

NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY

THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR THE SUCCESS OF AN ORGANIZATION: A
CASE STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE- MAFIKENG IN THE NORTH WEST
PROVINCE (NWP).

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED FOR THE PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE MASTER OF COMMUNICATION DEGREE- (M A Comm.).

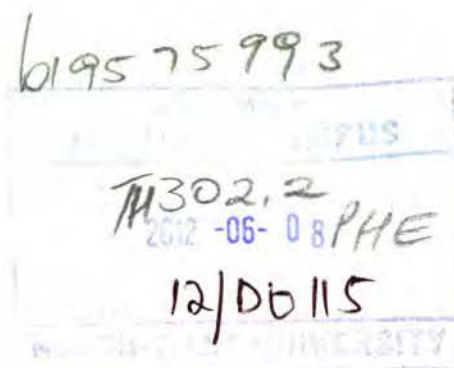
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DECLARATION

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It is my own topic formulated by myself, and the contents thereof have been obtained from the literature review through the use of study materials and other sources as mentioned in the bibliography part of this report.

Further that this is not a copy of a research that has previously been submitted by anyone before. Therefore I do understand the contents of the report to the best of my knowledge.

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ABSTRACT

It came to the attention of the Researcher that there is a lack of communication between the management and the personnel in most of the workplaces that could lead to the achievement of common objectives as set out by the organisation.

Therefore this study mainly focused on the poor standards of communication within the workplace between management and subordinates. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Rural Development (DACE & RD), Mmabatho Chief Directorate was identified as the population for this study. Permission was then sought from the Head of the Department to use this Chief Directorate as a study population.

A total group of seventy (70) out of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) employees were given questionnaires to complete, and only fifty-one (51) well completed forms were returned and analyzed by the researcher. The views of the respondents were obtained through this method. The study reflected different views of the respondents starting from the demographic data, educational background, occupation and the different opinions regarding the topic. The demographic data assisted the researcher in knowing the background of the respondents. The results of the study show that different employees have got different viewpoints regarding the flow of communication within their work environment.

The findings from this research show that most of the respondents have indicated that there is no effective communication in this department. They further show that effective internal communication, leadership and employees seem to be three crucial aspects of critical importance for the potential success of any organisation or government department.

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The North West University Mafikeng Campus Library staff, the respondents, friends and colleagues who were very supportive during the difficult times in terms of assisting with the necessary material for the research work - You were great at All Times! Thank You Very Much!

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research report to our Heavenly Father who is the original source of wisdom and knowledge for giving me the insight and perseverance to face this challenge.

I would also like to dedicate this work to my late mother and mother-in-law who left me before they could see some of my achievements and capabilities. To you my parents I am saying wherever you are sleeping, I thank you for what you have done for me. I will always remember you. Thank you very much once more.

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Chapter 1

An Overview

1.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this report let us look at what Thomas Tortoriello, the Director of Executive Training and Organizational Development at F. & R. Lazarus has to say regarding communication in the workplace. He says: "The work of the world gets done because people actively cooperate with one another. We are all almost completely dependent upon what other people do for us. Our world is not a jungle of competition. The cooperation that makes human society possible is manifested most visibly within the organization or the workplace and it is almost entirely dependent upon the skill with which we communicate". (Tortoriello, 1978;3).

Being able to communicate effectively is therefore essential if one wants to build a successful career. To do this, one must understand what the message is, what audience one is sending it to, and how it will be perceived. One must also weigh-up the circumstances surrounding one's communications, such as situational and cultural context (*<http://organizationalcommunication.com>, 2010 on line*).

1.2 Background to the study

Communication is a process involving the sending of a meaningful message by the sender through the communication channel to the recipient. This involves the element of feedback, which is an indication that the message has been effectively received. However the channel through which the message is being sent should also be agreed upon between the sender and the receiver of the message. This is a process because at some stage in the process, the recipient becomes the sender as well. It is a well known fact that there is an existing problem in workplaces. This problem has been identified as the communication problem between Management and Personnel. This problem affects most organizations because objectives such as desired goals and organisational vision for the future cannot be achieved. This

problem occurs to such an extent that most of the tasks that have been assigned to certain individuals within the organization or the workplace are not achieved, either partially or totally.

Having made the above observations, it becomes clear that government departments are no exception as the same problem of communications exists between management and personnel. In most instances this problem affects the achievement of objectives or goals that have been set in a department or workplace. It happens in most instances that those tasks that have been given out to members of staff are only partially completed or not at all. One reason might be the poor education received by most of the employees and which they are unwilling to improve to improve, This is despite the fact that there are Acts and Regulations in place compelling employees to utilise bursaries which are offered in most workplaces, including government departments, to improve their skills. Most employees are not prepared to utilise them for some reason or another.

1.3 Problem statement

Effective internal communication seems to be an aspect of critical importance in the potential success of any organisation. In this study, an investigation was conducted to determine whether there is effective communication within the Workplace or Organization. The impact and the effects of poor communication in the Organization was also looked investigated, as this could hamper the smooth execution of the instructions given by those in management positions. The perception of performance output was also looked into. Therefore this research report attempted to give an academic insight into the link between service quality and the internal communication aspect in a workplace.

1.4 Research question

- To what extent could effective communication in the workplace improve the organisation's performance?

1.4.1 Sub -question

- What measures could be put in place to improve effective communication between Management and Personnel in a Workplace or Organization?

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were:

- To investigate the way in which the concept of effective communication applies within an Organization.
- To determine how productivity could be improved within an Organization when communication is effective and efficient.
- To find out how effective Communication in a Workplace could yield fruitful results.
- To give some new insight on how to improve the channels of communication in a Workplace

1.6 Assumptions about the study

It was assumed that:

- Failure to communicate properly between management and personnel could often result in poor performance of duties.
- Effective communication between management and staff could yield fruitful results.
- Sending of clear messages by top management to the subordinates could assist the organization to achieve set goals and objectives

1.7 Research design

The type of study conducted was evaluation research. The approach used to carry out the investigation was a case study method whereby a government department was analysed. In this case the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Rural Development (DACE & RD) was selected as a subject under study. Different employees within different

government departments have different ideas and approaches towards the way management and staff communicate within the workplace.

1.7.1 Covering letter

All questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter. In the letter the person undertaking the research was identified. A brief description of the purpose of the study was also given in order to motivate respondents to give their cooperation (Baker, 1988:72).

The covering letter also gave an indication of the importance of the study as well as for whom it was of special importance (De Vos, 2001:157).

The anonymity of the respondents was also clearly guaranteed in the covering letter and a clear indication was given that all information would be treated with confidentiality in accord with Baker (1988:173).

1.8 Methodology

Research methodologies

Historically, a study of organizational communication was driven primarily by quantitative research methodologies. Included in functional organizational communication research were statistical analyses such as surveys, text indexing, network mapping and behaviour modeling. In the early 1980s, the interpretive revolution took place in organizational communication. Putnam and Pacanowski (1983) text of *Communication and Organizations* titled "*An Interpretive Approach*", they argued for the opening up of methodological space for qualitative approaches such as narrative analyses, participant-observation, interviewing, rhetoric and textual approaches, readings and philosophic inquiries.

During the 1980s and 1990s critical organizational scholarship began to gain prominence with a focus on issues of gender, race, class, and power or knowledge. In its current state, the study of

organizational communication is methodologically open with research from post-positive, interpretive, critical, postmodern, and discursive paradigms being published regularly.

Organizational communication scholarship appears in a number of communication journals including but not limited to Management Communication Quarterly, Journal of Applied Communication Research, Communication Monographs, Academy of Management Journal, Communication Studies, and Southern Communication Journal (*[http:organizational communication, 2010 on line](#)*).

1.8.1 Population

According to statistical information provided by the Workplace Skills Plan of 2006/2007 for the DACE & RD the total number of employees currently in the Mmabatho Chief Directorate was two hundred and seventy-eight (278).

The DACE & RD, Mmabatho Chief Directorate Workplace Skills Plan 2007/2008 used for the Population selection of this study.

Category	Employees	African		Indian		White		Total
		M	F	M	F	M	F	Total
1	Directors & Corporate Managers	8	8					
2	Professionals	14	1			17	3	35
3	Technical Trade workers	3				12		15
4	Community & Personnel service workers	67	3			8		78
5	Clerical & Administrative workers	25	39		4			68
6	Machine Operators & Drivers	38		1	1			40
7	General Assistants	18	23		1			42
	TOTAL =							278

Data was collected from employees of the DACE & RD as the targeted population group for this study. The target population is a group of subjects to whom the findings are generalized according to Imenda (2000:116).

1.8.2 Sampling

Probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each element of the population can be determined. In other words, the researcher could estimate the accuracy of the generalization from a sample of the population. Simple random sampling is a procedure which provides equal opportunity of selection for each element in a population according to Bailey (1994:131). The use of random numbers is reliable and the techniques are simple, however, they are limited by their reliance on the existence of a complete list of all elements of the population, argues Bless (2000:89).

Out of this Chief Directorate in the DACE & RD, a minimum of seventy (70) employees, regarded as being twenty per cent (20%) of the entire population (270) under study, was selected. The aim was that, although it was not a true representation of all the employees, at least it gave an insight of what was actually happening within this government department. A total number of 70 questionnaires were submitted; some questionnaires were spoilt or damaged by the respondents.

1.8.3 Data Collection method

Data was collected through the use of survey questionnaires the main aim of which was to elicit information from those members of the DACE & RD who have specialised information about their experiences from different places of employment.

1.8.4 Data Analysis

With the help of the statistical consultant at NWU, computer aided statistical analysis was employed.

1.9 The significance of the study

Often members from different government departments or organizations accuse their managers ,at all levels, of being incapable of effective communication. The aim of this study was to evaluate how the different employees view their managers within their work environment. Therefore:

- The study will help to identify problems with regard to poor communication within the workplace
- The recommendations advanced should therefore assist to improve the quality of message formulation and effective communication within the workplace.
- Effective communication should then be used for the attainment of goals and objectives within the workplace
- Managers should be able to implement effective communication leading to high performance through communicable means across the department as a whole.
- The general level of the impact and clarity of executive communication utilising multiple sources in reporting information should then improve.

1.10 Scope of the study

The study was limited to the employees of the DACE & RD, Mmabatho Chief Directorate in Mafikeng in the North West Province (NWP). Therefore the results are not representative of all the government departments in the NWP.

1.11 Ethical considerations

- The researcher assured and guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents' answers.
- No information was disclosed without the consent of the respondents.
- No deceiving methods were applied by the researcher to the respondents in order to elicit information from them.
- No pressure of any sort was applied by the researcher to the respondents to elicit information.

- The respondents were briefed about the topic beforehand and what was expected of them by the researcher.

1.12 Limitations to the study

Time constraints - since the study was conducted for academic purposes, time given to conduct this study was limited and was seen as an obstacle to the general success of the study. Also the type of permanent employment ("embargoed") of the researcher served as a stumbling block since most of the subjects under study are known to the researcher. This hampered the smooth running of the research work.

1.13 Delimitations of the study

This study was delimited to the employees of the DACE & RD - Mmabatho Chief Directorate in the Mafikeng area.

1.14 Definition of Key Theoretical Terms

- **Communication** refers to the sending and receiving of messages in mutually agreed upon languages. Simply put by Tortoriello (1978:10). , it is defined as a process of sending and receiving meaningful and mutually agreed upon verbal and non-verbal messages between the sender and the receiver. It entails the sender, the message, channels of communication, noise and the receiver of this message.
- **Meaning** entails what the communication is about. Tortoriello argues that when we communicate with someone we are attempting to symbolize either verbally or nonverbally through facial expressions, actions, movement and gestures (Tortoriello, 1978:10).
- **Organization** is a social grouping that establishes tasks or interpersonal patterns of relationships for the attainment of specific objectives. In order to study communication within an organization it will have to be analysed as it relates to the stated communication within an organization (Tortoriello,1978;16).

- **Interactional** in communication means that communication is reciprocal. Both parties continually affect each other as they keep on sending and receiving messages. As Tortoriello put it, "One might be the person speaking, but the other person on the receiving end is simultaneously sending his or her own messages by means of facial expressions, gestures, actions, eye contact, movements and so forth" according to Tortoriello (1978; p.10).
- **Channel** is described as a means employed to transport symbols. According to Tortoriello airwaves deliver words from one person to the other while gestures and facial expressions are delivered by light waves. Therefore light and sound are the channels used most often in human communication (Tortoriello, 1978;11).
- **Feedback** may be a way of helping a person to consider his or her behaviour or a way to reinforce his or her present accepted behaviour. According to Tortoriello, it is communication to a person that gives that person information about how he or she affects others (Tortoriello, 1978:103).

1.15 Communication Theory Framework

It will be helpful to examine communication and communication theory from one of the following viewpoints:

- **Mechanistic:** This view considers communication as a perfect transaction of a message from the sender to the receiver (Littlejohn,2002:26-30).
- **Psychological:** This view considers communication as the act of sending a message to a receiver, and the feelings and thoughts of the receiver upon interpreting the message (Littlejohn,2002:26-30).
- **Social Constructionist (Symbolic Interactionist):** This view considers communication to be the product of the interactants sharing and creating meaning (Littlejohn,2002:26-30).

- **Systemic:** This view considered communication to be the new message created via "through-put", or what happens as the message is being interpreted and re-interpreted as it travels through people (Littlejohn,:26-30).
- **Critical:** This view considered communication as a source of power and oppression of individuals and social groups (Littlejohn,2002:26-30).

Inspection of a particular theory on this level provided a framework on the nature of communication as seen within the confines of that theory. Theories can also be studied and organized according to the ontological, epistemological, and axiological framework imposed by the theorist.

- **Ontology** essentially poses the question of what is it exactly that the theorist is examining. One must consider the very nature of reality. The answer usually falls in one of three realms depending on whether the theorist sees the phenomena through the lens of a realist, a nominalist, or a social constructionist. The realist perspective views the world objectively, believing that there is a world outside of our own experience and cognitions. Nominalists see the world subjectively, claiming that everything outside of one's cognitions is simply names and labels. Social constructionists straddle the fence between objective and subjective reality, claiming that reality is what we create together (Littlejohn,2002:26-30).
- **Epistemology** is an examination of how the theorist studies the chosen phenomena. In studying epistemology, objective knowledge is said to be the result of a systematic look at the causal relationships of phenomena. This knowledge is usually attained through use of the scientific method. Scholars often think that empirical evidence collected in an objective manner is most likely to reflect truth in the findings. Theories of this ilk are usually created to predict a phenomenon. Subjective theory holds that understanding is based on situated knowledge, typically found using interpretative methodology such as ethnography and interviews. Subjective theories are typically developed to explain or understand phenomena in the social (Littlejohn,2002:26-30).

- **Axiology** is concerned with what values drive a theorist to develop a theory. Theorists must be mindful of potential biases so that they will not influence or skew their findings (Miller, 2005:21-23)

1.16 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five (5) chapters as explained here below:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter gives the broad outline of the study in terms of the background of the study, the problem statement, objectives of the study, research design and methodology, significance of the study, scope of the study, organisation of the study and conclusion.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Two deals with literature review and how information was collected from various sources and then grouped according to categories.

Chapter Three: Research Design

This chapter deals with Research Design. This entails the type of study that was conducted, the rationale of selecting particular instruments of data collection was explained as well as the advantages and disadvantages of using them, and how the data was collected and analysed

Chapter Four: Data presentation and analysis

Chapter Four deals with the presentation of data and its analysis. Most of the data collected was qualitative in nature. In view of this, qualitative analysis techniques were employed. The nature of the data collected also suggested further techniques that might be used.

Chapter Five: Recommendations

The last chapter details the findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study. The findings were linked to the aim and objectives of the study as outlined in chapter one, including the problem statement.

1.17 Summary of study outline

The first chapter introduced the topic investigated. It started with the background to the study, which was conducted through literature review. This part contains more explanation concerning the objectivity, impartiality and the origin of the study. It was then followed by the problem statement, which outlined what was to be investigated concerning effective Communication between Management and Personnel.

The aims and objectives of the study were to evaluate how effective Communication could improve performance in the workplace. The Research Design and Methodology outlined how the study was conducted. This included the method of obtaining the required data. The significance of the study revealed the importance of this investigation, as well as the recommendations advanced that could assist management to communicate effectively with their employees. The focus of the study does not define the limitation of the study.

The organisation of the study indicates how the whole study was conducted. This entails the introduction, literature review, the research design and methodology, data presentation and analysis, and the recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The definition of the term 'Communication', according to Gurevitich and Levy (1985:11) is the process of sending meaningful messages from the sender to the receiver by means of a communication channel. This involves an element of feedback on the side of the receiver to show that this process was effective. Furthermore it is the same process that involves the channel which is commonly understood by both the sender and the receiver, the message itself and the receiver of the message. This is an ongoing phenomenon whereby at some stage the sender becomes the receiver as the feedback from the initial receiver sometimes needs a response from the sender Gurevitich, M and Mark R. Levy (1985:11).

An abstract by Fletcher (1995:53) says that in the quest to establish communication as a critical management function, both literature and research have stressed the importance of effective communication as a prerequisite to the success of various programmes including service quality. Effective internal communication, leadership and employee issues seem to be three generic aspects of critical importance in the potential success of any organization Fletcher (1999:53).

According to Fletcher (1995:53), the implementation of service quality strategy is a multi dimensional process reaching far beyond the principles that are being implemented. Firstly the organization has to prepare for change, then identify and prioritise the required alterations. Furthermore, organizations also have to develop internal as well as external skills such as listening, effective communication and servant leadership to uphold the new service quality improvement strategy and, lastly, organisations have to control costs in order to contribute to the bottom-line of the organization according to Fletcher (1995:53).

Fletcher (1995:75) continues to argue that another key factor is the reality that management fails to realise that the development of service quality remains a senior management issue that strikes at the very heart of the organization- its true culture. In other words effective managers do not

begin solving service quality problems with the people who do the work. They are solved at the highest level within the organization with real commitment to service quality. This obviously does not imply that service quality is resplendent jargon reserved for management circles but this is where it has to start (Anonymous, 1988). According to Fletcher, this argument underlines David Crosby's words: "People perform to the standards set and attained by their leader" (Vasilash, 1996).

There seemed to be a major perception that the problems lie with implementation although the importance of quality was well appreciated in the market. Berry, a highly respected author in the field of services, stated in an interview that service quality is a journey more of the heart things. It would mean that once a person was satisfied about the service that was rendered that person would never forget the type of service and would go on spreading the word. Service quality was not necessarily improved by improving technology. Quality service is a function of leadership and good internal communications (Anonymous, 1988). This would mean that quality service without good internal communications does not serve any purpose.

According to programme number eight (8) of the 2005 Strategic Plan of the DACE&RD, the purpose of establishing the Communication, Planning and Information Management Division was to manage and coordinate communication, education and international relations within this department. The pronouncements contained in the 2004 State of the Nation address catapulted the Department onto centre stage of the Agricultural Credit Scheme (ACS), Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) and the Agricultural Black Economic Empowerment (AgriBEE). The challenge is how to communicate these programmes effectively. Communicating the departmental messages has to utilise both conventional and community media. The problem stated by this division was that the Department's products and services span clients within both the second and first economies Strategic Plan (2005:p.64).

According to Annexure 1 (b) of the Strategic Plan of 2005 of the Department of Agriculture, one of the key objectives of the Information and Communication Technology unit was to manage and provide information and communication technology support services. The main aim of this unit

was to develop and maintain computerised information systems that would also provide services such as effective database administration, internet and intranet as well as e-mail services (Strategic Plan,(2005:p. 96).

However there was a standard procedure to be followed when publishing information on the intranet. After receiving information in the correct format, the information would then take a maximum of fourteen (14) days before it could be available on the intranet. Changes to the same information would also follow the same procedure and take the same number of days. A notice was then given to say that the directorates are encouraged to manage their own information on the intranet (Strategic Plan (2005:p.96).

However the maximum number of days given for the information to be available on the intranet was unreasonable, in the sense that emergency communiqués cannot afford to wait for such a period before they could be available to the members. Information should be availed to the employees as soon as possible to allow them enough time to decide what action should be taken about that information.

Organizational communication is a subfield of the larger discipline of communication studies. Organizational communication, as a field, is the consideration, analysis, and criticism of the role of communication in organizational contexts.

2.2 History of Organizational Communication

The field traces its lineage through business information, business communication, and early mass communication studies published in the 1930s through the 1950s. Before then, organizational communication as a discipline consisted of a few professors within speech departments who had a particular interest in speaking and writing in business settings. The current field is well established with its own theories and empirical concerns distinct from other communication subfields and other approaches to organizations.

Several seminal publications stand out as works broadening the scope and recognizing the importance of communication in the organizing process, and using the term "organizational communication". Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon wrote in 1947 about "organization communications systems", saying communication is "absolutely essential to organizations".

In the 1950s, organizational communication focused largely on the role of communication in improving organizational life and organizational output. In the 1980s, the field turned away from a business-oriented approach to communication and became concerned more with the constitutive role of communication in organizing. In the 1990s, critical theory influence on the field was felt as organizational communication scholars focused more on communication's possibilities to oppress and liberate organizational members according to Ewing (2006:3).

2.3 Assumptions underlying early organizational communication

Some of the main assumptions underlying much of the early organizational communication research were:

- Humans act rationally. Sane people behave in rational ways, they generally have access to all of the information needed to make rational decisions, they could articulate, and therefore make rational decisions, unless there is some breakdown in the communication process.
- Formal logic and empirically verifiable data ought to be the foundation upon which any theory should rest. All we really need in order to understand communication in organizations was (a) observable and replicable behaviours that could be transformed into variables by some form of measurement, and (b) formally replicable syllogisms that could extend theory from observed data to other groups and settings.

- Communication was primarily a mechanical process, in which a message was constructed and encoded by a sender, transmitted through some channel, then received and decoded by a receiver. Distortion, represented as any differences between the original and the received messages, could and ought to be identified and reduced or eliminated.
- Organizations are mechanical entities, in which the parts (including employees functioning in defined roles) are interchangeable. What works in one organization will work in another similar organization. Individual differences can be minimized or even eliminated with careful management techniques.
- Organizations function as a container within which communication takes place. Any differences in form or function of communication between that occurring in an organization and in another setting can be identified and studied as factors affecting the communicative activity.

Herbert Simon introduced the concept of bounded rationality which challenged assumptions about the perfect rationality of communication participants. He maintained that people making decisions in organizations seldom had complete information, and that even if more information was available, they tended to pick the first acceptable option, rather than exploring further to pick the optimal solution (Ewing,2006:3).

Through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s the field expanded greatly in parallel with several other academic disciplines, looking at communication as more than just an intentional act designed to transfer an idea. Research expanded beyond the issue of 'how to make people understand what I am saying' towards questions such as 'how does the act of communicating change, or even define, who I am?' or, 'why do organizations that seem to be saying similar things achieve very different results?' and 'to what extent are my relationships with others affected by our various

organizational contexts?' This would mean that it is better for a person to know and understand himself better before he can start to explain himself to others because then he will be in a better position to answer the possible questions posed by those interested in the explanation. In the early 1990s Peter Senge developed new theories about Organizational Communication. These theories were 'learning organization' and 'systems thinking'. These have been well received and are now a mainstay in current beliefs about organizational communications according to Ewing (2006:3).

2.4 Communications networks

Networks are another aspect of direction and flow of communication. Bavelas has shown that communication patterns, or networks, influence groups in several important ways. Communication networks may affect the group's completion of the assigned task on time, the position of the *de facto* leader in the group, or they may affect the group members' satisfaction from occupying certain positions in the network. Although these findings are based on laboratory experiments, they have important implications for the dynamics of communication in formal organizations. ([http:organizational communication, 2010 on line](#)).

There are several patterns of communication:

- "Chain",
- "Wheel",
- "Star",
- "All-Channel" network,
- "Circle".

The Chain can readily be seen to represent the hierarchical pattern that characterizes strictly formal information flow, "from the top down," in the military and in some types of business organizations. The Wheel can be compared with a typical autocratic organization, meaning one-man-rule and limited employee participation. The Star is similar to the basic formal structure of many organizations. The All-Channel network, which is an elaboration of Bavelas's Circle used by Guetzkow, is analogous to the free-flow of communication in a group that encourages all of its members to become involved in group decision processes. The All-Channel network may also be compared to some of the informal communication networks ([http: Building Communication Theory, 2010 on line](http://Building Communication Theory, 2010 on line)).

If it is assumed that messages may move in both directions between stations in the networks, it is easy to see that some individuals occupy key positions with regard to the number of messages they handle and the degree to which they exercise control over the flow of information. For example, the person represented by the central dot in the "Star" handles all messages in the group. In contrast, individuals who occupy stations at the edges of the pattern handle fewer messages and have little or no control over the flow of information. These "peripheral" individuals can communicate with only one or two other persons and must depend entirely on others to relay their messages if they wish to extend their range ([Paul Copley ,2010,online](http://Paul Copley, 2010, online)).

In reporting the results of experiments involving the Circle, Wheel, and Star configurations, Bavelas came to the following tentative conclusions. In patterns with positions located centrally, such as the Wheel and the Star, an organization quickly develops around the people occupying these central positions. In such patterns, the organization is more stable and errors in performance are lower than in patterns having a lower degree of centrality, such as the Circle. However, he also found that the morale of members in high centrality patterns is relatively low. Bavelas speculated that this lower morale could, in the long run, lower the accuracy and speed of such networks. ([http: Dominic, 2010 online](http://Dominic, 2010 online)).

In problem solving requiring the pooling of data and judgments, or "insight," Bavelas suggested that the ability to evaluate partial results, to look at alternatives, and to restructure problems declined rapidly when one person was able to assume a more central (that is, more controlling) position in the information flow. For example, insight into a problem requiring change would be less in the Wheel and the Star than in the Circle or the Chain because of the "bottlenecking" effect of data control by central members. (<http://en. Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, 2010 online>).

It may be concluded from these laboratory results that the structure of communications within an organization will have a significant influence on the accuracy of decisions, the speed with which they can be reached, and the satisfaction of the people involved. Consequently, in networks in which the responsibility for initiating and passing along messages is shared more evenly among the members, the better the group's morale in the long run (*Werner et al, 2010, online*).

2.5 Why one needs to get the message across

Effective communication is all about conveying your messages to other people clearly and unambiguously. It is also about receiving information that others are sending to you, with as little distortion as possible. Doing this involves effort from both the sender of the message and the receiver. And it is a process that can be fraught with error, with messages muddled by the sender, or misinterpreted by the recipient. When this is not detected, it can cause tremendous confusion, wasted effort and missed opportunity. In fact, communication is only successful when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information as a result of the communication.

[http://en. Katherine Miller \(2010, online\)](http://en. Katherine Miller (2010, online)).

This would then mean that by successfully getting your message across, you convey your thoughts and ideas effectively. When not successful, the thoughts and ideas that you actually

send do not necessarily reflect what you think, causing a communications breakdown and creating roadblocks that stand in the way of your goals – both personally and professionally.

In a recent survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, communication skills were cited as the single more important decisive factor in choosing managers. The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Business School, points out that communication skills, including written and oral presentations, as well as an ability to work with others, are the main factor contributing to job success (*Werner et al, 2010, online*).

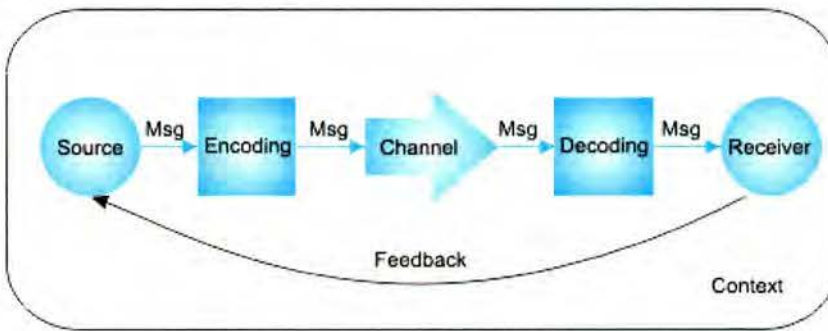
In spite of the increasing importance placed on communication skills, many individuals continue to struggle, unable to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively – whether in verbal or written format. This inability makes it nearly impossible for them to compete effectively in the workplace, and stands in the way of career progression.

Being able to communicate effectively is therefore essential if you want to build a successful career. To do this, you must understand what your message is, what audience you are sending it to, and how it will be perceived. You must also weigh up the circumstances surrounding your communications, such as situational and cultural context. (*Gerald Stone, Michael Singletary, and Virginia P. Richmond 2010, online*).

2.6 Communications skills – the importance of removing barriers

Problems with communication can pop-up at every stage of the communication process (which consists of the **sender, encoding, the channel, decoding, the receiver, feedback** and the **context** – see the diagram below). At each stage, there is the potential for misunderstanding and confusion (*Stone et al, 2010, online*).

The Communications Process



To be an effective communicator and to get your point across without misunderstanding and confusion, your goal should be to lessen the frequency of problems at each stage of this process, with clear, concise, accurate, well-planned communications. We follow the process through below:

Source...

As the source of the message, you need to be clear about why you are communicating, and what you want to communicate. You also need to be confident that the information you are communicating is useful and accurate.

Message...

The message is the information that you want to communicate.

Encoding...

This is the process of transferring the information you want to communicate into a form that can be sent and correctly decoded at the other end. Your success in encoding depends partly on your ability to convey information clearly and simply, but also on your ability to anticipate and eliminate sources of confusion (for example, cultural issues, mistaken assumptions, and missing information.). A key part of this entails knowing your audiences: Failure to understand who you are communicating with will result in delivering messages that are misunderstood (*Werner et al ,2010, online*).

Channel...

Messages are conveyed through channels, with verbal channels including face-to-face meetings, telephone and videoconferencing; and written channels including letters, emails, memos and reports. Different channels have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, it is not particularly effective to give a long list of directions verbally, while you will quickly cause problems if you give someone negative feedback using email (*Stone et al, 2010, online*).

Decoding...

Just as successful encoding is a skill, so is successful decoding (involving, for example, taking the time to read a message carefully, or listen actively to it.) Just as confusion can arise from errors in encoding, it can also arise from decoding errors. This is particularly the case if the decoder does not have enough knowledge to understand the message (*Stone et al, 2010, online*).

Receiver...

Your message is delivered to individual members of your audience. No doubt, you have in mind the actions or reactions you hope your message will get from this audience. Keep in mind, though, that each of these individuals enters into the communication process with ideas and feelings that will undoubtedly influence their understanding of your message, and their response. To be a successful communicator, you should consider these before delivering your message, and act appropriately (*Dominic, 2010, on line*).

Feedback...

Your audience will provide you with feedback, as verbal and nonverbal reactions to your communicated message. Pay close attention to this feedback, as it is the only thing that can give you confidence that your audience has understood your message. If you find that there has been

a misunderstanding, at least you have the opportunity to send the message a second time
(Witzany, G 2007, on line).

Context...

The situation in which your message is delivered is the context. This may include the surrounding environment or broader culture (corporate culture, international cultures, and so on) (Dominic, 2010, on line).

2.7 Removing barriers at all these stages

To deliver your messages effectively, you must commit to breaking down the barriers that exist within each of these stages of the communication process. Let us begin with the message itself. If your message is too lengthy, disorganized, or contains errors, you can expect the message to be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Use of poor verbal and body language can also confuse the message (James A. Anderson, 2010 on line).

Barriers in context tend to stem from senders offering too much information too fast. When in doubt here, less is often more. It is best to be mindful of the demands on other people's time, especially in today's ultra-busy society. Once you understand this, you need to work to understand your audience's culture, making sure you can converse and deliver your message to people of different backgrounds and cultures within your own organization, in your country and even abroad (Stephen W. Littlejohn and Karen A. Foss, 2010 on line).



2.8 The principles of communication

However, having made the above observation, there is the existence of a recurring problem within most government departments. This is the problem of communication between the management and members of staff. This problem in most instances affects the achievement of the objectives or goals that have been set in a department or workplace. It happens in most instances that those tasks that have been given to those members of staff are only partially completed or not completed at all as argued by Fletcher (1999).

As a result of this failure, someone within the department has to bear the blame, and in most instances these are members in the junior positions. They are being accused of incompetence, insubordination, defiance or being ignorant and too lazy to carry out instructions (Fletcher, 1999).

Failure to communicate properly by members on the management level has at times played an important role in derailing the planned objectives and goals by resulting in tasks being poorly executed. Again, failure to obtain clarity with regard to the given tasks ends up with poor results being achieved. The communication channel used should be one mutually agreed upon within the department or an organization as stated in the work of Fletcher (1999).

Therefore, in a quest to establish effective communication as a critical management function, studies have stressed the importance of effective communication as a prerequisite to the success of various programmes including service quality. Effective internal communication, leadership and employee issues seem to be three generic aspects of critical importance in the potential success of any organization (Fletcher, 1999).

2.9 Communication failure and its effect in the workplace

"The work of the world gets done because people actively cooperate with one another. We are all almost completely dependent upon what other people do for us. Our world is not a jungle of competition. The cooperation that makes human society possible is manifested most visibly within

the organization and it is almost entirely dependent upon the skill with which we communicate (Tortoriello,1978:89).

According to Tortoriello (1978:89), Communication in a workplace or Organization serves four major functions and they have been identified as follows: Control; Motivation; Information and Emotional Expression.

- Communication acts to Control members' behaviour in several ways within the Workplace. There are hierarchies that need to be observed and formal guidelines that employees are required to follow within the Workplace
- Communication also fosters Motivation by clarifying to employees *what* is to be done, *how* well they doing and *what* can be done to achieve common objectives
- Communication provides Information that an individual employee needs to make a decision by transmitting the data to identify and evaluate alternative choices
- The communication that takes place within the Workplace is a fundamental mechanism *by* which members show their frustrations and feelings of satisfaction. It therefore provides a release for the Emotional Expression of feelings and for the fulfilment of the social needs

However no one of these functions should be seen as being more important than the others. For employees to perform effectively they need to maintain some form of control over members, stimulate employees to perform, provide a meaning for emotional expression and make decision choices

In an enterprise which hinges upon the coordination of the efforts of all its members, the Managers depend completely upon the quality, the amount and the rate at which relevant information reaches them. Then the rest of the Workplace in turn depends upon the efficiency with which the Managers can deal with this information and reach a conclusion according to Tortoriello (1978:91).

In a workplace, communication channels may be identified as being either formal or informal. When message flows follow the formal structure in the workplace as represented by the organizational chart, they are following the formal communication networks. When the scalar

principle of authority and hierarchy is employed, messages will flow in a vertical way. They will only flow horizontally in the organization if the functional principle dictates the direction (Tortoriello, 1978:95).

According to Katz and Kahn, the classical school viewed the downward communication as a tool for transmitting orders. In most modern organizations most information still flows from top to bottom (Tortoriello, 1978:95).

2.10 Management and communication in a workplace

The flow of information within a government department usually takes place "within" rather than "between" the line functional groups. It was once proposed that this discrepancy might be due to comparing an executive - only sample against one that also includes rank and file workers. Managers at times do feel greater pressure to stay informed and thus cultivate others outside their immediate functional group (Lublin,2007:8).

In an article that appeared in the Citizen Newspaper titled "*How to Manage Staff better*" Lublin (2007:8) argues that whilst the managers are still busy with their New Year resolutions, they must never forget to include the one that goes "manage your subordinates better". In the past they have made and broken that pledge because they were unsure how to begin the process. Lublin further advises managers that they should improve their Managerial skills by identifying and avoiding supervisory blunders committed by past Managers both good and bad according to Lublin (2007:8).

According to Ewing (2006:3), management communication is the number one problem in Business today. While technology that supports management communication has advanced in leaps and bounds, managers' and academics' understanding of the substance of the process has not, argues Ewing (2006:3).

There can be no doubt, therefore, about the tremendously important role that communication plays in the management of a modern organization. Communication can be called the lifeblood of

an organizational management. It is regarded by many managers as one of the most important tools in their management kit according to Puth (1994:4).

According to Puth (1994:4) experience has proved over and over that a well-designed communication strategy and effective communication skills can enable a manager to be highly successful. A manager must have an adequate knowledge of the nature and role of communication in the management of people, and has to adopt and continually practice a positive attitude towards communication. Communication is the essence of management according to Puth (1994:4).

Therefore there can be no management without communication. It is not surprising that the communication skills of an organization's managers and their understanding of management communication directly influence all other management functions in the organization. In the day-to-day real world of managerial work, managers spend the major portion of their time communicating with people in the organization according to Puth (1994:4).

Puth (1994:3) argues that, while over the years executives, consultants and academics may not have expected the overriding concerns of a particular management era to solve all organizational problems, they did not tend to preoccupy themselves with one concern at the expense of the others. But now they can and should combine all the lessons of the past (Puth, 1994:13).

2.11 Communication skills

Communication skills fall into the broad categories of oral and written skills- both of which managers use in many different ways. It is necessary for a manager to orally explain processes and give direction to workers. It is also necessary for managers to give verbal praise to workers. Managers are also expected to conduct meetings and give talks to groups of people. An important part of the oral communication process is listening. Managers are expected to listen to their supervisors and to their workers. A manager must hear recommendations and complaints on a regular basis and must be willing to follow through on what is heard. A manager who does not listen is not a good communicator (<http://www.answers>, 2010 online).

Managers are also expected to write reports, letters, memos, and policy statements. All of these must be written in such a way that the recipient can interpret and understand what is said. This means that managers must write clearly and concisely. Good writing requires good grammar and composition skills. This is something that can be learned by those aspiring to a management position (<http://www.answers.> 2010, on line).

A distribution centre supervisor once said that; "A lot of people are saying that we need more communication in the workplace, I disagree. We have got too much already. What we need is to start fixing the communication that we already have. It is not so much what a person says that is so important- how they say it makes the biggest difference".

An example of communication skills concerns a certain (undisclosed) finance department. Most of the people working in this department had a difficult time accepting their manager's method of communicating. This manager could hardly acknowledge their existence except when he stopped by to bark short phrases at them to correct a problem of some sort. During meetings, when asked a question, this manager would seldom look up at the employees. This manager was good at finances but poor at communication according to Humphrey and Stoke (2000:27).

According to Humphrey and Stoke(2000:27), a supervisor's lack of effective communication skills can result in a number of difficulties for a company. These difficulties include such serious problems as:

- confusion,
- lack of direction,
- low morale, and
- performance slumps.

The bottom line is that a company's successful performance can depend greatly on the effectiveness of its manager's communication skills.

Many of the technological advancements in the past thirty years have been dedicated to creating more information faster, thus making it more available. The information that used to be available only to members of senior management is now easily generated by computers and is available to people at all levels of the organization. Now with so much more information conveniently available, important decisions can be made at lower levels of the company than ever (Humphrey and Stoke, 2000:27).

In another article of Cable and Wireless, titled: "*How to measure success*", it describes *Voice of the Employee* as a change management tool for the company. It is changing the way senior managers are interacting with their subordinates. She further argues that when looking at internal communication itself you will want to measure what is directly attributable to the function, but give some passing reference to factors outside your control according to Smith and Mounter (*n.d*, p-25).

2.12 Managerial skills

To be an effective manager, it is necessary to possess many skills. Not all managers have all the skills that would make them the most effective managers. As technology advances and grows, the skills that are needed by managers are constantly changing. Different levels of management in the organizational structure also require different types of management skills. Generally, however, managers need to have communication skills, human skills, computer skills, time-management skills and technical skills (<http://www.answers.2010> on line).

Management schools of thought: There are many views of management or schools of management thought that have evolved over the years. What follows is a brief discussion on some of the theories of management that have greatly affected how managers manage today.

- **Classical thought:** The Classical school of management thought emerged throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Since the beginning of time managers have needed to know how to perform the functions discussed earlier. The facts are gathered by observation, experimentation, or sound reasoning. This thought was further developed by individuals such as **Charles Babbage (1772-1871), and Frederick W Taylor (1856-1915)** ([http://www.answers.2010 on line](http://www.answers.2010.online)).
- **Behavioural management thought:** it was developed because the classical management theorists were so machine oriented that the behaviouralists began to develop their thinking. The behavioural managers began to view management from a social and psychological perspective. These managers were concerned about the well-being of the workers and wanted them to be treated as people not as part of the machines. These were people such as **Robert Owen (1771-1858), and Hugo Munsterberg (1863-1916)** ([http: management, 2010 on line](http://www.management.2010.online)).
- **Contemporary management thought:** in more recent years new management thoughts have emerged and influenced organizations such as the sociotechnical system. It also involves contingency theories. This approach states that the manager should use the techniques or styles that are most appropriate for the situation and the people involved. ([http://www.answers.2010 on line](http://www.answers.2010.online)).
- **Closed management system:** within the classical and the behavioural approaches to management, the managers look only within the organisation to improve productivity and efficiency. This is a closed system as the organization operates as though it is its own

environment. The outside influence and information are blocked out as well and therefore no external positive influence is allowed into this type of a management system. ([http: com /management](http://com/management), 2010 on line).

- **Open management system:** here the organization functions in conjunction with its external environment, acting with and relying upon other systems. Advocates of an open system believe that an organisation cannot avoid the influence of outside forces. It advocates the idea that no man is an island. ([http:answers.2010](http://answers.2010) on line).

2.13 Guidelines to effective communication

In *Managing by Communication*, Myers et al (1982:7) argue that an organization exists primarily because certain goals and objectives need to be achieved, and they can only be achieved through the joint effort and actions of groups of people. They further indicate that by organizing they refer to those people routinely going beyond their individual limitations and engaging in a concerted and coordinated action with others. The basic organizational unit is the two-person group or dyad. However, as the size increases, the organization becomes more complex, cooperation become more difficult and communication becomes both more necessary and more difficult according to Meyers et al (1982:7).

According to Robbins (1993:345), effective communication is difficult under the best of conditions. Cross cultural factors clearly create the potential for increased communication problems. The encoding and decoding of messages into symbols is based on an individual's cultural background and as a result is not the same for each person. The greater the difference in backgrounds between the sender and receiver, the greater the difference in meanings attached to particular words or behaviours. People from different cultures see, interpret and evaluate things differently and consequently act upon them differently. This would mean that the different cultural backgrounds from the different communities found among employees in a certain organisation can

hamper the achievement of common objectives in a workplace because of the different cultures that they come from. This could be as a result of the dialects, political affiliations, or religious beliefs according to Robbins (1993:345).

Robbins (1993:346) cites four rules for improving cross-cultural communications as follows:

- Assume differences until similarity is proven: people from different countries often vary from us on several issues, and as such, most of us assume that others are more similar to us than they actually are.
- Emphasize description more than interpretation or evaluation: interpreting or evaluating what someone has said or done in contrast to description, is based more on the observer's culture and background than the observed situation.
- Practice empathy: before sending a message the sender should put him or herself in the shoes of the receiver to find out what are his values, experiences and frames of references.
- Treat your interpretations as a working hypothesis: that once you have developed an explanation for a new situation or think you empathize with someone from a foreign culture then treat your interpretation as a hypothesis that needs further testing rather than as a certainty according to Robbins (1993:346).

There is, according to Robbins (1993:346), little value in reminding a person of some shortcoming over which he or she has no control. Negative feedback is therefore to be directed toward behaviour the recipient can do something about. To criticise an employee for being late because he forgot to set his alarm clock is valid. But to criticise him for the fact that the subway that he normally makes use of when coming to work had a power failure, trapping him underground for half an hour is pointless. There is nothing that he could have done to avoid that Robbins (1993:45).

Meyers et al (1982:26) further argue that, while all communication contains information, not all information has communicative value. Information is like an umbrella, a broad concept which covers communication as one particular type of information. Therefore the mission statement of an organization must be communicated to all the employees. It is the wish of the management that the personnel should identify with the organizational goals and objectives. An extension of job rationale and ideological information permits organizational members to understand the bigger picture and carry out their jobs more effectively according to Meyers et al (1982:26).

2.14 Direction of communication

If one considers formal communications as they occur in traditional military organizations, messages have a "one-way" directional characteristic. In the military organization, the formal communication proceeds from superior to subordinate, and its content is presumably clear because it originates at a higher level of expertise and experience. Military communications also carry the additional assumption that the superior is responsible for making his communication clear and understandable to his subordinates. This type of organization assumes that there is little need for two-way exchanges between organizational levels except as they are initiated by a higher level. Because messages from superiors are considered to be more important than those from subordinates, the implicit rule is that communication channels, except for prescribed information flows, should not be cluttered by messages from subordinates but should remain open and free for messages moving down the chain of command. "Juniors should be seen and not heard," is still an unwritten if not explicit, law of military protocol.(<http://www.answers>, 2010 online)).

Vestiges of one-way flows of communication still exist in many formal organizations outside the military, and for many of the same reasons as described above. Although management recognizes that prescribed information must flow both downward and upward, managers may not always be convinced that two-way communication should be encouraged. For example, to what extent is a subordinate free to communicate to his superior that he understands or does not

understand a message? Is it possible for him to question the superior, ask for clarification, and suggest modifications to instructions he has received, or transmit unsolicited messages to his superior which are not prescribed by the rules? To what extent does the one-way rule of direction affect the efficiency of communication in the organization, in addition to the morale and motivation of subordinates? ([http://en. Stacks,2010 on line](http://en.Stacks,2010 on line)).

These are not merely procedural matters but include questions about the organizational climate and psychological atmosphere in which communication takes place. Harold Leavitt has suggested a simple experiment that helps answer some of these questions. A group is assigned the task of re-creating on paper a set of rectangular figures, first as they are described by the leader under one-way conditions, and second as they are described by the leader under two-way conditions. A different configuration of rectangles is used in the second trial. In the one-way trial, the leader's back is turned to the group. He describes the rectangles as he sees them. No one in the group is allowed to ask questions and no one may indicate by any audible or visible sign his understanding or his frustration as he attempts to follow the leader's directions. In the two-way trial, the leader faces the group. In this case, the group may ask for clarifications on his description of the rectangles and he can not only see but also can feel and respond to the emotional reactions of group members as they try to re-create his instructions on paper (<http://www.answers, 2010 online>).

On the basis of a number of experimental trials similar to the one described above, Leavitt formed these conclusions:

- One-way communication is faster than two-way communication.
- Two-way communication is more accurate than one-way communication.
- Receivers are surer of themselves and make more correct judgments of how right or wrong they are using the two-way system.

- The sender feels psychologically under attack in the two-way system, because his receivers pick up his mistakes and oversights and point them out to him.
- The two-way method is relatively noisier and looks more disorderly. The one-way method, on the other hand, appears neat and efficient to an outside observer.

Thus, if speed is necessary, if a businesslike appearance is important, if a manager does not want his mistakes recognized, and if he wants to protect his power, then one-way communication seems preferable. In contrast, if the manager wants to get his message across, or if he is concerned about his receivers feeling that they are participating and are making a contribution, the two-way system is better (<http://Communication, 2010 on line>).

2.15 Communication and conflict

According to Michelle et al (1982:234), it is not possible to understand the dynamics of communication without coming to grips with the notion of conflict. If communication is transition then individual differences must be somehow mutually negotiated to develop common meanings. There cannot be differences without conflict, (Michele et al, 1982:234).

Puth and Andrew (1994:20) supports this statement and argues that many managers and supervisors seem to think that it is impossible to tackle anything or anyone head-on, even in business. By contrast the managers and supervisors at *INTEL* believe that it is the essence of corporate health to bring a problem out into open as soon as possible even if this entails confrontation. Dealing with conflict lies at the heart of managing any business. Therefore dealing with the confrontation caused by an issue about which there is disagreement can be avoided only at the Manager's peril (Andrew and Puth, 1994:93].

According to Puth and Andrew (1994:21) there are certain types of employees who are good at increasing potential for conflict in an organization. Therefore the Manager should be aware of the

following assumptions which can guide him in effectively dealing with difficult employees and the conflict associated with their behaviour. They are as follows:

- Conflict is inevitable -people cannot be together without experiencing conflict. It is natural.
- Conflict is not a dirty word - when it occurs it does not mean that those involved are bad people.
- It takes place for many reasons – conflict can manifest itself in many different ways. There are also many reasons why people become involved in a conflict situation.
- It has many forms – managers should be able to recognise the different conflict situations and adjust their conflict management strategies to those specific conflict situations.

The manager's communication styles during situations of conflict vary according to their normal communication behaviour patterns and their individual personality traits. One of the manager's task in an organization is problem solving. This entails a lot of communication. According to Whetton and Cameron, the job of the Manager is inherently a problem solving job. If there were no problems in an organization then there would be no need for managers. Therefore it is hard to conceive an incompetent problem solver succeeding as a manager according to Whetton and Cameron, (1994:13).

2.16 Communication and change: managing transition.

To quote the US President Barack Obama (2008) from his speech lobbying support during the preparations for the US Presidency elections: *"Change is not easy. However, resisting is futile. Ignoring it can be fatal. Where there is denial, there is little opportunity for growth."* (US President, Barack Obama, 2008). Resistance to change is one of the strongest laws of human nature. Therefore, because of its role in explaining change, communication serves as a powerful agent of change in its own right.

According to Puth (1994:21) communication provides reasons to employees, unions and the outside world serving as a basis for understanding and acceptance even when loss of jobs is part of the bottom line. Defining and relating the new corporate culture to employees on both an individual and team basis has become an urgent priority for many organizations. Employees need to understand the business in the context of the requirements and advantages of the new culture (Puth,1994:21).

According to (Humphrey and Stokes, if one has worked in business or the organization for twenty years or more, one does not need anyone to tell him/her about the dramatic change in consumer expectations. Managers are both directly and indirectly involved with the quality of the business or organization's product or service. Because of this immense responsibility and the changes in the business world, managers and supervisors are changing and it is imperative for them to be intimately acquainted with their new role. A supervisor or manager's lack of effective communication skills can result in a number of difficulties for the organization or business. As a manager of an organization one would be expected to perform the following activities:

- To be a proactive rather than reactive communicator,
- To be a true professional at initiating conversations and discussions about work process problems,
- To facilitate team meetings,
- To explain production efficiency reports

(Puth,1984:.21).

Therefore such responsibilities will require a manager to be better educated in the use of three important communication skills that will improve his performance. The skills are as follows:

- Active listening skills: when done correctly active listening skills reduce mistakes and miscommunication, and improve morale and performance (Humphrey et al, 2000:29).

- Communication profiles: every individual is unique and has different tendencies and needs in communication. His communication profile is made up of these needs and tendencies (Humphrey et al, 2000:29).
- Ability to conduct meetings and presentations: the growing need to keep more people informed in the most accurate and current facts makes facilitation and presentation skills vital for the new role (Humphrey et al, 2000:29).

Supervision or managing is a people profession, and communication is the most important professional tool that the "Twenty-First-Century" supervisor or manager will possess. The development of administrative abilities as a Twenty-First-Century Manager includes adding resource management skills to one's job description. To keep employees on track and performing at optimum levels, a manager will be required to provide employees with all the different things that they need, including communication, to accomplish their tasks effectively and efficiently (Humphrey *et al*, 2000:29).

2.17 Communication issues hampering service quality initiatives

Berry (1988:32) used a journey metaphor to stress that quality service is not a programme but rather a never-ending journey. It is actually a process that is continuous rather than static or having an end because service delivery is something that is needed on a continuous basis to satisfy the customers. According to this guru in the service industry, an organisation will fail if it thinks of service quality as doing a little training or starting an incentive programme. The commitment has to be an obsession. He further noticed that organisations mistake activities for change and as a result cause very little change. The very same view was supported by Deming who stated this in the first of his fourteen points in *"Adopt the new philosophy"* (Carr and Tyson, 1992:32).

Effective communication will assist in moving the current direction of organisations into self-directed or self-managed work teams that will provide an excellent opportunity for integrating the

thinking methods and tools of the quality movement into everyday work. This can achieve the results promised by the quality gurus of the twentieth century without the negative effects that come from regarding implementing "quality" as a programme (Logan, 1995:12).

Another key factor is the reality that management fails to realise that the developments of service quality remains a senior management issue that strikes at the very heart of the organisation – it is a true culture. In other words, effective managers do not begin solving service quality problems with people who do the work. It is solved at the highest level within the organisation with the real commitment to service quality. This obviously does not imply that service quality is resplendent jargon reserved for management circles but this is where it has to start (Crosby,,1988). However, this argument underlines David Crosby's words: *"People perform to the standards set and attained by their leader"*(Vasilash,1996).

The implementation of a service quality strategy is a multi dimensional process reaching far beyond the principles that are being implemented. Firstly the organisation has to prepare for change, then identify and prioritise the required alterations. Furthermore, organisations also have to develop internal as well as external skills such as listening, effective communication and servant leadership to uphold the new service quality improvement strategy and, lastly, organisations have to control costs in order to contribute to the bottom-line of the organisation (Vasilash,1996).

2.18 Leadership: prerequisite for service quality success

According to Berry (1994:86), delivering service requires a special form of leadership called "servant leadership". Built on trust and relationship, the servant leadership concept can provide a healthy, diverse, sound culture that is also able to maintain profits as it genuinely values people. Servant leaders find ways to recognise good performance and motivate their teams (Berry et al, 1994:86).

Throughout the years the role of a manager has changed. Years ago managers were thought of as people who were "the boss". While this might still be true today, many managers still view themselves as leaders rather than as people who tell subordinates what to do. The role of a manager is comprehensive and often very complex. Not everyone wants to be a manager nor should everyone consider being a manager (<http://www.answers 2010 on line>).

2.19 Measuring efficiency and effectiveness in government departments

When promoting efficiency and effectiveness in the public service, it is insufficient to execute functions or provide services cheaply. One must ensure that the right functions are executed and that the right services are provided. This requires focus on the needs of the population. The real fundamental danger in delivering public services is that it is easy to lose track of the effectiveness imperative (Ford and Zussman, 1997:42).

Efficiency and effectiveness are not synonymous. They represent two distinct but complementary ideas. The ethical standard of effectiveness refers to the achievement of predetermined objectives. The ethical standard of efficiency refers to the achievement of predetermined objectives (without regard as to whether these are the right objectives for the public service to attain) with the minimum resources. These resources include human and financial resources, information and equipment. Government programmes for meeting community expectations can be effective without being efficient. They can also be efficient without being effective. Superordinate public officials should ensure that community programmes are both effective and efficient (Ford and Zussman, 1997:42).

Summary

This chapter looked at the information obtained from different sources with regard to the research study conducted. It also looked at Communication networks, communication skills and principles, as well as the communication direction. It is a brief summary of information from different sources used by the researcher for this project.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the method of study applied. It also explains the rationale behind the methodology employed, how research was conducted, and what steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

According to Wellner, good communications are extremely important for a cordial atmosphere and good productivity in the workplace. Inability to communicate effectively with colleagues and superiors might lead to mistakes that could lead to poor productivity and losses. Effective communications are an absolute must for building up trust, friendship or relationships in life. (Wellner,2005:37-38).

Research could be defined as the systematic process of inquiry to discover knowledge about a phenomenon. Research methodology refers to "...the how of collecting data and the processing thereof within the framework of the research process", according to Brynard (1997:27). The quantitative research method or type was applied. A survey research was the principal design that was used. In survey research the researcher only determines the relationships, which occur between two or more variables argues Meyer and Mabaso.,(2001:4).

For the normative study or theoretical basis of the dissertation, local and international publications were consulted. Apart from books, these included applicable legislation and government notices of the Republic of South Africa, reports from government departments and other public institutions, as well as articles from subject journal (Crous,2002:10). A structured questionnaire was developed to evaluate the attitude of employees towards training and its impact on service delivery related issues. The outcomes of the questionnaires were presented in a table format. The respondents could choose answers on scales ranging from one to four (1-4) or one to three (1-3.). The use of a questionnaire is particularly useful when trying to ascertain the characteristics of a large population according to Brynard (1997:25).

3.2 Population

The North West province comprises of nine (9) Governments Departments. In all these departments there are employees who daily encounter Communication problems with their Management. Most of the people from the DACE & RD are educated with most of them in possession of either Junior or Honours degrees in Agriculture. There are five Chief Directorates and twenty-four sub-directorates in this department with a total number of two thousand and one (2001) employees in this department. There are fifteen (15) people from this department who hold Higher Degrees (master's or doctorates).

3.3 Sampling Method

For the researcher to obtain a representative sample, the total of two thousand and one (2001) employees were divided by the five by (5) Chief Directorates, which gave four hundred (400). This was a large number to work with, and therefore the researcher then concentrated only on the Mmabatho based Chief Directorate, which has a total of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) employees. A study sample was drawn from this Chief Directorate. In order to get a manageable sample size, this number (278) was multiplied by twenty per cent (20%) which was a reasonable sample size to work with to represent the total employees in this Chief Directorate, and it gave the researcher fifty four (54) employees. This number was deemed sufficient to represent the entire population in this Chief Directorate. However, 54 questionnaires were developed and distributed to cover for ones that might be lost or spoilt.

Types of sampling

There are two (2) types of sampling methods, probability or random sampling, and non-probability sampling according to Bailey (1994:p.131).

Examples of random sampling method are as follows:

- **Probability sampling**

Probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each element of the population can be determined. In other words, the researcher can estimate the accuracy of the generalization from a sample of the population. Simple random sampling is a procedure which provides equal opportunity of selection for each element in a population according to Bailey (1994:131). The use of random numbers is reliable and the techniques are simple, however, they are limited by their reliance on the existence of a complete list of all elements of the population, argues Bless (2000:89).

In other words, the researcher can estimate the accuracy of the generalization from sample to the population.

- **Simple random sampling**

Simple random sampling is a sampling procedure which provides an equal opportunity of selection for each element in a population according to Bailey (1994:131). The use of random numbers is reliable and the techniques are simple, however, they are limited by their reliance on the existence of a complete list of all elements of the population according to Bless (2000:89).

3.4 Research Instrument

Structured questionnaires for employees /participants were designed and self-administered to the participants. These questionnaires comprised both close-ended and open-ended questions to allow the respondents the opportunity to express their views where necessary.

3.5 Feasibility of the Study

The subjects under study were accessible to the researcher as the study was conducted in the Mafikeng area of the North West Province (NWP). The researcher is also employed in one of these government departments in the NWP. Transport was not a problem as the researcher resides in the vicinity of some of the elements under study.

3.6 Basic Assumptions

It was assumed that poor communication within the work environment played an important role in affecting the achievement of common objectives or goals within the workplace.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants in order for them to be of assistance to him. This also allowed the researcher to make good use of the participants' time as well.

3.8 Reliability And Validity

For the testing of the survey questionnaires, expert advice was used to determine the reliability and validity of the instruments of this research project.

3.9 Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The computer aided programme SPSS was not used for data analysis. Only tables and graphs were used for the presentation of data.

3.10 Summary

This chapter looked at how the research was designed. It also looked at issues such as the population under study, how samples were identified, feasibility of the study, ethical considerations, reliability and validity as well as the method of data presentation.

The impact of poor communication standards within the workplace has had a negative impact in most organizations such that identified goals and objectives within the workplace could not be achieved.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis and Presentation of Data

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to give the analysis and presentation of data, which has been obtained from the study conducted on the opinion about poor communication standards within the workplace from the participants of DACE & RD in the Mafikeng area in the NWP.

4.2 Basic Assumption

It was assumed that managers in most workplaces or organizations were failing to communicate properly with subordinates to an extent that mutual agreement between the two (i.e. manager and subordinate) could not be reached.

4.3 Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation-Review of the Respondents.

The analysis, presentation and interpretation of data were based on the responses from fifty-one (51) out of the fifty-four (54) participants in the DACE & RD, Mmabatho Chief Directorate, Mafikeng in the NWP.

4.3.1 Section A

Demographic Data of the Respondents

This section provided for the background information of the respondents. The information was of significance in knowing what types of respondents were being dealt with, including their backgrounds as well as their qualifications. It was also of the utmost importance to realize that the problem of poor communication in a workplace affected all employees both young and old. A brief summary of the information provided is presented in table format below:

Gender	
Male	26
Female	25
n=	51

Marital status	
Single	14
Married	28
Widowed	5
Divorced	4
n=	51

Age	
18-28	4
29-39	11
40-50 and above	36
n=	51

Level of Education	
Grade 7-9	4
Grade10-12	13
Tertiary.	34
n=	51

Occupation	
Professional	22
Administrative worker	22
General Assistant	3
Technical worker	3
Personnel service worker	0
Machine Operators & Driver	1
n=	51

SECTION B

Part One

The main aim of this part was to find out how the participants viewed the flow of communication within their department, and the response from the participants was captured in table format. The results were calculated in this format given as an example that about 35.2% ($352\% \div 10 = 35.2\%$), agreed that there was sufficient flow of information within their department, and are captured as indicated below:

Statements asked the Respondents	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
1.Management communicates with their subordinates effectively in this department	29.4%	56.9%	13.7%
2.Tasks are clearly spelt out to subordinates by the Management	45%	43%	12%
3. Subordinates carry out their tasks effectively in this department	58%	27%	15%
4 Subordinates enjoy working with their managers in this department.	26%	42%	32%
5.Managers explain tasks to their subordinates in this department	47.02%	37.3%	13.73%
6.Subordinates are motivated by their Managers at all times	27.5%	43.1%	29.4%
7. Managers hold open discussions with their subordinates.	35.3%	49%	15.7%
8.Managers are proud of their subordinates	25%	35%	40%
9. Working for this department motivates you.	39%	43%	18%
10. Communication in this department is effective.	24%	62%	14%
These results are shown in a graph format on page: 51 e.g. $352\% \div 10 = 35.2\%$	35.2%	43.6%	20.1%

Figure 1.1 Representation of the statements posed to the Respondents in Section B Part one

- The above table indicates the reaction in general to the statements from the respondents with regard to how the achievement of a common objective was affected due to lack of proper communication. The table is based on the response rate of the participants to all the statements (1-10) posed in relation to how they viewed the flow of communication in their department. The above table indicates that, for statement 10, a large number of the

participants, 62%, disagreed that there was effective communication going on within their department. This was despite the fact that for statement No.2, 45% of the participants indicated that the tasks were spelt out to subordinates by the management. Most of the participants have indicated that even if there was no effective communication between them and their management, their willingness to achieve the departmental objectives and goals was what counts most, despite the failure by management to communicate with them effectively. They have cited the following points of interest as the most influential factors motivating them in this department:

- a) Their willingness to perform their duties despite the failure to communicate by the management
 - b) They value their commitment to the country more than the relationship between them and the management.
 - c) Their contractual obligations with their employer DACE & RD.
 - d) They were not willing to compromise their organisational goals for their relationship with the management.
 - e) Lastly – Patriotism: they are proudly South Africans.
- Even if the tasks were clearly spelt out by the management - 45% agreed with this statement-, there were still 43% who disagreed. Most of the employees have indicated in their response from the questionnaires distributed that the experience that they have acquired over time was assisting them in most instances to achieve their goals in the department. It was further indicated in Statement 4 that about 42% of the participants did not enjoy working with their current managers in this department. Only 27% o agreed with this statement.
- This statement was strengthened by responses to Statement 9, that the subordinates were motivated by their managers at all times. 43% participants disagreed whereas 39% agreed with this statement. There was a small difference of 4% between the two response rates.

- Another difference could be noticed whether communication was effective in their department. From Statement 10, there was a wide difference where 62% of the participants disagreed, and only 23.5% of the participants agreed. The large difference was a clear indication that the subordinates were very concerned about lack of communication within their department and indicated that the achievement of goals and objectives as set out in the mission and vision statement of this organisation cannot be fully achieved.

Summary

This part of the questionnaire contained ten (10) statements that were intended to elicit information as to how the respondents viewed the flow of communication between their management and themselves. To sum up this section, the results indicated that about 35.2% agreed that there was sufficient flow of information within their department whereas 43.6%, the highest of them all, disagreed with this statement. 20.1% of the respondents indicated they were uncertain about this statement. These results are captured again in a graph format in Figure 1.1

- According to the respondents, the flow of communication in this department was encouraged by the fact that most of these employees according to the few who have been informally interviewed have been together for a very long time and as such their common experience that they have acquired over time helped them to achieve their departmental objectives.
- The representation of Section B Part one in a graph format appearing on page 51 indicates that a high number of the participants disagreed (at 43.6%) with most of the statements which were aimed at establishing the inner feelings of the participants about communication in their department. This was an indication that should something not be done urgently to improve the quality of communication within this department, failure in achieving the common objectives was imminent.

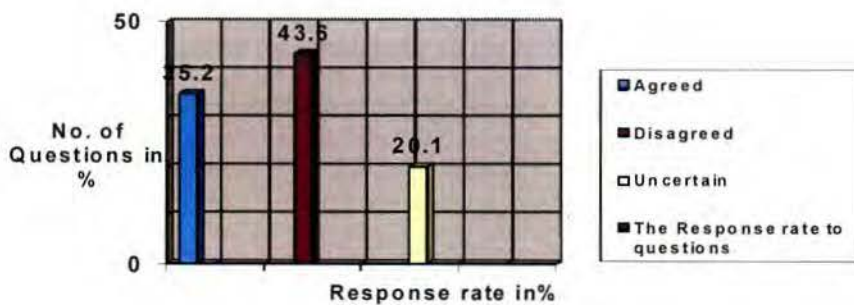


Figure 1.1 Representation of the answers given by the Respondents in Section B Part one

To sum up:

The graph was based on the response from the participants to all the statements that were posed in Section B Part one in relation to how they viewed the flow of communication in their department. The table in figure 1.1 indicates a summary to Section B Part one

that a large number of the participants (43.6%) disagreed with the fact that there was effective communication going on within their department.

This percentage when compared to those who disagreed has a difference of 15.74%, which was perceived to be a vast difference. This was an indication that, even if the flow of communication was there, it was so small that a larger percentage of the participants could not recognise it.

43.6% ($436\% \div 10 = 43.6\%$) of the participants disagreed with the statement that their management communicate with the employees. However even if there was not enough flow of communication in this department, employees at the lower level were still able to perform their tasks effectively. This was brought about by the fact that most of them were highly experienced staff members who also managed to gain enough trade crafts over time. The reason being that these employees have been in this department for a very long time.

20.1% ($201\% \div 10 = 20.1\%$) of the respondents indicated uncertainty about this statement that their management communicate effectively with the employees. This was an indication that the flow of communication was in actual fact not sufficient for all the staff members. This however was an anomaly in the sense that all the sections should be provided with enough information to effectively carry out their tasks.

It was from this section (section B part one) where indications were that a high percentage of the respondents in general disagreed with the fact that there was sufficient flow of communication in this department. The current flow of communication prevailing was as a result of the employees who have worked together for a longer period, and the work experience that they have gained over time.

A large percentage employees, 43.6%, (which was the highest percentage in this section), at the lower level of the organisation indicated that they disagreed with the fact that there was a flow of information between themselves and their management. This indicates that this is a cause for concern.

Lack of communication between the employees and their management could hamper the smooth running of the organisation aimed at attaining the common objectives within the department. This was indicated by a high percentage on the first question, 56% of the respondents, who disagreed with this statement. Therefore a serious intervention is needed to improve the situation. This would assist employees in the achievement of common objectives aimed at attaining the priorities as set out by top management of the department.

Part 2

This part was intended at eliciting information from the respondents as to how they would rate the flow of communication/information within their department and the results were as follows:

Questions asked the Respondents	Could not rate	Poor	Average	Good
11. How would you rate the flow of Communication in your workplace?	13.73%	33.33%	50.98%	1.96%
12. How would you rate the issuing of tasks to be performed in your workplace?	21.57%	19.61%	52.94%	5.88%
13. How would you rate the response/feedback on the tasks given to be performed?	13.73%	19.61%	60.78%	5.88%
14 How would you rate the communication channels used in your workplace	21.57%	23.53%	50.98%	3.92%
15 How would you rate the clarification on the tasks given to be performed?	21.57%	23.53%	50.98%	3.92%
Grand Total divided by the n of Questions asked in this column in% (E.g.: 92.17% ÷5 = 18.43%)	18.43%	23.92%	53.33%	4.31%

Section B Part Three

- Section B Part Three was dominated mostly by the '*average*' responses from the participants on the questions asked. Most of the participants have indicated that the flow of communication in this department was at an '*average*' point of 53.33%.
- 23.92% of the participants have outlined the flow of communication in their department as '*poor*'. This amount was second to '*average*'.
- 4.31% of the participants have indicated that the flow of communication in their department was '*good*'. This is the smallest of all the response in percentage format that indicates the need for an intervention.
- However, even though the rate of feedback was rated high on '*average*', at 60.78%, the participants have indicated that they were able to perform their duties as a result of the experience that they have gathered over time. Most of these employees have been with this department for a long period and they were mostly relying on their past experience to accomplish their duties.

- However, because of the '*average*' flow of communication in this department there was an '*average*' response or feedback to the tasks given by the management. This was indicated by 60.78% of the participants who believed that there was an average feedback on the tasks given.
- Communication should therefore be improved in this department to get excellent feedback with regard to the tasks. It would be of the utmost importance for the attainment of the organisational objectives as set out in the mission statement.
- The rating of the communication channels used in this department as well as the clarification of the tasks given share equal percentages whereby participants have indicated, at 21.57% that they '*could not rate*', 23.53% that it was '*poor*', 50.98% '*average*' and 3.92% indicated that it is '*excellent*'. However, 3.92% is a very small amount as compared to 23.5% . There is some bias somewhere with regard to the flow of effective communication in this department. This needs to be rectified for the attainment of the departmental objectives.

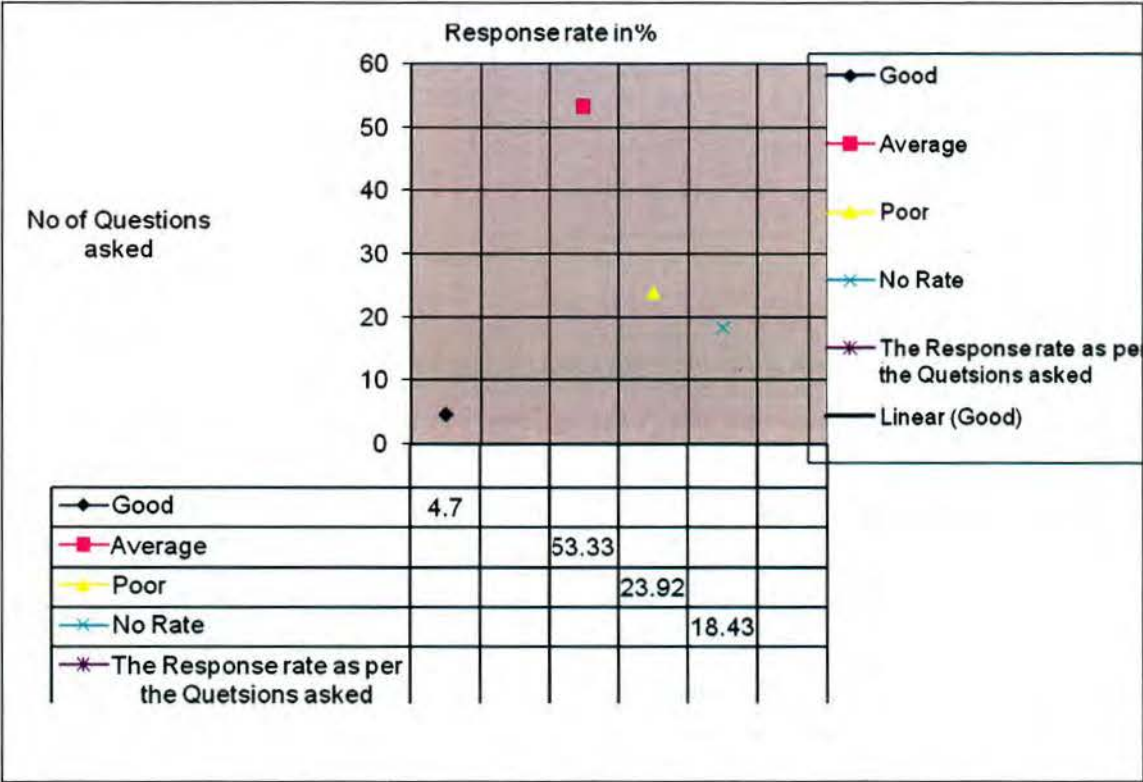


Figure 1.2: The Responses to the questions in Section B Part one in a graph format

- The graph above reveals how the different respondents rated the flow of communication in the DACE & RD. This part also included items such as the issuing of tasks, the use of different channels of communication as well as the clarification of tasks that were given to individuals within the department. However it came out clearly that the respondents rated the flow of information as either 'average' at 53.33% which is the highest, followed by 'poor' at 23.92%, then 'could not rate' at 18.43%. Those who rated it 'good' were at 4.31%.
- This was followed by the respondents who indicated that there was a 'good' flow of communication in this department at 1.96%. Only a few respondents indicated that they 'could not rate' the flow of information and their response stood at 13.73%. This would mean that, in this department, even if there was a problem, there were only a minority who could not detect what the problem is and what could be done about it. Therefore as the studies in the past have indicated that there was indeed a need for the establishment of effective communication

as a critical management function, it was proved that there was a need for the establishment of effective communications.

Part 3

Items 16.1 to 16.5

This part was aimed at eliciting information from the respondents as to what they thought was the best option that could be taken to improve communication within their work environment. The results were then captured in a table format and also in the pie-chart on page 69 :

Possible suggestions to the Respondents		Not at all	Not sure	Strongly agree
16.1	Offer in-house communication training to all?	64.71%	11.76%	23.53%
16.2	Just leave everything as it is?	17.65%	7.84%	74.51%
16.3	Copy/Imitate other departments?	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
16.4	Demand training for all?	0%	9.80%	90.20%
16.5	Request for an outside intervention? E.g. Communication Specialists	7.84%	21.57%	70.59%
Grand Total divided by the n of questions asked in this column in % (E.g:123.53 % ÷ 5 = 24.71).		24.71%	16.86%	58.43

Figure. 1.3 Section B Part Three

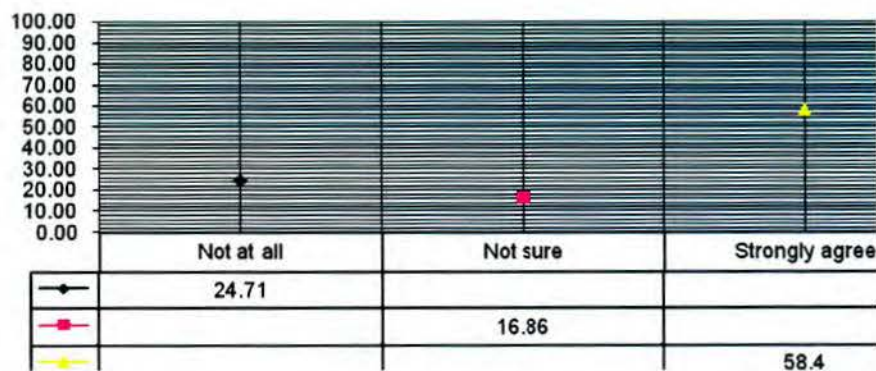


Figure 1.4: The Response of Section B Part Three in a graph format.

- The questions on this part were aimed at getting the feelings of the respondents on what they thought could be the best option to improve the level of communication in their department (question 16.1). On the offering in-house communication training to all the employees, the respondents indicated, at 64.71% that they 'strongly *disagreed*' with the fact that there must be in-house training offered. Only 23.53% of the respondents indicated that they 'agreed' with the suggestion of in-house training being offered in their department, and 11.76% were '*not so sure*' about this proposal.
- On the question of what type of strategy they thought could be offered to remedy the situation (question 16.2), 74.51% of the respondents indicated that everything should be left just as it is. However this feeling could be as a result of the prevailing situation where there is a failure to promote experienced employees to higher positions; only new employees who were regarded as having better qualifications were being considered for such positions. The problem with these new employees, some of whom were still fresh from learning institutions, was that, they did not have the necessary experience for the positions that they were employed in; therefore they were looking up to those long serving employees for assistance most of the time. Only 17.65% of the respondents have indicated that they do not '*agree*' that everything should just be left as it is.
- On the question of copying from other government departments (question 16.3), the response rate was a tie at 33.33% for all the answers. However on the issue of demanding training for all the employees, a high percentage at 90.20% of the respondents agreed that this could be a better option. This has been supported by another high response rate to the question of requesting for outside intervention such as using communication specialists (question 16.5), where 70.59% of the respondents agree with this. Only 7.84% of the respondents disagreed with this and only 21.57% were not so sure of whether this could bring changes to the department or not.

- In general the response rate to part 3 has indicated that 58.43% of the participants strongly agreed with the offering of in-house training. This was the highest number which was then followed by those who disagreed with this at 24.71%. The remainder, which was also the lowest, is 16.86% of the respondents who were not so sure of what exactly could be done. The intervention could be through a requisition of outside intervention from the communication specialists to come to the rescue of the DACE & RD. This indicates a serious concern and frustration that the people were encountering in their work environment on a daily basis.
- However this could only be effective if an individual employee was prepared to improve his/her skills through this type of training which in most cases was offered through higher learning courses only. Some of the employees have resorted to staying in their comfort zones ever since they entered their current employment, and were reluctant to increase their vocabularies by studying further.
- The respondents were of the opinion that all those employees in this department who were occupying higher posts should be there not by favouritism but because their relevant qualifications, experience and skills are needed for the positions that they are currently occupying..Merit should be the only criterion for their selection.

Favouritism is not an option in this case as this usually brings the department into disrepute. Several cases of maladministration, corruption and negligence have caused different organisations and departments a severe financial loss in the past. In most instances this has been as a result of some employees occupying posts for which they are not qualified but where they have been favoured with the job.
- South Africa needs trained government employees if it is to meet the unfulfilled needs of its population. The demand for services is there, and unless DACE & RD employees are properly and adequately trained, service standards will decline and, in extreme cases, some services may cease altogether, (Craythorne ,1997:323-324). A well-trained workforce will be competent enough to direct its efforts towards meeting organisational objectives. Employee

training and development is seen as a key factor in meeting the employer's strategic, business and operational goals.

- Less attention, in most instances, has been given to the leaders of tomorrow. Departments and organisations seemed only to concern themselves about the development of principled authentic leaders once their employees have spent a number of years in the organisation and are now in leadership positions or are about to be promoted to such positions.

Part 3 (continued)

Items 17.1 to 17.5

This part was aimed at eliciting information from the respondents as to what they thought could be done about those colleagues who did not show any interest in improving their communication skills within their department. The results were presented below in a table as follows:

Response to possible interventions strategies to improve Communications		Always	Sometimes	Not Sure
17.1	Should they be requested to improve their skills?	88.24%	7.84%	3.92%
17.2	Should they be offered free communication lectures?	74.5%	21.58%	3.92%
17.3	Should they be made to undergo communication training?	68.63%	27.45%	3.92%
17.4	Do you feel comfortable working with them?	19.61%	60.78%	19.61%
17.5	Should they be ignored?	13.73%	45.09%	41.18%
Response to the questions asked in%		52.9%	32.6%	14.5%

Response to Section B Part Three continued

- From this part about 88.24% of the participants on question 17.1, were of the opinion that those employees who cannot communicate in this department should be requested to improve their skills for the betterment of the department's objectives. A lower percentage is '*not sure*' about this.

- According to 74.5% of the respondents to question 17.2, the employees in the department should be offered free communication lessons, whereas 21.58% were of the idea that this should be done sometimes. The two numbers suggest that there was a need for an intervention of some sort to alleviate the problem, and only a small percentage 3.92%, was '*not so sure*' about what could be done.
- On the question of whether such employees should be made to undergo communication training, 68.63% of the respondents have indicated that this should always be done. This was supported by 27.45% of the participants who have indicated that sometimes such employees should be made to undergo such training. Only 3.92% of the participants were not sure of this action.
- However, when asked whether they felt comfortable working with such employees, 60.78% of the participants have indicated that they sometimes felt comfortable, whereas the remainder of the participants have indicated that they '*always*' and are '*not so sure*' of this fact. Whether such employees should be ignored, the participants have indicated, at 45.09% that sometimes they should be ignored, and 41.18% indicated that they were not sure. Now the problem would be that if they are ignored then there could not be any improvement within the department, more especially on the communication side.
- To indicate their serious concerns about those individuals who cannot communicate properly, in general, the respondents have indicated at 52.9% that they agree that employees should be offered free communication lectures that would assist them to improve their communication skills. All the employees come from different cultural backgrounds and this cannot be overlooked.
- 32.6% of the participants in general have also indicated that all such employees should sometimes be made to undergo communication training whereas only 14.5%, were not sure of what the solution to this problem could be. The problem of communication between the management and personnel can hamper the aims and objectives of an organisation. However, leaving the communication problem to recur can bring a total collapse of an organisation as the common objectives cannot be achieved.

According to Pitse (2002) in Bramley (1991,p.1) training needs assessment could be defined as 'the process of discovering precisely what gaps existed between what people know, do or feel, and what they should know, do or feel in order to perform competently'. The training needs assessment process could be thought of as an organizational intervention as it deals with identifying the gap between current and expected results. This implies a performance deviation: there should be a prescribed standard to which the employee should conform, and if the employee fails to do so, there is a deviation. The standard must be known during the process of determining training needs if any useful comparisons are to be made (Bramley, 1991,p.1).

According to Pitse (2002) in Bramley (1991, p.1) analysis at the organizational level is used to determine where training can and should be used. The focus is the total enterprise and the analysis will look at things like the organizational objectives, the pool of skills presently available, indicators of effectiveness and the organizational climate (Bramley,1991,p.1).

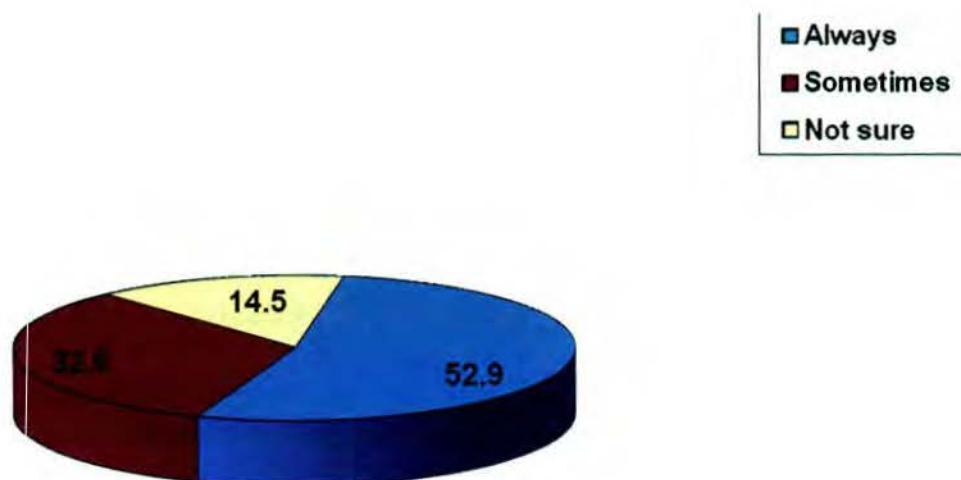


Figure 1.4 : Response to Section B Part Three continued in a graph format

- The questions presented in this part were aimed at eliciting information as to what could be done about those colleagues in a workplace who do not show any signs of improvement on their communication skills.
- The larger percentage ,13.5%, indicated that there was a serious concern about those colleagues who did not show signs of improvement and as such should always be requested to improve their skills. This indicated that there was a concern amongst the other employees who liked to see their colleagues improving their skills for the better achieving of a common objective within the workplace.
- This percentage was followed by those colleagues, 8.3% who thought that sometimes their colleagues should be told or rather requested to improve their communication skills by either further studies or requesting the intervention of external assistance.
- A smaller percentage of the participants at 3.7% indicated that they were not sure of what should be done to improve that poor communication problem within the workplace. However, according to an article on the back page of the magazine from the Workplace, (Workplace 2010:28), it said that followers would trust a leader who has authentic motives and put up with a rocky journey. The article went on to say that, hardly anyone was naturally comfortable with "uncomfortable", so when someone took them towards this place (a rocky journey) it was easy not to like that person (the leader).
- The majority of South African workers needed new or significantly expanded skills to keep up with the demands of their jobs. These included new technology, management, customer service and basic skills training. These could be acquired through training, which was seen as a key factor in meeting the employer's strategic, business and operational goals.

Hussey in Bramley (1991,p. 9) argued that training should not be for the individual in the hope that it would benefit the organization; training should be for the benefit of the organization as this would benefit the individuals in it. Thus training objectives, especially those for management development,

should be reviewed regularly by top management and particularly whenever a change in direction or emphasis was planned. Organizational analysis was concerned with examining the organization as a whole (Bramley, 1991:p.9).

A common method of training is on-the job-training (OJT). No matter how effective employees are, there are times when they could be confronted by some aspects of the job that they have not experienced before. When training is given at a workplace by a manager, supervisor, external institution, or a co-worker it is called OJT training. OJT training enables the individual to acquire new skills and behaviour via observation and guided practice while working 'on the job'. OJT training takes place when the organization trains newly hired employees, upgrades the skills of experienced employees when new technology is applied, cross-trains employees within a department or work unit and orientates transferred or promoted employees to their new jobs (Meyer,2001,p.171).

Summary

This chapter looked at how data obtained from the respondents was presented and analysed by the researcher. It outlined the analysis, presentation and interpretation-review of the respondents. The different responses from the respondents are in graph and percentage formats.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The NWP comprises ten (10) Government Departments. In all these departments there are employees who daily encounter communication problems with their Management. Poor communication standards between management and personnel could hamper the smooth running of the department or even an organization. This could also play an important role in derailing the achievement of common objectives and goals as set out by the government department.

5.1.1 Recommendations

This study exposed the different feelings of employees within the DACE & RD regarding poor communication standards between management and personnel. It has been discovered that poor communication in a work environment hampers the achievement of common objectives. This could also render the employees demoralised and demotivated as their managers were unable to communicate with them effectively.

Regardless of the size of the government department, organization or business entity one is involved in, effective communication skills are essential for its success. Effective communication skills are all about conveying messages to other people clearly and unambiguously. It is also about the receiving and understanding of information that other employees are sending to you with as little distortion as possible. However, doing this involves efforts from both the sender of the message and the receiver of that message.

Recommendation 1.

According to the table and the graph (section B – part one), it was indicated that a high percentage (at 56%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that there was effective communication in their workplace. It is therefore recommended that top management of the DACE & RD needed to start getting involved in proper communication exercises that would involve all members of the personnel.

This would encourage all members to get engaged in a communication standard that involved everyone within the department.

Recommendation 2.

This was followed by a lower percentage (at 45%) of the respondents who have indicated that despite the failure of management to communicate with their subordinates effectively in the DACE & RD they were still able to perform their duties well. It was therefore recommended that even if the tasks were spelt out clearly, management should begin to involve other members of personnel in various discussions that would make them feel at ease in clearly seeking relevant answers and clarity to the points that they did not understand very well. They would also stop making use of their instincts to carry out the tasks that were allocated to them.

Recommendation 3.

42% of the respondents have indicated that they did not enjoy working with their current managers in the DACE & RD with only 27% agreeing with this point. This would mean that managers in this department did not engage their personnel either in formal or informal discussions regarding their work environments. It was therefore recommended that there be some form of team building exercise that would assist members to get along with their managers. During team building exercises, those members who felt somehow isolated by management could be identified and helped to get along.

They could feel part of the team once their inputs and involvement during team building were taken into consideration. There should be seminars and break away 'Lekgotla' sessions held whereby the personnel members could freely express their feelings about the department and their working environment. The personnel members should be allowed to participate in debates about their department and no victimisation should be made by management as this could discourage them from expressing their points of views.

Recommendation 4.

According to Section B - Part 2, which was aimed at eliciting information from the respondents as to how they rated the flow of communication in this department, a high percentage (at 50.98%) have

indicated this as '*average*'. This is followed by a lower percentage (at 33.33%) who indicated it as being '*poor*'. It is therefore recommended that management should allow the free flow of information to the personnel members. This could be of utmost importance in assisting the members in taking informed decisions with regard to their management expectations. Keeping information away from personnel members could lead to information from the grapevine and gossip as most of the information would be obtained from the 'corridors' of the premises.

Recommendation 5.

This was followed by the response on the question of how they rated the feedback on tasks performed (question 13). 60.78% of the respondents have indicated the response rate as '*average*'. It is therefore recommended that management should always ensure that they give feed back to the personnel members regarding everything that concerns them. Management should always try to make time available to give members feedback either during the morning meeting sessions or weekly meetings. They should also attempt to clarify outstanding issues that could cause uncertainty amongst members of the DACE & RD staff. Some managers fail to meet with their DACE & RD staff members at least once in a month, and this brings doubts to members as to what type of a manager are they working with.

Recommendation 6.

On question 15 of this part, 50.98% of the respondents have rated the clarification of the tasks given as '*average*'. For management to ensure that tasks were performed well, it is recommended that they should make sure that those tasks are clearly spelt and no uncertainty remained. Informal discussions between management and personnel would pave the way for employees of the DACE & RD to have a clear understanding of what type of leaders they have. This could assist during the allocation of tasks to members who, when in doubt of something, would be able to ask for clarity without any fear.

Recommendation 7.

On part 3 of this section, the respondents were asked about their thoughts regarding the improvement of effective communication in the DACE & RD. A high percentage, at 64.71%, responded to this

question of 'offering an in-house training to all', and indicated that this should not be done at all. They strongly agreed with the statement that 'everything should be left just as it is' at 74.51%.

Therefore, it is recommended that training on communication aspects should be offered to all as indicated by question 16.5, whereby the respondents were asked about how an outside intervention could be of assistance in this regard. 70.59% of the respondents thought that this could work better for all the employees in the DACE & RD. The management of the DACE & RD should therefore encourage everyone to be engaged in communication training from outside institutions such as universities and Further Education and Training (FET) Institutions. There are courses in communication standards that are being offered by these higher learning institutions that could be important to all the employees in this department. The graph also indicated that 58.4% of the respondents supported the idea of external training on communication matters that should be offered to all the employees.

Recommendation 8

Still in part 3, items 17.1 to 17.5, which served as a continuation of this part, the respondents were requested to indicate what they think could be done about those colleagues who do not show any interest in improving their communication skills within the DACE & RD. A high percentage, at 88.24%, on question 17.1 indicated that such employees should '*always*' be requested to improve their communication skills. This was followed by question 17.2 and 17.3 respectively at 74.5% and 68.63% whereby the respondents indicated that such employees should be '*offered free communication lectures*'(17.2), and '*be made to undergo communication training*'(17.3).

According to an article in the *Sunday Times* by Furney (1999,p.25), the financial director of communications consultancy - *Fox Strategic* argued that companies with good internal communications were likely to have happier and more loyal staff as well as a better bottom line. Furney further indicated that communication problems between the South African management and the employees have been exacerbated by distrust surrounding affirmative action laws, fears of downsizing and retrenchment, and increased global competition. Internal morale was at an all time low

in many organizations, yet few companies have managed the current climate of fear and cross-cultural misunderstanding by inspiring their teams with a clear vision of where the company was headed, and how each individual could continue to play a role in its ongoing achievements (Furney, April 25, 1999, p.25).

The internal communication function is not a 'soft' area despite popular opinion. It can be measured in bottom-line results. Good communication starts with articulating a realistic vision. Every employee needs to know where the organization or the company is headed and whether it is meeting its mark on an ongoing basis. Also of importance is briefing employees early about changes that affect them because they need to know what is happening, and the 'how, when and why', and what is in it for them (Furney, April 25 1999, p.25).

5.1.2 Conclusion

The tower of Babel collapsed because people could no longer communicate, their speech became so different that no one could understand another. A person needs to communicate to coordinate his/her own work and that of others. Without explicit effort his/her conversation lacks communication and so his/her work too would collapse through misunderstanding and error. The key is to treat a conversation as a person would treat any other managed activity by establishing an aim, planning what to do, and checking afterwards that one has achieved that aim. Only in this way can a person work effectively with others in building through a common effort,(Blair, [2009/09](#)).

As Blair (2009/09) indicates, to ensure an efficient and effective conversation, there are three (3) considerations that are identified as follows:

- One must make his/her message understood
- One must receive or understand the intended message sent to him/her
- One should exert some control over the flow of the communication.

Thus one must learn to listen as well as to speak. Those who dismiss this as a mere platitude are already demonstrating an indisposition to listening. The phrase might be trite but the message is hugely significant to his/her effectiveness as a manager. If one does not explicitly develop the skill of listening, one may not hear the suggestion or information which could launch him/her to fame. (Blair, [2009/09](#)).

Positive communication brings about many benefits but it requires a different mindset, role models and coaching. An analysis of a problematic department culture inevitably links up with problems with communication in the workplace. If one steps back and reflects on how one can achieve effective relationships between people, a sense of purpose or high performance levels could be sustained without continuously appropriating effective conversation at all levels. The absence of positive communication affects every area of the department internally and externally with the spin-offs of unprofessional communication seeping into staff morale, and impacting on the staff turnover and corporate credibility, and teamwork.

In remedying this, a recommended starting point was analysing the values intrinsic to positive communication and building awareness of this internally. While respect, trust and mutual consideration might seem blatantly obvious to some, add a dose of economic pressure, some uncertainty, extended working hours, life challenges and unattainable high performance targets and these rapidly disappear in even the most stable and calm personality types to be replaced by blame, mistrust and emotional venting (Hart, 2010 July 07,p.9).

There is much discussion in the academic world of communication as to what actually constitutes communication. Currently, many definitions of communication are being used in order to conceptualize the processes by which people navigate and assign meaning. Communication is also understood as the exchanging of understanding. Additionally the biocommunication theory is investigating the communicative processes within and among non-humans such as bacteria, animals, fungi and plants.

We might say that communication consists of transmitting information from one person to another. In fact, many scholars of communication took this as a working definition, and used Lasswell's maxim, "who said what, to whom, in what channel, with what effect," as a means of circumscribing the field of communication theory.

"If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants," said Sir Isaac Newton, *Workplace article*, 2010 March 24, p.28).

I wish that this study could be perceived as a prelude to further research, for many questions in this field are still waiting to be answered, questions such as:

- How could a certain communication theory be applied to improve the communication standards in this department?
- How effective managers communicate in their successful departments?
- What are their styles of communication with their staff members?

It is of vital importance, for instance, to look at how other strategies could be applied in order to promote participation amongst managers and personnel within the different government departments in shaping them for the future by involving them in different communication strategies.

Summary

This chapter looked at the recommendations forwarded by the researcher after analysing and presenting data from the respondents. The recommendations are the views and opinions of the researcher that could be used in a workplace for the achievement of common objectives. Also contained in this chapter is the conclusion part of the project by the researcher.

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APPENDIX "A"

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South Africa 2735

Department of Communication.

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Fax: +27 18 389 2504

Email: 17156505@nwu.ac.za

Date: 09 September 2009

Head of Department
Department of Agriculture
Mmabatho Chief Directorate

Request for Authority to conduct a study Research in your Department

1. The above matter refers
- 1.1 I, Pheega Kealeboga Kenneth (*Student No. 16114558-1997*) am a Communication (Masters) student at the above-mentioned University. I am conducting a survey on the employees' opinion about the negative impact of poor communication between the Management and the personnel in a workplace in the Mafikeng/ Mmabatho areas
- 1.2 Therefore, I do hereby request for an authorisation to make use of the employees within your Chief Directorate as the subjects for my study research. This research is strictly for study purposes only and nothing more.

I thank you for your kind assistance in this regard

Faithfully Yours

as signed
Pheega KK
(St.No. 16114558- 1997)

Date: _____

Approved/Not Approved

as signed
Mogotlhe MP
Head of Department

Date: _____



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
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APPENDIX "B"

Private Bag X2046 Mmabatho

South Africa 2735

Department of Communication.

Tel: +27 18 389 2514

Fax: +27 18 389 2504

Email: 17156505@nwu.ac.za

DEAR RESPONDENT.

I am Communication (Masters) student at the above-mentioned University. I am conducting a survey on the employees "opinion about the negative impact of poor communication between the Management and the personnel in a workplace in the Mafikeng/ Mmabatho areas.

I have been authorised by the Department of Agriculture to approach you on this study (Approval attached). I therefore urge and request you as an employee to take part in this survey. The purpose of the questions asked is to obtain your opinion as an employee about the impact of poor communication between the Management and the personnel in a workplace.

You will have to choose only one answer for every question. Use a blue or black pen to fill in your answers.

Please remember that:

- This is not a test.
- There is no right or wrong answer.
- Your name will not be written down anywhere in this study.

Remember to answer all the questions.

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

Yours faithfully

as signed
PHEEGA KK (MR)

SECTION 1.**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE PARTICIPANTS.**

This Questionnaire below is designed to get information about how different employees in the Department of Agriculture view the Communication level between themselves and the Management at all levels of employment.

Make a Cross (X) next to the relevant block.

Gender

Male	
Female	

Marital status

Single	
Married	
Widowed	
Divorced	

Age

18-28	
29-39	
40-50 and above	

Level of Education

Grade 7-9	
Grade 10-12	
Tertiary.	

Occupation

Professional	
Administrative worker	
General Assistant	
Technical worker	
Personnel service worker	
Administrative worker	
Machine Operators & Driver	

SECTION B
PART ONE.

Indicated below is the key to indicate your view on the following statements. Mark your view with a CROSS (X).

- Key: 1. Agree == A
2. Disagree == D
3. Uncertain == U.

1. Management communicates with their subordinates effectively in this department

A	D	U.
---	---	----

2. Tasks are clearly spelt out to subordinates by the Management

A	D	U
---	---	---

3. Subordinates carry out their tasks effectively in this department

A	D	U.
---	---	----

4. Subordinates enjoy working with their managers in this department.

A	D	U.
---	---	----

5. Managers explain tasks to their subordinates in this department

A	D	U.
---	---	----

6. Subordinates are motivated by their Managers at all times

A	D	U
---	---	---

7. Managers hold open discussions with their subordinates.

A	D	U
---	---	---

8. Managers are proud of their subordinates

A	D	U
---	---	---

9. Working for this department motivates you.

A	D	U
---	---	---

10. Communication in this department is effective.

A	D	U.
---	---	----

PART B.

11. How would you rate the flow of Communication in your workplace?

Could not rate	
Poor	
Average	
Good	

12. How would you rate the issuing of tasks to be performed in your workplace?

Could not rate	
Poor	
Average	
Good	

13. How would you rate the response/feedback on the tasks given to be performed?

Could not rate	
Poor	
Average	
Good	

14. How would you rate the communication channels used in your workplace?

Could not rate	
Poor	
Average	
Good	

15. How would you rate the clarification on the tasks given to be performed?

Could not rate	
Poor	
Average	
Good	

PART THREE.

16. What do you think could be done to improve effective communication within a working environment for both management and the subordinates?

Choose only one answer for each of the following from the three given possible answers (viz. Not at All, Not Sure, Strongly Agree) and Mark it with an "X"

16.1	Offer in-house communication training to all?	Not at all	Not sure	Strongly agree
16.2	Just leave everything as it is?	Not at all	Not sure	Strongly agree
16.3	Copy/Imitate other departments?	Not at all	Not sure	Strongly agree
16.4	Demand training for all?	Not at all	Not sure	Strongly agree
16.5	Request for an outside intervention? E.g. Communication Specialists	Not at all	Not sure	Strongly agree

17. What do you think could be done about those colleagues who do not show any interest of improving their communication skills within your workplace?

Choose only one answer for each of the following from the three given possible answers (viz. Always, Sometimes, Not Sure) and Mark it with an "X"

	Always	Sometimes	Not Sure
Should they be requested to improve their skills?			
17.2 Should they be offered free communication lectures?			
17.3 Should they be made to undergo communication training?			
17.4 Do you feel comfortable working with them?			
17.5 Should they be ignored?			

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT!!