

Quadrant II – Notes

Paper Title: Mass Communication

Code: COG149

Module Name: Nature and Process of Communication - Elements in the Communication Process - Communication Cycle

Module No: 1

Communication is a transactional, ongoing and continuous process. It involves the generation of meaning by sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal symbols or signs, such as words, icons, images, tone of voice, facial expressions, etc. Through communication, people create, send, and receive symbolic messages in order to construct and interpret meaning in a variety of situations and contexts.

Elements in the Communication Process

The communication process involves different elements working together. Participants (source and receiver), message, encoding, decoding, and channels, feedback, noise and context.

1. **Participants:** The participants in the communication process are responsible for sending and receiving the messages. The sender is also known as the source of the message. The intended target of the source's message is the receiver. There is perhaps no element more important in the communication process than the audience or the receivers of communication.
2. **Message:** The communication sent from the source to the receiver is called the message. It is the verbal or nonverbal communication being conveyed to the receiver.
3. **Encoding and Decoding:** Encoding is the process by which the source translates the thoughts and ideas so that they can be perceived by the human senses. Decoding is the process by which the receiver translates the source's thoughts and ideas so that they have meaning.
4. **Channels:** The means of any communication or how the message is communicated is called the channel. It is the pathway or the medium that allows the message to travel from the speaker/source to the audience/receiver. Sight and sound are sensory channels that allow the transmission of messages. Radio, television, film, and the Internet all represent different channels through which an individual can receive a message.

5. Feedback: Feedback is any verbal or nonverbal response to a message. It is a message sent in response to other messages.
6. Noise: Noise is any interference in the communication process that affects the understanding of the message. Noise can be physical, psychological or semantic. Physical noise is any external sound that hinders your ability to concentrate and listen to a message. On the other hand, psychological noise is any mental preoccupation, such as stereotypes, biases and assumptions, that hinders your ability to concentrate and listen to a message. Another type of noise is semantic noise which arises when the sender and receiver have different meaning systems or speak different languages. Noise creates barriers to communication.
7. Context: The context is the setting, location or environment in which the communication takes place.

Communication Cycle

According to Michel Argyle, the communication cycle involves six steps: someone decides to communicate an idea, they encode the message and then, send it; someone else receives it, decodes it and understands it.

A more complex understanding of the communication process is the transactional model of communication. This model presents communication as a two-way, continuous cyclical process: where communication is a process in which participants act as sender and receiver simultaneously; they are both communicators. The communicators generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback simultaneously within social, cultural and relational contexts.