

Exploring the Impacts of Ineffective Communication and Identifying Effective Communication Strategies for Higher Education

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Abstract

The foundation of human connection is effective communication, which affects everything from interpersonal relationships to organisational success. It is a process in which the sender's intent is mirrored in the message that the recipient appropriately receives. Human existence depends on communication, and the quality of that communication has a direct effect on educational culture. The core aim of the research is to explore the impact of incomplete messages on institutional effectiveness and individuals' morale, and also to identify the elements that enhance effective communication. The qualitative phenomenological research design is used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 individuals to collect in-depth data. The sample was selected by using a purposive sampling technique. The collected data was analysed by using thematic analysis. Two major themes emerged: the impact of ineffective communication on both the institutional environment and individuals. The second theme unfolds the elements of effective communication. The results highlighted that incomplete messages tend to delay organisational tasks, reduce the efficiency of work and defame the organisation. In contrast, incomplete messages also have a negative impact on individuals who suffer from anxiety, stress and conflicts. The findings also highlighted three significant elements of effective communication, which include the addition of specific vocabulary in the sentences to bring concreteness and the use of the 5Ws in messages to make them complete to avoid misunderstanding. The recommendations are proposed based on derived themes to address the issues.

Keywords: Misunderstanding, Ineffective Communication, Higher Education.

Introduction

Effective communication is the cornerstone of human interaction, influencing domains from interpersonal relationships to organisational success (Sulastri, 2023). It is a process where a message is conveyed and accurately understood by the recipient, mirroring the sender's intent (Lashari & Umrani, 2023). Communication is fundamental to human existence, with its quality directly impacting the quality of life (Religioni, 2025). The exchange of information occurs through various channels, including words, gestures, signs, and body language (Djalolovna, 2025). Effective communication is particularly crucial in fields like medicine, where clear physician-patient communication is linked to better health outcomes, increased patient satisfaction, and improved overall health (Chia, 2025). It becomes especially critical when a patient's safety is at risk, necessitating clear explanations and mutual understanding of

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diagnoses and recommendations to ensure coordinated care. Effective communication and teamwork are essential for delivering high-quality and safe patient care, with communication failures frequently contributing to inadvertent patient harm.

The essence of concreteness in communication lies in its specificity and clarity, ensuring that messages are easily grasped and leave little room for ambiguity (Chauhan, 2025; Bukhari et al., 2023). Abstract language, while sometimes applicable, can often lead to misunderstandings and confusion, especially when dealing with complex or sensitive topics (Turayeva, 2025). Concreteness, by contrast, grounds the message in tangible details, facts, and examples, making it more accessible and relatable to the audience (Holm, 2025). It involves using precise language and avoiding vague terms (Javid, 2025; Fayaz et al., 2023). A concrete message is vivid and helps the audience visualise the intended meaning (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). When teams need to communicate complex information quickly, structured communication techniques ensure accuracy (Yilmaz, 2025; Fayaz et al., 2023). The key components of communication converge intricately, highlighting potential opportunities for misunderstanding (Cao, 2025).

Concreteness enhances comprehension by reducing cognitive strain on the receiver (Cao, 2025). When a message is concrete, the audience does not have to expend extra effort interpreting abstract concepts or filling in missing details (Holley, 2025). This is particularly important in situations where the audience may have limited knowledge of the subject matter or be under stress (Lashari et al., 2023; Bukhari et al., 2023). It allows for a smoother and more efficient transfer of information, preventing misunderstandings and ensuring that the intended message is received accurately.

In universities, unclear or insufficient communication frequently leads to a variety of problems. Employees become confused and frustrated when they receive messages that are unclear or missing important details, making them doubt their duties and obligations (Lashari & Umrani, 2023). Employee morale can suffer as a result of this ambiguity since people may start to doubt the organisation's goals and direction. Inadequate communication, especially partial messages, can create an unpredictable work environment, impede collaboration, and raise workplace conflict (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). Workers may misunderstand goals, which could result in many mistakes, missed deadlines, and eventually a drop in output.

Additionally, poor management-staff communication can make workers feel disengaged and underappreciated, which can lead to increased turnover and decreased organisational effectiveness (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021; Lashari & Umrani, 2023). To prevent misconceptions and ensure that every employee is aligned with company objectives, a clear and succinct message is crucial. Direct, unambiguous messages that are adapted to the needs and circumstances of the audience are ideal.

Honest and open communication between management and staff fosters trust. Transparent companies welcome feedback and foster an atmosphere where staff members feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021). Message timing and communication channel selection have a significant impact on how effective a message is. Information is more likely to be received and interpreted as intended when the appropriate medium is used and messages are delivered on time.

Problem Statement

Effective communication, especially in English, is essential for organisational success in the increasingly globalised business world of today (Abro, 2025; Kurniawan, 2024; Agustina, 2024). Nonetheless, many institutions face challenges related to employees' ineffective use of messages. This shortcoming may affect the efficacy of the institution by causing misunderstandings, operational inefficiencies, and impeded collaboration (Bakhaya, 2024; Salih, 2024). Although the importance of successful communication is widely recognised, little

is known about the perceived effects of poor and ineffective communication on institutional effectiveness (Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021), particularly about employee perceptions of overall performance, teamwork, and productivity (Zhang, 2024). To determine the precise locations where communication breakdowns take place and how these breakdowns are thought to impact institutional outcomes, this study aims to explore the perceived effects of ineffective communication on the organisational environment.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the impact of incomplete messages on organisational effectiveness.
2. To identify the elements that enhance effective communication.

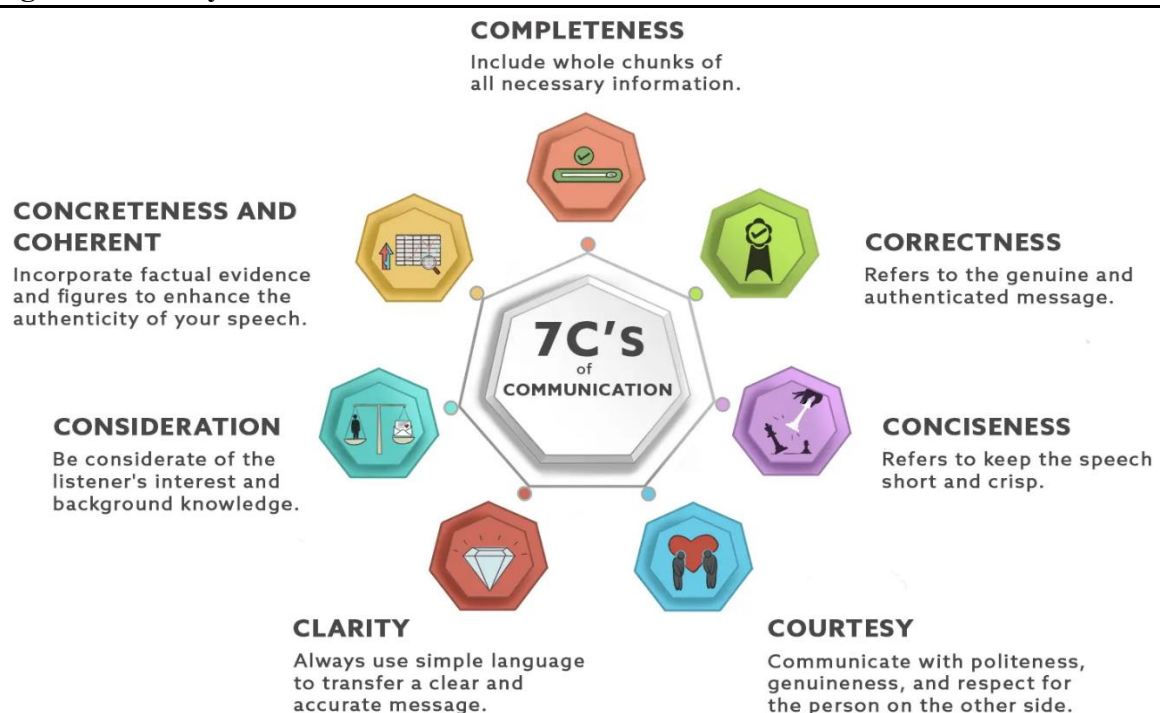
Research Questions

- Q1. How do ineffective messages in English communication impact perceived organisational effectiveness?
- Q2. What are the elements to enhance effective communication?

Theoretical Framework

It was Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Centre's 1952 book "Effective Public Relations" that introduced the Seven Cs to the area of public relations. To ensure that your audience effectively understands your message, the Seven Cs are designed to serve as a checklist for making sure that your meetings, emails, reports, presentations, and other kinds of communication are organised and unambiguous. These guidelines can be used in a variety of communication scenarios, including personal and professional ones. This theoretical framework aligns best with the core objective of my research, which is to explore the elements of effective communication. These are the elements of communication which are proposed in this theory of the seven C's. The study will examine the perceptions and observations of people to determine which elements are essential in every situation.

Figure 1: Theory of seven Cs



Research Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research design is used to explore the perception of higher education faculty to explore the impact of incomplete messages on organizational effectiveness. Phenomenological research design is appropriate to find the perceptions of people. The study investigates the participants view of ineffective communication and their actual experiences with it.

Population

The target population is faculty members of higher education who frequently communicate in English. Sampling technique is purposive sampling. The sample size was determined by data saturation. The sample size was 10 faculty members from different higher educational institutes of Karachi.

Data Collection Method

Rich and comprehensive data was gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions about the perceived effects of inefficient English communication in higher education affect organizational procedures, worker comprehension, and productivity were included in an interview guide. Flexibility and probing to examine new subjects was achieved due to the semi-structured framework. Semi-structured interviews were taken to get the detailed and invasive information. Interview guide was developed after extensive and in depth literature review. The questionnaire was pilot-tested to ensure validity. Interviews were conducted in a serene ambience. Transparency for the interview protocols was maintained to get unbiased data. Interviews were transcribed to facilitate analysis process.

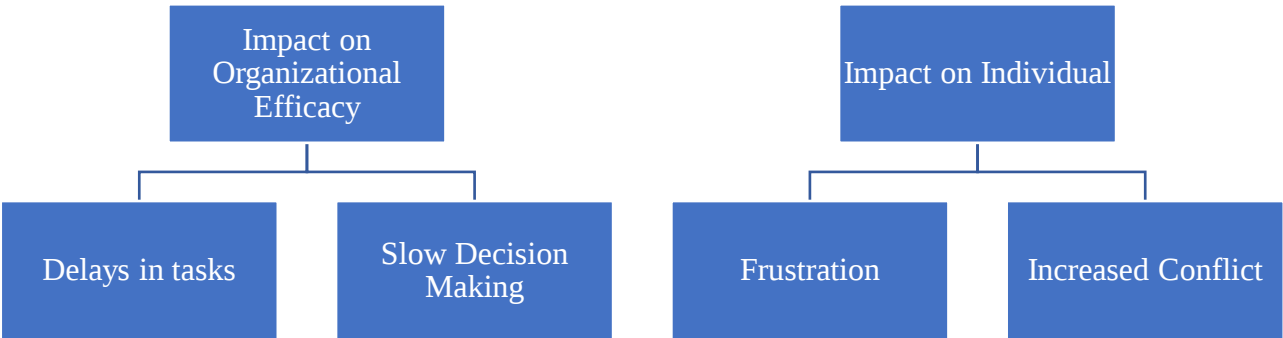
Ethical Consideration

All the ethical guidelines were followed diligently. Participants were informed prior to interview. They were told that they can with draw the interview at any point of time. It was also clearly told to them that their answers will only be used for the research purpose and will be discarded after 6 months. All the terms and conditions of BERA framework were followed.

Data Analysis

The collected data is transcribed after transcribing it was read and re read to make sense of the data .This lead to coding and which was followed by themes. Two major themes erupted from the data which are Impact on Organization: Reduced Efficacy ,Delay in task completion, organizational impact .The two major themes were revealed which are as follows.

Figure 1: A graphical representation of Theme 1



Impact on Organizational Efficacy

Delays in Task Completion

Task completion delays brought on by poor communication have a big influence on project schedules and overall output. According to research, ineffective communication causes miscommunication, rework, and missed deadlines, which eventually cause project delays and cost overruns (Arora, 2023). Time performance and project success are directly impacted by effective communication, which is necessary to sustain stakeholder participation and guarantee clarity in project objectives (Manuputty & Nursin, 2023). Project deadlines may be significantly delayed as a result of mistakes and missed steps brought on by poor communication (Arora, 2023).

P2: Poor communication leads to time wastage as one message is explained multiple times.

P3: Time management is affected because of poor communication, we have to meet deadlines which are difficult to be tracked.

Stakeholder coordination is hampered by poor communication, which results in disputes and inefficiency (Fahad, 2025). Poor communication causes delays that raise expenses and waste resources, which lowers overall productivity (Suleiman, 2022). Stakeholder discontent can result from unclear communication, which makes project execution even more difficult and lowers productivity (Saeeda, 2024)

Slow Decision-Making

In both commercial and government settings, poor communication seriously impairs decision-making. Misunderstandings, a misalignment of objectives, and eventually less-than-ideal decisions can result from poor communication. The effects of poor communication on decision-making in these two areas will be examined in this overview. Effect on Managerial Efficiency in Inadequate communication can hinder the exchange of information, delaying decision-making and decreasing managerial effectiveness. Understanding market expectations and staff needs requires clear communication (Malesev, 2021). Group dynamics: Ineffective decision-making groups frequently don't engage in meaningful conversation, which leads to a lack of consensus on procedural issues. This can inhibit creativity and make it more difficult to reach successful solutions (Lee, 2025). In times of crisis, such recessions, poor communication can make matters worse, resulting in miscalculated plans and bad results for companies (Sull, 2022).

P2: It effect decision making, satisfaction level is lowered where there is a lot of miscommunication.

P3: Incomplete messages hold lack of information, the need for clarification slows down decision making and sometimes we doubt our decision making skill.

Inadequate communication during emergencies, like the COVID-19 pandemic, has caused public perplexity and policy misunderstandings, which can exacerbate public health outcomes and prolong crises (Malecki, 2021). Poor communication can undermine public confidence in the government, which makes it more challenging to successfully execute essential programs (Singun, 2025).

Impact On Individual

Frustration

When our wishes, desires, and wants are denied or disrupted, we become frustrated. Disparities between what we want and what is available cause the emotion. For instance, we are likely to become frustrated when our aspirations surpass our accomplishments. The intensity of frustrations might vary from subtle to strong. A sense of discomfort is the first step into frustration.

Incomplete communications in the workplace can greatly increase employee annoyance and have a number of detrimental effects. Misunderstandings, inefficiencies, and strained relationships among employees are frequently the outcomes of poor communication (Stanton, 1986; Abalogu, 2024). This ambiguity can exacerbate employees' frustrations by fostering an atmosphere where they feel ignored and devalued. Errors and rework may result from incomplete messages that cause tasks or expectations to be misunderstood. Workers may squander time looking for clarification or fixing errors brought on by imprecise instructions.

P1: Once I suffered because of incomplete message, I got depressed and dishearten because I felt that I don't know how to do work .I felt in competent in my job role and I felt embarrassed in front of my HODS when I had multiple re signatures for the faculty time table and eventually I became harsh to one of the faculty and said to communicate with me via email keeping in cc all the HODS.I come across environmental stress too when I was explaining things to new faculty I was misunderstood and they had an impression of me being a sycophant and snitch.

According to Stanton (1986), ineffective communication can lead to animosity and disagreement among team members, which lowers morale at work. When workers try to express their complaints, they may feel as though their worries are not taken seriously, which makes them more unhappy (Harlos, 2001).Employee resentment can be heightened when criticism is ignored, leading to feelings of unfairness (Liu, 2024;Harlos, 2001).An unpleasant feeling, frustration can cause you to feel irritated, disturbed, or frustrated. This frequently refers to the perception that something is keeping you from fulfilling your wants or ambitions.

P3: Incomplete messages effect a lot ,they increase stress level.

The data clearly shows that incomplete messages and in effective communication increases frustration of the people and misunderstandings lead to stress and frustration. Effective communication can lead to peaceful organizational environment with smooth transactions.

Increased Conflict

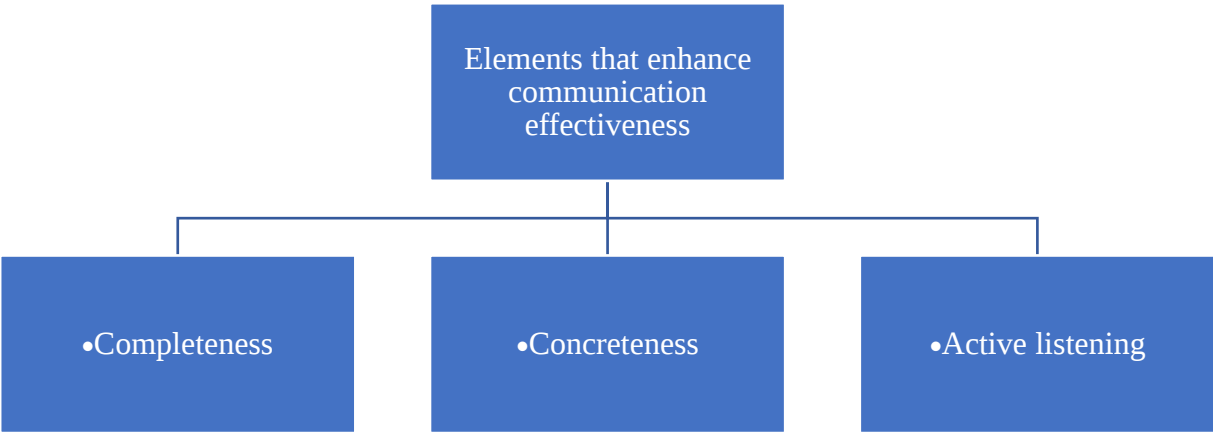
Due to misunderstandings and misinterpretations, incomplete messages greatly worsen conflict communication among coworkers in professional situations. A phenomenon called Perceiving Disagreement can occur when statements are unclear or ambiguous, making it difficult to express the intended meaning (Wootton, 2024). Inappropriate acts and behaviors that go against the sender's expectations may result from this misunderstanding (Elder, 2024). Employees may differ on duties and responsibilities as a result of unclear communications (Liang, 2024).

P4: Incomplete messages contribute to a lack of trust or transparency within the organization which leads to conflict and mistrust.

When miscommunications intensify, they may turn into more serious disputes that impact team dynamics and output (Rai, 2024). Employees with poor communication skills may find it more difficult to resolve problems and further complicate interactions (Hussain, 2024). Aligning team objectives and expectations through clear and consistent communication lowers the risk of conflict (Gerull, 2025).To improve employees' capacity to deliver messages precisely and successfully, organizations should spend money on communication training (Addimando, 2024).

Elements That Enhance Communication Effectiveness

Figure 2: A graphical representation of Theme 2



Concreteness

Concrete statements greatly improve the clarity of professional communication through the reduction of ambiguity and the promotion of understanding among various audiences (Garcia-Varela, 2025). Concrete language can result in more impactful and convincing communication, and this efficacy is especially noticeable in uncertain situations (Li, 2025). To make messages clear, it's suggested to add concrete words rather than general words (Alisoy, 2025). General words are open to number of interpretations which increase the chances of crisscrossing the wires and are easily misunderstood (Rehman, 2025) To minimize misunderstandings and uncertainty, concrete statements offer precise, observable information (Corbett, 2025; Rieu, 2024).

P1: I was once asked to make my assignment creative and I added colorful fonts and designed it creatively when I submitted the assignment the required task was to add original ideas and personal reflections.

To ensure that everyone, including people with impairments, can understand the information being conveyed, inclusion requires clarity (Connor, 2024).In investor relations, managers' use of specific language is associated with favorable investor responses, particularly in high-risk situations, which builds credibility and confidence (Sandy, 2025). According to Mizrahi (2015), professionals can improve workplace dynamics by using clear communication tactics, including those described in workplace writing guides, to successfully deliver their messages (Isabirye, 2024).

By making difficult material more accessible and interesting, storytelling strategies can enhance concrete communications and close the knowledge gap between the general public and scientific research (Vitting-Seerup, 2025)

In multicultural or multilingual contexts, concrete statements are essential for improving communication effectiveness (Tuimebayeva, 2024). Messages that are well-structured and clear aid in reducing miscommunication, bridging cultural divides, and improving interpersonal interactions (Yap, 2025). In multicultural environments, where perceptions may

differ greatly due to cultural differences, concrete communications reduce ambiguity, which is crucial (Chen, 2024).

Completeness

Lack of essential components including clarity, engagement, and suitable delivery techniques frequently results in ineffective messaging (Tang, 2025). Particularly in areas like public policy and health communication, these shortcomings may result in misconceptions and diminished influence. Improving efficacy requires an understanding of the "how," "what," and "why" of communicating. Clarity and Content Since people are constantly inundated with information, messages must be succinct and clear to prevent information overload (Zhong, 2025). Particularly for groups with different literacy levels, the use of simple forms and plain language can greatly enhance comprehension (Summers, 2025)). Engaging the audience is essential for effective communication, and this can be accomplished by using techniques that promote involvement and feedback (Cappella, 2024). To make sure the recipient has received and comprehended the information, it is essential to acknowledge messages, especially when communicating electronically (Kalogiannidis, 2025).

P1: time duration was missing and in second case payment details were missing. why was missing from the second message.

P2: recently I made a time table. the adjustment of the faculty in time table is difficult. The complete commitment of rest of the teachers were not clear ,their daily availability timings were missing.

The way a message is delivered has a big impact on how effective it is. Compared to more conventional approaches like emails or letters, in-person interactions frequently produce superior results). Message reception and adherence to desired activities can be improved by adapting the communication technique to the audience's preferences. On the other hand, some contend that in particular situations, where comprehensive information is required for well-informed decision-making, the complexity of the content can be justified. However, if not handled effectively, this intricacy frequently alienates the audience.

Active Listening

A key element of successful communication, active listening greatly improves interpersonal connections and promotes understanding (Paramole, 2024). It entails giving the speaker your whole attention, listening to their message objectively, and intelligently answering. In addition to fostering trust, this ability fosters teamwork, which is crucial in both professional and educational contexts (Abdurashidova, 2023). Active listening enables people to effectively comprehend messages by separating facts from personal prejudices (Zaripour, 2024). As listeners show sincere interest in the speaker's points of view, it builds rapport and trust (Nurgaliyeva, 2024). Active listening can increase student confidence and involvement in educational settings, which will result in a better learning environment.

P1: listen carefully concise, openly in professional

Active listening fosters cooperation and lessens conflict, active listening is essential during problem-solving sessions (Paramole, 2024). Open communication makes it possible for a range of viewpoints to be heard, which improves the quality of decision-making (McPherson, 2021). Some contend that the fast-paced nature of contemporary communication, particularly in digital environments, can hinder the practice of active listening, despite the fact that it is frequently highlighted as a crucial communication skill (Yashan, 2024). This emphasizes the necessity of continual instruction and education to develop active listening abilities in diverse contexts.

Findings

The findings of the study unfolded that effective communication is the core of maintaining positive environment in higher education. The root causes of ineffective communication is that complete messages are not delivered, instead half information is sent which leads to frustration and delayed tasks completion. Students and teachers suffer from frustration and stress. The findings of the research aligns with previous studies. Through the reduction of ambiguity and the promotion of understanding among various audiences, concrete statements greatly improve the clarity of professional communication (Garcia-Varela, 2025). Concrete language can result in more convincing communication and favorable reactions from stakeholders, including investors, under situations of uncertainty, where its impact is most (Capecchi, 2025). In addition to facilitating understanding, the use of concrete, precise language fosters inclusion by guaranteeing that everyone, including those with impairments, can interact with the material (Fitas, 2025). According to Horen et al. (2023), concrete statements are more compelling because they include specific information that eliminate ambiguity, particularly in situations that are unclear (Bach, 2025). A positive educational and workplace is fostered by using terminology that is specific and clear to grasp (Singha, 2024). It is found from the study that specific vocabulary facilitates communication and general vocabulary is one of the causes of miscommunication as it is open for number of interpretations and different people interpret general words according to their comprehension level, which leads to misunderstandings and eventually stress and work delays are noticed.

Complete messages guarantee that information is communicated fully and efficiently, which greatly improves clarity in professional communication (Giray, 2024). Clarity in a message comes from completeness of a message. Better teamwork and fewer misunderstandings result from the messages including 5Ws, which are when, where, what, how and why (Li, 2024). Complete messages boosts output and the caliber of relationships (Ainani, 2024). Unambiguous communications reduce the possibility of misunderstandings, which can result in disputes and inefficiencies at work (Fahad, 2024; Lashari, Umrani & Buriro, 2021; Lashari & Umrani, 2023). By avoiding misunderstandings and incorrect use of information, clarity in knowledge communication promotes improved knowledge transfer both inside and between organizations. Active listening and constructive criticism are crucial behaviors that improve mutual understanding and trust between coworkers (Fatih, 2025). It is found from the study that complete messages are essential for clarity. Effective communication in professional contexts requires striking a balance between concreteness and completeness of a message.

Conclusion

It is concluded that in organizations messages are being sent and received on a daily basis using official norms, yet misunderstandings are commonly observed at the same time. The ineffective communication has drastic effect on higher educational performances like tasks are delayed due to half or missed communication. Sometimes decision making is hindered because of incomplete and drastic concrete messages which are open to number of interpretations can lead to misunderstandings. These misunderstandings effect the mental health of employees. The employees face frustration and doubt their capabilities, sometimes indulge in arguments on trivial issues and face organizational conflict. These conflicts defame organizations and ruin organizational culture. The second theme of the research highlights the elements to improve the efficacy of communication which suggests that messages should be concrete which means specific words usage minimizes the rate of misunderstandings. Completeness of messages is another factor which leads to effective communication. Complete messages have all the important information like what, when, where and how about the tasks. This improves the efficiency of messages. It is also concluded that along with concreteness and completeness

,active listening is the corner stone of effective communication which minimizes the chances of ineffectiveness of communication.

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