

Influence of Communication Strategy on Performance of Project within Non-Governmental Organizations in Mogadishu, Somalia

Abdikani Ali A.,^{1*} & Ouma Caren A.¹
United States International University–Africa,
*Email: couma@usiu.ac.ke

*Corresponding author

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to determine the influence of communication on performance of project within Non-Governmental Organizations in Mogadishu, Somalia. In this research, descriptive research design was used, and the target population was 78 managers and 390 senior employees in the 78 NGOs in Mogadishu. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique, where a sample size of 216 respondents was selected using Yamane's (1967) formula. Data was collected using questionnaire, and descriptive and inferential statistics were applied in the data analysis. The findings showed that managers and other higher-level staff are aware of the communication process. There was a written and well-articulated communication process. The managers can communicate effectively with employees. Communication within the NGO has an influence on organizational performance. The intercept between communication and performance of project becomes better by $\beta = 0.821$, $p < 0.01$. This meant that when a single unit improves Communication, the project performance also significantly improves by 82.1%. Lastly, the study concluded that communication is very key for any seamless operations within the project deliverables. Further, communication is the key ingredient in effective project management as everything revolves around it from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation which requires proper feedback mechanisms for a seamless operation. Finally, the study recommends adoption of a communication channel that facilitates proper feedback mechanism in order to prevent information loss on any item, whether it is a big or small ticket item.

Key Words: Communication, Performance, Project Non-Governmental Organizations, Mogadishu, Somalia.

Introduction

Communication strategy is concerned with ensuring that the NGO gets its information to the destination on schedule. In contrast with a definition of strategy as planning, strategy is derived from the Greek word "strategia," which depicts "generalship. The Greek military used the word strategy when referring to the measures to deploy troops for action in the quest to conquer enemies (Nickols, 2016). Strategies provide direction, distribute capital most operatively, and organize decisions taken by various individuals. According to Hitt et al. (2017), a strategy is concerned with integrating organizational operations, utilizing, and distributing scarce resources within the organizational environment to fulfill current objectives. When developing a strategy, keep in mind that choices are not made in a vacuum and that each action done by the business is likely to be greeted with a reaction

from those affected, whether rivals, customers, workers, or suppliers.

Communication strategic plan determines an organization's strategic orientation. A business's path to attaining its objectives is essential to the strategic planning process (Butuner, 2019). In a study done in Australia by Harkin (2018) the benefits of a clear strategic direction are felt across the business, from front-line employees who work more effectively with defined goals to shareholders who stay confident in the company's potential for continuing growth and financial prosperity. Strategic direction ensures that, the NGO understands its objectives, how they will be achieved and what resources are needed. It develops a basic plan of how the NGO must function (Kuusela et al., 2016). Every element of the business, including all procedures, must be reviewed to achieve the most benefit from developing a strategic direction incorporating a 360° corporate vision. Organizations must choose their strategic direction and apply that vision to all areas and processes (Cordeiro & Nyaruwata, 2016).

Communication's strategy enables an NGO to disseminate its strategic plan. Strategic plan is a method that is being used globally by many organizations to increase effectiveness (Thompson et al., 2019). Strategic planning is a strategy that helps organizations formulate and make decisions regarding their future direction (Kotler, 2017). Koskei (2017) defines strategic planning as a method of identifying strategies and developing a budget that can be used to execute the strategy. Koskei (2017) adds that implementing the strategic plan is important for determining organizational performance. Therefore, management must have a clear strategic plan to successfully establish its prospects for the organization.

Thairu's study (2020) in Kenya argued that, strategic planning influences the performance of non-governmental organizations through communicating the strategic objectives. He argued that NGOs consider strategic planning a key success factor in achieving their short-term and long-term goals. They are often successful when they can attract more funds to achieve their mission and objectives (Omolo, 2018). Therefore, to remain competitive in the industry, NGOs must align their internal operations with the external environment to increase effectiveness, efficiency and strengthen their shared values, communicate clearly defined tasks and encourage teamwork and employee participation.

Organizations face challenges based on strategic planning which are not properly communicated. Kabeyi (2019) noted that, some of those challenges include political factors, limited resources, and global economic factors that organizations cannot control. To mitigate these challenges, organizations must monitor internal and external environments and make changes, thus increasing their performance in the industry. Leskaj (2017) adds that poor budgeting and financial constraints are challenges that affect many organizations' strategic planning. Otherwise, a lot of NGOs embrace strategic planning (Muriithi & Kinyanjui, 2017). The study noted some of the challenges that NGOs face in implementing strategic plans to include a lack of proper management style, defined culture and a lack of effective flow of communication.

Somalia's state collapsed in 1991. Since then, civil war and drought have killed hundreds of thousands of Somalis. Many NGOs worldwide assist the Somali people, and Islamic NGOs also play a critical role in this rescue effort. In Somalia, the transnational Islamic NGO's work often differs. Some focus on education and health; others work in several areas, including providing relief to the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and sponsoring and implementing development projects (Tuschling, 2017).

Effective communication is crucial for the successful performance of projects. Good communication ensures that all stakeholders, including project team members, clients, and stakeholders, are on the same page and working towards a common goal. Studies have shown that effective communication can positively impact on project performance. For example, a study by Wang and Huang (2021) found that clear and effective communication between project managers and team members improved project performance by reducing misunderstandings and increasing cooperation among team members. Another study by Chen and Yang (2018) found that effective communication was positively related to project success. The study found that projects with clear and open lines of communication were more likely to meet their goals and objectives, while projects with poor communication were more likely to experience delays and cost overruns. However, poor communication can negatively impact project performance. A study by Li and Chen (2020) found that poor communication among project team members was one of the major causes of project failure. The study found that miscommunication and misunderstandings among team members led to delays, cost overruns, and other issues that negatively impacted project performance. Therefore, this study sought to close that gap and add more literature that can be used to conduct more research. The main objective was to determine the influence of communication strategy on project performance within Non-Governmental Organizations in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used in this study as according to Serakan and Bougie (2013) because it helps in determining the appropriate data collection methods for a research, making summary, presenting the data, and interpreting information to explain results obtained with clarity. Saunders et al. (2016) postulated that descriptive research gives an investigator the opportunity to gain accurate profile of events, persons or situations. Kothari and Garg (2014) define descriptive research as a structure and design used to measure the features identified in the research questions. The population for the study was 78 managers and 390 senior employees drawn from 78 NGOS in Mogadishu City. Stratified random sampling was used and the strata were managers and senior employees. The sample of these population was randomly selected from each stratum. The sample size was arrived at using Yamane's (1967) formula as below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

n = sample size required

N = Population size

e = allowable error (%)

At 95% confidence level with $\pm 10\%$

The sample size for this study will be;

$$468 / \{1 + 468(0.05)^2\} = \mathbf{216}$$

Questionnaires were used to collect primary data using Likert scale of 5= strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3=neutral, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree. A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of research instruments with at least 5% of the respondents to ensure that items in the research instrument are clearly stated and have the same meaning to all participants (Kothari, 2014). Feedback obtained after conducting a pilot study was used to

make necessary corrections on the questionnaire. Data coding, cleaning and sorting were done. Data was then analyzed using SPSS version 25. The study also used descriptive and inferential statistics. According to Saunders et al. (2015), descriptive statistics is the process of translating raw data into information that can be understood. Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used for the inferential statistics to determine relationship between variable and the regression model was as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1$$

Where:

Y= performance of NGOs in Mogadishu

$\beta_0, \beta_1,$ = Regression coefficients for the independent variable.

X_1 = Communication

Results

Response rate

The target sample of the study was 216 and about 172 respondents filled and returned the questionnaire. This represented a response rate of 80%. This response rate is in line with Mugenda and Mugenda, (2008)'s assertion that a response rate of above 75% is adequate enough for statistical conclusions. The results are as shown in the Figure 1.

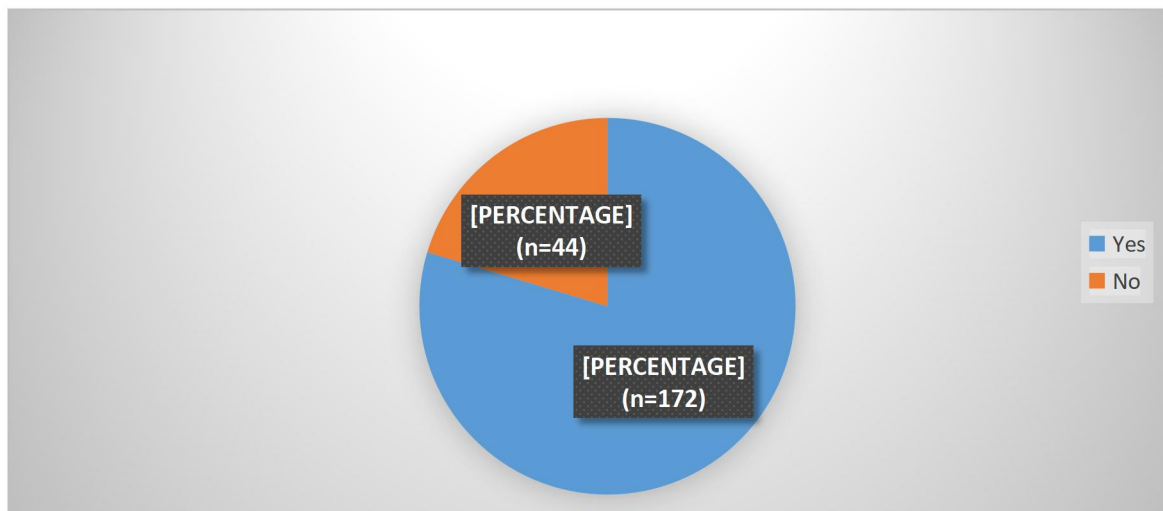


Figure 1. Response Rate

Descriptive Statistics

Influence of Communication on Performance of Project

On a standard deviation scale of 1-5, the employees were asked to rate the extent to which they agree with the statements on the influence of communication on performance of project. A standard deviation score of 1.0 to 1.4 means the statement is not true (no extent), a score of 1.5 to 2.4 means the statement is true to a little extent, a score of 2.5 to 3.4 means the statement is true to moderate extent, a score of 3.4 to 4.4 means the statement is true to a great extent and 4.5 to 5 means that the statement is true to a very great extent. The findings showed that the employees agreed to a great extent with a mean score of 3.5 that all managers and higher-level staff are aware of the communication process, The NGO has a written and well-articulated communication process, the managers can communicate

effectively with employees, The manager instructs lower-level employees to help them improve their performance and that the NGO follows a defined set of procedures in its top-down communication process.

Table 1. Influence of Communication on Performance of Project

	N	Missing	Mean	Std Dev
All managers and higher-level staff are aware of the communication process	169	3	3.76	1.157
The NGO has a written and well-articulated communication process	169	3	3.69	1.134
The managers can communicate effectively with employees	170	2	3.65	1.168
The manager instructs lower-level employees to help them improve their performance.	171	1	3.59	1.167
The NGO follows a defined set of procedures in its top-down communication process	168	4	3.58	1.161
In the organization, the communication flows freely both upward and downward.	170	2	3.42	1.170
The communication plans and prepared at the functional level and other lower management levels	169	3	3.40	1.125
Horizontal communication among employees manages change and encourages employee participation in decision-making	172	0	3.40	1.084
Horizontal communication is used in the organizations to connect employees who are working on related tasks	172	0	3.36	1.086
In the organization, a lot of managers usually communicate their vision to motivate employees	172	0	3.32	1.141
Communication in an NGO is affected by management style and conflict among employees	172	0	3.17	1.329
Lack of communication skills has led to poor employee performance	172	0	3.08	1.359
There is a delayed execution of tasks due to a lack of information.	172	0	2.82	1.369
We face many communication challenges due to the organization's diverse and multicultural workforce.	172	0	2.74	1.195
There is a failure to communicate certain policies	172	0	2.65	1.266
Average	171		3.309	1.194

Employees agreed to a moderate extent with a mean score of about 3.0 that in the organization, the communication flows freely both upward and downward, the communication plans are prepared at the functional level and other lower management levels as shown in Table 1. Horizontal communication is used in the organizations to connect employees who are working on related task. In the organization, many managers usually communicate their vision to motivate employees. Lack of communication skills has led to poor employee performance. There is a delayed execution of tasks due to a lack of information, and that there is a failure to communicate certain policies.

Correlation between Communication and Performance of Project

A Pearson correlation was done to investigate if there was a significant relationship between Communication and performance of project. The results shown in Table 2 below showed that there is strong positive significant relationship between communication and performance of project (r=0.691, p=0.00). This indicated that any significant change in communication would significantly affect performance of project.

Table 2. Correlation between Communication and Performance of Project

		Correlations	
		Project Performance	Communication
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.691**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	172	172

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression between Communication and Performance of Project

Model Summary for Communication and Performance of Project

The model summary for communication and performance of project is presented in Table 3 below. The findings showed that, R-square= 0.478. This means that communication predicts 47.8% of the project performance and 52.8% is predicted by other factors.

Table 3 Model Summary for Communication and Performance of Project.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.691 ^a	.478	.474	.68989

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication

ANOVA between Communication and Performance of Project

The ANOVA between communication and performance of project has been presented in Table 4. The results showed that there was significant linear relationship variance between Communication and Performance of Project ($F = 133.492, p < .05$). Therefore, the linear regression model is $Y = B_0 + X_1 B_1$ where Y is the Project performance, X_1 is the Communication, B_1 is the coefficient or effect of Communication (X_1) and B_0 is the constant in the model.

Table 4. ANOVA between Communication and Performance of Project

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.535	1	63.535	133.492	.000 ^b
	Residual	69.488	146	.476		
	Total	133.023	147			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication

Regression Coefficients for Communication and Performance of Project

Table 5 represents the regression coefficients between communication and Performance of Project. The result shows that the intercept between communication and Performance of Project becomes better by $\beta = 0.821$, $p < 0.01$. This therefore means that when communication is improved by a single unit, the project performance also significantly improves by 82.1%. The significant linear regression model explained in the table 5 below is therefore $Y = 0.966 + 0.821X_1$.

Table 5 Regression Coefficients for Communication and Performance of Project Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.966	.243		3.978	.000
	Communication	.821	.071	.691	11.554	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance

F Critical was 133.492

F calculated = $63.535 / .476 = 133.477$

The calculated F value in the test was smaller than the F critical value, we therefore accept the null hypothesis and state that communication has a significant influence on the Performance of Project.

Discussion

The study findings showed that all managers and senior-level staff are aware of the communication process and that the NGO has a written and well-articulated communication process. This is in line with Sima (2017) who stated that communication is a very important process that is used in our day-to-day life and that 90% of a project manager's time is spent communicating what needs to be done for seamless operations and successful delivery of project assignment.

Managers communicate effectively with employees and that they instruct lower-level employees to help them improve their performance as the NGO follows a defined set of procedures in its top-down communication process. This is consistent with Eadie and Goret (2013) who indicated that top-down communication is a method of communication where management of the NGO provides employees with instructions on how to perform their duties and responsibilities or provides feedback, further, the manager issues instruction to lower level employees and explain to the changes that might take place in the NGO that will help them increase their performance.

Communication flows freely both upward and downward and that the communication plans are prepared at the functional level and other lower management levels as revealed in the findings. Further, horizontal communication is used in the organizations to connect employees who are working on related task. This is in line with Shimizu (2017) who mentioned that managers who are able to communicate effectively with employees pay attention to the entire communication process, not just the content of the message hence enhancing performance as roles and expectations will be clear. Managers usually communicate their vision to motivate employees and lack of communication skills leads to poor employee performance. The company also experiences delayed execution of tasks due to a lack of information. This is consistent with Valiga (2019) who indicated that in an organization, a lot of managers usually communicate their vision so as to motivate employees to ensure that change is embraced and projects implemented effectively.

The revelation from the study indicated that there is delayed execution of tasks due to a lack of information. Project performance refers to how the project is being executed throughout its life cycle. This includes the indicators being used to assess whether or not the project performs successfully. Commonly agreed success criteria considers constraints such as scope, time, and cost (Belassi & Tukel, 2016, with client satisfaction and requirements adding to the well-known traditional triangle.

Conclusion

Communication is very key for any seamless operations within project deliverables. Further, communication is the key ingredient in effective project management as everything revolves around it from planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation which requires proper feedback mechanisms for a seamless operation. The study established that employees and managers are able to interact freely and thrive in their respective assignments where communication channels are working. This therefore confirms that any successful project must be backed up by a proper communication channel. The NGO places a high level of importance on effective communication. Managers and senior-level staff are aware of the communication process, and the NGO has a written and well-articulated communication process. Additionally, managers can communicate effectively with employees, and there are defined procedures in place for the top-down communication process. However, there are areas for improvement, such as the flow of communication both upward and downward, communication at lower management levels, and horizontal communication among employees. The communication process is also affected by management style, conflict among employees, lack of communication skills, and the diverse and multicultural workforce of the organization.

Recommendations

The study recommends adoption of a communication channel that facilitates proper feedback mechanism in order to prevent information loss on any item. This will enhance

effective relationships which in turn promotes information sharing with ease for effective and efficient communication within teams regardless of the roles for the success of the project assignments. NGOs should encourage a free flow of communication both upward and downward to ensure that information is shared efficiently and effectively. There is a need to invest in training employees on effective communication skills to improve their performance and minimize the impact of communication challenges. The NGO should ensure that all policies are communicated clearly to employees to minimize confusion and ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities and obligations. NGOs should foster a positive workplace culture that encourages collaboration, teamwork, and open communication among employees.

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