

DECLARATION

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of MULEMWA MULEMWA is approved as partial fulfillments of the requirements for the award of Master of Communication for Development (MCD) degree of The University of Zambia.

Supervisor:

Signature:

Date:

Dr. Elijah Mwewa Mutambanshiku Bwalya

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DEDICATION

This piece work is heartily dedicated to my boys; Gift, Kawana and Mulemwa. The joy of seeing them grow and the opportunity to understand the most important things in life, through them,

inspires me to work harder every day. In their eyes, I cannot fail in anything and so I had no excuse to fail in this work.

I also dedicate this document to all brothers and sisters in all sectors who go an extra mile, in whatever way, big or small, to offer quality service, lighten the burden, inspire hope and solve problems of all clients and fellow staff.

We can all afford a polite greeting, a listening ear, an encouragement word and selfless service in whatever work we do and will make a big difference to that learner, teacher, parent, retiree, widow, widower, community, partner, whatever client. It is one world and we all belong here, let us make life easier for one another, especially for the least of our brothers and sisters, through dedicated and honest service unconditionally.

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MESVTEE Management and Staff at Headquarters, EBS, PEO’s office. Chongwe and Lusaka DEBS’ offices, Libala High School, Mukamambo II Girls School, Chalimbana and Woodlands ‘A’ Basic Schools. Many thanks also go to Management at NISTCOL, Chalimbana, particularly the Principal, Mr. Muzumara, for hosting me during field research in Chongwe.

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Above all, I thank My God and Saviour for the wisdom, protection and gift of life and all providence; Always.

ACRONYMS

1. BSACo	British South Africa Company
2. DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
3. DESO	District Education Standards Officer
4. ESO	Education Standards Officers
5. EML	Educational Management and Leadership
6. HOD	Head of Department
7. ICT	Information Communication Technology
8. IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
9. LAN	Local Area Network
10. LMS	London Mission Society
11. MOE	Ministry of Education
12. MESVTEE	Ministry of Education Science Vocational Training and Early Education
13. NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
14. ODL	Open and Distance Education
15. PABX	Private Automated Branch Exchange
16. PEO	Provincial Education Standards Officer
17. PMES	Parish Mission Evangelical Society
18. PS	Permanent Secretary
19. SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
20. ZICTA	Zambia Information Communication Technology Authority

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to identify effects of communication on implementation of government programmes and service delivery in the Ministry of Education in Zambia. The study also examined factors which cause ineffective communication in the Ministry at all levels and how the administrative structure and its positions affect communication effectiveness and thus programme implementation and service delivery. Further, the study also identified strategies and methods which can improve communication in order to facilitate effective programme implementation and delivery of quality service.

The research was conducted in Lusaka and Chongwe district. In Lusaka the study was done at Ministry of Education Headquarters, the Provincial Education Office, District Education Board Secretary's office, Libala High School and Woodlands 'A' Basic School. In Chongwe the research was conducted at Mukamambo II Girls' High School and Chalimbana Basic School.

A total sample size of 35 members from a research population of 840 staff at all levels of the education, from Registry clerk, teachers all through to the level of Permanent Secretary, participated in the study. Data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative instruments. Interviews and focus group discussions were qualitative tools used while questionnaires were the quantitative tools used.

The data collected was analysed initially, through content analysis theoretically, that is, both conceptual and Relational Analyses and also electronically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

It was found from the study that despite majority of the staff at all levels acknowledging that effective communication was critical to programme implementation and service delivery, it was evident that there were a number of gaps, inadequacies and shortfalls in as far as communication was concerned and that this affected programme implementation and service delivery. The major factor which led to ineffective communication in the education system were found to be lack of adequate, appropriate and modern tools for communication and facilitative services network and infrastructure, a big and bureaucratic administrative structure on which channels of

communication are laid, delayed feedback, lack of follow up, lack of close supervision and monitoring poor work culture, weak management systems, besides inadequate, inconsistent and delayed funding.

In the face of the foregoing challenges, it is strongly recommended that, adequate, appropriate communication tools be provided to personnel at all staff levels in the education system, capacity building programmes for staff at all levels to be conducted on the use of ICTs, communication skills, upgrade job competence and educational management appropriately such as for those in administrative positions, changing the work culture of personnel at all levels staff, decentralizing some functions in the system, ensuring quick feedback and follow up. It is further recommended that the ministry be restructure in order to ensure clear reporting lines, correct alignment of personnel according to jobs they quality for. Increased funding which is released on time and consistently is also called for at all levels of the education sector so that personnel at all levels are better equipped. This, it is hoped, will foster effective communication and as a result, accelerate programme implementations made to improve effective communication in the ministry of education will not only be considered but acted upon positively as this will help achieve speedy and successful implementation of government programmes and delivery of quality service in this very important sector needed for economic development and empowerment of the Zambian nationals, at various levels and in different areas of development.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Education Sector is a service delivery sector which involves various stakeholders such as Learners at various levels, teachers, lecturers, parents, and members of the public, educational administrators, government, the church and Non Governmental Organisations.

The core business of the Ministry is teaching and learning at the various subsectors and educational provision and development for the benefit of all Zambians. In order to achieve this, government partners with other stakeholders to facilitate the provision of this very important

service, in both public and private institutions, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education works through an established structure which is found across the country. The work of various stakeholders at different levels across the country needs to be well coordinated through communication in order to deliver quality education.

Communication is a vital component in ensuring that the education system is well coordinated at all levels, among all stakeholders. Despite the significant role communication plays in the education system, there are considerable gaps and weaknesses in the manner that communication takes place in the sector. These gaps and weaknesses unfortunately, have an effect on the implementation of government programmes and delivery of service.

This study looked at the effect of communication on implementation of government programmes and service delivery in the Ministry. Factors which account for ineffective communication such as lack of communication tools, lack of appropriate skills and poor work culture were investigated and measures to improve communication in the Ministry have been recommended arising from the research's findings.

The participants in the study were strictly members of staff in the Ministry of Education at various levels as they are crucial to programme implementation and service delivery in the education system. In view of this consideration, 35 members of staff were purposively selected to participate in the study by virtue of their positions or job titles.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. BACKGROUND

The Zambian Education spans from as far back as the colonial rule when Zambia was a British territory, between 1891 and 1924. Then, the major stakeholders in the education system were the colonial office in London, British South African Company (BSA Company), missionaries, native authorities or local chiefs and the local people. The administration of the school system then, was not well defined as there were few schools that were there run independently by various missions. As a result of this, there was no established structure through which the education system was run (Mwanakatwe 1968, p. 10).

The BSA Company which was in charge of the territory was less interested in investing in education for the native Africans. Education was, therefore, left in the hands of the missionaries who ran the affairs of their mission schools independently and differently from one another. In other words, in the absence of formal unison structures, missionaries made their own structures as they saw it fit or as they wished. It was not until about 1919 when the General Missionary Conference was set up as a regulatory body to look into school interests by various missions that some form of structure to look at education matters, was started. The initial objective for the General Missionary Conference was protecting mission schools. (Mwanakatwe 1968, p 26).

The running of schools independently by various missions meant that there were no formal structures which were coordinated. Without such structures, communication in the education system was based on individual mission schools and their relationship with the native authorities or Local Chiefs. The type of communication that was done at this time was mostly talks with chiefs or their indunas. It was mostly about the need to have children in school to learn how to read the bible and to write, and learn simple arithmetic.

The missionaries played the role of both teachers and priests. Sometimes, the missionaries were assisted by local teachers who showed ability to teach after going through some form of training by the missionaries. The major objective of the school system was to teach literacy skills that could enable the local people to read the bible and thereafter help spreading Christianity.

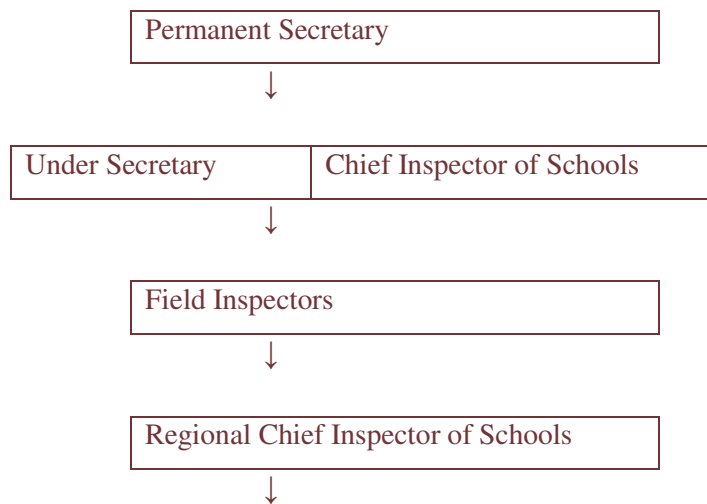
At the school level, therefore, communication was in the form of teaching instructions while consultations with local chiefs especially on getting them to influence the local people to support the school and the church was done in the form of discussions. The church building was often used as the school during week days and for church services at weekend.

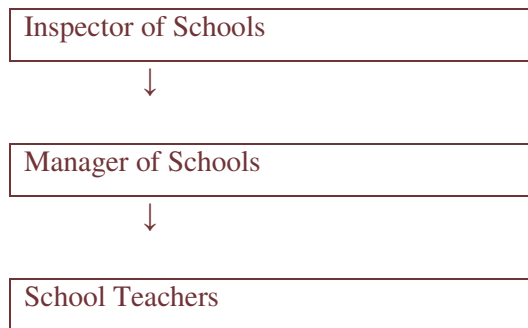
The increase in the number of mission schools in the territory and the coordination among different missions such as the Parish Mission Evangelical Society (PMES) in Barotseland (now Western Province), London Mission Society (LMS) around Tanganyika, the White Fathers in Chilubula, the Salvation Army in now Southern Province and the Capuchin Fathers in now North Western Province, all between the period 1883 to 1936, made it necessary for mission schools to work together. This meant sharing ideas, ideals and speaking with one voice especially towards getting support for education from the colonial administrators. The British South African

Company ceased to represent the British Colonial rule in 1924. After that period, the education affairs of the territory were then placed under the care of the Ministry of Overseas in the United Kingdom, in collaboration with the Scottish Education Department. This was the genesis of a centralized system by the government. Communication in the education system was mostly top-down, from the Colonial Office overseas to the territory in Northern Rhodesia.

Meanwhile, the public school system had developed rapidly towards the independence period. Primary, Secondary schools and Teachers Training Colleges had been established in Zambia by this period. It is important to acknowledge that most of the school teachers and college lecturers, then, were expatriates from such countries like Canada, America, Australia and later West African countries such as Ghana recruited by the British Government on behalf of the Zambian government. This perpetuated the top-down communication and centralized system of administration.

By 1966, the Zambian School System had the structure below:





Source: field data

Each position in the structure had particular roles related to the expansion, improvement of education in the country and ensuring that standards of teaching and conduct of teachers were up to expectations. Communication therefore, was based on the authority of the office bearer. The major form of communication was by written form from one level of authority to another, top-down. On the other hand, when reports were sought from lower levels, however, there was bottom – up communication.

At that time, communication was done by sending mail runners who either walked or cycled. Rarely was mail delivered faster by road, as driving was a preserve of high ranking officials such as District Inspectors. Occasionally, word of mouth was used to pass on information from village to village, especially on matters which were not of sensitive nature. Such mechanical means of communication made communication slow and this had an effect on the pace of programme implementation.

It can be said that the education system has often followed a system of communication which is mostly associated with authority. The increasing number of personnel, pupils and other players in the education system, led to more demand for communication to reach all the appropriate levels in the structure. Besides, the huge numbers of primary consumers of information in the education system such as teachers, school administrators, district officials, provincial officials and all the way to the ministry headquarters has an effect on the quality of communication that took place in the education system. For example, when information had to pass through many people by word of mouth, distortions and misinformation could not be avoided.

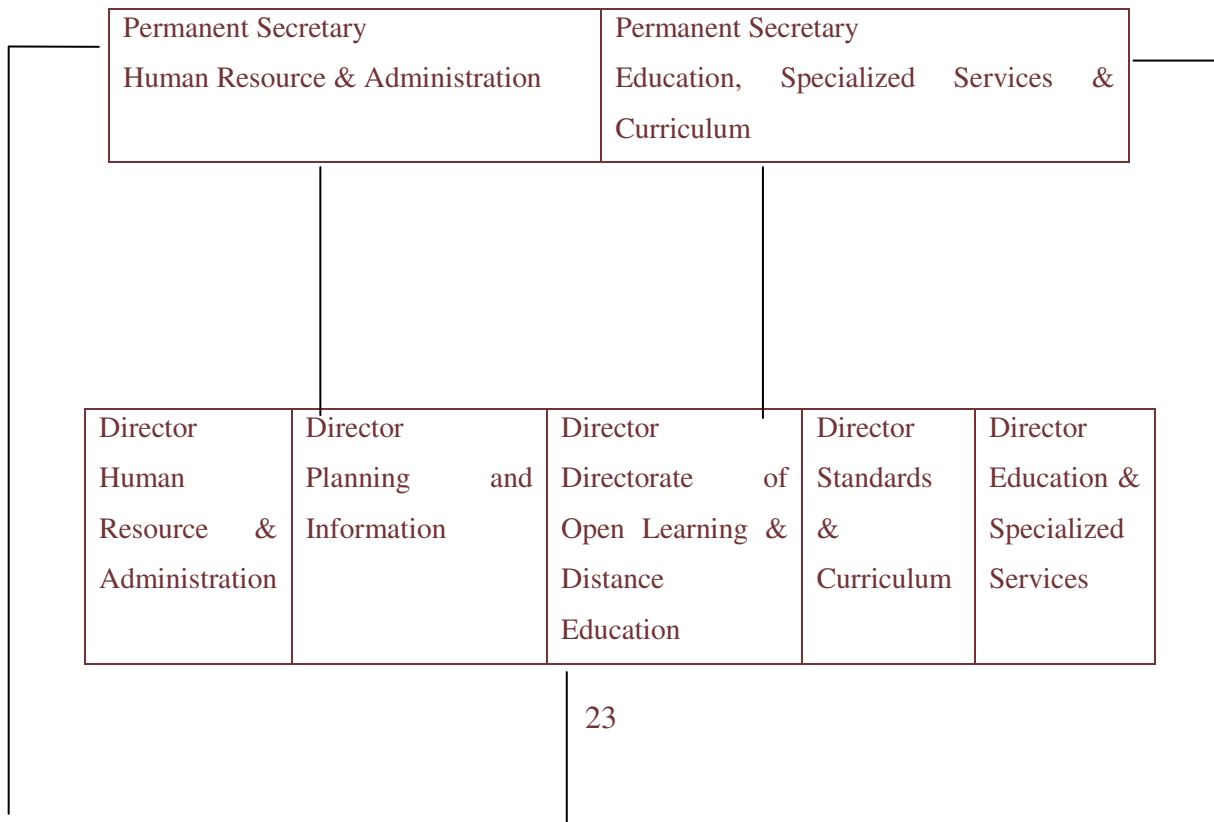
Factors such as how long it takes for the process of communication to take place from one level of the structure to another, how much information is shared, methods of communication used, the competence of those sending and receiving the information in understanding, interpreting and

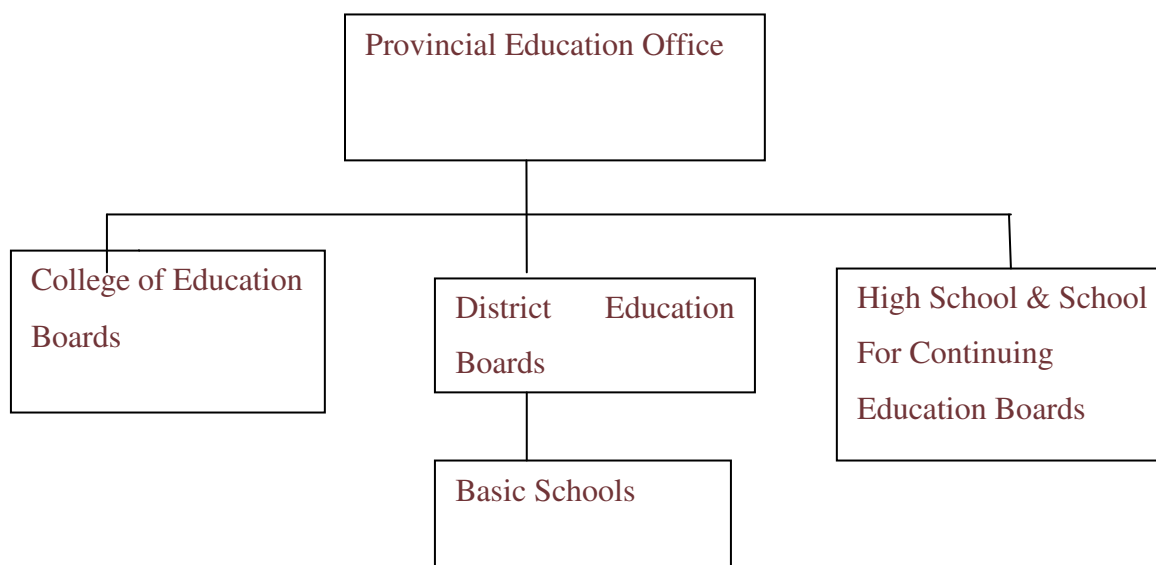
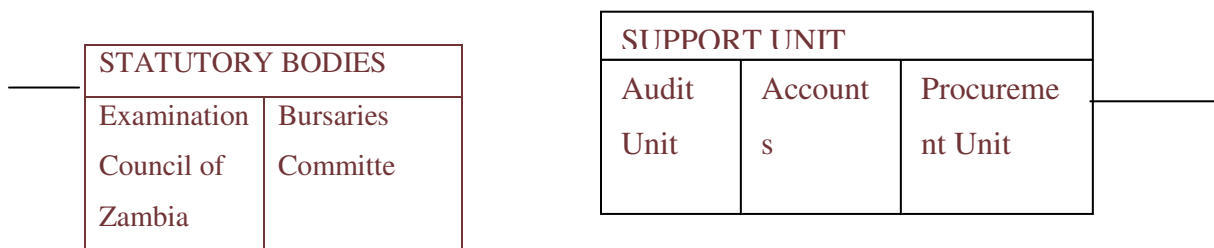
acting on it, poses various challenges in ensuring that the delivery of quality education, implementation of various programmes is done effectively.

In other words, communication is an important tool in facilitating timely, well coordinated and successful programmes in the education system. The role of each level in the structure and how well they communicate, is critical to achieving smooth operations in the education system.

Over the years, the structure of the Ministry of Education, the resulting chain of command and mode of communication have changed. The administration in the Ministry of Education, dictates the channel of communication. For example, it is only the official head of administration that has the mandate to give information to the public at all levels of authority. In other words, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry Headquarters, the Provincial Education Officer (PEO) at Provincial level, the District Education Board Secretary at District level and the School Head at school level.

The organizational structure for the Ministry of Education is at four levels: National headquarters level, Provincial Level, District Education Board and Institution (College, High School and School for Continuing) Board level and Basic School level. The current structure of the Ministry of Education is as follows:





Source: field data

1.2. Statement of the problem

The Ministry of Education is the biggest ministry of the Zambian government. The structure for the ministry comprises of a lot of personnel, over hundred thousand across the country serving in various positions, such as in administration, teaching, and as support staff. With such a big structure, ensuring that the work of all the people is well coordinated so that programmes are implemented effectively and delivery of service enhanced, is no easy task. Although the role of communication in the education system is critical, the process of communication faces a lot of pitfalls due to both human and non-human factors. Communication is sometimes delayed, disrupted, misunderstood, ignored or poorly done by various officials at different levels of the system. This, without doubt, affects decision making, implementation of programmes and delivery of service. The strategies and forms of communication used and lack of appropriate

tools or resources for communication are part of the problem. It is some of these problems that this study attempts to address.

At present the manner in which communication takes place in the ministry leaves much to be desired for. For example right channels of communication are not followed, while roles and responsibilities are not respected. This confusion creates poor working relations, frustrates some workers and often delays or hinders the communication process. Ultimately, this affects programme coordination, implementation and delivery of service.

1.3. Rationale

At the heart of every organization, institution or system is communication. Communication is needed to pass on information, instructions or messages to members of the system. In order to make decisions, one needs to have information upon which to base the decision, the communication process has to take place. In any organization, people interact and this interaction is made meaningful by the communication process. Communication also relates directly to the basic functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling. The need for communication to be effective and avoid barriers which may hinder or disturb it from taking place, therefore, is not a matter of debate. The education system which is a people ministry and deals mostly with people directly needs to have an effective communication system. This research will, therefore, bring to the fore, factors which make communication not to be effective in the Education system and possible solutions to this problem which will help the system to be more effective and meet national expectations.

The study will also spell out aspects of communication which are usually overlooked by many people in the system, yet very critical to effective communication such as decisive and timely communication, use of appropriate methods of communication for specific purposes, situations, making follow-ups and giving timely feedback, and communication through right channels.

One of the major contributions the study will bring to the field is initiating action in the education system as a result of follow-ups, change of attitude on the part of personnel and using effective methods of communication. Recommendations will also be made on how to improve communication in the education system.

1.4. Research objectives

1.4.1. General objective

- To identify the effect of effective communication on implementation of government programmes and service delivery and finding solutions to improving communication in the education system.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

- To evaluate how effective organizational communication is in the Ministry.
- To evaluate how communication affects programme implementation and service delivery in the education system.
- To identify factors which cause ineffective communication in the education system.
- To show the effect of ineffective communication on programme implementation and service delivery in the education system.

1.5. Research questions

- How effective is communication in the Ministry of Education?
- Does this affect implementation of government programmes and service delivery?
- What are the major factors that cause ineffective communication in the Ministry of Education?
- Why are there delays in the implementation of government programmes and service delivery in the education sector?
- What should be done to improve the communication system in the ministry?

1.6. Significance of the study

It is hoped that the findings of the study will help the Ministry of Education Management and Staff at various levels to have effective communication, and therefore, bring about successful implementation of programmes and quality service delivery.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2. Introduction

This chapter outlines the whole process of gathering information during the study: how the information was collected, where from and who participated in the study. This chapter further looks at how the information collected was processed and analysed in order to arrive at the findings.

In order to enrich the data collected the study used triangulation method. This involved qualitative and quantitative approaches. The strengths of each approach were used to get as much information as possible from participants in the study.

2.1. Design of the study

The study design was a Case Study since it was focused on a particular area. The focus of the study was to examine in detail, strategies used in communication in the education system how effective the strategies are, what other factors affect communication in the system and how all these factors affect implementation of programmes and service delivery in the system.

2.2. Target population

The target population of this study comprised of all the levels of the administrative structure of the Ministry of Education; from The Permanent Secretary through to Class teacher and Registry Clerk. These positions in the structure of the education system were representative of levels of all authority along which channels of communication in the ministry flow. The target population for this study was 890.

2.3. Sample size

Specifically the target population consisted 35 respondents drawn from Ministry Headquarters, Lusaka Provincial Education Office, two district education offices; Lusaka and Chongwe, Two High Schools, one from each district, two Basic schools, also one from each district system. The total sample size represented specific level of authority critical to the communication system in the Ministry of Education.

2.4. Sampling procedures and location

The study sought to have representation from both urban and rural setting from the level of the district and below. The Ministry Headquarters, and The Provincial Education Office were selected purposively by virtue of their levels of authority.

2.4.1. Districts sampling

There are four (04) districts in Lusaka Province. Of the four, one, Lusaka is urban while the other three Luangwa, Kafue and Chongwe are classified as rural. (CSO 2010). Lusaka District was

purposively selected to represent the urban setting while Chongwe represented the rural setting. Due to financial limitations, as a self sponsored student, proximity to home was considered in the sampling procedure. With only two districts remaining to pick from a rural setting, random sampling was used to make the selection for the rural district. The names of the two districts were written on two separate pieces of papers. The papers were then rolled into small balls and thrown into a big envelope. The envelope was then shaken several times after which one ball was picked. This happened to be Chongwe.

2.4.2. Schools sampling

2.4.2.1. Lusaka schools

The choice of both high and basic schools was also done with a consideration of proximity to the researcher's home, for reasons already advanced. Ten High schools and ten basic schools in Lusaka Central and Kabwata constituencies were randomly selected using alphabetical order. The names of the ten high schools were written on pieces of paper and thrown in A4 envelopes; one for basic schools and another for high schools. The envelopes were then shaken several times, one at a time and then one school was picked from each envelope. Libala and Woodlands 'A' were picked as High and Basic schools respectively.

2.4.2.2. Chongwe schools

There are two high schools in Chongwe central; Chongwe High School and Mukamambo II Girls' High schools and two Basic Schools; Chongwe and Chalimbana Basic Schools. Names for the two high schools were written on pieces of paper, folded into small balls and thrown in a big envelope. Mukamambo High school was picked and Chalimbana through the same process.

2.4.3. Sampling of teachers

Teachers in schools report for work in sessions and according to their class timetables and other responsibility needs. This is, especially so for urban schools. For each school that was visited, a letter of introduction and authorization to conduct interviews in the school was presented to the School authorities. Permission to carry out the research was then granted. Mostly, the visits were conducted in the mornings to allow for continuity or follow ups in the afternoons where necessary.

With voluntary consent from the teachers, opportunity or convenient sampling was used to sample from the available members of staff. In order to choose from particular categories such as class teachers, senior teachers, heads of departments, their availability was the major consideration. Where there were a number of available staff in the same category, random sampling using names was used by putting pieces of papers with teachers' names in an envelope and picking the required number, one at a time.

It is important to emphasize that in each sampling, participants volunteered to be part of the research. No respondent was forced to be part of the research. Even where sampling was purposively done such as in the case of school administrators whose positions are single in the institution, the procedure was voluntary.

In other words both purposive and simple random sampling, were used to select heads of departments, senior teachers and class teachers.

2.5. Data collection

This study used both quantitative and qualitative instruments of data collection. Structured questionnaires were used for quantitative data collection while interviews and focus group discussions were used for collecting qualitative data. Observations were used as a means to collect qualitative data through the use of observation checklists and field notes. The notes were to be used for data analysis after field research.

The interviews and focus group discussions were video recorded for purposes of data analysis with the express permission of participants. Both interviews and focus group discussions were done using interview guides. However, respondents were given the freedom to amplify their submissions and give examples of scenarios which further explained their submissions. In other

words, in depth interviews were also employed where need arose, in order to get maximum value from the respondents' discussions.

2.6. Data analysis

Analysis of data is an important element of research. Among other factors, it is the analysis of data that will give value and meaning to the data collected. As it will be appreciated, not all the information which is collected during the research can be useful to the purposes of the study. Analysing the data, therefore, helps to isolate useful data from irrelevant material. In view of this the method of analysis often takes into consideration, the type of research that was undertaken, the purpose of the study and the form in which information is gathered.

In this study, which sought to analyse real happenings in the Ministry of Education, the information given, its source, the process of getting the information and deriving meaning, was critical to the study. Such relationships as causal factors and effects also needed to be analysed in order to find interventions to arising findings that could be detrimental to the progressive functioning of the organization.

For qualitative data, Content Analysis was used as an appropriate process so as to analyse the information gathered which partly recorded vocal messages, written information such as from quantitative sources and also with a consideration of the source of the information, the participants in the study.

According to Hugh Coolican, (1999, 449), Content Analysis is a research tool in which focus is on actual content and is used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases within a text in order to make inferences about the message. This research tool, helps to get meaning from communication by breaking down the units of the communication into meaningful units and categorizing the information into specific units such as themes. The choice of this tool was therefore relevant to the intention of the study as far as analyzing the data was concerned. Both Contextual Analysis which examined the concepts in the texts and Relational Analysis which analysed the relationships of the concepts, were used for analyzing the content of the research material collected.

Another important dimension of content analysis is its evaluation dimension. Arising from the analysis of textual, visual and audio data, it is possible to make interpretations, comparisons and explanations of the information. This process leads to getting the underlying meaning of messages. This was paramount to the process as it enabled the researcher to relate situations on the ground to what was said and linking that to perceived causes and effects. Linkages were also made on the basis of similarities of characteristics or meaning of content.

During this study, the analysis was further enriched by careful and repeated examination of collected information such as video clips of recorded discussions and interviews. For example, written information from questionnaires and field notes, the information was analysed by perusing through the texts over and over. This gave an opportunity to filter the information in order to get rid of materials not related to the study, errors and biases.

Video recorded data was analysed by carefully transcribing the recorded data and fitting its content into related concepts. The significance of all such data was then checked using validity checking approach. Arising from this, related ideas were grouped into themes. The themes were further analysed to underscore the meanings of what was said, why they were said and other attributions. From this process, explanations of prevailing situations on the ground were achieved.

Selected verbatim from respondents were also identified and used to understand deep insights of the factors at play and their significance to the study. Selected scenarios depicting specific areas of the problem of ineffective communication in the ministry and its effect on programme implementation and service delivery have been cited in the study as appendices to further cement the findings.

Comments from members of the public on various aspects on communication and related effects on programme implementation and service delivery as reported in the print and electronic media have also been given in the appendices.

Research objectives and questions were guiding pieces of information in the analysis of data during the study. Through the objectives, findings have been categorically discussed and recommendations for interventions have been made.

For quantitative data, statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to enter, code, categorise and analyse the information.

2.7. Ethical considerations

As standard practice for scientific research the research team conducted the this study on the basis of ethical research practices. The following ethics were followed during the study:

2.7.1. Confidentiality: All personal information and submission made by respondents in the study were treated as confidential unless permission was otherwise given.

2.7.2. Voluntary Participation/Informed Consent: All participants in the study participated in the study were not forced, coerced or manipulated into taking part in the study, but did so out of free will. Permission was also sought from relevant authorities to undertake the research in the institutions involved.

2.7.3. Objectivity: The research team ensured that all processes, methods used during the study were strictly meant for research purposes and were free of personal of Education Science biases or prejudices that would undermine the research findings.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3. Introduction

This chapter discusses relevant theories in organisational communication and how these relate to this study. Also, concepts that are used in the field of communication related to this study have been looked at as operational definitions.

3.1. Conceptual and operational definitions

3.1.1. Communication

The process of transmitting information; verbal, written, symbolic, or visual form one person or party, to another and such should express meaning. (Griffin 2002, p. 557).

3.1.2. Effective communication

Communication is said to be effective when, among other things;

- it conveys meaning that is understood
- it is done timely
- it responds to the needs of the receiver
- it is thought provoking or spurs action
- its cycle is completed (Griffin 2002, p. 557).

3.1.3. Communication tool

A piece of equipment or facility which is used for communication. (Bagdikian 1971, p. 21).

Example: Telephone.

3.1.4. Communication infrastructure

A network, system of facility which enables communication tools to functions successfully. For example, Analogue Lines, Base Transmitter Station (BTS). (www.google.co.zm).

3.1.5. Analogue communication

Transmission of information over a network of telephone lines laid from one point to another.

For example, by telephone. (www.google.co.zm).

3.1.6. Digital communication

Transmission of information either by voice, video or internet without use of truck lines.

For example, by cell phone. (Verderber 1994, p. 12).

3.2. Communication is the process of transmitting information from one person to another (Griffin 2002, p. 557). This can be achieved in forms or ways such as oral or written. Oral communication is the form of communication where the spoken word is used to express meaning or convey a message. Such as face to face discussion and telephone call.

Written communication on the other hand is a type of communication where the word is used to transmit meaning such as letter, report, memorandum, fax, text message, notes or notices.

The choice of the form of communication to be used depends largely on the purpose of the communication and situation in which communication takes place. For instance, written communication is often used when the message is impersonal or official, longer and has a means of record. This type of communication is common in the education system. It is often vertical, that is it flows top and down and often takes place along reporting lines. Examples of such communication in the education system could be from one level of the structure to another such as from Provincial Education Officer to District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) or from School Manager to a Head of Department.

Oral communication is often preferred when the message is brief, personal or less official and non-routine. This does not mean that oral communication is never official. For example a quick call from Provincial Education Officer to District Education Board Secretary informing him or her about the Minister's planned visit to the district is oral but official. One of the advantages of oral communication is that feedback is immediate and hence facilitates quick decision making or action.

For communication to be effective, players in the communication process whether on individual or organizational level require to possess particular skills. In the education system, communication though representative of an authority or office is often done by an individual. Sometimes a group such as a meeting, committee, or board transmits information. In each case, skills such as follow up, maintaining credibility of information, using language correctly to convey meaning is important (Griffin 2002, p. 560).

Communication is usually looked at or studied from the context of a structure in an institution, organization or form of system. Theories that apply to communication and how communication affects implementation of programmes or delivery of services, like the subject for the study is,

therefore, falls on organizational communication. It is in view of this that this part of this proposal will consider theories relating to the organization, its structure and how communication takes place in the organization. In the case of this study, the education system will be looked at as an organization.

To begin with, it is essential to acknowledge that communication plays a critical role in planning, coordinating, managing and implementing programmes in an organization. It is also important to note that in an organization people are the means of making communication possible. This is done through sending and receiving messages or information. Therefore, people are at the centre of communication in any organization. How they handle or manage information, how they share it or pass it on, which is the process of communication, is of paramount importance and whether the communication is effective or not. The organization's structure and how people in different positions and how they work together is another important factor in the effectiveness of the communication process and whether or not it facilitates the implementation of programmes and effective delivery of services.

A conceptual frame work is described as a set of broad ideas, theories and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiring and used to structure subsequent presentations.(Reichid & Ramey 1987, p. 17).

A conceptual framework is useful in research on a number of scores. Firstly, it sets guiding principles against which judgments, reflections of the study can be anchored. In other words, it acts as a roadmap which links possible courses of action and gives coherence to ideas under study. The ideas are often derived from previous enquires in the same field yielding a number of theories. The theories provide reference points for discussion; inform thought and practice, aids reflection on the study and develops an awareness and understanding of the subject under scrutiny.

It can be said that the conceptual framework is significant to any study as it also sets a stage or point of departure on which the current study can be anchored or from whose ideas the subsequent presentation will be approached. It also provides a connection of ideas done by other researchers, their relatedness and possible transferability to the study at hand.

In this study, theories of organizational communication will be considered as this is the discipline or field in which the topic falls.

Generally, organizational communication is a field which considers the analysis and criticism of the role of communication in organizational contexts. As it will be appreciated, communication is an important process in any organization, which is a key for coordination of activities, achieving integration of different units or structures and activities, respectively.

In the Ministry of Education communication plays an instrumental role at various levels of the organizational structure, through horizontal or lateral, downward or upward communication.

The Ministry of Education is run on hierarchical structure with several communication networks or patterns along which information flows. Examples of communication pattern include chain from top-down, wheel one man rule or autocratic star authority located centrally.

It is necessary to look at various theories used in organizational communication and how these relate to this study. From the onset, it is necessary to state that theories in organizational communication have been evolving for overtime. At each period, there has been a particular focus for the priority of communication.

Here now are some theories used in organizational communication

3.3. Administrative Theory: Henry Fayol (1949)

This theory is based on principles of management. Management is a set of activities such as planning, organizing, training, controlling and coordinating, directed at an organization's human financial, physical and material resources to achieve organizational goals. (Fayol 1937, p. 99).

Concepts in this theory were developed to increase management efficiency. It is important to note that management functions or roles can be carried out at various levels of the structure.

Although all the roles outlined above involve communication, the informational role will be considered as priority for this study. This role involves, disseminating information, monitoring information and processing information. All these functions are communication functions which need to be carried out effectively in order to have effective communication, through which organizational programmes will be implemented and services delivered. Fayol also observes that the success of organisations or an enterprise largely depends on the effective exercise of administrative abilities. This shows that administrative functions are critical to effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation.

Equally, the Ministry of Education has management functions at all the levels of the structure, headquarters, province, and district or school level. No wonder, the use of the term school managers since the communication role is critical in management of any type of organization, especially in the area of human resource. Human resource is the major resource, hence the need to have effective communication. Yet, every member of the organization should be engaged and the process, work towards achieving goals and accomplishing organizational objectives. Union is strength and effective communication coordinates this strength.

3.4. The Total Systems approach: Albrecht (1983)

This theory is based on the notion that the organization is a system of interrelated and thus, mutually dependent subsystems. The organization, therefore, needs to have linking processes which links all subsystems towards achieving organizational goals and communication is the basic process which links all systems in the organization. The link by communication helps to coordinate the activities of individuals and their roles in the organization.

In this approach, the physical environment is seen as an important factor in enhancing effective communication. If the environment has a lot of barriers, is not conducive for communication, then individuals will have difficulties communicating effectively. Communication becomes the fibre holding the system together.

The total systems approach is very relevant to improving the effectiveness of communication in education. Noting that the education system is run on subsystems or structures different levels,

communication plays a critical role in coordinating these subsystems or different levels in the structure. Such coordination helps to achieve common goals of the ministry; The more effective the communication in the subsystems, the more goals for the organization will be achieved. That is why improving communication in the organization system at all levels is necessary.

Also, the working environment has a lot to do with how effective communication will be. A number of factors in the environment in which communication takes places, influences the effectiveness of communication. For example, the relationship that exists between the sender and receiver, personalities of the sender and receiver may create a facilitative environment whereby understanding between the two is made easy.

On the contrary, if the relationship between the sender and receiver of the message is not cordial, personality factors such as perception, attitude will affect the interpretation of the information. Poor relationship is a bad environment for communication; therefore it can lead to distortion, misunderstanding and negative process of information (Verderber 1994, p. 8).

Improving relationships at the work place, therefore, helps to create a conducive environment in which communication will flourish. Whether it is supervisor-insubordinate, staff-line, learner-teacher relationship, the health of the relationships at all levels in the education system is critical in promoting effective communication. A healthy relationship in the organization promotes openness and is a source of motivation to the members of the organization where information will be shared easily. When this happens, negative attitudes, perceptions and other barriers to communication will be avoided. The end result of good working relationships or a good work environment will be productivity through trust, objectivity active participation and unity of direction in the organization. Status will be used for service and not self motives.

3.5. Bureaucratic Approach: Weber (1947)

This approach is based on the consideration that an organization is a segment of the broader society whose functions should be formal and organized in some way. Weber's theory acknowledges the importance of structure; positions should be arranged in hierarchy where each position or level of authority should have established particular amount of responsibility and

authority. The structure should determine the roles and responsibilities assumed by the position holder, including informational roles. One should be able to know to what level they can go in terms of official functions. (Griffin 2002, p. 357).

This theory is in harmony with the education system even as far as communication is concerned. For example, only certain key positions are allowed to disseminate particular information. Often these are heads of structure positions such as permanent secretary at headquarter level.

Other facts of bureaucratic approach include predictability and stability, specialization and democracy. Predictability and stability entail that an organization should operate according to a system of procedures consisting of formal rules and procedures. The rules and procedures give order, direction and guidance on how the system should run smoothly (LaVerne 1990, p. 83). Order and direction are necessary factors in the Education system where there are many people operating at different levels in different locations in order to avoid confusion and anarchy in the system.

Specialization relates to allocation of tasks on the functional basis which are distinguished. Although distinguished, each function falls under a particular chain of command which forms a network in the entire system. Again, the Ministry of Education draws a lot of this approach, different people in different fields have distinguished roles which contribute to the well being of the entire system. Various fields are coordinated through an established system of chain of command. When communication is effective in the system, coordination becomes easy and achievement of goals is possible. On the other hand, without effective communication, it is difficult to co-ordinate roles of different distinguished tasks by various individuals especially in a big system as the education system. Effective communication and association and associated skills is, therefore, a crucial factor in the education system. Instructions should be released correctly and timely, tasks carried out effectively and personnel conduct themselves according to set codes of conduct.

Meanwhile, responsibility and authority should be acknowledged and recognized by designations and not on personal basis. When personal factors precede organizational structures, it becomes difficult to create an orderly system which operates effectively. Well defined roles and responsibility which are communicated to all the members of the organization, makes it easy for

functions to be carried out without personal barriers and with cooperation from other members. It is the role of the communication of public relations departments to establish and maintain mutual understanding to ensure that the organization is understood by others in the organization (Verderber 1988, p. 7).

Maintaining good will and mutual understanding is necessary in order to have a well functioning organization. Effective communication makes this achievable.

3.6. Participatory Development Communication: WIF (1986)

Perhaps one of the most recent theories in communication in organizations is that of the participation of all stakeholders from the start of the process. Discussions, debates, consultations and consensus from the decision making in the interest of the group is much more important than individual interest.

The approach can be said to be adopted by the current education system especially with the introduction of decentralization; taking decision making to the lower organs. The point of delivery or lower organ such as a school has been empowered to be the focal point of planning and delivery of public services central or higher level as will help to facilitate support systems and offer technical support. (GRZ, Cabinet Office, The National Decentralization Policy 2002, p. 6).

The strength of this approach lies in the participation of the people at the lower organs as points of service delivery. The decisions made through the approach ensures collective responsibility and sense of ownership of programmes. The fact that the communication process begins with everybody, at the start of the process gives a higher chance of success for programmes. Collective responsibility and working together are ingredients of not only successful programmes but also ensuring their sustenance.

The education system has several programmes at grassroots level such as infrastructure development programmes, the participation of the rural community in partnership with education authorities is therefore necessary. Effective communication through participatory development communication is, therefore, a feasible approach which can ensure successful programme implementation and delivery of services.

Although the approach highlighted above have some relatedness to the approaches followed by the Ministry of Education in terms of communication, it is perhaps that lack of vigor, absence of necessary steps such as follow ups and feedback mechanism that still results in gaps in how effectively programmes are implemented. As seen in the above discourse, communication should be practical, well planned, well coordinated and channeled process involving all the necessary stakeholders in the origination. This requires appropriate skills by competent personnel and availability of relevant resources such as infrastructure and facilities for communication such as computers, functional telecommunication facilities. Although barriers to communication may exist in the education system, all efforts should eliminate them because communication is essential to all organizations (Griffin 1947, p. 571).

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE REVIEW

4. Introduction

The chapter looks at writings by different scholars in the field of communication as it relates to education and education management. This study, therefore, therefore discussed each writer's contribution on how communication applies to the education system, and can help to improve the effectiveness of communication and ultimately, programme implementation and delivery of services.

4.1. Review of literature

There have been a number of scholars who have written on effective communication. However, most of the scholars have not emphasized on making communication facilitate effective programme implementation and delivery of service to the education system.

The study sought to apply the relevant factors of communication cited by a number of writers, to the education system. For instance, Warriner (1999, p. 213), talks about the need for planned communication. Griffin(2002, p. 565), talks about direction of communication and language appropriacy. Other scholars whose works have been reviewed are Bagdikian (1971, p. 29) on slow or delayed communication and use of information technology.

Although most of the ideas by the scholars cited in the study are based on organizational communication, these ideas are applicable to the education system, whose communication functions on the basis of the structures in the Ministry of Education as an organization.

Also, writers in the field of Education such as John Mwanakatwe (1968, p. 68) in the book, “The Growth of Education in Zambia,” Alan and Paisey (1988, p. 142) on “Effective Management in Schools,” will have their works looked at and related to in the study.

Education is one of the universal rights recognized by the United Nations and member countries. This service is provided in all countries in the world. The Education systems used, forms and quality provided, however, varies from one country to another. Structures of different education systems by different countries, also vary. Yet, principles of teaching and learning, general practice and communication systems are almost the same. The initial question to ask is, “What role does effective communication play in the education system?”

To answer this question, one needs to identify the levels of operation and the purpose of communication being done. For example, communication used in management functions is done differently from communication in form of classroom or teaching instructions. However, in order for communication to be effective, certain cardinal factors should be taken into consideration.

4.1. Communication should be planned for

Warriner (1999, p. 213), states that before communication is initiated, it should be planned for, it should have a purpose, a necessity and direction; the flow of the channel it takes. Both purpose and direction help to consider factors which will make it effective. Also, the purpose and direction of the information will guide its facilitation and the methods that will be used. For instance, official communication which is meant to be a permanent record will be done in written form, such as a letter or memorandum while a reminder to attend a meeting can be done orally such as by telephone.

4.2. Direction of the communication

Whether vertical, top-down or bottom-up, horizontal, direction of communication should take certain considerations. Since the education system is run on a structure, channels of communication through which communication takes place, takes into consideration authority of office. In view of this, the flow of information will go with the language being used in the communication process. For instance, authority, seniority and expertise are some of the considerations made in official communication in order to validate it and for the communication to spur action.

4.3. Language appropriacy

The choice of words and the meaning they carry is an important factor in official communication. Verderber (1994, p. 35), in his book, "Speech for effective communication," Verderber emphasises that caution should be taken so as not to use impolite, crude or personal language. Communication should not offend the receiver of the message. Professionalism and maturity should be exhibited even through communication. It can be said that many people in the education system need to be reminded, time and again, how important purpose and direction of communication are. For instance, when a school head is writing to a teacher at his or her school, the tone of language should not be provocative or offensive. If the opposite is true, this might attract a bad response from the latter. This situation will lead to poor working relations between the parties involved. When there is no harmony at the work place, it is the work which will suffer, for example, implementation of programmes will be difficult due to lack of cooperation and coordination between or among workmates.

4.4. Slow or delayed communication

Slow or Delayed communication has a number of negative effects on the communication process, the parties involved in the communication. It also affects achievement of desired results of the communication process. A few examples are discussed below.

4.4.1. Slow communication leads to poor results

In his book entitled, “The Information Machines, their Impact on man and the Media”, Ben. H. Bagdikian (1971, p. 29) contends that slow communication leads to poor results. When communication is slow, its purpose will not be realised to full expectation. In any organization or institution, all activities have particular time frame. Some activities are connected or are done one after the other. Slow communication can, therefore, negatively affect implementation of programmes. Communication initiates action, if communication is delayed, action will be delayed or fail to take place. Perhaps this could be linked to the legal saying that “justice delayed is justice denied.”

4.4.2. Slow communication leads to programme failure

From the Ministry of Education’s point of view, slow or delayed communication can lead to serious failures. This is because the administrative structure, from the highest ranking official, the permanent secretary to the lowest ranking official professionals in the system, the teacher, there are several levels of authority through which communication should flow. If, for some unfortunate reason, communication is delayed at a point, by the time it reaches the lowest level, a lot of time would have passed. As a result of this, some decisions become overtaken by events and this affects programme implementation or delivery of service. Also, when communication is slow, programmes fail or take too long to be accomplished or implemented. Other times, slow communication makes programmes fail completely.

4.4.3. Slow communication leads to employee frustration

In the case of human resources, related issues such as appointments, promotions, confirmations or payments, slow or delayed communication is a source of frustrations to employees. When deserving cases such as the ones cited above do not receive due and timely attention, the affected officers will be demotivated. When this happens the performance of those affected will affect performance on the job. It is of paramount importance, therefore, that all officers in the Ministry

of Education should move away from the tendency of delaying communication unnecessarily. No one should delight in having a full “In” or “Pending” desk tray. Inevitably, such practices affect the effectiveness of the system and bring untold miseries to those who depend on decisions from such communication. Unfortunately, slow communication can become very costly. For example, when teachers do not receive necessary or vital information on matters of their allowances, they may end up taking industrial action such as a strike. This can be avoided if they are communicated to in good time.

Keeping people waiting and wondering without any update or feedback is indeed frustrating. This should be avoided always at all levels of the ministry. People need information to make informed decisions and also, to plan their activities properly. Effective communication makes this possible. Also with timely communication, even when the response to be given is negative, the fact that an update or feedback has been given, being in the know makes a big difference than unexplained silence.

4.4.4. Slow communication can lead to indiscipline

Slow or delayed communication has another negative side. In cases to do with discipline, delayed decisions can be very costly. If a disciplinary case is not disposed off in good time, it can make the situation worse or bigger and unmanageable. For example, disciplinary action serves as a deterrent to other officers or employees in an institution. If disciplinary cases take too long to be decided on or decision too long to be taken, the problem behaviour or practice will spread to other employees. Undoubtedly, an organization full of disciplinary cases and or indisciplined employees will have poor work output and fail to deliver services or implement programmes successfully.

In the case of the education system where there are many employees, often dealing with sensitive matters such as handling pupils and their welfare, managing public funds and using public resources such as vehicles, pieces of equipment and certain infrastructure, the need for a disciplined work force is a must. It is, therefore, crucial that communication related to disciplinary matters should be decisive and timely or expediently dealt with as they arise.

4.5 Overcoming slow or delayed communication

As a solution to slow or delayed communication, besides the human elements such as reluctance, indifference, laziness or lack of understanding or knowledge to communicate, there is also the vital aspect of information technology. Communication can be quickened, made easier and clearer to understand by using new technology. Such facilities as email, internet, teleconferencing, e-learning, use of radio, television and telephone among other facilities are useful for making communication possible. Not only mere communication but also, teaching and learning (Paisey 1987, p. 20).

4.5.1. Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The use of information technology is a must especially in the education system where there are huge numbers of personnel its establishment located in far apart and hard to reach areas. Investing in information technology in the education system is not only necessary but urgent. It is gratifying to note that plans to automate the Ministry of Education are underway. Faster, easier and better forms of communication will have a positive effect on programme implementation and service delivery in the Ministry of Education.

4.5.2. Clear reporting lines and clear roles

Although the Ministry of Education has a laid down structure, cases are many when overlaps between officers holding different positions have occurred. In some cases, officers in different positions have assumed roles whose responsibilities overlap or clash with other officers. The overlap is mostly in the area of giving information or making certain decisions. Some positions are mostly deemed to be administrative while others are taken to be technical. For example, the position of PEO at provincial level is mostly administrative while that of a Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO), is supposed to be technical; relating to a particular field of specialization in education, such as SESO language. Meanwhile, the Principal Education Standards Officer, (PESO) who is supposed to be a technical position, also acts as an administrative officer deputizing the PEO and carries out administrative duties in the absence of the PEO. A problem arises in the sense that PESO who is supposed to be like a chief inspector and be independent of the PEO in terms of operations, reports to the PEO. This creates a problem professionally and in maintaining neutrality.

4.5.3 Harmonisation of positions in relation to qualifications and salary scales

Issues to do with remuneration can be sources of conflict at the workplace. As such, they should be dealt with cautiously and objectively in an organization. Manipulation of the workforce cannot go on always, with time, things come to light and people react.

This study revealed that there are glaring anomalies as far as positions, salary scales and related qualifications are concerned. It was found out that in some cases, people with less qualifications supervise those with more qualifications. This was found to be a source of a number of conflicts, discontentment and frustration among a number of personnel in the ministry. Although it is understood that not all people can be in supervisory positions, most participants in the study said that salary scales should be on the basis of qualifications. While long service and experience could have their own privileges, yet many people talked to called for an urgent review of the situation. Having lowly qualified personnel get higher salaries than more qualified personnel was found to be scandalous and many people talked to called for an urgent review of the situation. Many people felt that there should be returns on investment in education and those who endeavour to upgrade themselves academically should be rewarded somehow, and salary upgrade was seen by many to make a lot of sense in this regard. Qualifications also, should manifest in better performance and management

For example, the position of District Education Board Secretary, (DEBS) in relation to District Education Standards Officer (DESO) are in the same salary scale despite the DEBS being senior to the DESO administratively.

A similar situation prevails at Basic Schools where Diploma holders find it difficult to report to the Senior Teachers who are in a lower salary scale than them due to differences in qualifications. This situation affects communication so much that when the situation is desperate, a gap is created among the staff. As a result, the flow of information is either disturbed or frustrated making it difficult to implement programmes or deliver services effectively.

It is important that at every level in the education system, the administrative structure should be clear on roles and responsibilities of office bearers. This will create harmony in working relations and enhance effective communication in the system. Unnecessary stepping on each other's toes can be a source of lack of coordination between members of an organization. Avoiding it, therefore, will allow for open, easy, quick and effective communication.

4.5.4. Work overload

Another factor related to roles and responsibilities is the question of how much work an individual officer has to do. During the post restructuring era, the Ministry of Education showed that there were a number of positions which had not been filled at various levels, especially the lower organs such as the District Office. The position of Education Standards Officer (ESO) has not been filled in all the districts in Zambia. A good example is the position of ESO- Open and Distance Learning (ODL). As a result of gaps, one ESO – ODL has to man two districts for example Kafue and Chongwe.

In this situation, the officer will be overwhelmed with work as manning two districts, which are vast in themselves, is not an easy task. With lack of resources such as reliable communication tools and transport, an officer will have difficulties in carrying out work effectively. Naturally, communication will be affected where there is a lack of resources.

Besides, it becomes difficult for one officer to coordinate the work which is supposed to be for two officers or more. It is important to note that two different districts will have different demands and problems at a given time. Harmonizing these demands and problems, from a distance or as an absentee officer, is a sure way of yielding failure if not just paying lip- service to the situation.

Over and above, communication will be less effective if one has very little time to devote to the process like the case would be for an ESO – ODL, manning two districts whose boundaries may not always be parallel but in opposite directions. In such a situation, communication will be less effective, not done on time resulting in poor programme implementation. Also, work timeframe will not be met. This can however, be remedied to some extent for instance, by the use of information technology such as email, which unfortunately is not well established in most rural Zambian districts. There is no doubt, therefore, that improving communication in the education system will help improve programme implementation and service delivery, in the education system.

4.6. Effects of work overload

When personnel are made to do too much work, especially with disproportionate rewards for their sacrifice and dedication, several effects can result. The effects may affect the worker or the work that they do. Below are some examples of the effects of work overload that participants in this study cited. It was found during this study that some personnel had too many responsibilities on their hands. As a result of having too many things to do, their performance was not as expected. It would be better that division of labour was effected in the ministry according to personnel expertise and capabilities. While it is appreciated that some individuals can have multi responsibilities, the amount of responsibilities given should be matched by available resources which include time and the knowhow to accomplish tasks. It would be futile to have somebody assuming several responsibilities in which they do not deliver.

In other words, it is not the positions and titles that should matter but how these are used to offer service, where it is required.

4.6.1. More time taken to accomplish tasks

With a lot of things on one's plate, more time will be required to accomplish tasks. A person cannot do many things at the same time. Like the old adage goes, "Do one thing at time." Even multi tasking requires that each task is allocated its own time, if desired results are to be achieved at work. Doing so many things at the same time will only result in confusion which is an ingredient for failure.

4.6.2. Substandard work and underperformance

Quality of service or performance is bound to be compromised when one has too much work to do at the same time. The Bible says that "You cannot serve two masters at the same time," qualifies this notion. "With two masters, you will please one and displease the other." (Luke 16:13).

In short, one needs to devote time to one thing at a time in order to do a good job. The administrative structure of the ministry should be revised to ensure that human resource is deployed to maximum effect. This can be achieved by ensuring that people do work that they are better qualified for and are available to do it. Although other factors such as interest are important on the job, these cannot replace skill.

4.6.3. Stress and frustration

Having too much work to do at the same time can be stressing. The pressure that comes with demands from several tasks, expectation from a number of quarters such as supervisors and clients can stress anyone found in such a situation. Also, under such a situation, it will be difficult for one to enjoy their work. In the end, the pressure will make one frustrated due to pressure of work and lack of rest.

Like the saying goes, “All work without play makes John a dull boy.” This saying is not only applicable to academia but also to vocations. Whatever people do, they must have time to recreate and refresh the mind, for example, through sports and social outings. Educational managers should ensure that such programmes are organized for their personnel, once in a while. Not only will such activities be refreshing and a spice for enjoying work but are opportunities for building healthier relations and sense of belonging among staff.

4.6.4. Poor health

Although some people are more hardworking than others, there is no superman who can just go on and on without rest and sometimes without time to even take a meal. All supervisors should ensure that their personnel’s health is not compromised due to work overload. Rest, recreation and good health practices should be encouraged at all levels in order to avoid wearing out of personnel with work overload. Like it is often said, “One’s Health is One’s Wealth,” and so should be guarded jealously. It is in light of this that the Ministry should be encouraged to carry out health activities such as Health day, through which medical services and sensitization talks are offered to staff and members of their families, regularly. Campaign against the deadly HIV AIDS, should also be prioritized in workplace health activities as prevention and intervention measures.

4.6.5. Poor social well being

Work overload can also affect the social well being of personnel. When personnel have too much work to do, they will always be arriving home tired and stressed. This would affect their social relationships. Without good social relationships, it would be difficult for one to enjoy their work as their state of mind would be unstable most times. This would make it difficult for them to

concentrate on their work. Consequently, targets, deadlines and goals given to personnel should be realistic and achievable. Besides, no one's health should be sacrificed for attainment of goals. A good supervisor should encourage health living styles for their workers to and fro from the job. Losing personnel through bad health practices is very costly, to the organization and the family of the employee. For example, it takes a lot of years to train an expert in any field. Personnel attrition, such as that of experts in an organization, should be as a result of natural and unpreventable causes and not out of negligence or man made sickness such as stress resulting from work overload. In this vein, most respondents said that "Leave should be every worker 's right and be accorded accordingly, and not be seen as a favour by the powers that be.

Also, Northouse, (2007, p. 93) observes that assigning unattainable objectives to workers can result in failure and loss of self esteem. It is, therefore, advisable that those in supervisory positions in all forms of duties work with their staff in a humane and fair manner. This, however, does not mean tolerating laziness or indiscipline on the job.

4.6.6. Loss of interest in work; reduced productivity

Too much work to do can also lead to loss of interest in the work that one does. This is so in that with too much workload, work becomes less interesting. Instead it becomes more boring than motivating and satisfying. When personnel lose interest in what they do, for example, they will be less innovative, less creative and their sense of commitment to duty will be reduced. In such a situation the outcome, would among others, be less productivity.

In view of the foregoing, it is necessary that all personnel in the ministry, are given the right amount of work, adequate resources and are motivated to do their best on the job. Over loading staff with work, as has been discussed here, will not be profitable to the organisation on many fronts. Instead the organization will stand to lose as there will be for example, less productivity.

Quality should, therefore, never be compromised in favour of quantity even when it comes to allocating work to personnel. Having too much to do, and doing it poorly is worse compared to having enough or little that is done well. Whether it is a teacher in a class, a secretary in the office, an accounts person tasked to prepare books of accounts or a senior officer preparing a report or planning for a meeting, the principle of, "Do one thing at a time," should be applicable to all in order to be effective.

Meanwhile, it should be acknowledged that part of achieving effective communication is ensuring that information is passed on correctly and meaning is understood as it was intended. Conditions that are associated to work overload do not facilitate either of the two exemplified. All administrators and supervisors at all levels in the Ministry of Education, should, therefore, be encouraged to manage their human resource diligently even in the area of assigning tasks to their workforce.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5. Introduction

In this chapter, the study predominantly uses descriptive statistical tools to interpret the respondents' sex, job positions, work station and response profiles. Frequencies in both absolute and relative terms are used in frequency tables, charts and graphs. Precisely, the findings of this thesis are presented thematically. Each theme highlights particular aspects of communication; effects of communication, factors that affect effective communication in the Ministry of

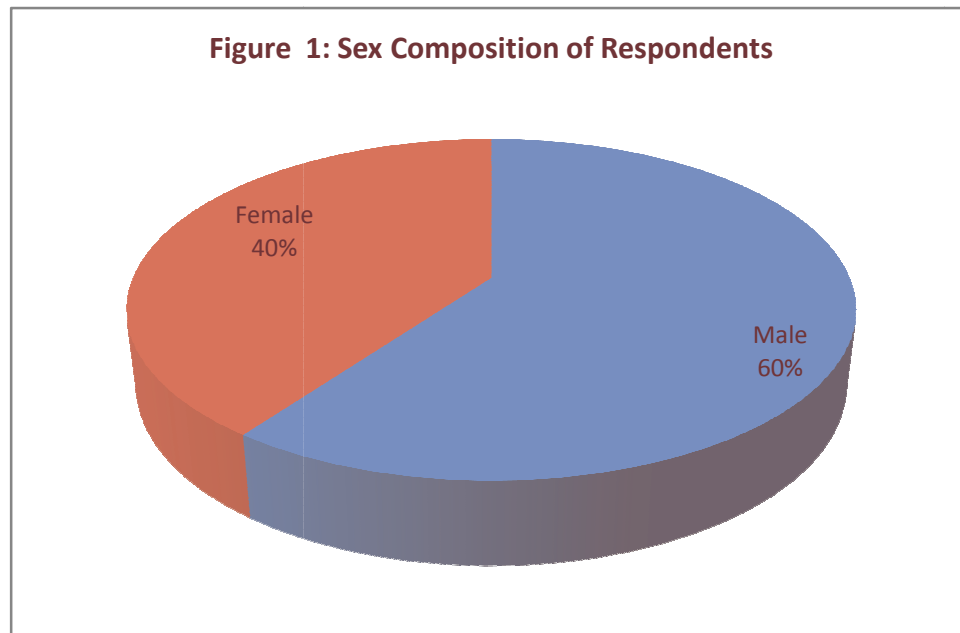
Education, their causes and strategies to achieve effective communication in the system. These themes summarise the research findings at all the levels of the education sector.

5.1. Data analysis

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the characteristics of the sample population in terms of sex, job positions and place of work. The second part describes the nature, structure, causes and impact of communication quality on the operations of the education system. The possible strategies and forms of communication that can be implemented to enhance the quality of communication in the education system are discussed in the third part of this chapter.

5.1. Part A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

5.1.1. Sex of Respondents



Source: Field Data

It is clear from Figure 1 that the sample was skewed towards male respondents. A total of 21 respondents (60 percent) out of 35 sampled respondents were male. Then, the remaining 14 (40 percent) respondents were female.

It is important to note that the ratio between male and female respondents was determined by positions held by participants in the study and not on the basis of gender. Also, participation in the study was voluntary and according to the availability of respondents at the time of the study.

5.1.2. Distribution of Respondents by Workplace

The respondents in this study were purposively selected according to the various structures found in the ministry's administrative structure; from support staff such as Registry Clerk, Teachers, all through to the most senior Controlling Officer in the Ministry, and the Permanent Secretary. It is important to note that at the time of the study, the ministry was known as the Ministry of Education (MOE). In this study, the Ministry is referred to as Ministry of Education. The ministry's name has since changed to Ministry of Education, Science and Vocational Training, Early Education (MESVTEE). The distribution of the sample according to the place of work is shown in the frequency distribution table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Workplace

	Frequency	Per cent
Education Headquarters	7	22.9
Lusaka Provincial Education Office	4	8.6
Lusaka DEBS' Office	4	11.4
Chongwe DEBS' Office	4	11.4
Chalimbana Basic School (Chongwe)	4	11.4
Mukamambo II Girls' High School (Chongwe)	4	11.4
Woodlands 'A' Basic School (Lusaka)	3	8.6
Libala High School (Lusaka)	5	14.3
Total	35	100.0

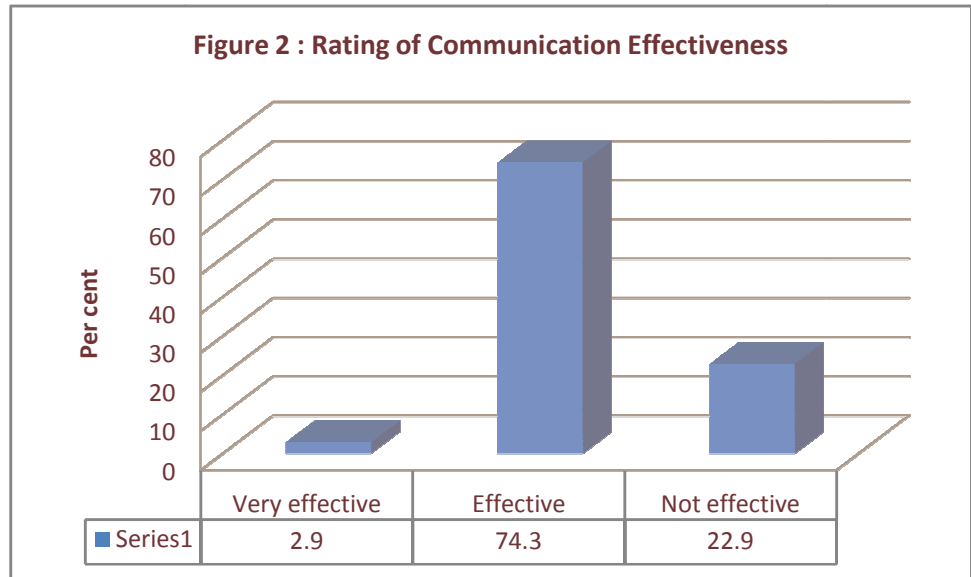
Source: Field Data

Table 1 indicates that 22.9 percent of the respondents were working at the MOE Headquarters, 8.6 percent at the Provincial Education Office (PEO), 11.4 percent at both Chongwe and Lusaka DEBS' offices, 14.3 percent at Libala High School in Lusaka, 11.4 percent at Mukamambo II Girls' High School, 11.4 percent from Chalimbana Basic School in Chongwe and 8.6 percent from Woodlands 'A' Basic School in Lusaka.

5.2. Part B: Respondents' Perceptions about the effectiveness of Communication in the Education System

The general objective of this study was to show the effect of communication on implementation of Government programmes and service delivery in the Ministry of Education. Noting that communication can either be effective or ineffective, it was inevitable for the researcher to investigate which of the two positions; effective or ineffective, was the case as far as communication in the ministry was concerned. Also, factors which accounted for the findings were to be identified and recommendations for interventions made.

The results on respondents perceptions on the effectiveness of communication in the Ministry of Education are shown in the figure 2



Source: Field Data

The majority (74.3 percent) of the respondents rated communication in their institutions as “ineffective” while 22.9 percent of them rated it as “effective.” However, the minority (2.9 per cent) of the respondents rated it very effective. Based on these findings, it can safely be concluded that the problem of communication in the education system is quite serious and needs to be addressed as urgently as possible. With ineffective communication, programme implementation and service delivery are likely to be affected negatively. Few who rated communication as “effective” and “very effective,” happened to be those in high positions of authority. Understandably, this category of personnel would not want to shoot themselves in the foot by giving a low rating since they were largely in charge of the process in their respective places of work.

5.3. The importance of effective communication in programme implementation and service delivery

To validate the above conclusion, the respondents were asked to state how critical effective communication was in the implementation of Government programmes and service delivery. The findings are tabulated below.

Table 2: Perceptions on the Importance of effective communication in implementation of Government programmes and delivery of services

Rating	Frequency	Per cent
Very critical	28	80
Critical	7	20
Not Critical	0	0
Total	35	100

Source: Field Data

The frequency distribution table in table 2 above, clearly shows that 80 per cent of the respondents stated that effective communication was very critical to successful implementation of Government programmes and quality service delivery in the Ministry. Only 20 per cent of them indicated that it was critical and no one stated that it was not critical. With most of the respondents rating communication in the Ministry as ineffective and acknowledging that effective communication was very critical in their operations, one would say that without effective communication, the operations of personnel in the ministry could be impeded somehow, especially in the aspect of timeliness. News about the inefficiency of the civil service and education personnel in particular as far as the delivery of services is concerned makes common reading, time and again, in the public media. From this premise, there is need for further probing of what causes ineffective communication in the education system.

5.4. Causes of ineffective communication in the Ministry of Education.

The respondents in this study were taken from different backgrounds ranging from the lowest ranked to the highest ranked in the hierarchy of the education sector. Although there were variations in the perceived causes for ineffective communication in the ministry, the following were found to be major ones.

Table 3: Factors blamed for ineffective communication in the Ministry of Education

Factor	Frequency	Per cent
1.1 Lack of communication tools and facilitative infrastructure	35	100
1.2 Lack of ICT and Communication skills	30	85.7
1.3 Poor communication strategies	30	71.4
1.4 Weak Management Systems	25	71.4
1.5 Poor work Culture	32	91.4
1.6 Poor work relations	20	71.4
1.7 Limited access to appropriate and relevant information	20	57.1
1.8 Inadequate, Inconsistent and Delayed Funding	20	57.1

Source: Field Data

5.4.1. Lack of Communication Tools

Among the factors that were found to be responsible for ineffective communication in the ministry, lack of communication tools was seen to be one of the major problems. It should be recalled that apart from having no communication tools of their own, some institutions in the ministry are located very far away from commercial centres where basic communication facilities are provided. Without communication tools and facilitative infrastructure in these institutions, their ability to communicate effectively especially to next levels of authority becomes very difficult. This difficulty translates into slow decision making as consultation or authority seeking and feedback takes too long to materialise. This is further exasperated by the need to follow channels of communication that are laid down. In a system with long communication channels, the time it takes to make decisions is inevitably long especially where the communication process follows all the channels. Table 4 shows some tools perceived to be critical to effective communication in most institutions in the education system.

Table 4. Communication tools seen as basic and critical to effective communication by most institutions in the ministry

TOOL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Telephone/ Cell phone	35	100%
Fax	30	85.7%
Computer	35	100%
Printer	28	80%
Photocopier	25	71.4%
Radio	22	62.9%
Television	15	42.9%

Source: Field Data

The communication tools which were seen to be critical for effective communication system were said to be necessary because of their uses and application to the communication process in general. The uses for particular tools are given below.

Telephone and Cell phone: Timely communication

Fax: Timely Transmission of documents

Computer: Access to internet:

- Production of documents
- Record keeping

- Exchange of information, for example, by email

Printer: Production of documents

Photocopier: Reproduction of documents

Radio: Source of information, information dissemination across barriers

Television: Source of information, information dissemination across barriers

Notice board: Information dissemination

The tools listed above were found to be essential for effective communication. If provided to institutions of learning, departments, sections and other units in various directorates, they would help facilitate timely communication. Although radio and television were found to be quite expensive, they can be very effective when used expertly. Their advantage to reach difficulty-to-reach and far flung places, reaching out to a lot of people at the same time (mass media effect) make radio and television to be important communication tools. It is the need to improve reception, especially in rural areas that should be improved in order to make these tools much more useful. Basic ones, though, such as a telephone, cell phone, computer, fax, and printer are necessities which need to be invested in, at all costs. Where possible a photocopier could be procured for use in reproducing official documents which cannot be produced in public business centres, due to their confidential nature. Examination papers, staff confidential information, disciplinary cases and management meeting minutes are examples of such sensitive matters.

Also, a photocopier is an important necessity as it can reduce the high cost which could emanate from using a printer to produce large numbers of document copies. As has been seen in this study, timely communication can significantly bring about successful implementation of government programmes and facilitate delivery of quality services. Providing the basic communication tools enumerated here will enable personnel in the ministry to communicate more effectively, thereby improving programme implementation and service delivery as well.

Although the mandate to provide quality education is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the need for other stakeholders to partner with the ministry in educational provision is

valid. As far as provision of communication tools is concerned, any support given in this regard would help improve the situation in the ministry, which in most cases, can be described as dire.

Most respondents suggested that the ministry should engage business houses, corporate organizations and service providers in the communication industry so that they begin to support efforts by the ministry in providing ICT tools and facilities to institutions and departments in the ministry. For example, companies that sell computers could support the ministry by donating or selling computers to institutions in the ministry at reduced rates. Donating unusable computers should be discouraged as such computers end up just filling space and cannot be used due to their lack of updated programmes. Those offering internet services could also come on board and provide this service to educational institutions. Such support could be conducted and managed through a well coordinated programme which would be a continuous process and for the benefit of all institutions country wide and not few selected institutions, always getting support because the need is almost everywhere.

Although donations have been made by various organizations to different institutions and departments in the ministry, it would perhaps be better if there was a profile of ICT needs for ministry institutions, especially institutions of learning, to which support in ICTs could be channeled.

The provision of ICT tools for purposes of communication are a necessity especially in institutions of learning such as schools, colleges, universities and skills centres. With such tools and facilities in institutions of learning, members of staff and learners at various levels in these institutions would have an opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge which ICTs afford. Such skills and knowledge would empower learners, especially those in rural areas to access information relevant to their educational development much more easily and faster. Presently, learners in institutions where ICT tools and facilities are not available, have no choice but to continue being victims of the digital divide. As it will be appreciated, such a situation is not only unfair but a big disadvantage to the successful integration of these learners (skills wise), when they enter higher levels of learning where ICT skills are a must.

Other government organizations in the field of ICTs such as Zambia Information Communication Technology Authority, (ZICTA), should also be challenged to get more

involved in the provision of ICTs to institutions in the ministry. As an authority with regulatory powers in ICTs in the country, ZICTA is better placed to use its statutes and influences to lobby for support to educational institutions through provision of ICT facilities and services. After all ZICTA's motto is, "Providing ICTs to All." At present, institutions of learning are subjected to the same commercial conditions by business houses who sell ICT products and offer related services associated. In other words, it was high time institutions of learning and other departments in the ministry were accorded some preferential treatment and concessions in certain areas of operations as suggested here. After all, it is these institutions which prepare and train the much required pool of skilled human resource that go to work in various industries when they successfully graduate from various institutions of learning. It makes a lot of sense, therefore, to ask the future employers of today's learners (tomorrow's experts and employees), to partner with government and prepare learners at various levels and in various fields, adequately. Provision of ICT skills to institutions of learning, departments in the ministry and other units in the ministry, priority attention and support, consequently. The Ministry of Education, should, however, lead the way in this area by investing more in the provision of ICTs and skills thereof. The state of affairs prevailing at present do not inspire much hope as far as advancement in ICTs and its utilization is concerned.

As discussed earlier, the value of ICTs in the Ministry of Education is beyond measure. ICTs will not only improve teaching and learning but impact positively on management and communication systems in the educational sector in Zambia. Unless deliberate measures are put in place by government and its various partners, to improve availability of relevant, up to date and adequate ICT facilities and services, effective communication and resultant successful programme implementation and provision of quality services in the education sector will continue to be, but a dream or a difficult undertaking in the Ministry.

5.4.2. Low ICT Skills in personnel

All skills are learnt. In the education sector, like other sectors, personnel at various levels and in different institutions, departments, sections or units, possess different skills in different areas of expertise. However, the need for ICT skills is all embracing or universal in the operations of personnel in the ministry. Yet, it was found that ICT skills were unacceptably low in the ministry's most personnel. Skills especially to do with communication using digital technology of various forms was found to be very low among personnel. Although, there are some personnel with expert skills in this field, majority possess only basics which may not adequately enable them to fully exploit the multi functions of ICTs, so necessary in service delivery.

As already indicated, communication skills using the computer such as sending an e mail, a fax message or indeed using computer programmes such as power point, excel, outlook or internet explorer were found to be very low among most personnel. With lack of skills in this area, it was found that delays in communication were high due to dependence on manual systems of operations.

Table 5: ICT personnel competence rating

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION	PERSONAL RATING OF ICT COMPETENCE
Top Management/Administration	Average
Middle Management	Above Average
Non Administrative Staff	Critical

Source: Field Data

5.4.2.1. Need for upgrading ICT skills in personnel

While considerable levels of computer literacy among staff at different levels of the education system could be recorded, it was generally observed, by most respondents that skills in ICT by personnel in the education system needed to be upgraded. All levels of personnel in the education system acknowledged the need for upgraded ICT skills at all levels of the system.

Meanwhile, the levels of skills and competence in ICT in the ministry was found to vary at different levels of the system and in individuals.

As can be seen from table 5, the rating for ICT skills needs improvement, as acknowledged by most personnel in the ministry. Like it was observed by some administrators, lack of ICT skills makes even the simplest of work to take unnecessarily long. Meanwhile, any delay at any point in the system, affects progress at other points. Hitherto, implementation and service delivery are negatively affected. The need for personnel in the education system, at all levels, including administrators or management to have appropriate and updated skills in ICT for them to work effectively, cannot be over emphasised.

It is important to note that in this digital era, the use of information technology is the norm and not an exception. In this digital era where e- learning has become an important factor in education provision, personnel in the ministry should possess acceptable and applicable ICT skills in order to ably drive the advancement of the new but necessary form of learning, at various levels of the education system. Zambia needs to embrace e-learning as a new approach to quality educational provision especially in the face of scarce resources, such as expert tutors, inadequate infrastructure, few teaching and learning materials and facilities.

Also, most communication nowadays is done using ICTs in order to facilitate quick exchange of information between parties to business transactions. The Ministry of Education works in collaboration with a number of partners, both local and international. This partnership requires timely communication in order to meet obligations contained in the partnership. Also, targets and deadlines have to be met in order to harmonise with other players' programmes. With this in mind, personnel in the ministry tasked to facilitate communication with other stakeholders need to carry out this function effectively. As it will be appreciated, the Ministry of Education partners with other stake holders engage the ministry at various levels. The need to have personnel with sound ICT skills, therefore, is inevitable at all levels of the education system. It goes without saying, therefore, that ICT skills are a must in all personnel in the sector. Skilled personnel will facilitate effective communication. Effective communication is a catalyst for any successful business (Bronson 2006, p. 70).

Education is also a business and one which affects all sections of society; families, communities, businesses, industries and government. It is, therefore, necessary that this business is done with effective communication, without which several programmes in this business will fail or will not be carried out to expected levels and desired results may not be produced.

Examples of ICT skills that were found to be mostly lacking in most personnel at all levels in the ministry were identified as follows:

(i) *Using the computer* and programmes such as word, excel, power point, internet explorer, outlook and publisher.

(ii) *Skills to send documents* electronically, such as using email and by fax.

(iii) *Opening and receiving electronic documents*.

Undoubtedly, such skills would help personnel to communicate faster and more conveniently. Quick communication, in turn, would lead to quicker and successful implementation of programmes besides ensuring quality service delivery.

It should be noted also that the quality of service is highly affected by how timely the service is provided. Timely communication facilitates quality decision making and helps in planning activities well and allocating resources effectively. Effective communication is also essential to good organisation. For instance, parents of pupils and students in institutions of learning at various levels, time and again require information about their children's performance and welfare in these institutions. Such information is vital to parents for several reasons such as planning and monitoring their children's progression. Learners too, need information as a means of feedback and motivation in their learning process. Those who deal with the ministry at district, provincial and national headquarters for cases such as payments, approvals, reports and other forms of authorities or supply of some information, require such services timely. Loss of time which could arise from being made to wait for too long, is equated to loss of money or profit in a business sense (Bronson 2006, p. 56). Effective communication is, therefore, necessary and beneficial to personnel in the ministry, as well as to clients and partners to the ministry. With the foregoing, it can be safely said that effective communication is a prerequisite by the ministry for provision of quality services to its clients and within its administrative structure.

5.4.2.2. Need for effective communication skills

It was generally acknowledged by all respondents that sometimes, poor communication skills affected the implementation of programmes and quality of services in the education system. Some of the factors necessary for effective communication are as follows:

- (i) **Clarity:** The communication should use appropriate and exact words in order to convey clear meaning and make understanding easier.
- (ii) **Courtesy:** The communication should take into consideration, the feelings of the receiver. It should not be biased and should show respect and politeness.
- (iii) **Correctness:** Correct communication should have correct and exact information which is also well timed and respond to the needs of the receiver and sender of the information.
- (iv) **Consideration:** Communication should take into consideration, views, requirements and needs of the recipient or audience. It should also stimulate interest in the receiver of the information.
- (v) **Conciseness:** What is communicated should be convey in least possible words and should not be repetitive.
- (vi) **Concreteness:** Communication should not leave room for misinterpretation but be particular and clear. The information given should be supported with specific facts and figures.
- (vii) **Completeness:** The communication should give all necessary information to the receiver. It should not have missing crucial information nor leave questions in the minds of the receiver.

The factors given above are termed as the 7 C's of effective communication (www.managementstudyguide.com). When taken into consideration, the factors enumerated here can greatly improve the effectiveness of communication and thus, lead to successful programme implementation and delivery of quality services in the ministry besides helping to build and maintain working relationships and partnerships at all levels.

Considering the factors given above, most respondents observed that there was need to improve communication skills among personnel in the ministry. It is worth noting that while effective communication is a facilitator for successful programme implementation and delivery of services, its very opposite; ineffective communication, can be a serious obstacle. Misunderstandings, distortion, misinterpretation and misrepresentation of facts and other forms of data can arise where there is ineffective communication. Ultimately, all these negative elements cause delays in communication. For correct explanations, clarifications, corrections and retractions to be made, especially if the information was already sent out, it could be too late and perhaps serious damage could have been made beyond redemption. Besides, it would take too long to reverse the impact which wrong information would have had, talking less about how institutional image would have been adversely affected. The need for effective communication, therefore, is more critical than meets the eye. Good communication skills are key to successful programme implementation and provision of quality services in the education system besides maintaining healthy work relations among personnel at various levels.

Essentially, most of the respondents identified communication skills that needed to be improved in the education system as follows:

- (i) Taking a call and recording a message correctly.
- (ii) Addressing fellow workmates with respect.
- (iii) Giving clear instructions.
- (iv) Using official language as one universally understood by all concerned.
- (v) Passing on information at the right time and in the right environment.
- (vi) Using polite language instead of “barking or shouting orders.”
- (vii) Listening effectively and engaging in productive conversation.
- (viii) Report writing.
- (ix) Writing official correspondence such as Letters and memos.

(x) Presenting statistics in different formats such as graphs, charts and other illustrations.

(xi) Basic but appropriate ICT skills such as presenting information in Power point.

(xii) Production of a variety of print materials such as Flyers, Brochures and Newsletters.

(xiii) Public speaking such as taking radio and television interviews.

(xiv) Negotiating skills and dealing with clients politely.

As it will be appreciated the skills enumerated above are applicable in different situations. Depending on the nature of the work one does, they would apply to some categories of personnel in varying degrees. However, some are universal to all personnel despite the nature of their work and their positions on the job. For example, speaking to other people politely is a necessity for all, no matter their position on the job, while taking a phone message is a must in all forms of communication at all levels without which information will be distorted or misunderstood.

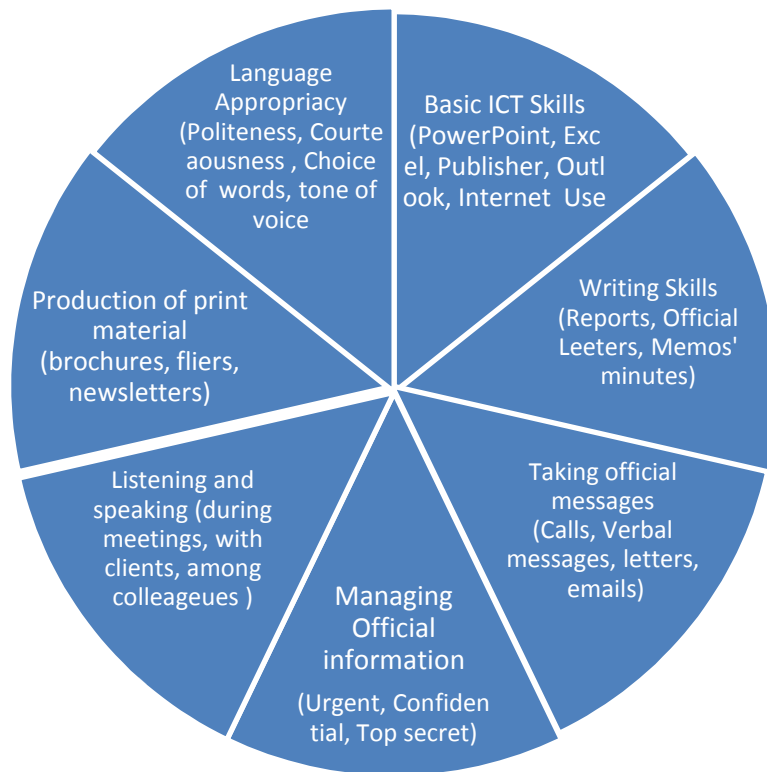
In addition, most respondents said that sometimes communication was delayed not because people did not know what to do but because of the manner in which they handled the communication process. In other words the information could be;

- **Misrepresented:** What is said does not convey the intended meaning,
- **Misinterpreted:** A wrong meaning is derived for information given,
- **Misunderstood:** Meaning of information given is missed,
- **Mismanaged:** The use of given information is not as intended or poorly handled.

Noting that communication skills are critical to effective communication, it was suggested that all personnel that initiate, convey, processes and act on all forms of information in the Ministry should be oriented on basic communication skills. It is such skills that would be used to share information, relate to each other better and harmoniously serve clients more effectively and facilitate implementation of programmes speedily and successfully, besides other social and

professional benefits. While it is acknowledged that some personnel in the ministry have proficiency in both ICT and verbal communication, majority of the personnel would do with capacity building in these skills. Capacity building in this area needs to be continuous in order to empower personnel to be relevant and effective in the face of changing technology in today's world.

Figure 3: Summary of Communication skills recommended to be upgraded in ministry personnel to improve communication



Source: Field Data

5.4.3. Huge administrative structure and too many information check points

Another factor which was found to cause ineffective communication in the education system was the big administrative structure along which information flows. Communication in the education system is done through laid down channels. These channels can be Top-Down; from higher levels to lower levels, Bottom –Up; from lower levels to higher administrative levels and horizontal or lateral; across personnel at the same level of authority. The point to note is that most decisions for most activities have to pass through several people in various positions before a final decision which allows for taking action or carrying out an activity is made. It was observed by most respondents, especially non administrators that even when the channels of communication involved a number of people, there was little input that was made by most of the officers through which information passed.

In other words, the manner in which the process of communication takes place in the ministry is such that there are a number of handlers of information in the process. For example, registry clerks, registry officers, human resource personnel, and administrators at different levels of the education system. The involvement of a number of people in the process does not only imply delayed communication but also renders the process susceptible to abuse and other negative trends in the system, as will be discussed in subsequent parts of this discourse.

For example, it was noted (with sadness) that when writing an application letter the first page will have no substance apart from such traditional terms as UFS (Under flying Seal), Noted, Seen or FYA (For Your Attention) by different officers in the line of authority. These comments were seen to add little or no value or not to significantly affect the final decision at the end of the process, apart from being a stamp of authority in the process, and a culture that has existed over the years. Since correspondence has to pass through several people before a final decision is made, it takes a lot of time to have actual or required action take place.

5.4.4. Rare or non availability of actioning officers

It was observed by a number of respondents that much as information had to pass through all the channels laid down, further delay was caused by the unavailability of actioning officers in their offices or at the station. Actioning officers in this case are officers whose authority is necessary to process cases as demanded by their functions and roles. Some officers were reported to be

rarely found in their offices, making progress on the communication process to stall several times.

5.4.5. Lack of delegation of duties

Unfortunately, some senior personnel do not delegate duties to other available staff, while they are away. This counterproductive practice “Jams” progress for most activities as authority to proceed with an activity would not have been given. In the Civil Service using initiative is not always good initiative, especially if it is not okayed by the powers that be. Then, (when it is done without blessings of the authority) it would be termed insubordination to authority and could attract sanctions, despite the good intentions the initiator might have had. Time and again, these authorities are reported to be “attending a meeting somewhere,” usually for unspecified period. In their absence, they do not delegate duties to other available staff who could do what they are supposed to do equally well. This scenario shows that the communication process sometimes stalls along the way, for several reasons, besides having to pass through a number of offices. Clearly, this is another reason for delayed and subsequently, ineffective communication in the system.

5.4.6. Delayed feedback

It should be realised, also, that the same channels of communication are most times, followed downward, when giving feedback. This doubles the time it takes for the process of communication to be completed.

Also, with a very big administrative structure in the ministry and with the need to follow channels of communication, which as has been seen, are bureaucratic, institutions at the lower levels of the structure are often at the receiving end and are adversely affected by the delays that go with the communication channels at play, in the system. Lower organs depend mostly on decisions or authority that comes from higher authorities. If such authority is delayed, implementation of activities and programmes are bound to be delayed too.

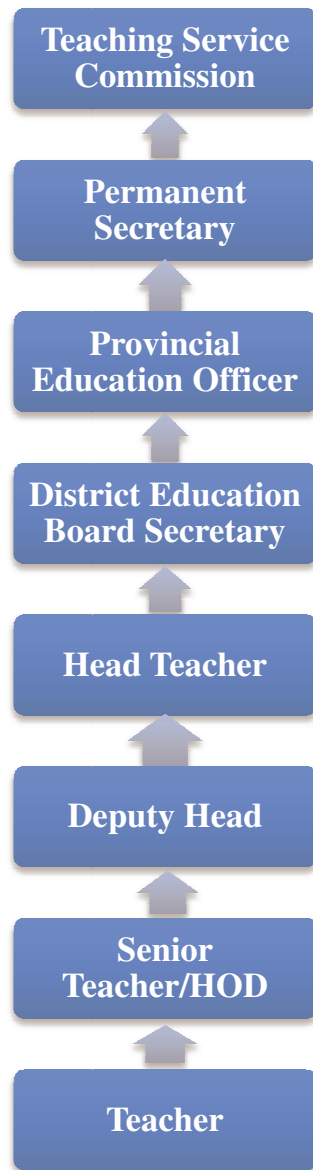
5.4.7. Centralisation

It was strongly suggested by most respondents that the bureaucracy experienced in the way communication was done in the education system, be reduced significantly in order to facilitate quick and more effective communication in the system by decentralising some functions to lower organs where actual work was done for most activities. When Decentralisation is effected, implementation would be faster and quality of service improved. Unnecessary channels would be done away with thereby quickening the communication process significantly.

For instance, it was felt by most respondents that decisions to do with schools such as staff issues, school projects and school funding did not need the authorisation from the PEO or Permanent Secretary but from DEBS who is nearer to the schools. Other decisions, especially those to do with teachers could be presided over by the school administrators, who after all, would know better about the teachers than for instance, the Permanent Secretary stationed in Lusaka, who may have never come in contact with the individual teacher. Reports would then be forwarded to the PEO and Permanent Secretary for their records and attention, in due course, instead of having to wait for the course of the communication process in its full length, back and forth. This is an example of management systems that need to change so that they become more responsive and relevant, and timely so, to various stakeholders in the education system instead for a teacher waiting for twenty one (21) years to be confirmed in appointment, for example.

The structure below shows an example of channels which have to be followed in processing teacher cases, for example when a teacher makes an application, for instance, for a transfer, within the ministry:

Figure 4: Channels of communication followed in processing teacher cases

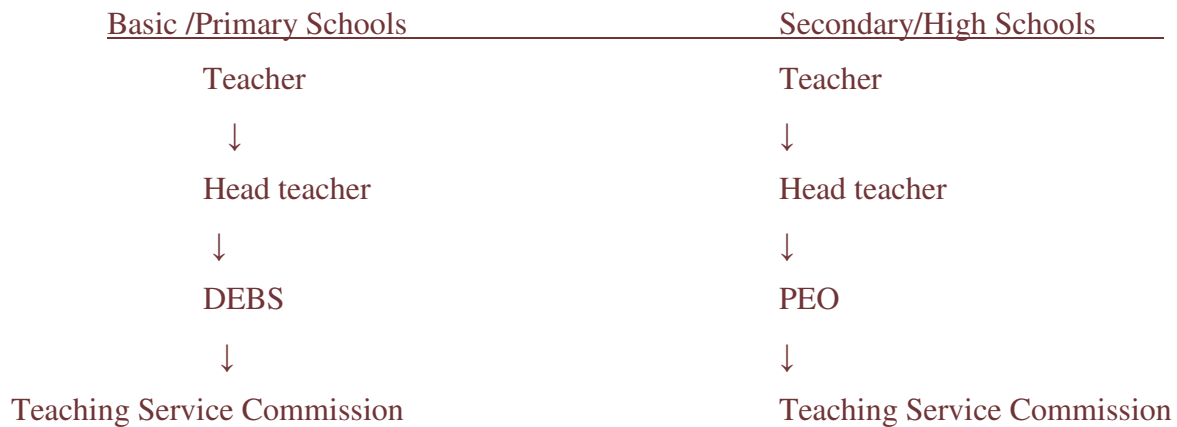


Source: Field Data

Note also that, along the way, the application could be referred to other authorities not shown in the hierarchy given above, for specific comments or observations. Also, the same channel would have to be followed when giving feedback.

The illustration given above is typical of the principle of *Direction of Communication* which Pluckrose (1999, p. 213) identifies as having an effect on communication effectiveness. Direction in this case, refers to the channel through which information flows in a system. As has been discussed here, in the case of the Ministry of Education, the channels have been found to be unnecessarily long and this negatively affects programme implementation and the quality of service delivery at most levels of the education system. This situation is undesirable and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency, as far as communication and its effect on programme implementation and delivery of services are concerned.

Figure 4: Suggested decentralised channel of communication for processing teacher Cases



Source: Field Data

Note: Copies of relevant information on these cases could be availed to other authorities at other higher levels such as PEO and Permanent Secretary for their attention only.

The channel of communication suggested above, is significantly shorter than the one currently followed. With a shorter channel of communication, decisions would take a shorter time to be made. This would also make the process cheaper and more effective.

5.5. The effects of ineffective communication on implementation and service delivery in the education system.

Having looked at various aspects of communication in the education system, it is now necessary to analyse how the generally ineffective communication that exists at most levels in the education system affects implementation of Government programmes and service delivery.

Without effective communication a number of undesirable effects manifest in the education system. Some of the major ones enumerated by most respondents are as follows:

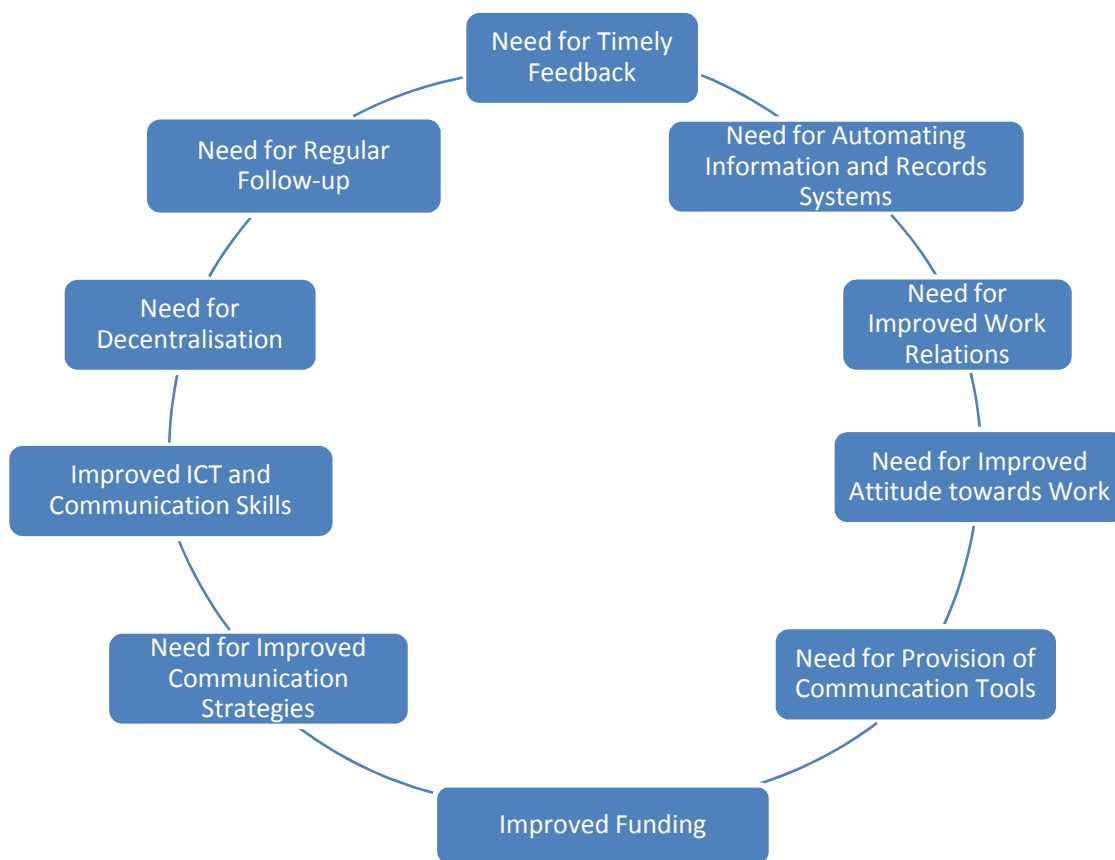
- (i) ***Programme implementation failure:*** Ineffective communication sometimes makes some programmes to be overtaken by other events. Also, with time, priorities of an institution change. For example, the need to procure examination materials may override a building project if resources are scarce.
- (ii) ***Delayed programme implementation:*** Long channels of communication to seek authorisation and requesting for financial, material or technical support take too long in the sector. This process delays actual work on the ground.
- (iii) ***Poor quality service delivery:*** one aspect of quality service delivery is timely decision making. With long channels of communication, delayed feedback and delayed decision, quality of service delivery becomes poor.
- (iv) ***High cost of programme implementation:*** Economic factors such as cost of services and materials do change time and again. In case of an increase in the cost of services and materials, for example, due to inflation, budgets for projects and programmes would have to be adjusted upwards. The cost of implementation and delivering services becomes higher, as a result.
- (v) ***Poor performance and low productivity by personnel:*** It is a necessity for people who work together to communicate effectively. Without effective communication there will be no coordination of efforts of members of a team. As a result of lack of coordination among the personnel, more time will be taken to achieve desired goals

- and objectives. Less work will be done in an environment lacking unity of purpose due to ineffective communication.
- (vi) **Poor working relations among personnel:** Harmony at the place of work, like in any set up where people do things together or live together, is key to achieving group or organisational goals. Where there is no harmony, it will be difficult to share ideas, consult one another, correct one another or work towards same goals and objectives. Instead an atmosphere of division, jealous, hate, lack of cooperation and conflict will be the order of the day. Such an environment or atmosphere will lead to a waste of time for productive work and instead bring a preoccupation of personal issues. In other words, people who do not have good relations cannot work well together. On the contrary effective communication builds relationships and even when there are differences, they will be resolved harmoniously.
 - (vii) **Poor organisational image:** Part of effective communication involves relating to clients and partners in a good way. As service provider, the Ministry of Education works with various stakeholders with various commitments, interests and work cultures. Continued delays in giving service, sharing information, giving feedback, carrying out activities and programmes, for whatever reason would not go well with these partners and stakeholders hence creating a poor image. With a poor image comes the loss of partners. The Ministry of Education needs all the partners it can have to provide quality education at various levels.
 - (viii) **Dissatisfied clientele:** The Ministry of Education has a mandate to provide quality education to all citizens. If these clients become dissatisfied with the service being offered by the ministry, it will become irrelevant to the needs of the very people it is supposed to serve.
 - (ix) **Poor education results:** As already indicated, the mandate of the ministry of Education is to all. In order to achieve this goal, the programmes and activities in the ministry have to be well organised and implemented. The core business of the ministry is teaching and learning. These processes cannot be stand alone activities but

have to be supported by all the structures of in the ministry. Without such support, the results from educational institutions are bound to be poor.

- (x) ***Slow educational development:*** Education is a right and need. Its provision, though, is affected by changing global trends. Also, its provision should be tailored to the needs of the people at individual, group and national levels. Its development, therefore, should be in tune with such needs instead of being mere tradition.

Figure 5: Summary of areas of improvement needed in the education sector.



Source: Field Data

5.6. What needs to be done to improve communication?

5.6.1. Improve on supervision

Noting that channels of communication are a factor in the education system and that there were a number of players in the communication process in this system, the question of the need for supervision in the education system was found to be relevant to the study in the light of inadequacies and poor performance cited by some sections of society, time and again, through different media and through clients' complaints.

To begin with, it should be noted that authority is an important factor in all settings and activities in the education system. Recognising, acknowledging and following instructions which come from this authority at various levels of the system was found to be crucial to getting things done in the system.

Meanwhile, some respondents observed that there were a number of instances when this authority was not effective in ensuring that work was being done in the right way, at the right time and perhaps, for the right reasons. Sometimes, authority was absent, unconcerned or simply reluctant or inactive. It was felt that there were personnel in the ministry who could be described as "bad eggs." Bad eggs in the sense that they did not uphold professional conduct and ethics on the job which affected performance and productivity on the job. The attitude of such personnel towards work and towards fellow workmates was described as counterproductive and left a lot to be desired for and impacted negatively on the communication process in their institutions and to their clientele. It was felt that with such elements in the system, there was need to have closer checks and balances at the system in order to reduce on possible negative effects of their conduct, attitude and poor performance on the job.

Below is the representation of views by different respondents on the need for strengthening supervision so as to improve effective communication in the education system.

Table 6: Perception of personnel on the need to strengthen supervision in the ministry

Personnel Classification	Response (Strongly Agree, Agree, Does not Agree)
Administrators	Agree
Middle Management	Strongly Agree
Other Staff (Non Administrators)	Agree

Source: Field Data

The results from the respondents generally showed that the need to improve supervision in the education system was there. Most respondents felt that improved supervision would also improve effective communication in the education system. All categories of personnel agreed that supervision needed to improve at most levels of the education system. Yet, it was the degree of supervision and the manner in which it was done that perhaps needed to be revisited.

Meanwhile, the need to strengthen supervision in the ministry was acknowledged by all respondents. It was felt that supervision needed to be effected at all levels. For instance, it was felt that “*Supervisors also needed to be supervised.*” It was argued that ineffective communication and subsequent delays and failures in a number of activities and programmes was not always the fault of junior staff or non administrators but those in higher positions of authority as well. Mostly, their failures (administrators) were seen in form of non availability on the job and taking too much time to expedite issues needing their attention or authority, among others. In view of this, it was suggested that strengthening supervision be effected at all levels of the education system.

In order to effectively analyse reasons for most respondents favoring improved supervision, it is helpful to understand the meaning of the term supervision. In getting to understand the meaning

of any terminology, it is useful to identify the context in which it is used. Since this study was specifically in the field of Education, the term supervision will be discussed from the education point of view.

Edgar (1984, p. 27), coins the saying that, “The qualification of a Supervisor is **Super Vision.**”

The attributes of a supervisor in this context are outlined as follows;

- *An acute sight to see what is happening,*
- *Insight to understand the significance of what is happening,*
- *Foresight to see what could be happening,*
- *Hindsight to see what should have happened that did not happen and*
- *Second sight to see what did not happen, to happen the next time.*

The statements outlined above suggests a number of critical aspects of supervision. Most notably among them are the following elements:

Ability to see: In order to see, one should be present. This implies that the presence and availability of a supervisor is of importance on the job.

Ability to understand: Katz (1955, p. 34), describes this as a Conceptual Skill. Conceptual skills are to do with ideas and concepts which is mental work such as shaping meaning out of situations. This implies that the supervisor should have particular skills to see and understand the value of what is at play or lack of it, in relation to the core business of the job.

Ability to see beyond the obvious: to look ahead and read between the lines. This is an important attribute in that it helps to prepare for what is to come or avoid undesirable outcomes before they occur.

Ability to reflect: or look back and learn from past experiences. Ideas that shape the future arise from lessons of yesterday and today. Looking back and learning from past experiences and relating that to what is to be done in a current situation is quite progressive, moving ahead in a better way.

Ability to use skills, knowledge and experiences: to plan better and prepare for the future as a way of making improvements is indeed second sight. The above attributes are important skills for supervisors in order for them to be effective.

In addition, supervision has an aspect of practicality and involvement in the process. The supervisor is required to work together with those being supervised to ensure the efficacy; skill and confidence of the supervisee. The objective of this partnership is to facilitate professional development and maintain set standards in the system. It can be seen from this explanation that the role of supervision, among others, is to ensure that standards are followed on the job or any undertaking. The supervisee is expected to achieve professional growth. In other words he or she should exhibit a variety of abilities which should translate to expected performance on the job.

When the supervisee performs better, there is another benefit; their morale and job satisfaction is increased. Also this becomes an opportunity for personal professional empowerment unlike a burnout or stress that might arise from condemnation for poor performance. It can be seen from the examples highlighted here that there are a number of professional benefits for enhancing supervision at the work place.

Meanwhile, supervision should not be used as a mechanism to find faults but as a routine way of checking on work so that it is done to standards and offering professional support, where it is needed. A supervisor can also be likened to an overseer. The overseer's usefulness is much more before damage is done, consequently he or she should be available to the one being overseen for professional development and achieving desired goals.

To be able to carry out supervisory roles and functions effectively, one must also be articulate and be able to communicate effectively with others. The supervisor should also be an example for an effective communicator. Without effective communication skills, it would be difficult for a supervisor to ably guide, correct and inspire those being supervised for professional development.

Fayol (1949, p. 20), supports the importance of effective communication in increasing management efficiency. Through the Administrative Theory, Henry Fayol identifies information dissemination, monitoring information flow and information processing as key elements which need to be well managed by supervisors and managers in order to achieve efficiency in the organization. As has been discussed already, the structure of the Ministry of Education is very large, covering various levels, such as institutions of learning, Districts and Provincial administrative centres besides the National Headquarters.

Also, accomplishment of tasks should be a goal of any supervisor through those that they supervise. It follows, therefore, that supervision at the work place is a necessity, more so where performance does not meet expected standards. The Ministry of Education surely stands to benefit a lot from improved supervision among its rank and file.

As earlier noted, the channels of communication in the ministry are laid bureaucratically, up the ladder of authority, down the ladder or indeed across the structure, from point to point. Any inefficiency at any level in the structure, therefore, has repercussions on the effectiveness of other personnel in the process.

Supervision, with its mandate to check on what is being done to ensure adherence to standards and facilitating professional growth by the supervisee, cannot be divorced from the education system. With such a large workforce found across the whole country, checking for adherence to standards is not only important but necessary. Strengthening the process of supervision through provision of relevant resources and upgrading supervisory skills is vital to effective communication in the education system on a number of scores. For example, it has been shown that supervision does not only benefit the system but also, the players in the system such as the supervisee. Embracing supervision in any organisation, therefore, has multi benefits and worth institutionalising and strengthening, more so for the Ministry of Education with a large administrative structure and whose core business is service.

5.6.2. Undistorted timely flow of Information

In such a big administrative structure, ensuring that appropriate information is disseminated to all relevant levels of the structure is no easy task. Not only are there challenges in ensuring that the information is disseminated on time but also that the information is not distorted before it reaches the intended recipient. This study has revealed through the findings that both timely communication and efficient processing of information in the education system has been a challenge. With a serious lack of appropriate communication tools, poor communication infrastructure, lack of ICT and lack of ICT skilled personnel at most levels of the sector, the challenge of achieving effective communication is quite big.

5.6.3. Need for improved management skills

Since different styles of management were employed by different administrators, strengthening supervision would be determined by the varying needs of individual institutions, departments and other units in the education system. Arising from this observation, the need for improved management skills at various levels of the education system was strongly called for by respondents. While it was recognized that in the teaching fraternity, Educational Management and Leadership (EML) courses were being offered to school administrators, most respondents were for the idea of extending such training to non teaching administrators such as at district and provincial levels and other support staff in the system.

5.6.4. Improved work culture and sense of responsibility

Meanwhile, it is was also argued by some respondents, especially those in middle management, and even in lower positions that it was a sense of responsibility that needed to be cultivated in personnel for them to do what they needed to do, with or without supervision since the supervisor cannot always be their to check on what is being done. Perhaps this could be the ideal situation desired by most personnel, including administrators or supervising officers.

However, it should be qualified that the need to strengthen supervision does not mean there is lack of sense of responsibility among personnel in the ministry. There are some personnel who are doing a good job at all levels of the ministry, but unfortunately there are also irresponsible

ones too. It is perhaps, the need to empower them with work tools and upgrade their skills that needs to be stepped up, besides motivating them in one way or another.

5.6.5. The need for timely feedback

One of the attributes of effective communication is that it should be a complete cycle. In other words, the flow of information should pass through the cycle completely. This study showed that in the Ministry of Education the communication cycle was often broken, delayed or not completed. As a result, there was usually a problem of delayed feedback on a number of cases in the system.

From what most respondents said and from the records for a number of correspondences in the system which were availed to the researcher, it was shocking to see how long it takes to process cases even within the same institution, department or directorate. Appointments, confirmations, payments and approvals seemed to rank high on the list of cases where feedback was poor in the ministry.

Measures to ensure timely feedback is given are urgently needed. Personnel at all levels should be sensitised to see the need for timely feedback and awareness that other decisions depended on feedback they have to provide, without which such decisions will be delayed.

5.6.6. Need for follow up

In most cases follow ups were found to be lacking. For example, after endorsing, signing or putting a comment on a document, most officers did not follow up on how the issue they had worked on had proceeded. It was suggested that a follow up system that would check on the progress and status of cases being processed be put in place at all levels of the education system so that unnecessary delays in the process could be stopped.

With a good follow up system, it would be possible to track cases or flow of information at every level. Follow up could also help to check for challenges in the communication process that could be barriers for progress. Such challenges would be addressed by relevant authorities at whatever level, and progress made.

Also, with a follow up system in place, it would make the personnel to be more dutiful knowing that any delays on their part would be seen or known. As a result, some sense of commitment would be instilled in the personnel at all levels. In this way, unnecessary delays in the communication process would be avoided, and timely implementation of programmes would be enhanced.

5.7. Causes for delayed feedback

Some common causes for delayed feedback in the education system were given as follows:

5.7.1. Unclear instructions

Some information is presented in unclear manner making it difficult for the next person to understand what is required as the next course of action. Clarity, simple language which is straight forward and plain could help those acting on the issue to easily understand the information. Technical issues, where applicable should also be explained.

5.7.2. Incompetence and poor or no orientation upon recruitment

Some personnel were reported to lack skill and knowledge of what they were supposed to do as their job roles and duties. As a result, they take too long to act on the information passed on to them for action. It was reported that part of the cause of this was misplacement of personnel. Some personnel were reported to be in positions they are not qualified for but are in those positions because they were corruptly engaged. When they join the system, they receive no orientation on what they are supposed to do on the job. As a result, their performance on the job fails to meet the expectations.

Other personnel do jobs different from their areas of specialisation. Without skill, work takes too long to be executed and this delays the communication process, implementation and service delivery, subsequently.

In addition, it was reported that some officers did not understand the system itself. It was observed, for instance, that the same procedures that are enshrined in the system are not understood by those that are supposed to follow the procedures. As a result of such

misunderstanding or incompetence, delivery of services and implementation of programmes is affected negatively.

5.7.3. Lack of adequate and properly functioning communication tools

Without enough functioning communication tools, facilitating the communication process cannot be done effectively. A piece of work will take too long to do when using malfunctioning tools. Also, if there are few tools to be used, it means personnel have to wait to take turns in using the few available tools. For instance, the lack of computers in most institutions and departments is a big problem.

5.7.4. Non availability of actioning officers

In the bureaucratic system followed in the ministry, information has to move from one officer to another for comments, approval or onward transmission to the next level. On its own, this procedure was found to be too long considering the number of officers through which the information is supposed to pass. In case of a delay at any point, this would affect the flow of information at other points. The delay is often caused by non availability of actioning officers in their offices.

If, for example, a file is taken to some office for action and the officer responsible is not there, the practice in the Ministry is often that the process has to wait. The waiting will be for as long as the officer concerned is not available, for whatever reason and for whatever period. In a system where the flow of information goes both forward and backward; when seeking authority (forward) and when giving feedback (backward through the same channel), the delay in the communication process is worsened by delays at various points in the communication process. This trend was found to be common at all the levels in the ministry especially those in positions of high authority. Sad as this sounded, it was unfortunately a reality in the education system, officers not being available and usually, with no one to do what they are supposed to do.

It was also found that sometimes, the absence or non availability of personnel would not be known let alone explained by workmates, a secretary or supervising officer. When an explanation would be given, it would be that the officer in question was attending a meeting

whose nature, purpose (whether official or unofficial) and venue would often be unexplained for purposes of courtesy, most times.

In addition, it was observed in several instances that a lot of time was taken for personnel business instead of doing official duties. For example, entertaining a friend or relative, doing personal and unofficial work during office hours was found to be common, especially among office workers. Clearly, such practices negatively affect effective communication at the workplace. It was no wonder that in the education system, sometimes it could take as long as three, five, ten or even twenty one years for a teacher to be confirmed.

Also, examples of projects that have failed or abandoned by contractors due to non release of project funds, are numerous. Delays in processing payments such as for retired personnel were reported to be serious on account of lack of funding- sometimes, even some funding was released, the payment process was marred with corrupt practices, retirement or transfer. It was for this reason that retired or transferred personnel would still be found at their old stations years after receiving letters of transfer or retirement, respectively. Admittedly, this led to another problem of scarcity of accommodation at such stations since those who needed to vacate living quarters would still be occupying them. With such a culture, programme implementation is bound to be delayed or worse still, fail completely or overtaken by other events. Clients are inconvenienced and subjected to untold miseries, silently, especially those who have to travel from other areas away from the station of authority, usually centrally located.

5.7.5. Missing documents

This rather unfortunate phenomenon is a reality in the education system. It was described as very frustrating, retrogressive, costly and disturbing by all respondents. Largely, the issue of missing documents was found to be as a result of the manual system of using hard copy documents, using manual systems for large numbers of documents, kept in one place and with inefficiency or human factors by personnel was found to be the cause for missing documents. Poor record keeping systems were also attributed to the problem.

For example, with big numbers of personnel in the education system, having documents for all personnel falling under a particular administrative authority level such as a district, province and national headquarters in one room, becomes a nightmare. Registry clerks, registry officers, human resource officers, administrators and outside clients, all bemoaned the problem of missing documents in the system. It was strongly felt that it was high time the ministry moved from manual to automated information systems and record keeping in order to get passed this problem. The Human factor in personnel such as laziness, reluctance and corrupt tendencies which lead to unnecessary delays in the system should be rooted out from the education system in order to achieve effective communication.

5.7.6. The need for improved attitude towards work

Like it has been alluded to already, the ministry carries out its programmes at various levels of its structure and through personnel in these structures. The attitude, conduct, values and practices of personnel at various levels directly or indirectly affects how well programmes and activities are carried out. In other words, it is people who implement programmes through their various roles in the structure. How these people go about their on daily basis, therefore, has a direct bearing on the expected outcomes of their work.

It was reported by most respondents that attitude towards work was generally poor in the education system. This was reported to be more pronounced especially in the following sections at all levels of the system;

- (i) Registry
- (ii) Secretarial staff
- (iii) Accounts
- (iv) Human Resource
- (v) Administration/ Management
- (vi) Teaching fraternity
- (vii) Infrastructure and maintenance

Table 6: Performance Rating By Sections in the System

Section in the Education System	Performance rating on attitude towards work
Registry	Very poor
Accounts	Poor
Human Resource	Poor
Administration	Average
Secretarial	Below Average
Teaching fraternity	Average
Infrastructure and maintenance	Below Average

Source: Field Data

It will be noted that in the rating, there was no category which was rated as “Good” or “Very good”.

It was generally observed that there was need to improve the attitude towards work at all levels of the system. The sections seen to be doing very poorly as far as attitude towards work was concerned were the Registry office and Accounts sections. Most respondents felt that the personnel in these sections seemed to work too independently or without close supervision. They were also reported to exercise unexplained authority to the disservice of clients. Their professional conduct was questioned in the following areas according to their areas of operations:

Secretarial staff

- Uncooperative attitude
- Slow conveyance of documents to relevant authorities. Cases where documents meant to be forwarded to authorities for attention, ended up in drawers or filing cabinets for sometime, were reported.
- Impoliteness, rigidity and lack of courtesy to clients
- Need for upgrading of skills on the job

Registry

- Not Punctual
- Impolite language to clients
- Poor record keeping, selling confidential information
- Delays in giving feedback and updates
- Slow transmission of information from one level to another
- Corrupt practices such as soliciting for inducement through such language as (“ Ya lunch”, “Ya Drink,” “Ya talk time”; something for lunch a drink or talk time)

Human resource

- Delayed processing of cases
- Poor documentation and record keeping
- Lack of courtesy to clients
- Some level of incompetence
- Employing unskilled/unqualified people in exchange for favours, social, financial or material
- Use of nepotism, tribalism and other unethical conduct
- Corrupt practices such as in processing appointments in recruitment exercises
- Lack of objectivity in making appointments promotions due to self preservation

Accounts

- Delays in expediting payments
- Non availability in offices
- Corrupt practices, asking for commissions of tips on payments they make

Infrastructure and maintenance

- Delays in approving construction plans
- Irregular visits to project sites
- Use of cheap material and cheap labour
- Delays in processing payments
- Corrupt practices in supervising projects

Procurement

- Delays in processing payments
- Procurement of cheap material
- Inflating prices of materials and services
- Corrupt practices in selecting contractors resulting in poor workmanship
- Long channels and procedures in information processing (Red Tape)
- Lack of timely feedback to suppliers and contractors

Administration/ management

- Delays in decision making (Red Tape)
- Non availability in offices
- Lack of accountability in the use of public funds and other resources
- Bureaucratic tendencies in implementing decision

Teaching fraternity

- Laissez-faire attitude towards work such as laziness and poor attitude towards work
- Late reporting for work
- Occasional misconduct, abuse of pupils, drunkenness

Having looked at aspects of attitudes towards work, the following areas of weaknesses were reported to be in need of improvements:

- (i) **Punctuality for work:** Late reporting for work and early knocking off.
- (ii) **Commitment to duty:** posture attitude towards work.
- (iii) **Hard work:** Doing actual work as required by their principal responsibilities and duties.
- (iv) **Reliability:** Trustworthiness and carrying out tasks as per job requirements.
- (v) **Discipline :** Professional behaviour and conduct violates work ethics and harmony at the work place such as abscondment from duty, insubordination, indecent dressing or other conduct detrimental to professional stability.
- (vi) **Language appropriacy:** Officially acceptable language, which is polite and not offensive to fellow staff, clients or management.

- (vii) **Confidentiality:** Need to respect secrecy of individuals, organizational and other non public or confidential information.
- (viii) **Objectivity:** Need to carry out work without biases or other influences out of the professional lines.
- (ix) **Accountable use of public resources:** Need for accountable use of public funds, office artifacts, and transport among others.
- (x) **Impartiality:** Need for public service workers to carry out their responsibilities in a fair and just manner.

(Cabinet Office; Code of Ethics For The Public Service 1999, p. 5).

The above attributes cited as in need of improvements in the ministry personnel are critical to fostering high productivity in the work place. It is hoped that all administrators at all levels will take time to address these inadequacies. Left to continue, the deficiencies highlighted in this discourse would further compromise implementation of government programmes and quality of service in the education system. Besides, people who require services from the sector such as cooperating partners, parents, learners and members of the public would be affected negatively by such negative trends.

5.7.7. Need for Incentives

On the other hand, it was found during this study, that there are still men and women working in the education system who are devoted to duty who, even under tough conditions, were always trying hard, to do their best on the job. It was felt that as a way of motivating such staff, there was need to institute a reward system in the education system. Northouse, (1997, p. 189), calls this, “Encouraging the Heart.”

He suggests rewarding accomplishment, recognizing effort and giving attention as a way of encouraging and giving support to personnel in an organization, so as to enhance productivity, performance and build self confidence in workers. It would hold water to say that there has been little motivation of staff in the education system despite the generally poor conditions in which

the staff have to work under most times. Yet, this cannot be justification for not doing the right things in the right way on the part of the personnel in this very important sector.

Meanwhile, it was suggested that rewards and other forms of recognition of workers be done on the basis of merit. It was observed that sometimes, awards went to friends, relatives and the favoured and not to those who deserved these awards.

5.7.8. Need for properly planned and organised meetings

Despite their valuable significance in any organisation, in a number of instances, meetings were found to fail to be useful due to the poor manner in which they were organised and conducted. It was felt that despite their frequency in most institutions and departments, they were not usually well planned for in order to be effective and participatory communication tools. Without good preparations and adequate notice to attendees, the participation of the attendees would be unproductive. It was suggested that notices for meetings and agenda items be given to would be participants so that they adequately prepare for the meetings and have significant input during the meeting instead of being mere attendees. Good preparation is the basis of good work, it does not come from thin air. In view of this, there is need for adequate notices for meeting to participants so that they become productive during meetings and other fora.

Without focus, objectivity and implementation of agenda outcomes, meetings, especially when conducted too frequently, were seen to be counterproductive in the education system. They were found to be reasons for absence of personnel from their stations besides being bottomless pits yielding very little results to the advantage of organisations, their clients and staff.

It was suggested that meetings needed to fit into organisational communication strategies which facilitated implementation of programmes and enabled delivery of quality services be organised. Also, they were seen to be opportunities for sharing ideas and tapping into the valuable reservoirs of skills and knowledge found in personnel.

For instance, as a result of sharing expertise and perspectives in meetings, complex organisational issues could be addressed.

Besides, effectively organised meetings had the advantage of having a buy-in effect to members of the organisation. This could be achieved when members are given an opportunity to be part of the discussions relating to their work in an open and objective manner. If the process is objective, decisions made in meetings would be supported by most members. This would help to avoid resistance or delays at the implementation stage. In other words unnecessary delays that would otherwise arise from other members who may not have been party to the decision making process, would be avoided or at least minimised. Meetings can help education personnel to improve service delivery and quick implementation of Government programmes in a number of ways.

Also, meetings could be an opportunity to achieve consensus on a number of issues which are inevitable in groups of people working together. Consensus is very important in every organisation as it is a sign of the participatory workforce. When consensus is reached, it means that all personnel have agreed to work towards the achievement of a common goal. Besides, meetings present an opportunity for making or refining decisions. This is important because people support what they help to create during face-to-face discussions.

In addition, important issues have many dimensions. If an individual solves a complex problem without input from others, the risk is that his or her understanding of the issue would be limited and therefore the solution would be inadequate to the best interests of the organisation or to majority of personnel.

This naturally leads to better strategies, decisions and solutions. Therefore, if the meetings held by the education personnel were well managed inclusive and held in much more objective ways, better outcomes which result into successful implementation and delivery of services would be achieved. Well organised meetings would also be platforms for learning and professional development among staff.

When consistently held and with well thought out agendas, meetings could be a stage for building health working relations among the staff. For example, when they are participatory and widely representative, meetings were also seen to be opportunities to get rid of personal differences that would otherwise, be counterproductive to the organisation. Meetings become counterproductive if they are held as mere talk shops without action plans and follow up

strategies to lead to implementation and if they become fighting grounds for personal conflict. The purpose and outcome of meetings should, therefore, be clear to all participants even before the meeting is held, if it is to be a productive meeting.

One of the most valuable benefits of meetings does not occur at the meeting at all, but afterwards. If, at the end of the meeting, people have a clear idea of what they should do, it would be more productive and members would accomplish more if they left the meeting focused and anticipatory about their follow-up items or to-do lists.

Also, sometimes when administrators give assignments individually, employees often miss out on an understanding of how their assignments fit into the larger picture. As a result, they often take less ownership or sense of urgency for their roles or would be unclear on how to proceed if they got stuck. On the other hand, in a group set up, there is an opportunity to share ideas and enrich decisions.

Consequently, the wide use of meetings as a communication tool can benefit the Ministry in a number of ways as long as they were well run. Besides, meetings can also give education personnel a real opportunity to work as a team.

Meetings also enhance interpersonal communication and presentation skills. It is vitally important to the successful implementation of programmes and service delivery if education personnel can clearly articulate their ideas, ask meaningful questions, and listen effectively.

Furthermore, education personnel can learn in meetings how to work together better and how to manage conflicts more productively, as well as to show professional respect to their colleagues. These desirable benefits can result in a more purposeful, productive, and capable institutions in the education sector. However, it is pointless to hold meetings, and the benefits outlined above cannot be achieved, if they (meetings) were not well planned and conducted effectively.

Furthermore, meetings could be held to solve problems, share information, or even deal with a cross-departmental issue that arises, time and again. When this occurs, it is important for the meeting leader to plan clear transitions from one topic to the next. The chances are high for such meetings to get bogged down if members were not informed beforehand, about the meeting agenda. This is because attendees are unclear about how to participate in each segment. If the

meeting leader is also unclear and unprepared, then the meeting can quickly become counterproductive.

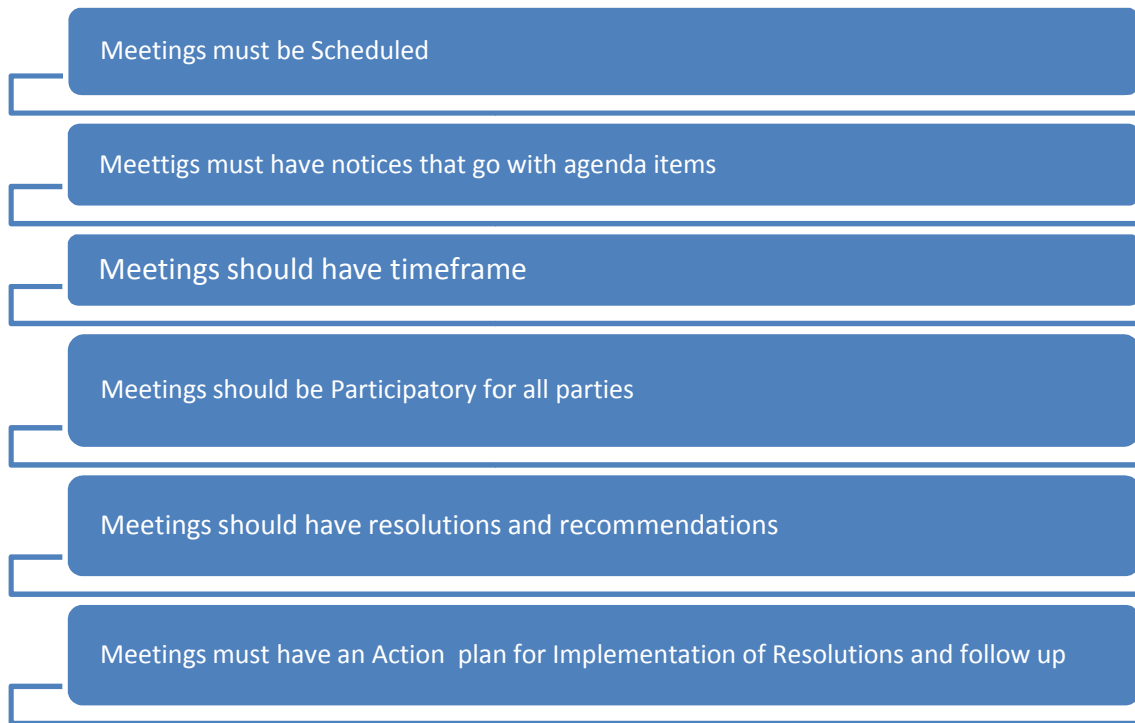
Meetings should not be used as planning stages to undermine, sideline, disadvantage others not privileged to be attendees. Instead they should be used as valuable time invested in the interest of the organisation, its goals and the general well being of its members.

When the personnel have to be away from meetings, they should put in place measures that ensure that in their absence, normal functioning of office duties could continue. In other words, there should be delegation that goes with proper handovers.

Like one respondent observed, “it should be the officer who leaves, not the office, its keys and functions.” In other words, work should continue with other personnel available even in the absence of an office bearer. Delegation of duties, handover should be encouraged in the ministry to ensure continuity of work at all times. No office bearer should be indispensable and make work fail to progress when they are not available.

This means that at every level of the education system, work and normal operations at the workplace should not be jammed by the absence of an individual. The system should continue operating normally in the absence of any officer, no matter what their position is.

Figure 6: Proposed summary of characteristics of productive meetings



Source: Field Data

5.7.9. Need for improved work culture

The concept of work culture relates to the work environment and behaviour, practices, processes, values, norms and associated relationships that make up the work environment. (<http://humanresource.about.com>).

Culture is not usually defined as good or bad although some aspects of your culture are likely to support your progress and success or impede it. It is work norms or acceptable behaviours, practices and the manner in which processes are done in a workplace which give the basis for the evaluation of a work culture.

Although culture cannot be seen, its physical manifestations can be seen through the workforce's behaviour, practices, values and processes they follow in the workplace. For example, a norm of accountability will help to have successful organisational goals while tolerating poor performance and indiscipline will impede an organisation's success. This study

has shown that there were several aspects of work culture in the Ministry of Education which needed to be improved. Most respondents in the study felt that particular improvements were urgently needed in the daily work practices, attributes and behaviours by the personnel.

- (i) Delays in serving clients and processing cases.
- (ii) Lack of feedback.
- (iii) Lack of courtesy to clients.
- (iv) Unprofessional language which is sometimes offensive.
- (v) Corrupt practices.
- (vi) Delays in decision making

It was observed that administrators or managers were key in shaping work culture due to their roles in decision making, authority functions and strategic directions which they are mandated to give.

The need to improve work culture in the education system was seen to be crucial as it would significantly bring about efficiency in the manner that personnel conducted business in the system. Most importantly, it was the culture of unnecessary and long delays, ineffective systems such as in communication and in management that needed to be overhauled. When work culture is improved, personnel will be more committed to their work and perform better. As a result, this improvement will impact positively on implementation of government programmes at all levels and bring about quality service delivery. Discipline among the personnel need to be improved too.

Yet, it is important to acknowledge that with a big administration of the Ministry of Education, ensuring adherence to norms and standards requires a lot of sensitisation and training at various levels of interactions among the personnel at all levels. Administrators especially, should lead the drive to improve work culture in the work place. This could be achieved through supervisory roles and leading by example besides encouraging desired and productive behaviours and practices. Motivating personnel in various ways was also found to be another

way of creating a health work environment and work culture. This was found to be so in that motivated personnel would be committed to upholding and promoting behaviours, practices, values and attitudes which build the organisation and provides opportunities for personal and professional development of its personnel.

5.7.10. Need for positive attitude towards work

Attitude is key to the success or failure of every person or organisation. Attitude is a way of looking at, thinking about or treating something or somebody. Attitude can either be positive or negative. Positive attitude can help any individual or group of people achieve more than they ever imagined. It was observed by a number of respondents that sometimes the personnel in the ministry treated their work with a negative attitude. Such attitude manifested in such behaviours as:

- (i) **Laziness**; slow at doing work, doing work at their own time.
- (ii) **Reluctance**; unnecessary hesitation, inactiveness in doing work, lack of sense of responsibility.
- (iii) **Late reporting for work**; Failure to observe punctuality.
- (iv) **Misconduct**; any behaviour that is outside ethical conduct on the job.
- (v) **Impoliteness**; Bad language, lack of courtesy to clients and fellow workmates.

If the personnel was only motivated by personal gain, and not for example, by a satisfaction that comes with providing quality service and solving problems, it would mean their attitude towards work is very poor. With poor attitude towards work, the personnel at any level cannot be good facilitators of successful implementation of programmes nor any agents of provision of quality service. With this in mind, it is imperative that all the personnel at all levels be sensitised, encouraged and motivated to have a positive attitude towards work so that they become instrumental in successful implementation of government programmes and provision of quality services to all.

5.7.11. Need for improved working relations

As already discussed, interaction among personnel in any work place affect the performance of the organisation in its various functions. Personnel in organisations need to coordinate their efforts through their different roles in order to achieve organisational goals. Such coordination will be very difficult without effective communication. In the absence of health work relations among the personnel in an institution or organisation, it would be difficult to collaborate, have cooperation and sense of unity of purpose.

On the other hand, health work relations allow for open communication, consultation among staff, teamwork and general goodwill for one another on both a social and professional basis. Also, when work relations are not good or health in a work place, they become barriers to effective communication. Such barriers would make it difficult for the personnel to work together and achieve organisational goals. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that health relations be developed at all levels of the system without regard to titles and positions, as these are also, forms of barriers to effective communication in the system. Barriers to effective communication, in whatever forms, such as human or material factors should be eliminated from the education system so that there is easy and effective collaboration among all the personnel at all levels in the education system. This will create a united workforce which networks effectively in carrying out programmes and activities in the sector, successfully to the benefit of all.

While management or authorities at various levels have their prerogative powers of exercising authority, it is necessary that they, as much as possible, allow an environment which facilitates public participation in decision making. This was found to be the basis for consensus and team building at the place of work. Also, when the personnel are involved in decision making, they assume a high sense of ownership of programmes for the organisation and would support them more than if they were made to be mere recipients of decisions made by other people.

Also, objectivity and regard for one another in a spirit of teamwork would help people working together to achieve a lot even in the face of adverse challenges. Poor working relationships on the contrary, would result in divisions, personality clashes, witch hunting and other counterproductive practices which do not help to achieve harmony at the work place. Good working relationships among other benefits, would also make it possible for the personnel at

various levels to work together, learn from one another and network easily, on the job. As already stated it would be difficult for people with poor work relations to achieve common goals. This is because with poor work relations, it would be difficult to communicate effectively. Effective communication, as already seen, is a catalyst for all successful business including, the business of education which requires the interaction, collaboration, networking and cooperation of various players in the system. Like the old adage goes, “United we stand, divided we fall.”

The Ministry of Education, therefore, should take advantage of its presence in most areas of the country, its large work force and huge human resource base to strengthen its operational and administrative structures and work as a united force with a common purpose; providing opportunities for quality education to all. Procedures and processes at play should be those which are facilitative rather than restrictive and be relevant to the system and those it stands to serve. Ensuring effective communication, firstly among the personnel at all levels and then with other stakeholders, would greatly be obvious steps towards successful implementation of government programmes and provision of quality services.

5.7.12. Need to adopt effective communication strategies

Since communication is a catalyst for successful business, the manner in which communication is conducted in the ministry needs revising and improvement. This is especially so as regards timely communication which is faster and more convenient. For example, it was strongly recommended that there be a shift from more dependence on paper trail kind of communication with a heavy reliance on written information to more of face to face communication. Some of the advantages that were cited for face to face communication included;

-Quick decision making since it was possible to discuss issues conclusively.

-Better understanding of issues since the communication was more natural and included the appreciation of different aspects of the communication such as emotions and gestures.

-Building relationships: It is generally agreed by most scholars in the field of communication that chances of building relationships are higher and better when the parties to the communication process meet physically than otherwise. This is believed to be so, for example, because positive

attributes, pleasantries and warm human impressions can be exchanged when the parties to the communication process meet face to face.

Other strategies that were recommended in order to improve communication effectiveness in the education system include the following:

- (i) Automating records and management systems for easy and quick exchange of information for planning and decision making purposes.
- (ii) Establishment of local communication networks for internal communication.
- (iii) Establishing a clear and mandatory feedback and follow up system.
- (iv) Providing access to information to all the personnel appropriately.
- (v) Providing adequate and relevant communication tools to all the personnel.
- (vi) Ensuring adherence to professional ethics by all the personnel.
- (vii) Decentralising decision functions and authority to lower levels of the administrative structure for faster and realistic decision making.
- (viii) Strengthening supervision and other necessary controls at all levels of the education system to ensure professional conduct is upheld and performance enhanced in all the personnel in the education system.
- (ix) Sensitising the personnel at all levels on the need for productive work culture.
- (x) Adopting a multi media approach to communication.
- (xi) Decentralisation of some administrative functions to lower organs of the administrative structure in the ministry. In the current structure, most decisions are made at higher levels of the structure. Lower organs of the structure have to wait for approvals, recommendations and direction to make decisions most times.
- (xii) Ensure continuous capacity building in the use of ICTs and Communication skills in all the personnel.

- (xiii) Provide Educational Management Training to all administrators and other relevant personnel in the system.
- (xiv) Ensuring easy access to relevant information and communication tools by the relevant personnel.
- (xv) Ensuring the adoption of inclusive, participatory approach to communication at all levels of the system.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed in more details. The discussion is based on the topic of the study which was, “The effect of Communication on Implementation of government Programmes and Service delivery in the Education sector in Zambia.”

The discussion of findings is organised thematically and also include relevant theories in the field of communication, scenarios from different institutions in the ministry, public perceptions or comments and expectations of various stakeholders and personnel in the sector, on various aspects of communication.

It is important to clearly state that the findings of this study revealed explicitly that there is generally ineffective communication in the Ministry of Education. This was despite the acknowledgement by all respondents that effective communication was critical to effective educational management, implementation of government and service delivery in the ministry.

It was also, overwhelmingly agreed that the ineffective communication manifesting in the ministry negatively affected implementation of government programmes and service delivery. The major causes of ineffective communication in the ministry were attributed to various causes; mainly lack of communication tools and associated poor communication infrastructure, lack of ICT and communication skills and incompetence among the personnel, corrupt practices, large administrative structure characterised by long channels of communication, lack of effective supervision, delayed feedback and lack of follow up, poor work culture, poor working relationships and ineffective communication strategies and delays in releasing funds.

All these factors deemed to cause ineffective communication in the ministry, can be summarised as follows:

- (i) Systems factors
- (ii) Material factors
- (iii) Human factors
- (iv) Financial factors

The factors listed are discussed in more details below.

6.1. Systems factors

For the purposes of this study, systems factors include;

- Management Systems
- Administrative Structure and associated channels of communication
- Communication Strategies and Methods

6.1.1. Management Systems

In looking at management systems, it is necessary to appreciate, first of all, the meaning of the term “Management”. In his book entitled “Management,” Griffin (2002 p. 7), defines Management as, “ A set of activities including planning, decision making, organising, leading and controlling directed at an organisation’s resources which include human, financial, physical and information, with the aim of achieving organisational goals in an efficient and effective manner.”

Management systems, therefore, are procedures, set standards, guidelines and practices through which management activities are carried out. Management systems in the Ministry of Education are carried out using the concept of Chain of Command in which clear and distinct lines of authorities are established among all positions in the organisation. Authority is very important in this type of management system.

Also, the management system with this approach, follows a bureaucratic design, which was pioneered by a German Sociologist, Max Weber. Through this design called Bureaucracy, the organisation works through certain organisational characteristics which include the following:

- (i) Division of labour through expert filled positions.
- (ii) Consistent set of rules and procedures that ensure task performance uniformly by all the personnel.
- (iii) Managers conduct business in an impersonal way and maintain social distance between themselves and their subordinates, among other characteristics.

As can be seen, bureaucratic management design operates through standard procedures, rules, steps to be followed which can be described as mechanistic. Unfortunately sometimes, in a bureaucratic system, the procedures are followed too rigidly and the steps to be followed are too many. This scenario which has too many procedures to be followed in carrying out activities in an organisation is sometimes referred to as Red Tape.

As has been seen from the findings, the numerous procedures and associated human delays in following these procedures, most times affect the effectiveness of the processes through which the management functions are conducted. The feedback was also found to be seriously affected by the delays in communication. Since decision making largely depends on authorisation, if authority is delayed to be granted, action will delay or not take place. This, inevitably, affects implementation of programmes and service delivery negatively.

Also, some of the functions such as planning and organising, are often poorly done, leading to ineffectiveness or its failure. Yet, other management functions such as decisions take too long because of the long procedures involved in the process. Furthermore, the expected task performance at various levels of the structure sometimes, do not meet the set standards due to human factors such as poor attitude towards work or lack of relevant skills.

The aspect of organising requires, among other things, allocating resources, coordinating activities and ensuring that planned activities are carried out successfully. In order to have successful organisation of activities, the Ministry of Education requires huge resources to be

channeled to these activities. Also, when resources are made available, it is important that they be managed prudently and used for the intended purposes. In order to achieve this, sound management and supervisory skills are needed in those that are tasked to preside over these activities.

In view of the above, it is strongly recommended that management skills be upgraded at all levels of the education system. When the personnel has appropriate management skills it will be effective in carrying out its duties. While it is appreciated that there has been some improvements in the area of management, a lot of improvements are still needed at all levels in order to enhance successful implementation of programmes and deliver quality education.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that those in management and supervisory positions in the education system needed also to improve their communication skills. It was learnt during this study, for instance that sometimes programmes fail or delay at various levels because supervisors do not employ effective communication systems. Poor communication makes it difficult for all players and partners in given programmes to work together harmoniously with unity of purpose and achieve set goals.

Besides, in the absence of effective communication, unnecessary delays occur due to misunderstandings. Misunderstandings can also arise if some parties to certain processes such as project implementation feel left out or sidelined. It was found that there were many instances when supervisors did not adequately involve other stakeholders in the process of carrying out activities and implementing programmes. It was felt by a number of respondents that there was need to promote a consultative and participatory approach in carrying out activities and programmes in the ministry.

Fayol (1949, p. 99), supports the importance of effective communication in increasing management efficiency. Through the Administrative Theory, Henry Fayol identifies among other factors, ensuring unity of action, discipline, order and ensuring good working relations among staff and coordination of all efforts of staff towards the overall goals as key to effective management. Also, information dissemination, monitoring information flow and information processing are seen as key elements which need to be well managed by supervisors and

managers in order to achieve efficiency in the organisation. As has been discussed already, the structure of the Ministry of Education is very large, covering various levels, such as institutions of learning, Districts and Provincial administrative centres besides the National Headquarters.

In such a big administrative structure, ensuring that appropriate information is disseminated to all relevant levels of the structure is no easy task. Not only are there challenges in ensuring that the information is disseminated on time but also that the information is not distorted before it reaches the intended recipient. This study has revealed, through the findings, that both timely communication and efficient processing of information in the education system has been a challenge. With a serious lack of appropriate communication tools, poor communication infrastructure, lack of ICT and other forms of communication in the personnel at most levels of the sector, the challenge of achieving effective communication is quite big. It is because of this that Fayol's Administrative Theory is very relevant to the case of the Ministry of Education especially as far as the need to improve communication is concerned.

Further, with such a big administrative structure in the ministry, ensuring that there is effective coordination of activities at all levels requires effective communication which will link all subsystems in the structure. In the case of the Ministry of Education, the subsystems are the various structures at different levels of the system. This idea of linking and coordinating different subsystems of a system is spelt out by Albrecht (1983, p. 28), in his theory called Systems Approach. The thrust of this theory is based on the need for linking an organisation's subsystems and coordinated the activities of these subsystems through an effective communication system.

As has been noted already, in the Ministry of Education, such linkages are weak and in some cases not there due to lack of facilities, tools and facilitative infrastructure. Management systems which are supposed to effect the linkages at various levels in the ministry have also been found to be weak. The call for improved communication, by various stakeholders advanced through this study, is therefore, very significant and requires deserving attention and action by management in the ministry and its partner, if headway in achieving successful implementation of government programmes and delivery of quality services is to be made at all levels of the education system.

Further, many respondents said that when there was open communication and involvement of many people in decision making and implementation, chances of scoring success in programmes were higher than when just small cliques with blind loyalty to supervisors were the only ones allowed to participate in organisational decisions and activities. Like the saying goes, “There is quality in diversity and union is strength.”

Also, when many people are allowed to be part of the programmes, especially those that are affected by them, they would render support to these programmes and assume a sense of responsibility towards the success of these programmes. Otherwise when people sense a deliberate ploy to leave them out, they may sabotage the success of the programme.

Also, the problem of ineffectiveness is sometimes aggravated by the weaknesses in controlling the personnel. As earlier discussed in this study, supervision is very important in achieving organisational goals, besides promoting professional development through the interaction of superiors and subordinates, in other words, those in high positions interacting with those in lower positions on the job.

Besides, if management systems have ineffective communication, it would be difficult to achieve set goals. This is so in that coordination of activities of various personnel at different levels requires effective communication.

From the foregoing, it can be said that it is important to have effective management systems in the ministry so that activities that lead to implementation and service delivery, are done successfully. Both managers or administrators and other personnel in the ministry need to work as a team and review some of the practices, procedures and rules in the education system which may not answer to the demands and needs of today’s organisational functions and those of its clients.

It is, therefore, important that the ministry adopts management systems that are innovative, creative and beneficial to the organisation’s survival and its relevance to those it serves. Sticking to procedures, rules and systems even in a changing environment would lead to continuous

failure to achieve effectiveness and efficiency, which will ultimately affect programme implementation and service delivery at various levels of the education system.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that effective communication is inevitable in coordinating all activities of the ministry successfully. Management systems in the education sector, therefore, should be reengineered towards overcoming communication barriers by being facilitative in order to achieve excellent performance by all the personnel so as to ensure quality service at all levels in the sector.

This study found that most systems followed in the education system do not adequately answer to the attributes highlighted above. In short, most systems used in the ministry rarely facilitate smooth operations in the system. While the system is seen to be running, it was found that the wheels that turn it could turn faster than the case was at present. Improving these systems so that they make services become more and easily accessible, through a much more effective system was a call made by most respondents. Such improvement is bound to not only benefit the ministry's clients but also personnel's work environment and conditions.

For instance, coordination of activities by various units, departments, institutions and different categories of personnel, needed to be strengthened. Instances were reported where activities did not go well or as planned due to poor coordination. It was also reported that at other times, there were information gaps among different sections or units that needed to share information or work together. Sharing or exchanging relevant information was found not to be effectively done in the ministry. Sometimes this was due to fragmentation or isolation through which directorates and departments operated. Instead of collaborating and complementing, as units of the same organisation, it was found that there was a stand alone kind of approach to carrying out functions and activities. This also caused unnecessary competition for resources, opportunities and authority to preside over given activities or programmes. With such kind of work culture, accomplishment of tasks tended to take longer than necessary causing delays in the implementation of programmes and delivery of services.

Yet, when roles and responsibilities are well defined and explained to all the members of the organisation, this will help to avoid differences among members. Instead, functions will be carried out without unnecessary barriers at individual and group levels such as departments. This

will instead, foster cooperation and mutual understanding at the work place which is a catalyst for achieving organisational goals.

It was further suggested by some respondents that it was important to clearly spell out the functions of all sections, institutions, departments and even at directorate level so as to avoid overlaps or clashes of interests in the ministry.

Clearly spelt out roles and functions also made it easy to follow up issues while decision making would also be enhanced. This is so in that clear structures also made communication more effective instead of a vicious cycle and blame shifting which can arise when a system has unclear structures in its system. This is possible in a big organisation such as the Ministry of Education.

Clear roles were not only advocated for departments and other units which form the structure of the ministry but also for individual job specifications. It was felt that for non teaching positions, especially at district, provincial and headquarters levels, some roles did not seem to have clear job holders. For instance, registry staff were reported to, often times, pass the buck from one person to another thereby delaying the communication process in the system. Without clear roles, it becomes difficult to know who to easily hold accountable when work did not go as expected.

6.1.2. Administrative Structure and associated channels of communication

As has been seen in this study, the administrative structure in the Ministry of Education is quite big. In this structure, chain of command is followed strictly in decision making. The red tape associated with following the channels of communication at various levels contribute to delays in making decisions and subsequently, implementation of programmes. Most respondents felt that there was an urgent need to decentralize some functions in the system to lower levels such as the district and school levels, for some administrative issues.

6.1.3. Strategies and Methods of Communication

Communication is about sharing ideas, thoughts, feelings and information. In a big organization such as the Ministry of Education a lot of people at various levels depend on timely communication in order to make decisions and implement programmes. It is therefore,

necessary that communication in the education system be done timely. For communication to be timely, there is need to have effective communication strategies and methods which facilitate quick and effective communication. In other words, methods and strategies of communication should ensure quick and easy flow of information in order to avoid delays in the transmission of information at all levels.

6.2. Materials Factor

One of the major factors that was found to cause ineffective communication in the Ministry of Education was the lack of communication tools and the absence of facilitative service infrastructure. This study has revealed that there is serious lack of tools, facilities and other pieces of equipment that can enable personnel in the ministry at various levels to communicate effectively. It is such tools and facilities which make it possible for personnel to facilitate effective communication in their institutions, departments, units, sections and overallly, directorates.

The problem of lack of communication tools was found to be common at all levels of the education system and both urban and rural areas. Admittedly, the lack of communication tools and facilities was found to be more serious in rural areas. As it will be acknowledged, it has become necessary for the education system to adopt faster, more convenient and effective methods of communication in this era. In a fast changing world where knowledge is increasing at a very fast rate and the manner of doing business has become more inclined to the use of ICTs such as e-learning using the internet and other forms of teaching like tele-conferencing, provision of ICTs and other communication devices is paramount. With such tools not only will access to information be faster and easier but it would make teaching and learning more interesting. The communication tools that were seen to be critically needed included the following:

- (i) Telephone and Cell phones
- (ii) Fax
- (iii) Computer and internet
- (iv) Printer

- (v) Photocopier
- (vi) Radio
- (vii) Television
- (viii) Notice boards

The communication tools listed here play multi functions in a workplace. Mostly, these tools facilitate quick, easy, reliable and effective communication. Besides, their use cuts on delays which would otherwise be experienced when they are not available.

In a system which requires following channels from top to bottom, bottom to top and across personnel at the same level, with a large administrative structure, the need for such communication tools and facilities cannot be over emphasised. This is because different levels have to transmit and share information amongst themselves for decisions to be made. Availability of such modern tools makes it possible for personnel at different levels in the ministry to communicate effectively. In other words, effective communication cannot be achieved without appropriate communication tools. As has been seen from this study, without effective communication, successful implementation of programmes and delivery of quality services may be problematic.

Like it was said by most respondents, if effective communication was a priority in the Ministry of Education, then investing in communication tools that facilitate this communication, should also be a priority.

It should be acknowledged also that there are long distances between administrative centres and various institutions in the education system. In the face of such long distances, technology takes care of communication needs. Without communication tools, communication would have to be done through manual or physical means. For example, information will have to be delivered by errands, from one point to another. With so many points in the education structure, through which information has to pass, delays become the order of the day without appropriate communication tools. It is no wonder that processing such cases as teachers' confirmations, approving projects, making payments and procurement of goods and services takes unnecessarily too long in the ministry.

It was found that to some extent, the personnel was not competent enough, to effectively use these tools. A host of other management problems also arose such as limited access or worse still, denial by the powers that be. It was reported, for instance, that some supervisors locked up the telephone or computers in their offices preventing other staff to use them. Such practices were seen to be retrogressive and frustrating. These are examples of management systems in the education system, which worsen the lack of effective communication at different levels of the system. The situation would significantly change for the better if ICTs were adopted as a must in the communication processes in the ministry, skills in their use upgraded and the utilisation of these tools done objectively.

Besides, the need to use quicker and more efficient means of communication in today's digital world, should compel the ministry management to adopt these communication forms. It will be difficult to move along with other partners and stakeholders who are already using ICTs for communication if the ministry would still want to continue using old and traditional ways of communication.

This study also found that apart from the problem of lack of adequate, up-to-date and functional communication tools, it was seen that service networks which could facilitate the effective use of these tools was also a problem which contributed to delayed communication. For example, telephone and cell phone service networks, internet service, good roads and efficient postal services were found to be poor in most places in the country side .

Even when the ICT systems were introduced to the education system, the lack of functional facilities and network systems frustrated the effective use and application of these systems. In the Ministry of Education there is a newly introduced financial system for release, allocation of funds and payment system. It is called Integrated Financial Management and Information System (IFMIS). This system enhances efficiency and strengthens monitoring of financial matters. In order to function properly, the IFMIS system heavily relies on internet services. It was reported that several times the internet service is disrupted or there is no connectivity. This affects processing of, for example, payments which are meant to facilitate implementation of various activities. This is an example of delays caused by unreliable service networks which affect service delivery and programme implementation. Upgrading, expanding and replacing

communication infrastructure across the country and linking ministry structures to these facilities and service networks is, therefore, necessary.

It would be helpful for ZICTA and other relevant institutions in the communication business to ensure more investment in the sector so as to improve provision of services in a timely manner.

6.3. Human Factors

Human factors in this case refer to all communication factors which are caused, influenced or affected by the personnel in the education system. These factors include:

- (i) Personnel skills
- (ii) Attitude towards work
- (iii) Ethical conduct
- (iv) Working relations

The success of any organisation, among other factors, depends on the ability, attitude and discipline of its workforce and human resource. This is because in any organisation, it is the personnel which coordinates and facilitates implementation of activities and programmes in the organisation. To be able to carry out this function successfully, the personnel need to have relevant skills and competencies. It was found that some personnel in the education system lacked relevant and appropriate skills to effectively carry out their duties and positively impact on their performance on the job.

Meanwhile, it is important to acknowledge also that individuals have different skills, attitudes and interests. Ensuring that these individual differences and qualities are well harnessed for the good of the organisation requires effective management and leadership skills. Management in the ministry of education needs to be encouraged and supported to effectively direct available human resource in the institutions and departments most optimumly. Also, the personnel at various levels needs to be sensitised so that they commit themselves to playing their part in the organisation, and do so diligently.

6.4. Financial factors

In his book, “Screw it, Lets Do it, Lessons in Life,” Richard Branson (2009, p. 75), contends that money is for making things happen. He adds that the provision of financial resources in an organisation should be seen as a necessity and, therefore, be undebatable. Institutions, departments, directorates and other levels of the administrative structure require financial resources to facilitate the implementation of their activities. It was found that most institutions, departments and directorates were poorly funded. The little funding that was provided was often inconsistently released, inadequate and delayed. This affected implementation of programmes and provision of services directly. Without financial resources, procurement of goods and services becomes difficult or impossible.

Effective communication is also affected by lack of funds. Without adequate funds, provision of communication tools, carrying out communication activities and programmes would be impeded, delayed or even fail. At all levels, resources are a must. It is logical to think that without financial resources, goals and objectives will not be achieved.

Perhaps another important aspect as far as the financial factor is concerned is the need for financial accountability in the ministry. It was reported that cases were many where reports of financial abuse were common at various levels of the education system. The circumstances, reasons and management of financial indiscipline needs the serious intervention of relevant agents. Yet, management in the ministry at all levels needs to instill in their personnel, a sense of financial discipline. All resources available in the ministry should be used for the intended purposes and not be abused. There are many needs for financial resources in the ministry such as improving infrastructure, procurement of materials, improving systems and remunerations. The little resources that are available, therefore, should be used and managed prudently and optimumly.

In addition, most respondents reported that corruption was the other reason for poor or lack of implementation of programmes in the sector, sometimes. The vice of corruption is something that should not be swept under the carpet when it comes to service delivery and procurement of goods and services in the education system. A number of respondents cited corrupt practices at different levels of the education system as one of the causes for poor quality of service and an

impediment to successful and timely implementation of government programmes at various levels in the education sector.

For instance, some respondents reported that times were numerous when their cases were delayed to be processed because those acting on their cases showed reluctance to do so. The delays and reluctance was reported as a deliberate ploy to frustrate the clients. Straight forward procedures are often made to take unnecessarily long while documents would mysteriously miss only to be found when a client pays something towards the resolution of their cases. Such trends should be stemmed out as they do not only affect service delivery but are a big source of financial stress to those affected.

It was reported that there was even a new terminology that was being used in the education system code “pushing or chasing a file”. This terminology was used to mean that an extra effort on the part of the personnel providing the service was most times required to deliver a request. As a result of such extra effort needed, some illegal payment or some inducement was sought from the client, directly, or indirectly.

Another aspect of corruption that was talked about by most participants in the study was the issue of poor workmanship. It was said by a number of participants in the study that as a result of corrupt practices some contractors who were awarded contracts such as construction of classroom blocks and other facilities did not do a good job. Often times such contractors were found to deliver poor quality of work. As it will be appreciated, poorly constructed buildings are a big cost in that they will require constant maintenance. Not only would such buildings need constant maintenance but also the life span of such buildings would be short due to, for instance, use of cheap materials and unskilled labour. Inevitably, poor workmanship multiplies the cost of projects.

Additionally, poor workmanship, results in delayed delivery of projects. Like earlier stated, when people do not have appropriate skills, they will take longer to do the work that is supposed to be accomplished in a shorter time. The longer a project takes to be completed, the more costly it will become due to economic factors such as effect of inflation which makes the cost of goods and services to go higher.

Many participants in the study also said that service delivery and job performance are often affected as a result of having incompetent personnel who were corruptly employed, not out of merit but through corruption. When such people get in the system, they fail to perform to expectations since they rarely have relevant skills to enable them perform on the job. The face of corruption, therefore, can be seen in many forms. Sadly, such cases were reported to be many and in different forms.

Most respondents said that such corrupt practices were very annoying and retrogressive besides being costly on the part of clients. Yet, it was felt that as things stood in the ministry, such practices were deeply entrenched in the education system and unfortunately, at a number of administrative levels. The most culprits for corrupt practices in the education sector were reported to be the registry, accounts, procurement and human resources. Many respondents added that corrupt practices were common in movement and processing of files on human resource issues such as appointments, recruitment and transfers. Other cases involved payments and procurement for a number of supplies. Again, it was felt that these processes were unnecessarily delayed, done without order, for example, on first come first serve basis or meritocracy basis. These reports should be taken seriously by the powers that be in the ministry and other relevant authorities because they are a thorn in achieving efficiency in the education sector. Besides, corrupt practices eat into the moral fibre of any system and if allowed to continue, can compromise the development process of any country. Corruption affects everyone and everything and if given a chance to grow roots in any system, can have devastating results and consequences on any system. It is frightening to imagine the consequences such a vice can have if entrenched in a large system as the Ministry of Education. It is not too late to institute measures which can counter this vice in the education system. With a clear structure with clear responsibilities, identifying problem areas in the system cannot be impossible.

As already discussed in previous parts of this study, it is crucial that management systems and controls in various aspects in the education system, need strengthening at all levels in order for the sector to effectively deliver quality service and score more successes in implementing various programmes at different levels. The Ministry of Education is expected to be a champion of good values and practices by virtue of its mandate, providing quality education for personal

and national development. Clearly, corruption is not among such values and should be stemmed out of the system.

This study found that while there were many employees in the ministry who were performing well on the job, some did not live up to expectations as far as job performance and work ethics were concerned. Supervision was consequently found to need strengthening in order to improve personnel performance.

For example, lack of skill in personnel makes it difficult for them to do their work effectively and on time. This inevitably, affects implementation and service delivery in the system. Failure to uphold work ethics such hard work, punctuality, honesty, objectivity and reliability have a bearing on how well personnel carry out their duties.

The conduct of the personnel on the job directly affects their performance. Since organisational functions require concerted effort by all members through team work, it is necessary that the personnel, despite their positions on the job, work as a team towards achieving common goals.

In addition, it is important that the personnel shows commitment to duty, exhibit disciplined behaviour and use time productively. Like the saying goes, “Time is money.” Time is a resource which has cost implications to an organisation and at individual level. This resource should, therefore, be used to the full benefit of the organisation. For example, laziness, abscondment from duty, reluctance and other laissez faire attitudes on the job are counterproductive practices which should be stemmed out of the organisation. It was found out during this study that sometimes, the personnel wasted a lot of time through unethical conduct on the job. Such unethical conduct does not only affect the implementation of programmes and service delivery but also damaged the image of the ministry at whatever level such behaviour manifested. Of course, this is undesirable and measures to arrest this problem should be put in place by management at various levels of the administrative structure.

Personnel work relations and interaction were also found to be another important factor which either promoted or hindered effectiveness on the job. The workplace should be an environment where work relationships among personnel are harmonious and health. Members of the

organisation should communicate effectively and build relationship that foster collaboration, cooperation and teamwork.

Apart from facilitating cooperation at the workplace, teamwork also has a social benefit which is character building.

Most managers contend that teamwork builds character in that while members of a team have different personalities, interests and needs, these personal attributes are harmonised when people come to work together. Members learn to put group interests first and adjust personal interests for the sake of the group. This builds character.

Conflicts, divisions, personal attacks on one another and non professional conductive should not be allowed at the work place. It was sad to note that these vices, however, showed their faces at the work place and negatively affected smooth operations of the system. Different levels of personnel; both supervising officers and subordinates were seen to be guilty of not upholding good working relations, sometimes. It is, therefore, strongly suggested that management at various levels of the ministry pays attention to this problem and prevents it as much as possible. Poor work relations, as has already been stated affects work in one way or the other.

Meanwhile, other stakeholders in the education system who may not be part of the personnel in the ministry will be affected by such situations. Ensuring good working relationships among the personnel at all levels of the ministry is, therefore, necessary. In addition, research also shows that strong management is key to maintaining motivation in the workplace. Senior education personnel must communicate passion and enthusiasm for the job – and challenge employees. The best managers know how to make of communication tools at their disposal to motivate the workplace and make jobs more engaging. In short, once there is effective communication between senior and junior personnel at the Ministry, implementation of programmes can be speedy and service delivery improve greatly.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Introduction

This chapter will give an overview of the study on its findings on the subject of, “The effect of Communication on implementation of Government Programmes and Service Delivery.” Comments and observations on the manner in which the communication process takes place in the ministry will be made. The chapter will be concluded by making recommendations on how to improve effective communication in the ministry in order to facilitate successful implementation of government programmes and delivery of quality services.

7.1. Conclusion

Communication is a human need vital for coordinating human activities and relationships. Whether it is at individual, group, corporate or organisational level, communication is vital. Also, the nature of activities engaged in, determines the degree for the communication needed.

The Ministry of Education is a large organisation with a big administrative structure and personnel found all over Zambia. The core business of the Ministry is to provide quality education to all Zambians at various levels. To achieve this mandate, the ministry carries out various programmes which facilitate the provision of quality education. In order to carry out programmes successfully, the effort of several personnel at various levels have to be coordinated. Without good coordination, activities may not be carried out successfully. Effective communication is a critical tool for ensuring that there is good coordination of activities and programmes.

This study revealed that communication in the Ministry of Education, not as effective as it is expected to be. A number of factors were found to account for the ineffective communication in the education system. Some of these factors include lack of communication tools and associated service infrastructure, lack of relevant and up to date ICT and communication skills, ineffective communication strategies, a big and bureaucratic administrative structure, weak management systems, poor work culture, poor working relationships, limited access to appropriate and

relevant information, inadequate, delayed and inconsistently released funds. The effect of these factors is that the flow of information is delayed, decision making is slowed resulting in delayed or even failed implementation of government programmes and poor quality of service delivery.

Weak management systems result in poor organisation, poor planning, compromised system on checks and balances and ineffective workforce performance. Also, ineffective communication strategies employed in the ministry at various levels contribute to further delays in the communication process in the education system. For instance, reliance on manual systems of communication instead of using ICTs largely contributes to delays in the communication process. In a big ministry whose personnel is located all over the country, continuous use of manual systems for passing on, processing and monitoring flow of information poses many challenges to the communication system in the ministry.

Also, with such a big administrative structure, using management systems which follow lengthy and slow channels of communication, negatively affects the effectiveness of communication. The problem of ineffective communication is further exasperated by human factors such as negative attitudes towards work by personnel, incompetence on the job and lack of teamwork, collaboration, objectivity and unethical conduct by the personnel at various levels of the education system.

In order to improve effectiveness in communication in the ministry, it is necessary for management in the ministry to review communication strategies, reengineer personnel attitudes and practices so that they become more responsible, committed to duty and motivated to deliver quality service and be facilitators of government programmes with diligence and excellence.

Further, most respondents proposed the development of both an effective "top-down" culture that encourages and rewards open communication and collaboration between management and employees and easy "bottom-up" in which subordinates are free to express their views to management. Once effective communication starts at the top, it must be driven down throughout the entire organization. Without sustainable top executive commitment and support, effective communication will be difficult to achieve in the education institutions.

In addition, some respondents recommended the use of multiple channels for organisational communication in their institutions. This should be encouraged in the Ministry of Education

because one of the most effective ways to ensure that people get their message is to send it across multiple channels. Apart from the traditional transmission of information through letters, memos and circulars, other effective communication channels such as which include face-to-face, e-mails, faxes, telephone conversations, bulletins, update postings, and memos were strongly recommended for use in the ministry.

Face-to-face communication for instance was strongly advocated for because it did not only allow for quick resolution of issues but also built relationships among management and other personnel. It was also seen to be a better way of communication as it provided an opportunity for deeper understanding of issues in that during the discussion, more information would be shared as opposed to the limitations of written communication. It was seen, therefore, that using multiple media approach to disseminate information would be more effective than a reliance on single communication channels.

Besides, channels of communication should be revised so that they become more relevant and responsive to the needs of the system and clients for the ministry in a timely manner. In order to achieve this, measures such as decentralising some functions and authority to lower organs so that decisions are made where services are required should be put in place. In addition, there is great need to upgrade skills for personnel at all levels. Skills in all areas in the system such as educational management at various levels, supervision, ICT, planning and financial management should be improved so as to equip the personnel with relevant skills and ensuring that, delivery of services is timely and of quality.

Motivating the personnel through improved conditions of services, continuous professional development and improving work relations are necessary steps which management at various levels of the education system need to seriously take.

It was found during this study that all the factors highlighted above, negatively affect implementation of government programmes and the quality of services rendered by the ministry. Both the ministry personnel and clients to the ministry strongly recommended that measures to improve communication such as provision of communication tools and infrastructure, changing attitude of personnel towards work and adopting more efficient and responsive management systems, be instituted in the ministry as a matter of urgency.

With effective communication, decisions will be made timely, information flow will be timely and personnel performance will be improved. Overall, this will result in successful implementation of government programmes and quality of services will be improved.

Also, effective communication empowers workers, avoids misunderstandings, provides direction, leads to a healthy work culture, and encourages accountability. It is essential in the education system because it also increases employees' engagement with their jobs and the Ministry's mandate. After all, an engaged and happy employee is more productive and performs better than one who is not. In short, the importance of effective communication cannot be over-emphasised as not sharing information in a well coordinated and timely manner has a negative effect on the performance of personnel. Moreover, this research has shown that the overall performance of workers would improve greatly if senior management communicated more effectively. It is, therefore, necessary for all personnel in the ministry to recommit themselves to better work culture aimed at better performance while working to achieve personal and professional development in a healthy work environment through effective communication.

It is also important to acknowledge that in order to deliver better services, the ministry should engage more with its partners and other stakeholders in the education sector so that the ministry becomes more relevant in its quest to deliver quality services. Parents, communities, line ministries and service providers should be brought on board appropriate programmes for the ministry, as much as possible. For example these partners in educational provision could be involved in consultative and planning fora from which the ministry could get valuable contributions to feed in its action plans at various levels.

Performance reviews should also be institutionalised in programmes and activities of the ministry at all levels so as to identify challenges in implementation and strategise on how to make improvements. Such reviews would also be opportunities to identify successes which can be built on or replicated in the system.

The current situation in the education sector especially as far as the need for improved communication is concerned should not be allowed to continue. One would not rate communication as effective, generally, in the ministry as seen from the numerous challenges

experienced in this regard. A lot needs to be done to improve communication effectiveness in the sector. If the prevailing situation is allowed to continue, more challenges if not worse, especially in the face of changing technology, are to be expected as far as service delivery and implementation of government programmes is concerned.

Like one correspondent put it, “We know what to expect if we continue doing nothing about this situation; we will use a lot of time and other resources achieving very little, we will leave a lot of people discontent and have no goodwill for what we do, we will fail to achieve what we are capable of achieving, we will perpetually live behind innovation and become victims of it instead of moving ahead by it, and we will keep other people who depend on what we do, for their development, from fully realizing their potentials. It is an important call, and that is why both of us; management and staff should play our part more than before and in a more effective manner.”

Communication is, therefore, critical to what the ministry does, not just communication but effective communication. Working towards effective communication, therefore, will make the ministry more effective, productive, achieve more and serve its clients better. Programmes will be better implemented, services delivered, qualitatively and in good time, among other benefits. This will ultimately help the ministry reduce the cost of doing business and instead, gain optimum value from all the activities and programmes carried out. Besides, realizing better, healthier and much more fulfilling human relationships at work and away from work. Efforts to ensure effective communication in the ministry should be made by management and all the personnel at all levels in the ministry in order to ensure a positive turn around in the area of communication.

7.2 Recommendations

From the several submissions made by a number of participants in the study, it is clear that effective communication is critical to successful implementation of programme implementation and delivery of quality service in the education sector. It is, therefore, important that measures be put in place in the education system, at all levels of the sector, to enhance effective communication. The following measures are strongly recommended.

- Management at all levels of the Ministry should improve material, skills, financial, human factors and management systems so that they facilitate effective communication.
- Government and Management of the Ministry at various levels should provide communication tools and network service infrastructure, respectively, to all institutions, especially in rural areas.
- Capacity building in the use of ICTs, communication skills and educational management should be conducted by Management at all levels of the Ministry, accordingly.
- Government to decentralise some administrative functions to lower levels in the ministry in order to speed up decision making and consequently, accelerate programme implementation and improve quality of service delivery.
- Management in all educational institutions and departments should put in place functional internal telephone systems such as Private Automated Branch Exchanges (PABXs) for quick internal communication and Local Area Networks (LANs) to facilitate reliable internet services.
- Management in the Ministry of Education should sensitize all personnel on the value of productive work culture. Disciplinary measures for erring personnel should be effected in order to uphold ethical conduct in the sector.
- Management at all levels of the ministry should encourage open communication and health work relations at the work place.

- Government and Management Boards for educational institutions should motivate staff through improved remuneration and other conditions of service.
- Management at all levels of the education system should adopt a multi-media approach to communication in order to speed up communication and enhance its effectiveness.
- All levels of the education system should adopt an inclusive and participatory approach to communication which would also be more consultative of relevant stakeholders on matters of common concern.
- Management of the Ministry of Education to automate records and information management systems in the education system.
- Educational Management at various levels should invest in continuous procurement and maintenance of communication tools and infrastructure.
- A system of ensuring timely feedback be put in place at all levels in the sector. Progress reports, periodic updates and performance appraisals should be made mandatory in the system so that the personnel are made to be accountable on the job.
- Reporting systems should be strengthened in order to promote accountability in all staff.
- The absence of any officer should not create a vacuum which “Jams” all programmes. A system to ensure continuity and progress in all matters should be put in place by management at all levels of the ministry.
- Supervision of personnel and regular monitoring of programmes and activities in the ministry should be strengthened at all levels of the ministry in order to ensure successful and timely programme implementation and delivery of quality services.
- Proactive measures to rid the sector of all forms of corrupt practices by the ministry personnel at all levels should be put in place by management in collaboration with relevant government institutional agencies. Preventive measures through continuous sensitization should be prioritized.

- In order to cut down on unnecessary delays in communication in the education system, it is strongly recommended that a tracking system for all forms of communication such as files, minutes, memos circulars and other forms of correspondence, be put in place in the education system. Such a system would help identify areas where delays are caused unnecessarily.

With new technology in various fields, it should be possible to develop tracking system of all forms of communication in the education system. For example, in the transport sector, there is technology that makes it possible to track vehicle movement even in very remote areas. Tracking flow of information in various offices in different locations, surely cannot be an impossibility with the use of the satellite, internet and the computer. Investing in such a system would help improve efficiency in the education system.

7.3. Future Research

The need to improve efficiency in the education system has a bearing on effective implementation of programmes and improving service delivery. Effective communication plays a critical role in effective implementation of programmes and service delivery. Further research on improving Management and Communication in the education system in Zambia is therefore, recommended since it has been established in this study that there is a strong link between effective communication and effective management.

Another area of research in the education sector is the notion to have a tracking system of documents at all levels and in all locations in the ministry. This is a research worth investing in as the returns will improve communication and generally, management in the sector.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Dear Respondent,

I am a University of Zambia Post Graduate student pursuing a Master of Communication for Development (MCD) programme, seeking information purely for academic purposes on *“The Effect of Communication on Implementation of Government Programmes and service Delivery: A case study of the Ministry of Education.”*

You are one of the respondents randomly selected for this research and all information you give will be treated confidentially. Please do not withhold any views that you have on the questions you will come across.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please answer all the questions.
2. Answer the questions as objectively as possible.
3. Answer by putting a circle round the answer or answers of your choice or writing in the space provided.

SECTION A: Personal details of the respondent

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Name of the Institution _____

3. Position in the Institution _____

SECTION B: INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

(Circle your answer)

1. How critical is effective communication in implementation of Government programmes and delivery of services?

(a) Very critical (b) Critical (c) Not Critical

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of communication in your institution?

(a) Very Effective (b) Effective (c) Not Effective

3. What factors delay or impede effective communication your institution?
(List at least 4)

4. How does communication affect teaching and learning at your institution (List at least 4)

5. What communication tools do you use at your institution?

(List at least 4)

6. Does lack of communication tools affect the effectiveness of communication at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

7. Is lack of skill in using communication tools a factor affecting effective communication at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

8. Does lack of supervision affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

9. Does lack of feedback affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

10. Do human factors such as negative attitude, personalising work relations, lack of trust and lack of cooperation affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

11. How can you improve effective communication at you institution?

(List at least 4)

12. How can you improve successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(List at least 4)

13. Any further comment or suggestion you may have on improving effective communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution and in the Ministry in general?

(List at least 4)

THE END

Thank you for your co-operation.

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2. Name of the Institution _____

3. Position in the Institution _____

SECTION B: INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

(Circle your answer)

1. How critical is effective communication in implementation of Government programmes and delivery of services?

(a) Very critical (b) Critical (c) Not Critical

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of communication in your institution?

(a) Very Effective (b) Effective (c) Not Effective

3. What factors administrative or management systems delay or impede effective communication your institution?

(List at least 4)

4. What is the role of effective communication in successful implementation of Government programmes? (List at least 4)

5. How often do you hold staff meetings at your institution?

(a) Weekly (b) Monthly (c) Quarterly (d) Annually (e) As need arises

6. How do you rate the productivity of your meetings?

- (a) Always productive (b) Sometimes productive (c) Rarely productive

7. What communication tools do you use at your institution? (List at least 5)

.....

.....

.....

8. How do you describe or rate supervision at your institution?

- (a) close (b) Average (c) Weak (d) Lacking

9. Does lack of supervision affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

10. Does lack of feedback affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

11. Do human factors such as negative attitude, personalising work relations, lack of trust and lack of cooperation affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

12. How can you improve effective communication at you institution?

(List at least 4)

13. How can you improve successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(List at least 4)

14. Any further comment or suggestion you may have on improving effective communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution and in the Ministry in general?

(List at least 4)

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(Circle your answer)

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2. How would you rate the effectiveness of communication in your institution?

(a) Very Effective (b) Effective (c) Not Effective

3. What factors delay or impede effective communication your institution?

(List at least 4)

4. What is the role of effective communication in successful implementation of Government programmes? (List at least 4)

5. What communication tools do you use at your institution?

(List at least 4)

6. Does lack of communication tools affect the effectiveness of communication at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

7. Is lack of skill in using communication tools a factor affecting effective communication at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

8. Does lack of supervision affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

9. Does lack of or delayed feedback affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

10. Do human factors such as negative attitude, working relations, lack of trust and lack of cooperation affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

11. What strategies do you use to ensure that there is efficiency at your institution, at district and school levels. (List at least 4)

.....
.....
.....
.....

12. How can you improve effective communication at you institution?

(List at least 4)

13. How can you improve successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(List at least 4)

14. Any further comment or suggestion you may have on improving effective communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution and in the Ministry in general?

(List at least 4)

THE END

Thank you for your co-operation.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION

Dear Respondent,

I am a University of Zambia Post Graduate student pursuing a Master of Communication for Development (MCD) programme, seeking information purely for academic purposes on *“The Effect of Communication on Implementation of Government Programmes and service Delivery: A case study of the Ministry of Education.”*

You are one of the respondents randomly selected for this research and all information you give will be treated confidentially. Please do not withhold any views that you have on the questions you will come across.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please answer all the questions.
2. Answer the questions as objectively as possible.
3. Answer by putting a circle round the answer or answers of your choice or writing in the space provided.

SECTION A: Personal details of the respondent

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Name of the Institution _____

3. Position in the Institution _____

SECTION B: INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

(Circle your answer)

1. How critical is effective communication in implementation of Government programmes and delivery of services?

- (a) Very critical (b) Critical (c) Not Critical

2. How would you rate the effectiveness of communication in your institution?

- (a) Very Effective (b) Effective (c) Not Effective

3. Does the ministry has a communication policy?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Do not know

4. If your answer to question 3 is yes, do you understand the policy and does it facilitate effective communication?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

5. What factors delay or impede effective communication your institution?
(List at least 4)

6. What is the role of effective communication in successful implementation of Government programmes? (List at least 4)

6. What communication tools do you use at your institution?

(List at least 4)

7. Does lack of communication tools affect the effectiveness of communication at your institution?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

8. Is lack of skill in using communication tools a factor affecting effective communication at your institution?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

9. Does lack of supervision affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

10. Does lack of feedback affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

- (a).Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

11. Do human factors such as negative attitude, personalising work relations, lack of trust and lack of cooperation affect the effectiveness of communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

12. How can you improve effective communication at you institution?

(List at least 4)

13. How can you improve successful implementation of programmes at your institution?

(List at least 4)

14. Any further comment or suggestion you may have on improving effective communication and successful implementation of programmes at your institution and in the Ministry in general?

(List at least 4)

THE END

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 2 : Verbatim

1. “You can do very little without effective communication. Also, instructions and deadlines that come short of notices, puts pressure on us and makes work difficult.”
Provincial Education Officer.
2. Communication is the nerve centre of all activities in an institution.”
Head Teacher.
3. “It is frustrating to work in an institution where communication is ineffective, how do you plan your work without information!”
High School Class Teacher.
4. “Effective communication is necessary for planning, decision making, coordination of activities and their successful implementation in any work place.”
ESO, DEBS Office.
5. “Effective communication is inevitable in planning, making timely decision and funding of activities for successful implementation of Projects.”
Assistant Accountant, Ministry Headquarters.
6. ”If actioning officers did not take too long to work on files, work would move faster. It is not always the fault of the registry staff when things delay.”
Registry Clerk.
7. “We all need to communicate, share ideas, listen to each other, achieve consensus and do so effectively in to achieve our objectives, goals, and work in harmony.”
Human Resource Officer.
8. “I have been coming here for two weeks now; no one is telling me anything about my issue. They just continue saying come tomorrow! Do they know where I am sleeping or what am eating! I have no home here, I come from Luapula.”
Education Staff Widow.

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is the role of communication in the work that you do?
2. Is communication at your institution effective or ineffective? Justify.
3. What communication strategies do you use at your institution to reach out to all relevant stakeholders?
4. What factors impede effective communication at your institution?
5. How does communication affect implementation of government programmes and delivery of quality services?
6. How can communication effectiveness be improved in your institution and in the ministry as a whole?