Karolina, (2015) to measure communication efficiency. The open-ended questions however, were targeted to measure, alongside with interview, to get insight to the challenge and opportunities in project communication. In addition to this there are three questions which ask about whether there is time or budget overrun and if there is any scope change, in the project they had.

The first answer (answer 1) in the list of possible answers shows poor communication effectiveness at the same time the last answer (answer 5) in the list of possible answers, gives us the most effective communication effectiveness. For instance, to the question ‘Do you double-check messages sent/information provided regarding its logic and linguistic correctness? (to avoid mistakes, ambiguity, etc.)’, the possible answers are: ‘nearly never/never’, ‘seldom’, ‘sometimes’, ‘usually’, ‘nearly always/ always’.

#### 3.4.2. Interview

If there is some idea that was not clear interview will help to clarify it. So the researcher, preferred to add interview to gather deeper information, by including perspective of project manager. In this research interview is also used to triangulate the data gathered through questionnaire.

### 3.4.3 Document analysis

The documents relevant to the research, like project report document, interoffice memo, etc is used for further clarification and understanding of the topic under investigation and triangulation of data.

### 3.5 Validity and Reliability

The researcher will triangulate the research by using different source of information (primary, secondary) and different means of collecting the data (questionnaire, interview, document analysis), which will increase the research validity and reliability. In addition to this the questionnaire used to measure communication effectiveness were adopted from the research done by Karolina, (2018), that mainly focus on developing criteria for measuring communication effectiveness in any type of company. Which gives advantage in making use of already validated questionnaire.

In Karolina, (2018) research *“the validity tests, contained three major tests: content validity test, criterion validity test and construct validity test. The reliability tests, was based on reliability coefficient calculations, test-retest method and multi-source correlations. Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.94; the split-half method yielded an  $r_{tt}$  value of 0.92, and the inter-judge reliability test generated correlation coefficient of 0.61.”*

### 3.6 Ethical considerations

The research will respect all ethical standards to do the research. All participant of the research gives their consent before the questionnaire or interview is introduced. Any question that needs to be explained addressed accordingly. The project managers concern gets response by not presenting the content of the document delivered to the research purpose.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected from interview and questionnaire is analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively according to the type of data.

## Chapter Four

### 4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on presenting, analyzing and interpreting data that are collected through questionnaire, interview, and document analysis. The result presented in the form of table, figure and using descriptive statistical analysis. The first part of analysis focus on the first part of questionnaire, which analyze demographic data on participants of the research. The second part of analysis, gives attention to individual and team communication effectiveness. The third part of the questionnaire analyzed next, which is designed to investigate whether the project manager uses communication planning for communication management. Next to that part of analysis is based on the fourth part of the questionnaire which asks whether the company had a failed project, based on cost, time and/ or scope criteria. The last part of this analysis give attention to the last section of the questionnaire and answers what are the challenges and opportunities in project management communication.

Data collected from interview and document analysis is used as a means of triangulation for the data collected through questionnaire. Since the project manager told me not to use it other than a reference material, the content of the document is not presented on this research paper. After the analysis is done, the next part of the chapter focus on the interpretation of these analyzed data. This interpretation part tries to compare the first part of the questionnaire result with the model that was given by Karolin, (2015) in the first part. In the next section the result of the second part of the questionnaire interpreted and in the last section the two parts of the questionnaire are interpreted.

The company under research uses a matrix form of project management. Because of this type of organizational structure, different department took part in different project activity at different time in the project management. Based on this understanding the researcher distributed the questionnaire to these different department heads in addition to the project manager and project management team. The entire questionnaire distributed for these parties collected back. Most of the questionnaire gets response from the participant in the research.

#### 4.2 Demographic analysis of the respondent

There are four (4) male and five (5) female participants that are selected to answer the questionnaire. Four (4) of the participant are between thirty-one (31) up to forty (40) age group. Two (2) participants are between age group of forty-one (41) up to fifty (50) year. There are three (3) participants who are in the above fifty (50) year age group. Seven (7) participants say they have MA/MSc degree and two (2) of them says have BA/BSc degree.

***Table 2 Summary on demographics of participant***

Character of respondents	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	4	44.44%
Female	5	55.56%
<b>Age group</b>		
Between 31-40 years	4	44.44%
Between 41-50 years	2	22.22%
Above 50 years	3	33.33%
<b>Educational status</b>		
BA/BSc degree graduate	2	22.22%
MA/MSc degree graduate	7	77.78%

#### 4.3 Communication effectiveness in AACCSA

After saying this let us look what values were given by the respondent. The response given to the first part of the questionnaire can be summarized into two categories. The first one gives individual communication effectiveness of each respondent. The second one gives overall communication effectiveness within project team.

Individual's communication effectiveness is calculated based on comparing the answer with the reference model given by Karolina, (2015). This reference model categorize the communication effectiveness into three group in which, reference percentages for each level are given in Table 1 . The first one category in this reference model shows high level of communication effectiveness,

next category in the reference model shows medium level of communication effectiveness and the last one in the reference model category indicate the lowest level of communication effectiveness.

Table 2. Reference percentages of communication effectiveness reference model as it is prepared by Karolina, (2015).

	Reference percentage for most favorable and most unfavorable answers	
Level of communication effectiveness	Answer 1&2 (unfavorable)	Answer 4&5 (favorable)
High	< 10%	>70%
Medium	<20%	>50%
Low	≥20%	≤50%

Team communication effectiveness is calculated by adding the number of all five types of answers, ranging from those that shows high communication effectiveness to those that shows low communication effectiveness, for all questions in the first part of the questionnaires.

The first part of the questionnaire contains thirty eight questions with five possible answers for each question. Totally the respondent has three hundred forty two possible responses( thirty eight questions multiplied by nine respondent). From this three hundred forty two responses only sixteen (16 or 4.67%) of them did not get any answer at all.

The other three hundred twenty six (326 or 95.33%) of the question get answer. Of these three hundred forty two questions ten (10 or 2.92%) answers were given to the lowest value which shows very low level of communication effectiveness.

Two answers (2 or 0.58%) were given to the value which shows second lowest communication effectiveness. Seventy one (71 or 20.76%) were given to the value which shows middle level of communication effectiveness.

A hundred sixty three (163 or 47.66%) answers were given to the second most effective level of communication effectiveness.

The next eighty (80 or 23.39%) of answers were given to the level which shows the highest level of communication effectiveness in the project management with team member and other staffs who is involved in the project.

The answer is not evenly distributed. More answers given concentrate on answer 4 and 5. Answer number 3, 4, and 5 takes 91.81% of all the answers, which is three hundred fourteen. Answer number one (1) and two (2) takes twelve (12 or 3.5%) of all the answers. In addition to this there are sixteen (16 or 4.67%) of all the questions which did not get any answer from all the answers. The majority of all response indicates the second most efficient way of communication in the project which is about one hundred sixty three (163 or 47.66%) responses. A small number of all the response which is ten (10 or 2.92%) indicate a very low efficiency (answer 1) of communication in the project. Another very small number of all the responses, two (2 or 0.58%) in number indicate the second most non- efficient (answer 2) way of communication.

Table 3. The distribution of all answer in the five possible response options.

No answer given	16	4.67%
Answer number 1	10	2.92%
Answer number 2	2	0.58%
Answer number 3	71	20.76%

Answer number 4	163	47.66%
Answer number 5	80	23.39%
Total	342	99.98%

#### 4.3.1 Communication effectiveness for individual team members

Individual communication effectiveness is calculated by adding answers of each respondent and comparing the results to the reference model described in the above section. The mean is 3.75.

Table 4 Standard deviation for each respondents answer

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Standard deviation	1.0573	1.6344	1.0049	0.9455	0.55173	0.9824	1.1492	1.6560	0.8416
	86	44	66	29	3	2	47	59	61

As we can see from the result in the above table, the average of the response that each individual gives is greater than the mean value attached to the scale. More over the standard deviation has a small value which shows the responses of the respondent is more or less the same or at least closer to each other.

The interpretation of this result is that the respondents give answers that show higher effectiveness in their communication, when they are evaluated individually.

#### 4.3.2 Communication effectiveness from the company's perspective

A small number of responses, only 10 of all questions (about 2.92%) get answers which indicate the lowest efficiency of communication (answers number 1). The greater part of responses (about 47.66%) indicate the second most efficient communication of team members employed in the project (answers number 4), 20.76% are medium responses (answers number 3) and about 23.39% of all responses indicated a very high communication efficiency (answers number 5).

#### 4.4 Communication planning in AACCSA

The second part of the questionnaire prepared to give information on whether the project manager use project communication plan and he manages the project communication. The questionnaire in this section of the questionnaire did not ask whether the project manager prepare the communication plan and manage the project communication, rather it present questions indirectly by asking detail components of the possible communication plan to avoid misleading the respondent.

The questionnaire in this section asks details of the communication plan. In doing so, it will conform whether there is a plan or not, and if there is a plan, it answers the question that “is it the kind of plan that the literature talks about it?”

These questions get the two highest scores in the questionnaire (answer 4 and answer 5) for most of the questions. The project manager gives answer 5 for eleven (11) questions and answer 4 for four (4) questions out of fifteen questions. His assistant, monitoring and evaluation manager gives answer 5 for seven (7) questions, answer 4 for six (6) questions and answer 3 for two (2) questions.

Table 5 The project manager response on communication planning

Project manager response	No of questions
Answer number 5	7
Answer number 4	6
Answer number 3	2
Answer number 2	0
Answer number 1	0

Table 6 Monitoring and evaluation officer response on communication planning

Monitoring and evaluation officer response	No of questions
Answer number 5	11
Answer number 4	4
Answer number 3	0
Answer number 2	0
Answer number 1	0

Answers of the project manager and that of his assistant (monitoring and evaluation manager) are valued in evaluating the response from this section of the questionnaire. This is done because it is assumed by the researcher, that the other members of the project team are not involved in preparing the project plan. Therefore their response did not count. This is expected to be done by the project manager and somehow the monitoring and evaluation manager is involved in this process (because of special organizational structure).

#### 4.5 Project failure in AACCSA

The third part of the questionnaire developed to find out whether the company experiences a project failure. As the case of the second section, in this section of the questionnaire also the researcher preferred to ask the questions indirectly, to avoid misleading the participant.

The questions ask whether there is time and budget overrun and/or if there is scope change in the project the respondent participated in.

Out of nine (9) participants seven (7) says there is a time overrun in the projects as they have been a member of the project team.

Six (6) participants out of nine (9) says there is budget overrun. And five (5) participants say there is scope change in the projects.

Table 7 Response on scope overrun

No. of participants who say there is scope overrun	5
No. of participants who say there is no scope overrun	4

Table 8 Response on budget overrun

No. of participants who say there is budget overrun	6
No. of participants who say there is no budget overrun	2
No. of participants who did not give answer on budget overrun	1

Table 9 Response on time overrun

No. of participant who says there is time overrun	7
No. of participant who says there is no time overrun	2

#### 4.6 Challenges and opportunities of project communication in AACCSA

The last part of the questionnaire is the part of the questionnaire which asks about the challenges and opportunities that the participant experience or noticed in the project communication. This part of the questionnaire, unlike the other part of the questionnaire, is composed of open- ended questions. The response from the participant summarized and presented as follows.

#### 4.6.1 Challenges in the project communication

The participant raised or list down the following point as a challenge in there communication. These are: priorities given to the project differ from person to person, which result for different responses for the same enquiry; project performance report writing; a challenge in the use of technologies by stakeholders; enforcement issues in case of internal departments who implement the project; limited communication skills of stakeholders; the receiving and/or sending of incomplete information by stakeholders and low response rate for any kind of communication enquiry or invitation.

#### 4.6.2 Opportunities in the project communication

The participant raised or list down the following point as an opportunities in there communication. These are: the presence of follow up meeting, which enables the project to go smoothly; project communication gives room for continuous improvement; the presence of dedicated media (AACCSA has a media outlet of its own); the good working relationship that they have with government and there member; time-to- time improvement in the awareness of the stakeholder on the benefit of communication in the project and international experience they get by working with project partners communication experts.

## Chapter Five

### 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusion

One of the purposes of this research is to look the practice of project communication management. For this purpose, the data gathered through questionnaire, interview and data analysis. The results indicate that the project communication management is effective and well managed. Even though there are projects failed (in terms of scope, time and budget overrun) it is not related to the project communication management. The research with its limitation shows that communication management is not to be blamed for project failure in AACCSA projects, since the communication is found to be efficient.

By looking the issues raised by participants in the research as opportunities and challenge, it is clear that the communication practice in AACCSA has a room for further improvement. But at this time, the cause for project failure has to be searched somewhere else, rather than in the areas of project communication management practice.

Before starting this research, the researcher did not expect to see this much communication effectiveness. Even though the researcher learn there is a project failure (scope, time and budget overrun) now at this point it is clear that communication effectiveness is not the cause for these problems, in this company (AACCSA) projects.

## 5.2 Recommendation

It is advisable to maintain or improve the current project communication practice in AACCSA. At the same time it is very important to look for the cause of project failure. The project is doing well in its project communication management, does not mean all the project management areas are doing well.

The response for the open-ended questions in the questionnaire shows that there are some issues stated as a challenge in communication. Some of these issues can be tackled through training. The difficulties in the use of technology can get a solution this way. Problems in project performance report writing can be made less problematic through use of technology and/or by making the pre prepared reporting formats easy to use. Limited communication skills of stakeholders and low response rate of the stakeholders can also be improved, through training and open discussion with stakeholders to search for the solution together.

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## Appendixes

### A. Semi structured interview

Addis Ababa University School of Commerce

Dear Respected project managers and team members:

I am a master's student in project management at Addis Ababa University School of Commerce conducting a research on the subject of project management. The specific topic of my study is "Assessing internal project stakeholder communication practice: the case of AACCSA projects."

As project manager and team member performing in chamber of commerce, you have practical experience and knowledge that you can share to the advancement of project management profession. Hence, your response and participation in this interview will be extremely valuable in understanding core project managers' day to day practice. Meanwhile, all of your response will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study. Participants' names will not be published, recorded, or provided to others.

Thank you in advance for taking your time to participate. If you have interest in the final results of the study, contact me via E- mail and I will provide you with a complementary summary. Again, thank you for your participation.

Kind Regards

Beruk Tebebu

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## Interview Guide

### For project manager

1. How essential is a project communication plan for the success of a project?
2. Do you think that we should always write a communication plan for our projects irrespective of its size?
3. Please describe whether you have communication plan or not?
4. Please answer the following question only if you have communication plan.
5. Please elaborate what is included in your communication plan? What are the inputs?
6. Would you tell us what you will use, to prepare your communication plan?
7. When do you begin your communication plan, if you have one?
8. Do you manage your communication plan?
9. How do you manage your communication plan?
10. What are your tools and techniques to plan, manage and control your communication?
11. How do you control your communication with stakeholder?

### For project team member

1. Have you noticed any communication gap between project manager and his/her team? If your answer is yes, please explain it.
2. Have you noticed any communication gap between project manager and external stakeholder? If your answer is yes, please explain it.
3. Do you think there is a relationship between communication and project success? If your answer is yes, please explain it.
4. Are you expected to report to project manager? If you say yes, how often? In what format? And how detailed it is?
5. Do you have any direct communication with stakeholder? If you say yes, please explain it.
6. When do you get information about the next phase of your job from the project manager?
7. How frequent you communication with project manager and project team?

8. Is there any standard to which information to be communicated, including language, format, content, and level of detail?
9. Is there any guideline for reasons, in the distribution of information?
10. What are the time frame and frequency for the distribution of required information and receipt of acknowledgment or response, if applicable?
11. Who is responsible for communicating the information?
12. Who is responsible for authorizing release of confidential information?
13. What are methods or technologies used to convey the information, such as memos, e-mail, and/or press releases?
14. Is there any resources allocated for communication activities, including time and budget?
15. What are the escalation process identifying time frames and the management chain (names) for escalation of issues that cannot be resolved at a lower staff level?
16. What are the methods for updating and refining the communications management plan as the project progresses and develops?
17. Do you have Glossary of common terminology in you communication?
18. Do you have flow charts of the information flow in the project, workflows with possible sequence of authorization, list of reports, and meeting plans, etc?
19. Do you have any communication constraints usually derived from a specific legislation or regulation, technology, and organizational policies, etc?
20. Are there any guidelines and templates for project status meetings, project team meetings, e-meetings, and e-mail messages?

Thank you for your participation

## B. Questionnaire

Addis Ababa University School of Commerce

Dear Respected project managers and team members:

I am a master's student in project management at Addis Ababa University School of Commerce conducting a research on the subject of project management. The specific topic of my study is "Assessing internal project stakeholder communication practice: the case of AACCSA projects".

As project manager and team member performing in chamber of commerce, you have practical experience and knowledge that you can share to the advancement of project management profession. Hence, your response and participation in this interview will be extremely valuable in understanding core project managers' day to day practice. Meanwhile, all of your response will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study. Participants' names will not be published, recorded, or provided to others.

Thank you in advance for taking your time to participate. If you have interest in the final results of the study, contact me via E- mail and I will provide you with a complementary summary. Again, thank you for your participation.

Kind Regards

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6	<i>Is a communication plan developed for the projects you realize? (to avoid inconsistency, chaos, omissions, etc.)</i>					
7	<i>Is a meeting agenda prepared for each meeting?</i>					
8	<i>Is the meeting agenda followed during the meetings?</i>					
9	<i>Do you make sure all interested stakeholders have access to appropriate project information?</i>					
10	<i>Do you make sure all interested stakeholders have access to tools they need for communication?</i>					
11	<i>Do you ask stakeholders about their favorite communication medium?</i>					
12	<i>Do you tailor the medium of the message to specific stakeholder (group)?</i>					
13	<i>Do you analyze what kind of messenger (person, tool) is the most appropriate to communicate with a specific stakeholder?</i>					
14	<i>Do you use multiple media/methods to deliver the same information/message? (to increase the probability of reaching the receiver)</i>					
15	<i>Do you formulate your messages in such a way that the receivers do not ask you to repeat/clarify them?</i>					
16	<i>Do the recipients answer your messages as if they understood them properly?</i>					
17	<i>Do you plan the purpose of your communication? (what you want to achieve)</i>					
18	<i>Do you inform the recipients of the message about the goal you want to achieve?</i>					
19	<i>Do your recipients act accordingly to your expectations? (do you achieve the expected outcome?)</i>					
20	<i>Do you use formal forms of communication with project stakeholders? (reports, proceedings, etc.)</i>					

21	<i>Do you also use informal forms of communication with project stakeholders?</i>					
22	<i>Do you communicate with project stakeholders concerning non-project topics?</i>					
23	<i>Do you engage actively in reading the messages you receive or listening to someone talking?</i>					
24	<i>Do you find it easy to communicate with other people?</i>					
25	<i>Do you find it easy to control your emotions?</i>					
26	<i>Do you find it easy to make others do what you ask/tell them?</i>					
27	<i>Do you ask your recipients for feedback on your messages?</i>					
28	<i>Do you provide feedback to messages you receive?</i>					
29	<i>Do you keep open communication with all stakeholders? (without withholding information and/or excluding stakeholders)</i>					
30	<i>Do you know who is the receiver of the information/reports/documents you produce?</i>					
31	<i>Do you communicate your needs concerning the scope, form and frequency of communication?</i>					
32	<i>Do you tailor your communication routines to specific stakeholders (groups)?</i>					
33	<i>Do you analyze the cost effectiveness of communication methods?</i>					
34	<i>Do you communicate honestly?</i>					
35	<i>Do you maintain regular contact with your stakeholders? (to be able to make the best possible predictions about the future of the project)</i>					
36	<i>Do you actively work against prejudice in project communication?</i>					
37	<i>Do you try to make your past negative experiences with a specific stakeholder not influence your communication with them?</i>					
38	<i>Do you actively eliminate any disruptions hindering the process of communication?</i>					

Part III questions on project communication plan preparation		Strongly disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Neither agree or	Agree(4)	Strongly agree (5)
	Which of the following information is included in your communication plan?					
1	Stakeholder communication requirements					
2	Information to be communicated, including language, format, content, and level of detail;					
3	Reason for the distribution of that information					
4	Time frame and frequency for the distribution of required information and receipt of acknowledgment or response, if applicable					
5	Person responsible for communicating the information;					
6	Person responsible for authorizing release of confidential information;					
7	Person or groups who will receive the information;					
8	Methods or technologies used to convey the information, such as memos, e-mail, and/or press releases;					
9	Resources allocated for communication activities, including time and budget;					
10	Escalation process identifying time frames and the management chain (names) for escalation of issues that cannot be resolved at a lower staff level;					
11	Method for updating and refining the communications management plan as the project progresses and develops;					
12	Glossary of common terminology;					
13	Flow charts of the information flow in the project, workflows with possible sequence of authorization, list of reports, and meeting plans, etc.					
14	Communication constraints usually derived from a specific					

	legislation or regulation, technology, and organizational policies, etc					
15	Guidelines and templates for project status meetings, project team meetings, e-meetings, and e-mail messages.					

1. Part IV Questions on project failure

- 2. 1. Do you have time over run in projects?    Yes           No
- 3. 2. Do you have budget over run in projects?    Yes           No
- 4. 3. Do you have scope change in projects?    Yes           No

Part V Questions on challenges and opportunities in project communication

1. What are the challenges in your project communication? Please write them on the space provided.

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2. What are the opportunities in your project communication? Please write them on the space provided.

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