# Towards Achieving Organisational Objectives: The Role of Effective Communication

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| ARTICLE INFORMATION | ABSTRACT |
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| | This paper investigated communication as a tool for achieving organisational objectives. Again, the paper explored the influence that communication has on the operations of organisations. The study adopted descriptive survey design. A simple random sampling technique was used in sampling a sample size of 35 staff from the staff of Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), Suame-Maakro, Branch, Kumasi, Ghana. The main instrument used for collecting data was questionnaire. The findings showed that spoken or oral communication is the dominant channel of communication that is often used at that workplace. The findings also revealed that the views of employees need to be considered when choosing the right channel of communication. Again, it was realized that poor leadership prevents organisations from achieving their objectives. Effective channel of communication was seen to have a positive influence on the performance of workers. Consequently, managers should be proactive when they are choosing communication channels. The study recommended that the management of GRA, Suame-Maakro Branch should employ measures that would enhance the effective use of spoken or oral communication. |

## 1. Introduction

Communication is the practice of conveying information, ideas, attitudes, views and opinions from one individual to another. In every organisation, humans constitute the most important resources, since without them, other resources cannot operate. No organisation can function without interaction and influence of human entities. Communication assists in the transformation of human societies in many ways. Thus, it is a way of assessing the minds or thoughts of people (Chen, Dawin, Huges, and Benard, 2006).

In Goris (2007), it was revealed that there was a correlation between communication and employee job performance, as poor communication resulted in low employee commitment to organisation. There is, therefore, the need to explore the relationship between organisational communication and workers' performance in terms of achieving the objectives of the organisation. The performance of staff is regarded as how well an employee can dispatch his/her duties to the specified organisation. Setting and communicating performance standards and expectations, observing and providing feedback, and conducting appraisals can facilitate the achievement of best results (Chen *et al*., 2006). Best results foster improved relationship. Improved relationship also emanates from employees' deeper understanding of the organisational objectives and standards put in place to ensure the attainment of the objectives. Thus, the flow of communication can create identification with workers internalizing desirable values, regarding an organisation's goals and objectives. However, better performance can be achieved only when there is a reasonable level of expectation-fit and when the social exchange between managers and employees is fair and equal (Wang, 2005). Practising effective social exchange in every organisation can foster the achievement of organisational objectives. So, sound organisational communication plays an important role in maintaining this social exchange which leads to attainment of goals and objectives. The inability of Heads or Managers of any organisation to coordinate a perfect and smooth flow of interaction among employees and outside business environment

may likely create and facilitate low productivity, with a high degree of workers being bored and disorganised (Wang, 2005). This is so since people understand and interpret messages differently.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Most of the conflicts and misunderstandings that arise between individuals within organisations are as a result of a lack of good and effective communication between the members and the management of the organisation. Sometimes, workers are not informed about most of the plans of the organisation, especially those that affect them and their work. A prior pilot study undertaken in the case study organisation revealed that many management decisions are sometimes not properly communicated to those occupying the base of the organizational structure. Consequently, most of the policies passed down to employees are regarded as issues that are forced on employees. In some cases, aggrieved workers are prevented from gaining access to their rights to lodge official complaints. Because of this, the communication framework of the organisation under study was perceived as lacking certain features which make it challenging for the organisation to attain its objectives. It is against this background that the researchers decided to carry out this study about the role of communication in achieving organisational objectives.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research were:

1. to identify the different methods and channels of communication used in achieving organisational objectives,
2. to establish possible factors that prevent organisations from achieving their objectives, and
3. to determine the influence of organisational communication on workers' performance.

## 1.3 Research Questions

To ensure easy attainment of the research objectives, the following questions were asked:

1. What are the different methods and channels of communication used in achieving organisational objectives?
2. What are the possible factors that prevent organisations from achieving their objectives?
3. What influence has organisational communication got on workers' performance?

## 2. Literature Review

The literature is segmented into theoretical and empirical reviews.

## 2.1 Theoretical Review

The review of the theoretical issues has been grouped under the main issues in the objectives.

### 2.1.1 Methods and Channels of Communication

Channels of communication are the mechanisms through which communication is transported to the intended destination. Several of such channels are in existence. Agyemang (2019) noted the significance of oral or spoken communication in several ways. Oral communication is the only interactive tool that provides instantaneous or immediate feedback. Therefore, it is not surprising that most renowned companies have come to embrace the tenets of this communication channel. Through oral communication media, subordinates have the opportunity to interact with their superiors freely. Sam (2009) also posited that though oral communication is considered important and reliable, it has its challenges. He explained that in a complete high profile or intellectual oriented firms, one might need other forms of communication: written and even the new media (Internet, twitter, e-mails) to break the expected grounds.  Wilberforce (2009) opined that the two main channels of communication are mainly formal/written or oral/informal communication. These channels are the catalyst for effective communication at work. Even though, there may be other forms, under no justifiable reason can there be any official form of communication or interaction without having a link with formal or informal communication. In most cases, formal communication or written communication is used for inter-business engagement, whereas the informal one is strictly or mostly used as an internal medium between managers and subordinates. The choice of communication is one of the basic issues associated with messaging. Hughes (1999) asserted that channel of communication at the workplace has a great influence on the internal relationship. For example, it is used to build a bond between managers and subordinates. It is, therefore, always useful for leaders to choose a medium that may lead to the attainment of organisational objectives. Oral communication has been tested and proven as one of the most reliable channels of communication at the workplace.

Inversely, Luther (2007) stated that spoken/oral communication is only effective in a densely populated organisation where the majority of the lower-ranked staff have not properly gone through the ranks of formal education.

### 2.1.2 Possible Factors that Prevent Organisations from achieving their Objectives

The ability of most companies to achieve their stated objectives is attributed to the fact that authorities failed to know their employees communicatively (Oscar, 2014). Knowing the employees will determine the choice or method(s) of communication to use. Thus, the contribution of employees toward the achievement of the objectives of every organisation is vital. Dalton (2004) noted that if employers give employees opportunity to take an active part in decision-making process, it serves as a positive mechanism. This situation could lead to the attainment of organisational objectives. When employees are sidelined in terms of decision-making, they turn to feel that they are not part of the system. This usually affects the implementation process of a decision. However, Joseph (2000) asserted that it is not all decisions that management may allow subordinate staff to take an active part in. But, for the sake of easy implementation and achievement of expected organisational objectives, there can be partial involvement of employees in the making of decisions. Jackson (2013) posited that rewards are much important in organisational settings. However, since some employees do not absolutely depend on rewards, they (rewards) do not have serious influence on their (employees') output. In consonance with this argument, Nathan (2003) revealed that the concept of equity toward the development of any organisation is very important. It is against this background that (during the interview process,) managers need to educate employees about policies surrounding equity. Thus, equity could also lead to the achievement of organisational objectives.

### 2.1.3 Influence of Communication on Workers' Performance

Communication embodies all activities that a person does when he or she wants to transform someone else's mental faculty. Communication is a process that contains expressing, listening and understanding (Banerji and Dayal, 2005). Ayatse (2005) observed that communication is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the enterprise. According to Orpen (1997) communication is used for solving contradictions that arise at the workplace. Some of these challenges may be role, relationship, value, and cultural contradictions. Consequently, it is imperative for people in every organisation to work, think, learn, and advance together. Human communication enables entities to acquire new horizons and also discover new opportunities. Effective communication between leaders and employees is significant for the possible success of every company. It is always crucial for leaders to legislate strategies to improve communication that could lead to positive work consequences (Gray and Laidlaw, 2002). Improvements in supervisor-subordinate communication can assist organisations toward the aim of managing diversity by promoting equality and integration at the workplace.

Effective communication succeeds when employees support the leader and the organisation. This is especially so when employees know that their efforts will be rewarded. Lee and Chuang (2009) explained that an excellent leader does not only inspire his or her subordinates, by giving them the potential to enhance efficiency but also he or she meets their requirements in the process of achieving organisational goals. How a leader communicates, is as important as how he leads. The leader is the supervisory force between the organisation and the vision. Therefore, a leadership style that resounds with followers will allow the leader to achieve greater employee productivity. Conversely, poor leadership styles lead to poor communication and can have negative effects on workers' performance and productivity. The process by which employees are made aware of organisational goals, and employees involved in the achievement of these goals is seen to play an important role in fostering job commitment (Anderson and Martin, 1995; Haskins, 1996). Goris *et al*. (2000) and Ooi *et al*. (2006) argued that organisational communication have a significant optimistic association with affective commitment. Brunetto and Farr-Whartons (2004) proposed a robust relationship between communication procedures, job satisfaction and commitment. Research has shown that when the expectations of workers are met through adequate communication, employees are likely to develop effective work relationships (Gray and Laidlow, 2002, as cited in Tsai and Chuang, 2009).

Taylor (2003) posited that communication should be seen as a needful catalyst associated with productivity. Thus, communication helps workers to work assiduously, per their ability to interact freely and comprehensibly. Contrary to this, Hughes (2008) also argued that though effective communication at the workplace is very important, there are other issues like working conditions, motivational packages, and compensation that should also be given deserving attention. So, effective communication only, may not produce the expected employee performance.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

Kibe (2014) investigated the effects of communication strategies on organisational performance. A descriptive research design was used in this study. 132 questionnaires were distributed to some employees. The findings of this research showed the importance of communication in both theoretical and practical levels. His research concluded that for any organisational

performance to be effective, an open communication environment should be encouraged. Once members of the organisation feel free to share feedback, ideas and even criticism at every level, performance could increase.  Bery, Otieno, Waiganjo and Njeru (2015), explored the effect of employee communication on organisation performance in Kenya's horticultural sector. This study was carried out in flower farms in Kenya. All the flower farms in Kenya constituted the population for this study. Therefore, a total of 2,460 respondents were targeted by the study; but 1,888 responded. So, the response rate was 76.7%. Correlation and regression analysis were used to test the relationship between the variables of the study. The study found out that communication facilitates the exchange of information and opinion with organisations. Again, communication helps in improving operational efficiency and performance. They concluded that communication is a major determinant of organisational performance.

Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) examined the relationship between employees and their work environments. Specifically, their study assessed employee performance and productivity. Their work also examined the extent to which environmental factors enhance performance. A survey method was used. The study had a population size of 1,152, out of which a sample size of 297 participants was drawn. The findings of the study exhumed cases of unsafe and unhealthy workplace environment, poor motivation, lack of innovation, high cultural interference and low productivity.

## 3. Method
### 3.1 Research Design
The study was carried out using a descriptive survey design. This design is a fact-finding study that involves collecting data directly from a population at a particular time (Krishnaswami, 2001). A descriptive survey design was ideal for this study because the study was conducted in a setting that requires direct responses from the respondents while investigating an existing phenomenon without manipulating the variables. The design also allows the participants to describe and provide their opinions regarding the variables being studied.

### 3.2 Participants, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique
The participants for the study were drawn from the staff of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), Suame Maakro, Kumasi, Ghana. The population of the workforce as of December 2019 was about 55. Out of this, a simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the sample size of 35 staff. This technique gave the entire population equal opportunity of being selected. Out of this number, 26 of them (74%) were male staff, and 9 (26%) were the female staff. Their age range was between 20 years and 55 years.  On their educational qualification, 17 (49%) had Higher National Diploma (HND), 14 (40%) had various First Degrees, and 4 (11%) had various Masters Degrees.

### 3.3 Data, Instrument, and Data Collection Procedure
Formal permission was sought from the Branch Manager of GRA to undertake this study. The purpose of the study was, therefore, made known to the Branch Manager. Primary data was the main data used for the study. Questionnaires were used in soliciting the primary data. The questionnaire has been considered as the most appropriate research instrument employed in data collection (Ofori & Dampson, 2011). The researchers designed the questionnaire with a series of close-ended and open-ended questions. The participants filled the questionnaires instantaneously. This is because the participants were given prior information about the day and period of the questionnaire-filling exercise.

## 4. Results
The data analysis section of every empirical research work gives meaning to the data collected from the field. Descriptive statistics including percentages and figures were used. The results have been analysed using the specific objectives of the study.

**Objective 1: Methods and Channels of Communicating Organisational Objectives**

**Table 1: Spoken and Written Channels**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 20 | 57 |
| Agree | 10 | 29 |
| Strongly Disagree | 3 | 8 |
| Disagree | 2 | 6 |
| **Total** | **35** | **100** |

In Table 1, the respondents were asked to indicate whether spoken and written channels were the main communication tools

used in attaining organisational objectives. From Table 1, 20 of the respondents (57%) responded *strongly agree*, 10 of them (29%) selected *agree*, 3 (8%) selected *strongly disagree*, and 2 (6%) selected *disagree*. Since 30 (86%) of the respondents selected spoken and written channels, it is an indication that these channels of communication are the dominant tools used in achieving organisational objectives at that workplace.

**Table 2: Use of Emails**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 22 | 63 |
| Disagree | 13 | 37 |
| **Total** | **35** | **100** |

The respondents were also asked if the use of email messages helped achieve organisational objectives. From Table 2, it is obvious that 22 of them (63%) selected *strongly agree*, and 13 (37%) of them selected *disagree.* For 63% of the entire workforce to approve of emails and other social media platforms, is an indication that the organisation usually uses contemporary method (of email and other social media services) in sending messages as against the traditional methods (letters and memos) of sending written messages.

**Objective 2: Factors that prevent Organisations from Achieving their Objectives**

**Table 3: Poor Communication Channel and Organisation's Objectives**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 19 | 54 |
| Agree | 6 | 17 |
| Strongly disagree | 6 | 17 |
| Disagree | 4 | 12 |
| **Total** | **35** | **100** |

Table 3 explains how poor choice of communication medium affects the attainment of organisational objectives. From the Table, It is evident that 19 (54%), 6 (17%), another 6 (17%), and 4 (12%) selected *strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree,* and *disagree* respectively, to the question as to whether the selection of medium of communication could affect the attainment of organisational objectives. The fact that 25 (71%) of the participants responded in the affirmative, implies that if the choice of communication is poor, it can affect the attainment of organisational objectives.

**Table 4. Leadership Style and Organisational Objectives**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 21 | 60 |
| Agree | 9 | 26 |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 8 |
| Disagree | 2 | 6 |
| **Total** | **35** | **100** |

The participants were asked if the leadership style of the manager could affect the attainment of the organisational objective. 30 (86%) of the participants responded in the affirmative. However, 5 (14%) responded in the negative.

**Table 5. Involvement of Employees in Decision Making and Organisational Objectives**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 30 | 86 |
| strongly disagree | 2 | 6 |
| Disagree | 3 | 8 |
| **Total** | **35** | **100** |

From Table 5, thirty (30) of the participants (86%) agreed that the involvement of employees in the decision-making process has the propensity of affecting the attainment of organisational objectives positively. However, the remaining 5 participants (14%) responded in the negative. One factor that accounted for 5 participants responding in the negative is the fact that they viewed motivation as a strong factor that could lead to the attainment of organisational objectives, and not staff involvement in decision-making.

**Objective 3: Influence of Organisational Communication on Workers' Performance**
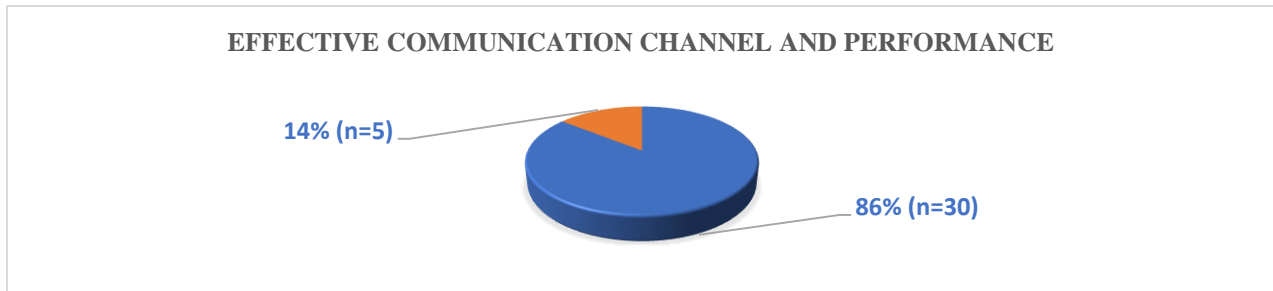


**Figure 1: Effective communication and Performance**

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on whether effective communication could lead to performance. From Figure 1, it is obvious that 30 (86%) responded positively that effective communication channel has a positive influence on performance, while the remaining 5 (14%) responded in the negative. Some of the reasons those who responded positively gave were: when the vision is well communicated to employees, they can execute the task with ease; when roles are well communicated, conflicts are reduced. However, those who responded negatively stated that effective communication alone is not a panacea to organisational performance. They stated other important reasons like monetary and non-monetary motivation, and the leadership style of the leader. This confirms Lee and Chuang's (2009) assertion that an outstanding leader does not only encourage his or her subordinates, by giving them the potential to improve productivity but also he or she meets their needs in the process of achieving organisational goals.
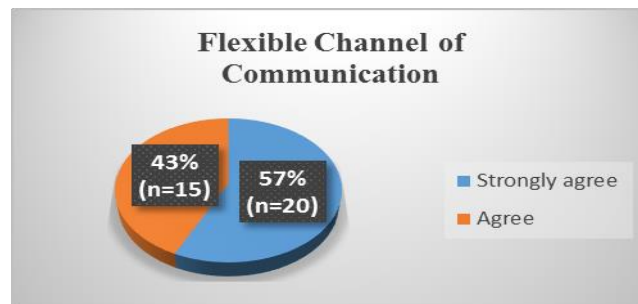


**Figure 2: The flexibility of communication channel and feedback**

Again, the respondents were asked to give their response on whether the flexible channel of communication produces appropriate feedback. From Figure 2, 20 (57%) of the respondents opined that a flexible channel of communication has the ability of generating appropriate feedback. Nevertheless, 15 (43%) of them opposed to the view that flexible communication always leads to appropriate feedback.
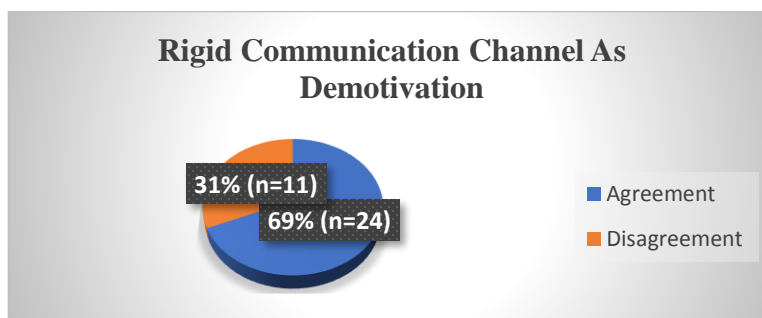


**Figure 3: Rigid Communication as Demotivation**

From Figure 3, 21 (69%) of the respondents believed that rigid channel of communication has the tendency of becoming a tool for demotivation. According to them, when employees are not given the opportunity of forwarding their grievances, they may not be inspired enough to perform their duties assiduously. Again, when the channel of communication is rigid, employees begin to have a feeling that they are not regarded or their concerns are not important to management. However, 11 of the participants (31%) expressed disagreement with the assertion that rigid channel of communication was a demotivational tool.

## 5. Discussion
The discussion has been grouped under the research objectives.

### 5.1 Different Methods and Channels of Communication used in Achieving Organisational Objectives

The study revealed that the use of oral and written communication have the inclination of achieving organisational objectives. Thus, 30 of the respondents (86%) corroborated this assertion. They believed that workplace communication is built around oral/spoken and written communication (Agyemang, 2019). Findings of the current research showed that the significance of oral or spoken communication is very needful and cannot be underestimated. Oral communication was seen as an interactive tool that provided instantaneous or immediate feedback. It is, therefore, not surprising that most institutions have come to embrace the tenets of oral communication. Through such medium, employees, especially junior staff, have the opportunity to interact with their superiors freely. However, Sam (2009) argued that oral communication is considered important and reliable, but it has some flaws. He explained that in a complete high profile or intellectual oriented firms, one might need other forms of communication: written and even the new media (Internet, twitter, e-mails) to break the expected grounds. Luther (2007) also argued that spoken oral communication is only effective in densely populated organisations where the majority of the lower-ranked staff have not properly gone through the ranks of formal education. In sum, Wilberforce (2009) concluded that the channels of communication that are perceived as catalysts of effective communication at the workplace are written (formal) and oral (informal) communications. Even though, there may be other forms of communication, under no justifiable reason can there be any official form of communication or interaction without having a link with formal or informal communication. In most cases, formal communication or written communication is used for inter-business engagement whereas the informal one is strictly or mostly used for an internal medium between managers and subordinates. Therefore, leaders and managers who desire to achieve superior organisational objectives should work hard in strengthening the use of oral and written forms of communication. This should be done in consultation with some of the union members of the organisation. Thus, 77% of the respondents stressed the need for managers to take into considerations the views of staff when formulating their communication measures. Kouzes and Posner (2012) revealed that it is always needful for an organisation to have a shared vision. Shared vision usually goes with consulting major groups in the organisation before some decisions are taken.

### 5.2 Factors that Prevent Organisations from Achieving their Objectives
The study established several factors that prevent organisations from achieving their objectives. One, poor choice of communication was seen to have an adverse effect on organisational objectives. From the results, 25 of the participants (71%) responded to this assertion affirmatively. Buttressing the response from the field, Oscar (2014) indicated that the choice of communication is one of the key issues that must be given major attention in every organisation. Thus, the inability of most companies to achieve their stated objectives is attributed to the fact that most managers were unsuccessful in dealing with issues on the choice of communication used in 'selling' the vision and objectives of the organisation. Employees, just like customers, constitute an important aspect of the entities in the organisation. Sometimes, they determine the choice of communication they expect employers to use. They do so through dialogue, industrial action, and submission of grievances. Two, the study also revealed that leadership style was also another factor that precludes organisations from accomplishing their objectives. Thus, 30 (86%) of the participants answered the questionnaire positively, on this assertion. However, 5 (14%) responded in the negative. The findings of the study align with Bass's (1985) study on leadership that argued that the transformational leadership style was the best leading concept that a leader may adopt or rely on. However, the study frowns on autocratic leadership style which uses some negative communication traits. Again, on decision-making, 30 of the participants (86% majority) agreed that the non-participation of employees in the decision-making process affects organisational strength negatively. This is backed by Dalton's (2004) study that argued that it would serve as a positive mechanism to allow employees to take an active part in the decision-making process, and sidelining them may not auger well for the organisation, especially at the implementation stage of policy. However, Joseph (2000) argued that subordinates cannot be part of all decisions of management.

## 5.3 Influence of Communication on Workers' Performance

The study revealed that effective communication has a positive influence on the performance of workers. Based on the field report, the majority (86%) of the respondents revealed that it is always good for management to choose the appropriate medium of communication. The respondents believe that the practice of selecting an appropriate medium of communication has a positive influence on employees' performance. In line with the respondents' view, Taylor (2003) argues that communication should be seen as a needful catalyst associated with productivity. This is so since effective communication enables workers to work diligently and interact freely and comprehensibly. Contrary to this, Hughes (2008) has argued that through effective communication at the workplace is very important there are other issues like working condition, motivational packages, and compensation that should also be given deserving attention. This means that focusing on effective communication alone will not yield the expected productivity results in the workplace.

From the field data most (57%) of the respondents believed that flexible communication channels pave the way for effective feedback. Similarly, Hayford (2006) posited that feedback is very important within the workplace environment. Sometimes the inability of some workers to press home their demands may be attributed to existing communication procedures or channels of communication. Because of that, it is always appropriate for management to consider the channel of communication within the set-up of the organisation. Again, the field response revealed that most (69%) of the participants believed that a rigid channel of communication at the workplace has a negative influence on employees. In a supporting argument, Nathan (2009) asserts that intricacies associated with workplace communication channels are very worrisome.

## 6. Conclusion

The study investigated communication as a tool for achieving organisational objectives. Employees of Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), Suame-Maakro (Kumasi, Ghana) office formed the population of this research. The total sample size was 35. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. The research instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The research revealed that poor communication channels can affect the achievement of organisational objectives. Spoken or oral communication was perceived as a powerful channel or method of communication. The study, also, advocates for effective utilization of written communication, since it has the proclivity of contributing to organisational growth. Again, the outcome of this study proved that poor leadership style has negative effect on the success of organisations. Knowing this, managers or leaders should not hesitate in employing the most appropriate leadership style in their quest to make inroads in communication and organisational objectives. To handle this effectively, we have proposed the involvement of employees in decision-making. On the influence of communication on workers' performance, the study revealed that effective channel of communication has positive influence on workers' performance. Sometimes, the flexibility associated with communication channels encourages workers to press home their demands confidently. However, a rigid channel of communication at the workplace may have a negative influence on employees.

## 7. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. The management of GRA, Suame-Maakro Branch, should employ measures that will enhance the effective use of spoken or oral communication. This is because it has a long history of ensuring immediate feedback.
2. Again, for the managers to achieve their operational objectives, they should not hesitate to choose the right channel of communication.
3. Managers should ensure that employees take an active part in the decision-making process.
4. Managers in charge of other organisations should employ flexible communication mechanisms. Rigid communication mechanisms can put fear and intimidation on workers.
5. Management should reconsider other mechanisms such as monetary and non-monetary motivational tools. This is because the study revealed that it is not only communication that can lead to the attainment of organisational objectives.

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