

## AN INVESTIGATION OF PERCEPTUAL, VERBAL, AND NON-VERBAL BARRIERS IN THE WORKPLACE



 **Madaha Hanafi @ Mohd Ghani<sup>1+</sup>**


<sup>1</sup>Academy of Language Studies, MARA University of Technology, Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, Perak, Malaysia.

Email: [madaha@uitm.edu.my](mailto:madaha@uitm.edu.my)

 **Nur Fadzilah Muhamad Zamani<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>Academy of Language Studies, MARA University of Technology, Johor Branch, Segamat Campus, Johor Darul Ta'zim, Malaysia.

Email: [nurfadzilahzamani@uitm.edu.my](mailto:nurfadzilahzamani@uitm.edu.my)

 **Aina Athirah Rozman Azram<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup>Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

Email: [aathirah@uitm.edu.my](mailto:aathirah@uitm.edu.my)

 **Noor Hanim Rahmat<sup>4</sup>**


<sup>4</sup>Academy of Language Studies, MARA University of Technology, Johor Branch, Pasir Gudang Campus, Johor Darul Ta'zim, Malaysia.

Email: [noorh763@uitm.edu.my](mailto:noorh763@uitm.edu.my)

 **Siti Khadijah Omar<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>5</sup>Academy of Language Studies, MARA University of Technology, Kelantan Branch, Machang Campus, Bukit Ilmu, Machang, Kelantan, Malaysia.

Email: [sitikhadijah7547@uitm.edu.my](mailto:sitikhadijah7547@uitm.edu.my)

 **Nurshaza Farah Md Sharif<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup>Academy of Language Studies, MARA University of Technology, Melaka Branch, Jasin Campus, Melaka, Malaysia.

Email: [shazafarah@uitm.edu.my](mailto:shazafarah@uitm.edu.my)



(+ Corresponding author)

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### ABSTRACT

Effective communication creates a positive working environment and thus increases the job performance of the staff. However, the absence of proper communication between the members of an organisation or a company would result in failure to achieve the agreement while working. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how perceptual factors, verbal, and non-verbal communication can be barriers to effective communication in the workplace. A set of questionnaires is used and distributed to workers of various industries in different companies. It consists of five parts: the demographic profile, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, work environment, and organisational values. A total of ninety-four (94) responses are received and recorded. Findings reveal how perceptual, verbal, and non-verbal factors influence the flow of communication in the workplace. Consequently, the findings of this study can help employers and employees to improve communication at all levels for the betterment of the work performance of all workers.

**Contribution/ Originality:** This paper contributes to the existing literature by offering clear explanations of how perceptual, verbal, and non-verbal barriers affect the communication flow in the workplace. By analysing the highlighted barriers, employers can be mindful of the challenges in communication at work and strategise systematic ways on how to ensure effective communication among workers for a smooth flow of the company.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Communication can be defined as the process of transferring information and mutual understanding from one individual to another (Keyton, 2011). Medium for communication can be divided into verbal, non-verbal, and written communication. For verbal communication, it uses language to transfer information through speaking. It is

one of the most common types in the workplace as it is efficient. It is used during face-to-face or one-to-one conversations, meetings, phone calls, and video conferences. On the other hand, the usage of facial expressions, body language, and gestures to deliver information is called non-verbal communication. People use it intentionally and unintentionally. This type of communication can help people in understanding others' thoughts and feelings. Additionally, written communication is also used as a medium to convey information and it can be writing, typing, or printing symbols like letters and numbers.

Communication in the workplace differs in type and environment. In the workplace, the use of verbal, non-verbal, written, and even visual communication is employed to deliver information from top-down, bottom-up, or among co-workers themselves (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020). Top-down information is when the affective factors are taken into consideration. It can facilitate even the most complicated of information to be conveyed. Bottom-up communication can be improved by reducing red tape without compromising respect for one another. In the workplace, emails, letters, memos, and chats are generic forms of written communication writing. These categories of communication are interconnected. In having a successful interaction at work, employers can support verbal communication with both non-verbal and written communication.

Two common components in every communication are the sender and the receiver. However, communication does not occur until the information delivered is understood by the sender and the intended receiver. Thus, according to Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang (2014), making a receiver understand as intended is also a crucial element of communication. Communication is always related to successful contact and interaction (Cobley, 2008). In the workplace, efficient communication is not merely to understand one another, but one should be able to respond appropriately. Successful communication is essential within an organisation when the right people obtain the right information at the right time. Or else, it will cause problems of unable to understand each other or misunderstanding. Then, the agreement between the two parties cannot be accomplished due to the existence of communication barriers. Therefore, efficient and meaningful communication must be practiced in the workplace to build and maintain relationships, thus, achieving the goals of the organisation. According to Grunig (1992) effective communication is the key to organisational excellence and efficiency.

However, barriers to communication often exist in the workplace. Sometimes the receiver of the information may lack interest in the content of the message so he or she may not understand what is conveyed. Sometimes it is the way the message is conveyed or the person who is disseminating the information, so, companies must take note when they need to convey important information to the employees. Next, sometimes, the sender uses terms that the receiver is not familiar with, or the receiver lacks the knowledge to understand the information (Fruhen, Carpini, Parker, Leung, & Flemming, 2019). The use of jargon and "big words" should be avoided when explaining information to new employees. "New" employees need not be employees that have just joined the company. They can be a staff that has just been transferred from one department to another. At times, the environment can become a hindrance to communication. Conditions like noisy background, the structure of buildings, and the location of the communication make a difference. Sometimes moving from one part of the building may not be convenient and this inconvenience can be the cause of why some information is not disseminated on time or to the correct parties.

Sometimes the message is not conveyed because the information is disseminated by an employee/employer who may not be well-liked by many. Affective factors can come into play and block any communication that is supposed to take place. Having a negative attitude (Fruhen et al., 2019; Neelima et al., 2020) towards the sender of the message or even towards the content of the message can also be a barrier. Fruhen et al. (2019) found that organisational barrier is a hindrance to communication in the workplace.

Nevertheless, in communicating, the issue of not being able to understand each other can occur. This is due to the communication barrier that distorts the message. The barriers of communication are grouped into three categories which are perceptual (environmental and personal), verbal, and non-verbal communication (Longest, Rakich, & Darr, 2000; Yusof & Rahmat, 2020).

### 1.2. Objective and Research Questions

This study investigates perceptual, verbal, and non-verbal barriers to communication in the workplace. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions:

- i. How do perceptual barriers influence communication in the workplace? (Environmental barriers and personal barriers).
- ii. How can non-verbal communication be a barrier to communication in the workplace?
- iii. How can verbal communication be a barrier to communication in the workplace?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Communication Theories

Communication evolution begins with the early models identifying the definition and concept of communication as a linear, observable process (McQuail, 2008). Shannon and Weaver (1949) is usually referenced for its formulation of relating a sender and a receiver by transmitting messages via a channel. Another crucial element in the model is the noise; if a barrier exists in the communication process, complete comprehensibility is impossible (Lunenburg, 2010). Moreover, McQuail (2008) highlighted that the early communication models are further developed by including new elements such as the process of perception as can be seen in Gerbner (1956). The model highlighted the perceptual dimension relationship between communicating agent and the event. It is explained by means; that a man would understand an event differently based on his perception of the event (Gerbner, 1956). To date, researchers extensively innovate new communication theories based on evolving barriers in communication for instance; process barriers, physical barriers, semantic barriers, and psychosocial barriers (Lunenburg, 2010).

Therefore, delving into barriers to communication is the primary step to accommodating communication competency. Suter et al. (2009) reported that communication competence is a perceived need for professionals to contribute effectively to a team. Lack of communication impedes collaboration in the workplace. Thus, Abdullah, Ling, Sulaiman, Mohd Radzi, and Putri (2020) claimed that there are three dominant models; trait model, functional model, and interpersonal skill model that can be used to mitigate the barriers by working on communication competency. Hence, scholars are encouraged to facilitate a few practices to remove barriers in communication specifically by elevating the standard of communication competency (Swetha, 2015).

### 2.2. Theories on Communication Barriers

There are several reported barriers to effective communication. Smith (2013) reported seven types of barriers to communication. The first is (a) physical barriers. Sometimes communication gets obstructed by doors, walls, or any physical objects that hinder effective interaction. Physical barriers can also be the location of the communication. A barrier like noise can be a hindrance to effective communication.

The second barrier is (b) perceptual barriers are internal barriers that happen within a person's mind. Often people begin an interaction with a pre-conceived idea of what the sender is. The preconceived idea could also be what the sender had assumed he or she would like to hear. So, anything that is not from the expectations of the sender would not be positively accepted.

The third is (c) emotional barriers could be caused by the speaker's ability to deliver the message. It could be caused by fear, anger, etc. Even bouts of happiness can make a person make temporary decisions that may not be true at other times. Similarly, temporary sadness may cause a person to decide based on what he/she is feeling at the point of the decision. Anger is the most common barrier in the workplace. Some people are not able to control their emotions. They may make rash decisions that they may regret when the anger has subsided.

The fourth is (d) cultural barriers and this happens when people from different cultural backgrounds may not understand one another because of their different understanding of certain issues based on their culture.

Globalization has enabled people to work across continents. People get to know more cultures and ways of life of people from other parts of the world. Nevertheless, the mingling of different cultures can sometimes bring negative consequences. One culture may be offended by a gesture that another culture considers normal. Misunderstandings have happened due to such circumstances. That is a barrier some know is unavoidable.

The fifth barrier is (e) language barriers and this can also refer to the use of terminologies in different languages. This can also be an extension of cultural barriers. It can also be a barrier on its own. Terminologies used by some employees may be unknown to others, thus, obstructing communication to take place.

The sixth is (f) gender barriers. Although these days this is not an issue, sometimes different thoughts about certain issues may surface as barriers. Sometimes affective factors can come into play. One factor that can be accepted as normal may not be normal to the other gender. Sometimes, preconceived ideas about what we think and gender stereotypes can be a barrier.

The last barrier is (g) interpersonal barriers and this can happen because of inappropriate transactions of words between two or more people. This can be personality issues. Some prefer one way of communication and may not like how one sender is disseminating the information. Some people speak with a tone and are thus misunderstood by the hearer. The interpersonal barrier can also stem from top-down and even bottom-up. Being too casual about barriers to communication or taking them too seriously can mark the beginning of unwanted barriers to communication in the workplace.

### 2.3. Past Studies

Communication is vital to an organisation's excellence and success. One of the factors for communication barriers is the environment. The relationship with the people we are working, with and the environment is crucial in determining effective communication at work. A positive working environment will increase the job performance of the staff. A study by Fruhen et al. (2019) studied perceived barriers to the implementation of multi-professional team briefings (MPTB) in operating theatres (OTs) and the potential solutions to overcome the barriers. 103 operating theatre staff, including nurses, surgeons, anaesthetists, technicians, and administrators from four tertiary metropolitan hospitals participated in this study. Participants provided their responses in an open-ended text format and the responses were coded independently via qualitative content analysis by two raters following an inductive coding framework. Results were generated by frequency counts per theme, which is an indication of perceived relevance. The identified themes were categorised into the levels of work design. Findings revealed that barriers to the execution of MPTB were mainly reported at workgroup level.

Rahmat, Razali, and Awang (2019) in another study investigated the influence of communication at operational and individual levels in the workplace. This quantitative pilot study was conducted on 68 respondents in a government organisation. The results showed that conducting effective and efficient meetings is an important form to facilitate communication between the management and the employees in the workplace. Meetings also improve communication as it is when employees receive constructive criticisms and suggestions from others. Findings presented that the employees felt that besides effective communication at the top-down level, there should also be good communication within the organisation and among the employees themselves. Generally, achieving effective communication in the workplace is the responsibility of both the organisation and the individual. Positive interaction would lead to positive communication and hence, improves motivation at work as well as productivity.

Next, a study carried out by Pal, Halder, and Guha (2016) determined the communication barriers that happen in the classroom in India. This study is conducted with the aim to investigate a total of 189 teachers' perceptions of the main communication barriers that happen in the class by taking in the variables such as gender, locality, location, and the type of school. This research is a quantitative design, and it used questionnaires as the research instrument. The findings showed that there is a huge significance among the variables mentioned above. All in all, male teachers opined that there are more communication barriers that happen in the classrooms compared to female

teachers. The government school, rural areas, and the district of Kolkata are identified with higher rates of communication barriers compared to private schools, urban areas, and Burdwan district. Of all the factors considered in investigating the communication barriers, the class environment is found to be the main reason to impede communication. The findings of this study are crucial in helping educators to identify and overcome the main factor of communication barriers in the classroom in the hope to encourage more effective teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, a study by Bergman, Dellve, and Skagert (2016) explored the communication process in workplace meetings in a Swedish healthcare organisation. This qualitative drive, but mixed mode design collected data through interviews, mirroring feedback seminars, focus group interviews, and observations. The data were analysed using descriptive and conventional content analysis. The results showed that the communication flow and the organisation of the meetings varied in terms of the physical arrangement, time allocated, frequency, and the number of participants. The topics for the observed meetings were mainly functional with a focus on clinical work dealing with guidelines, routines, tools, and patient care. The findings exposed that there was considerable variation in the observed meetings. It was found that one meeting was dominated by a downward communication flow and another meeting was dominated by a two-way or multi-way communication flow. In general, the meetings were viewed not only to disseminate information but also as an opportunity for the employees to exert an influence in decision-making and as a means of sharing knowledge and developing competence in the workplace.

Apart from that, personal factors can also hinder communication in the workplace. Neelima et al. (2020) examined the barriers to communication between nurses and patients. This study was performed on 100 nurses and 50 patients using separate questionnaires for nurses and patients containing demographic details and barriers to communication together with open-ended questions. The results showed that personal elements are also the factors for self-perception barriers in the workplace.

As for barriers to non-verbal communication, Jena (2020) focused on cultural variations in non-verbal communication. Finding out how non-verbal communication functions in many cultures is the key goal. It begins by concentrating on the different forms of non-verbal communication before moving on to discuss its significance in both the personal and professional sectors. It also emphasizes cultural barriers, for which the interpretation of non-verbal communication varies depending on culture, and how to overcome those barriers using various examples. According to the findings, non-verbal communication is stronger than oral or written communication. Additionally, it was noted that when it comes to all other non-verbal cues, including body language, eye contact is the one that receives the most attention. The most crucial weapon for the spread of different cultures is communication (both verbal as well as non-verbal). There is no doubt that non-verbal communication can occasionally cause confusion and disarray in people's minds. However, it varies from person to person and particularly from culture to culture.

The language barrier is an obstacle when communicating verbally. Ne'Matullah, Pek, and Roslan (2021) conducted a study to identify the language needs of foreign workers working in construction sectors in Malaysia. The study indicated how communication affects workers' productivity in completing the work on time. Purposive sampling was used to investigate 26 on-site contractors from different construction companies. An online survey was developed as a research design in this study, and it was distributed to construction site managers in Malaysia. They were asked about the country of origin of the workers and their opinion of English as a language of instruction. Findings showed that work productivity was affected due to language barriers in the sector of construction in Malaysia. Moreover, it is noted that cross-cultural differences had put foreign labourers at risk and caused a wastage of time and manpower.

In another study by Amoah et al. (2019) with the purpose to examine the perceived barriers to efficient therapeutic communication between patients and nurses at Kumasi's Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. 13 nurses and patients were chosen using a purposive sampling strategy, and they were each questioned using an unstructured interview guide. Socio-demographic variables, the patient-nurse connection, language,

misunderstanding, and pain were all recognised as patient-related characteristics that stood in the way of efficient therapeutic communication. Nurse-related traits such as a lack of knowledge, an all-knowing attitude, work overload, and dissatisfaction were also identified as barriers.

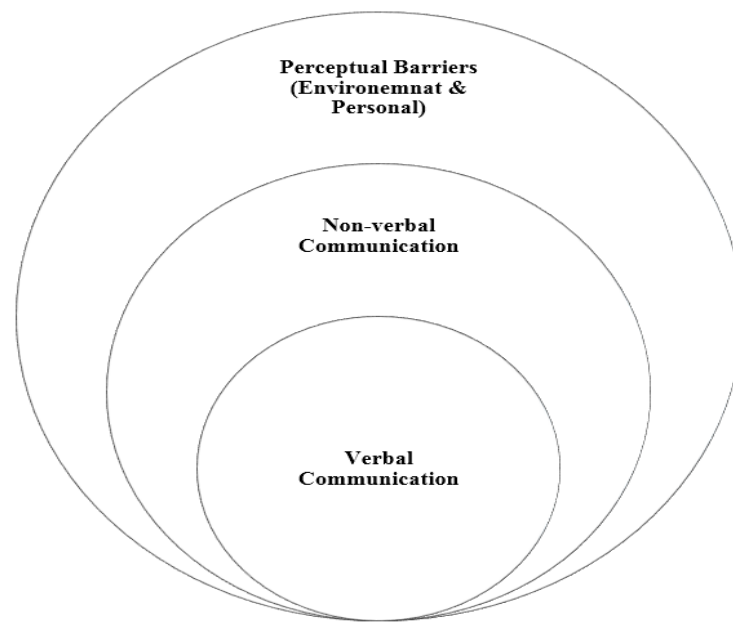


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

Source: Smith (2013); Yusof and Rahmat (2020).

#### 2.4. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Barriers begin with what people perceive. Sometimes what they perceive is a hindrance and sometimes it is a catalyst to communication. If it is a hindrance, it is then a barrier. Perceptual barriers can come from the (a) environment or (b) personal factors of the communicators. Next, when a person is communicating, (c) the non-verbal communication strategies used by the speaker would be noticed first by the audience/listener. Finally, (d) the verbal communication barrier can be a hindrance when the message is not understood as planned by the sender.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach to answer the research questions. This study used random sampling which targeted any working adults with the experience of working from the office as well as working from home. Ninety-four (94) participants responded to the questionnaire.

A questionnaire was developed and adapted from Yusof and Rahmat (2020) as well as Smith (2013). It consisted of five parts with a total of twenty-one (21) items. Part A looked at the participants' background, Part B was about verbal communication while Part C was about non-verbal Communication, Part D touched on the work environment and lastly, Part E was concerning organisational values.

The questionnaire was distributed using Google Form. A total of ninety-four (94) responses were received and recorded. Data was collected from the participants and later analysed using SPSS to determine the mean scores.

### 4. FINDINGS

This section presents the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire. This section also reports the findings by answering the three research questions of this study.



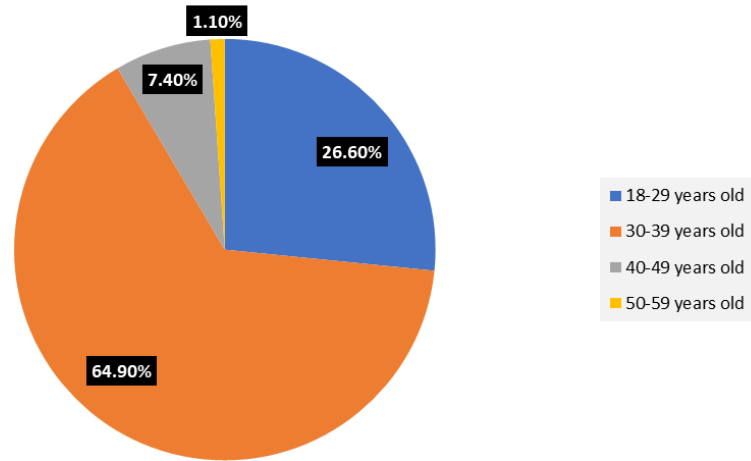


Figure 2. Percentage of age group.

#### 4.1. Findings for Demographic Profile

Figure 2 presents the demographic age groups among respondents who took part in the study. The study found that more than half of the respondents (64.9%) belong to the age group of 30-39 years old, followed by less than half of the respondents (26.6%) being from the age group of 18-29 years old. The result also shows that respondents aged 40-49 years old contributed the third highest with 7.4% while the rest of the respondents were from the age group of 50-59 years old which contributed to 1.1%.

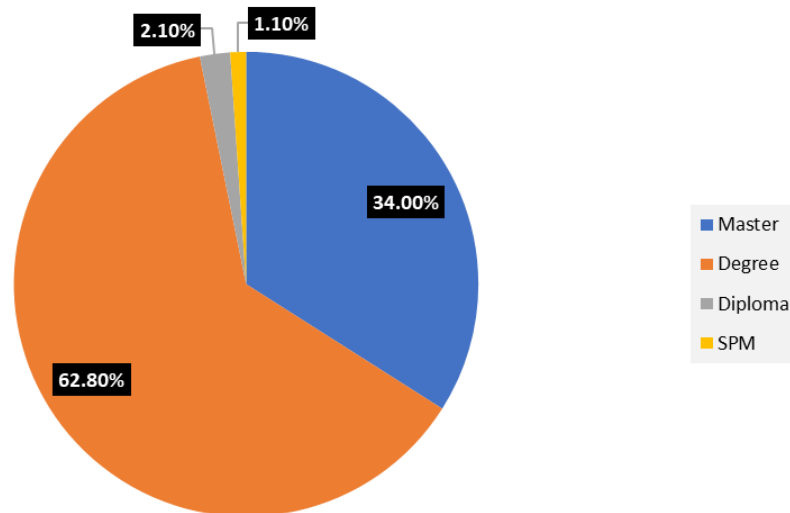


Figure 3. Percentage for highest academic level.

Figure 3 depicts the education level of the respondents. Based on the results, most respondents were Degree holders with 62.8% followed by Master holders 34%. Meanwhile, the percentage of the respondents with a Diploma qualification was 2.1% while the remaining respondents (1.1%) have SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) or also known as Malaysian Certificate of Education qualifications.

Table 1. Percentage for types of industry.

No.	Types of Industry	Percentage
1	Agricultural, Forestry and Fishing	1.1%
2	Mining	0%
3	Construction	3.2%
4	Manufacturing	11.7%
5	Transportation & Public Utilities	1.1%
6	Wholesale Trade	0%
7	Retail Trade	4.3%
8	Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	16%
9	Public Services & Administration	4.3%
10	Health Services	1.1%
11	Food & Beverage	5.3%
12	Oil & Gas	3.2%
13	Information Technology	2.1%
14	Education	37.2%
15	Others (Law, Training & Consultation, Freelance, Fashion, Airlines, Professional Service, Heavy Machinery, Energy, Government)	1.1%

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents by the type of industry the respondents were involved in. The result of this study shows that the education industry contributed the highest percentage with 37.2%, followed by the finance, insurance, and real estate industry at 16% as the second choice and accompanied by the manufacturing industry at 11.7% and the fourth highest percentage was food and beverage industry with 5.3%. On the other hand, both retail trade as well as public service and administration recorded at 4.3%. The findings also revealed that construction including oil and gas shared the same percentage of response which was 3.2%. Next, the percentage for the information technology industry is recorded at 2.1%. Based on the above table, agricultural, forestry and fishing, transportation and public utilities, health services, and others (law, training, and consultation, freelance, fashion, airlines, professional service, heavy machinery, energy, and government) contributed to the lowest percentage which was 1.1%.

#### 4.2. Findings for Perceptual Barriers (Environment & Personal)

According to Smith (2013), perceptual barriers are barriers that may or may not really exist. Two examples of perceptual barriers are environmental and personal barriers (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020). Findings are presented in terms of (a) environmental barriers and (b) personal barriers.

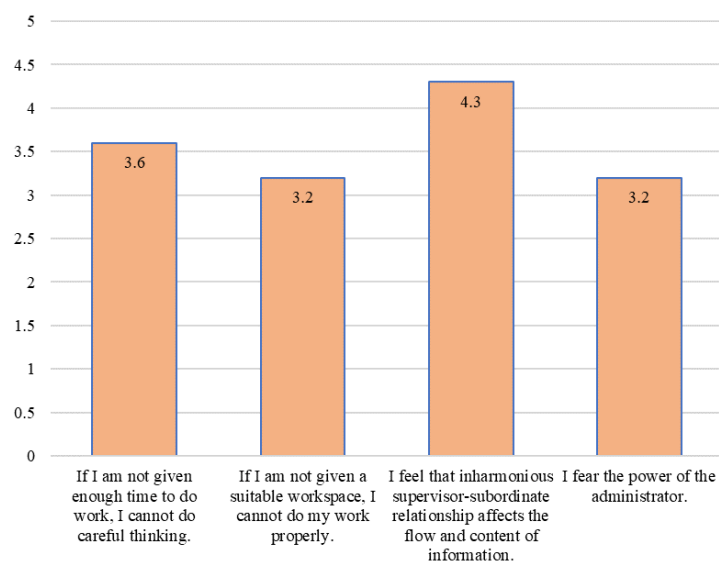


Figure 4. Mean for environmental barriers.



4.3. Findings for Environmental Barriers

Figure 4 reveals the findings for perceptual barriers focusing on environmental barriers. Respondents reported that an ‘inharmonious supervisor-subordinate relationship affects the flow and content of information’ (4.3). They also felt that ‘if they were not given enough time to do work, they cannot do careful thinking’ (3.6). Meanwhile, the lowest mean score is reported at 3.2 for the statement ‘If I am not given a suitable workspace, I cannot do my work properly’ and ‘I fear the power of the administrator’. This means that not having a suitable workspace is not an issue to work effectively and they are not afraid of the power of the administrator.

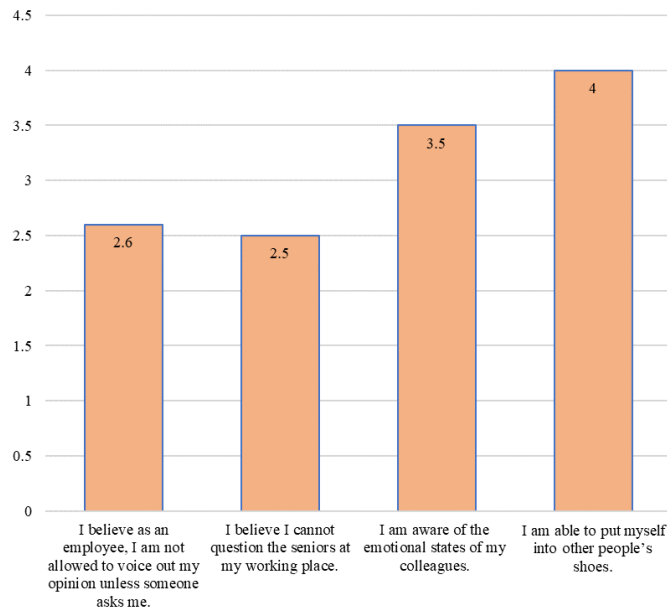


Figure 5. Mean for personal barriers.

4.4. Findings for Personal Barriers

Figure 5 summarises the findings for personal barriers. The statement ‘I am able to put myself into other people’s shoes’ has the highest mean score of 4.0 followed by ‘I am aware of the emotional states of my colleagues’ with a mean score of 3.5. However, the lowest mean score is found in ‘I believe I cannot question the seniors at my working place’ statement (2.5) meaning the respondents felt they could question their seniors at work.

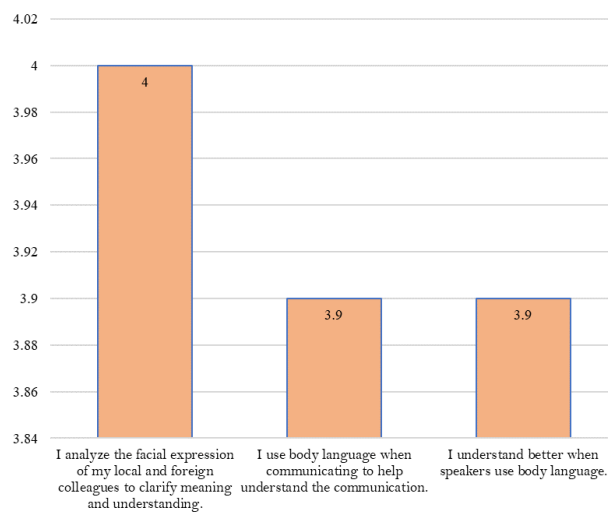


Figure 6. Mean for non-verbal communication.

#### 4.5. Findings for Non-Verbal Communication

Figure 6 reviews the results for non-verbal communication. Based on the mean values, the highest mean score is found in 'I analyse the facial expression of my local and foreign colleagues to clarify meaning and understanding' (M=4.0). In addition, the respondents also agreed that they 'use body language when communicating to help understand the communication' and 'understand better when speakers use body language' (M=3.9).

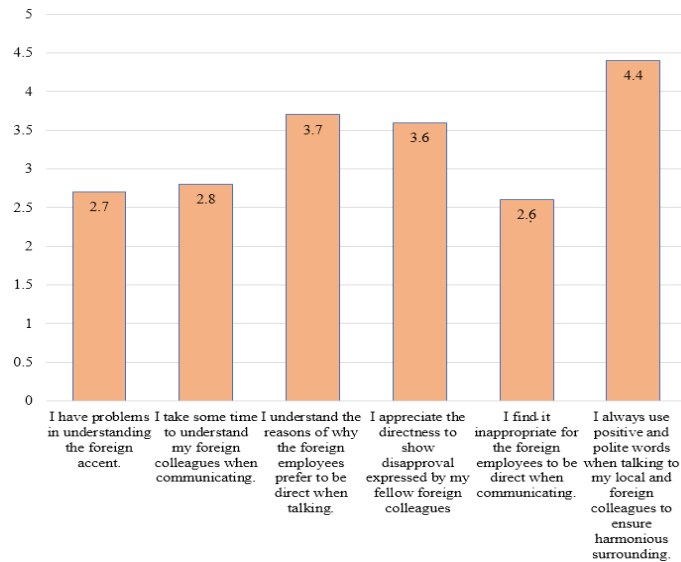


Figure 7. Mean for verbal communication.

#### 4.6. Findings for Verbal Communication

On the other hand, Figure 7 outlines the findings for verbal communication. It was found that the highest mean score is 'I always use positive and polite words when talking to my local and foreign colleagues to ensure harmonious surroundings' (M=4.4), followed by 'I understand the reasons why the foreign employees prefer to be direct when talking' (M=3.7), and 'I appreciate the directness to show disapproval expressed by my fellow foreign colleagues' (M=3.6). The statement 'I take some time to understand my foreign colleagues when communicating' and 'I have problems in understanding the foreign accent' have low mean values recorded with 2.8 and 2.7 respectively. The lowest mean value is 'I find it inappropriate for the foreign employees to be direct when communicating' (M=2.6).

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1. Summary and Discussion

The study explored the barriers to effective communication among workers from various industries in Malaysia. The first factor that was explored is the perceptual barriers. Perceptual barriers in this study refer to environmental and personal barriers (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020). The findings depicted that the non-harmonious environment, especially the relationship between supervisor and subordinate affects the flow and content of information when communicating. Rapport with a supervisor can be an obstacle to communication at work. This is in accordance with the studies by Fruhen et al. (2019); Rahmat et al. (2019) and Bergman et al. (2016) who stated that organisational barriers can be a hindrance to effective communication at work. Besides, the analysis showed that the respondents cannot make careful thinking if they were not given enough time to complete their work. Time factors can be a barrier to communication at work. This is supported by a study by Neelima et al. (2020) that stated time constraint impedes effective communication. This proves that getting enough time in a conducive work environment plays an important role to help or hinder communication in the workplace.

In addition, the study found interesting findings that some participants felt neutral for not having a suitable workspace could affect their work. This mean, for some workers, the condition of the workspace is not a big issue to work effectively. However, [Pal et al. \(2016\)](#) in their study found that the condition of the environment happens to be the main reason to impede communication. Communication will be affected by the external and internal noise of the surrounding. A calm environment and tension-free mutual interaction can enhance the effectiveness of the communication process. The respondents of this study also felt neutral when they were asked about fear of the power of the administrator. They think that the power of the administrator is not something that could hinder the employees from communicating with the administrator. Having high respect for the superiors in the workplace is a good thing, however, this feeling of respect should not be in any way a hindrance to effective communication in the workplace.

For perceptual barriers, this study reported that personal factors can ease or hinder communication in the workplace. It is reported that the participants agreed that they can put themselves into other people's shoes and they are aware of the emotional states of their colleagues. Similar findings were also described by [Neelima et al. \(2020\)](#) who found that internal or personal elements make up a small factor in the self-perception barriers in the workplace. Other than that, another interesting finding exposed in this study is the respondents felt they could question their seniors in the workplace. Therefore, the findings in this study revealed that personal factors include the emotional states of the employees and their attitude or empathy towards the element of communication somehow become an obstacle for them to communicate at work. However, a higher level of seniority is not a challenge for the workers to have effective communication at work.

Other than that, this study found that non-verbal and verbal communication is also an important aspect of communication. Non-verbal communication can facilitate or be a barrier to communication in the workplace. The study exposed that the participants analyse their facial expressions when communicating with their local and foreign co-workers to clarify meaning and understanding. Furthermore, the participants also said that they use body language when communicating to help understand communication and they admitted that they understand better when the speakers use body language. Nevertheless, this differs from the study by [Ne'Matullah et al. \(2021\)](#) as they stated that differences in meanings of non-verbal communication will cause miscommunication and make people offended due to cultural differences. Non-verbal communication is universal, but culture bound. Hence, cross-cultural understanding must be improved as it decreases the communication barrier caused by cultural differences ([Jena, 2020](#)). Generally, using appropriate non-verbal communication can help employees to receive and understand the message better and reduce or avoid barriers to communication at work.

Next, it is reported that verbal communication can either develop the obstacle or can make communication becomes smooth. The results exposed that the respondents did not find it inappropriate for foreign colleagues to be direct when communicating. In fact, they understand the reasons the foreign employees choose to be direct when talking. People in the workplace may not speak the same language ([Yusof & Rahmat, 2020](#)) or they speak the same language but differ in cultural background. Understanding different cultures will eliminate communication barriers ([Jena, 2020](#)). Additionally, the findings showed that the practice of using polite and positive words is important to sustain a harmonious workplace surrounding. Verbal communication is used to foster good relationships between individuals in general and in the workplace specifically. [Bergman et al. \(2016\)](#) emphasized that communication promotes tolerance and reduces conflicts. Knowing how and what to say under different conditions is a skill that employees should master to minimize misunderstanding. Moreover, the findings found that the participants did not take time to understand their foreign co-workers and they did not have problems comprehending the foreign accent when communicating at work. This is not in accordance with [Amoah et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Ne'Matullah et al. \(2021\)](#) that indicated that language barriers have become a threat to the workforce as it leads to miscommunication. Miscommunication later creates misunderstanding; hence it delays the time to complete the work and affects the quality of the work.

### 5.2. Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study assisted employers and employees to recognise how perceptual barriers which consist of environmental and personal factors, as well as verbal and non-verbal barriers, influenced communication in the workplace. It is almost impossible to eliminate communication barriers in the workplace. However, based on the highlighted barriers in this study, employers can take action to improve communication at all levels to enhance the work productivity and work performance of all workers. Apart from that, measures can also be taken by employees, so they are comfortable communicating their ideas and thoughts at their workplace. The findings of this research can also lead to the development of modules for workers' training. It is suggested that future research should explore further other forms of communication barriers at different levels of the workplace. Interviews can be done to ask the employees and the employers about their thoughts on barriers to effective communication and ways to eliminate the barriers. In addition, it would be interesting if the future study can include more participants from more companies locally and abroad.

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