The Impact of communication on employee's performance in a Retail chain's head office in Cape Town.

By

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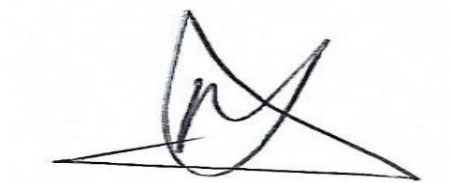
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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of communication on employee performance in a Retail chain's head office in Cape Town. It examines the communication strategies used in the organisation and how it affects work performance. The investigation is guided by the fact that employees' performance is influenced by the motivation they get from management and how the information within the organisation is communicated to them. This dissertation is underpinned by motivational and communication theories of Colquitt, LePone, and Wesson (2009) and Johansson, et al. (2011). A qualitative research method is used with a case study design placed within the interpretive paradigm. The data collected is analysed by using qualitative content analysis. The findings from the study suggest that communication is a critical component within the organisation but is currently deteriorating. However, the participants showed interest in receiving information relating to their functions regularly. The findings also revealed that a combination of top-down and bottom-up communication is best suited as this allows both management and staff to collaborate efficiently. This top-down and bottom-up approaches are also to ensure that the message reaches the correct audience intended for. The study concludes that the employees are well informed and are communicated too, but there is room for improvement. Most of the staff have adopted the industry's best practices such as emails to communicate. However, this is not always the preferred method of communication nor the best approach given its limitations. Based on this, it can be recommended that the organization tries to know its audience to select the correct tools when trying to relay a message. Although it is not always possible in the fast-paced working world to have one-on-one conversations, a balance is needed to project that sense of belonging with the employees when having a real conversation.

Keywords: Communication, Motivation, Communication strategies, Motivation strategies, Communication channels, Organisational performance.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following people: My parents Marius and Ronel Wagener for sacrificing luxuries and enduring tears from us during our childhood years when we could not understand why we were not always getting what we wanted. Being a parent, I now understand the importance of investing in your children's future by educating them. Through this sacrifice, I am in the position to hopefully give my family all they need.

Keeping the best for last, I take off my hat to my wife Izelle Wagener. Mum, you are the reason why I kept on pushing myself. Every time I looked at you and the kids, I could not help to feel that I want to give more. Thanks for the support, thanks for looking after our two kids and allowing me to study. I love and appreciate you more than words can explain.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background

The difficulty faced by many organisations is meeting their "corporate objectives for effectiveness and productivity with the needs of the employee for motivation, reward and job satisfaction" (Manolopoulos, 2008:1740). A primary function performed by Human Resource Management is to establish the level of employee satisfaction and to ensure that the levels are kept high to promote increased productivity, responsiveness, quality, and customer satisfaction (Sageer, Rafat & Agarwal, 2012:3239). Organizational communication can be viewed as cultural dependent and highly contextual through one-on-one, written, and arbitrate channels of messaging. Organizational communication encourages networking and at the same time engaging employees, staff members as well as interested persons outside the organisation. Through organisational communication, specific roles and responsibilities are addressed while getting used to changes within the organisation through creativity, adoption, and developing human relationships for mutual benefit. These are all benefits derived from effective organisational communication that ultimately contributes to improved organisational performance. Therefore, there is a definite need to address this within the Pick n Pay retail environment to improve employees' performance. The general purpose of this study is to determine the role of communication and how it impacts employees' performance as well as how it ultimately links to organisational performance.

Based on the above, the dissatisfaction of the employees caused by inadequate communication can have an adverse effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. This standpoint helps supervisors and organisations to better understand the impacts of communication on the performance of employees.

Employee performance can relate to a person's emotional, mental, and physical attitude towards his or her job and can be influenced by many factors. For a person to experience employees' satisfaction, all, or most of the factors that the person

considers relevant should be taken into consideration. Kabir (2011:113) recognises that the origin of productivity gains within a well-managed business organisation is the employees. Kabir refers to them as the capital of the business who add value to the firm's development. To promote employee performance, an organisation must commit and allocate resources in the development of employment sustainability through motivation and job satisfaction by reviewing fair wages, benefits, and other employee conditions (Champion-Hughes, 2001). This, therefore, means that achieving employee satisfaction through organizational commitment is not a task that should be taken lightly and should work according to the context of individual firms. This study, therefore, focuses on the role of communication as a factor influencing employee performance in achieving organizational goals and objectives.

It is considered that the development of organizational communication is a critical component in the organization that can motivate people. Thus, the benefits of effective communication include increased employee motivation, job satisfaction, productivity, profitability, efficiency, etc. Ahmed, et al. (2010:107) support the notion that "organisational performance markedly improves when communication is permitted to flow uninterrupted and employees are empowered, provided incentives and given the necessary resources to perform at an optimal level". It is a leadership attribute to be able to communicate effectively and these attributes contribute to managers becoming leaders in their fields within their organizations. Managerial communication can thus be defined as the "downward, horizontal or upward exchange of information and transmission of meaning through informal or formal channels that enable managers to achieve their goals" (Bell & Martin, 2008:130). Organisational performance can, be linked to the effective and efficient use of communication that promotes employee performance. This study explains the different types of communication and how they contribute to employee satisfaction and organisational performance.

According to Ramadanty and Martinus (2016), all human activities are driven by motivation, and work motivation is seen as energy used by the employers directed in achieving the goals of the organization. Ganta (2014) refers to motivation as a requirement from employees to feel good about their jobs to perform optimally. Hasibuan (2009) posits that motivation is important in encouraging employee morale

to complete work. Some employees find their motivation through recognition and rewards whereas others get motivated through money. There are various motivational theories that assist in understanding the different motivators. This study elaborates on the theories of motivation in chapter two.

All organizations even in our current highly competitive environment wish to succeed. For an organization to execute its goals and objectives, they develop strategies focusing on achieving these goals. Although human capital is the main asset within an organization capable of guiding them to success or failure, few companies do not consider it. Organizational success cannot be attained without employee job satisfaction and employees not being motivated to achieve their goals. Just after the industrial revolution, capitalists in America followed a philosophy called control. According to Etana (2014), control contributed to a decline in the quality of life as the leisure time of employees decreased, working hours increased and income with living standards deteriorated.

Conversely, the compensation towards senior management (i.e. CEO) increased from 24 to 290 times than that of the average worker (Etana, 2014). During 1991 and 1997, Telkom SA underwent major changes introducing a new management style and approach (Oosthuizen, 2001). By introducing the new management style, Telkom created a sense of uncertainty amongst the workforce mainly due to misunderstanding, ignorance, fear of economic loss as well as fear of the unknown. Consequently, all these reactions could potentially be avoided or limited through proper communication. Based on this, employees should have been communicated to avoid demotivation to the extent where it could impact on the performance of the organisation. Therefore, studying the role of communication and how it impacts on employees' performance in the South African context with a specific focus on retail chains within Cape Town, is imperative.

It can be challenging to generate high satisfaction levels within the workforce. However, great values can be added to every business when this is achieved. This study seeks to identify shortcomings in the current communication approaches in

organisations to give possible suggestions that improve employee performance levels in South Africa and the world in general.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

According to Karakas (2010, 89:106), "employee performance signifies individual's work achievement after exerting required effort on the job which is associated through getting a meaningful work, engaged profile, and compassionate colleagues/employers around". Pradhan and Jena (2017:2) support this view by adding that it is imperative for an organisation to fully utilize HR if they wish to amplify organisational success and employee performance. Earlier findings have suggested that the reason why some organisations get identified as an employer that is favoured could be because of the fruitful incentive schemes that motivate employees.

Additionally, organisational communication with subcategories such as motivation and employee satisfaction play a vital role in organisational performance. This implies that when the satisfaction levels of employees increase, the result is a higher return for the organisation. The dissatisfaction of the employees would always have an adverse effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. Hence, this study examines the impact of communication on employees and how communication impacts on organisational performance.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the research

1.3.1 Aims
The aim of this research study is to determine the effect of communication on employee performance within a retail chains Head office in Western Cape. The research helps organisations to understand what impact communication has on organisational performance.

1.3.2 Objectives
The study seeks to:
- Investigate the channels/modes of communication used in the organisation.

- Determine the communication strategies employed by the organisation to enhance to enhance effective performance.
- Fine out how the communication strategies affect employee performance and to
- Establish who the main stakeholders for effective communication are and the roles they play.

1.4. Research Questions

1.4.1 The main question to be addressed would be:

What is the impact of communication on employee performance in a retail chain's head office in Western Cape?

1.4.2 Sub questions to the main research question:

- What channels/modes of communication are put in place to enhance effective performance?
- Which communication strategies are employed by the organisation to enhance effective performance?
- How do communication strategies affect employee performance?
- Why are the roles of the stakeholders important for effective communication in an organisation?
- What role do the different stakeholders play in enhancing effective communication?

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study is to determine the effects of communication on employee performance within a retail chains Head office in Western Cape. Hence, the study:

- Investigates the channels/modes of communication used in the organisation.
- Determines the communication strategies employed by the organisation to enhance effective performance.

- Find out how the different communication strategies affect employee performance and,
- Establishes who the main stakeholders for effective communication are and the roles they play.

1.6 Significance of the research

For an organisation to have a competitive advantage, they must ensure that all the components contributing to employee performance are aligned and unhindered. In order to become and remain competitive, employee performance plays a critical role in the effectiveness of any business. Although the turnover within the retail space is mainly generated from the stores, the purpose of the head office is to supply efficient and effective support. This support is meant to assist the stores to focus their energy and resources to ensure that the customer has a pleasant shopping experience. Such support shows that there is a direct correlation between the head office support to stores and the stores being able to drive turnover through an enjoyable customer journey. The improvement of employee performance by ensuring employee satisfaction amongst head office employees sustains organisational effectiveness and induces long-term success. The study also contributes to national and international debates concerning the communication on employee performance in a retail.

1.7. Scope of the study

The study focuses on the impact of communication and motivation on employees' satisfaction and productivity of a selected retail group's head office in Cape Town. Although the retail group has representation in other provinces, this study is limited to the Cape Metropolitan. The sample size of the study is 12 participants, comprising of 4 Managers, 4 Supervisors, and 4 Clerk Level staff. The participant sample is a fair representation of all levels within the organisation. Managers are representing senior management; Supervisors represent middle management while the clerks are the workforce.

1.8. Definition of terms

Communication

Beattie and Ellis (2014) define communication as the transition of information using the human language. Miller (2014) states that definitions vary depending on the theoretical frames used and what aspects of the total process are being emphasised. There are five components within the communication process; an initiator starts the process that is received by the recipient. The mode or vehicle used can also be the "how" the message gets delivered. Hence, there is a message that is followed by a reaction or an effect.

Motivation

"Motivation is a force directing specific behavioural alternatives, which are suggested when deciding among behaviour options" (Chiang, et al. 2008:328). It is in the individual's nature to automatically select the options that enforce the optimal motivational behaviour.

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance can be referred to as the firm's outcome with three categories: firstly, organizational performance can refer to the return on investment or the profits; secondly, how the product performs in the market compared to other products and lastly the return it renders for its shareholders in the form of economic value added.

1.9. Brief Overview of Chapters

Chapter one contains the introduction and background of the study on the impact of communication on employee performance in a retail chain's head office in Cape Town. It creates the context for the research and includes the statement of the problem, the research questions, the research objective, problem statement, purpose for undertaking the study, and the significance thereof. On the conclusion of the chapter, there is a summary and the definition of key concepts.

Chapter two provides a review of relevant literature in the field of communication, theories of communication, communication channels, and barriers to communication and how motivation and effective communication contribute to the productivity of an organization. This provided a solid theoretical and conceptual background to which the findings of the research were related.

Chapter three discusses the research methodology used to respond to the research questions within the study. The chapter focuses on the research paradigm, research design, and then the research approach. It also deals with sampling and sampling size of the research population as well as the data collecting instruments used. The chapter ends with data analysis as well as ethical consideration.

Chapter four presents and analyses the data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. The data was then analysed and interpreted, and coding was applied for the identification of themes.

Chapter five deals with the research findings based on the interpreted data and supported by the literature.

Chapter six concludes the study and gives valuable recommendations on the communication strategies to be used in an organisation to improve employee performance.

1.10. Conclusion

This chapter provided a context and framework for the study. It made known the researcher's objectives for conducting the study. A comprehensive explanation of the topic and the problem statement have been provided to inform and explain to the readers what motivated the investigation into the impacts of communication on employee performance in a retail chain's head office in Cape Town. The chapter also introduced the research questions and the -sub-questions the key concepts were defined and applied to avoid any confusion. A brief overview of each chapter was also

provided to give the reader a taste of each chapter and how the researcher went about conducting the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the review of relevant literature in the investigation of the impact of communication on employee performance in a retail chain's head office in Cape Town. To understand these factors, there is a need to shed light on communication models within an organisation. This would be done through a set of broad ideas and principles drawn from relevant fields of inquiry and adopted to structure this chapter to understand these phenomena (Smyth, 2004).

This chapter also focuses on the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The chapter further reviewed relevant literature in the field of communication, theories of communication, communication channels, barriers to communication, and how motivation and effective communication contribute to the productivity of an organization.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is based on motivational theories. These theories can be categorised into, Needs based Theories, Process-based theories, and Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This study uses a Process-based theory to explain, predict, and understand the phenomena. The process-based theories analyse the environment to create reactions and feelings. Colquitt, LePone, and Wesson (2009) describe the expectancy theory as the process of making choices among different voluntary responses. These selections of elements represent the following: expectancy, instrumental, and valence. According to Semren (2017) the expectancy theory allows an employee to believe that their effort leads to high production outputs that would make them feel motivated (expectancy). When employees have the perception that their efforts lead to outcomes (instrumental) and when their outcomes from their efforts are to their satisfaction (valence) it creates a sensation of being motivated (Semren, 2017). The equity theory supports this view by

stating that people's perceptions and beliefs give rise to what their actions would be (Latham, 2012). Previous research mainly focussed on and addressed employee motivation, expectations, and communication interactions as a once-off process. There was also a shortcoming in addressing the valance and context of the interactions concerning the employee's communication. Therefore, the Expectancy Theory is appropriate for this study for understanding how communication between employees and organisations may impact on employee motivation.

2.3 Need-Based Theory

Need-based theory builds on the understanding of the individual's needs where they would focus their energy and resources to display goal-oriented behaviour to satisfy needs. Within the need-based theory, there are four major theories namely: "Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ERG theory, Herzberg's dual-factor theory, and McClelland's acquired needs theory".

- *"Maslow's hierarchy of needs"*
  Maslow believes that people are driven to satisfy their own needs. He developed a pyramidal diagram showing the hierarchy of needs. The pyramidal diagram depicts people starting from the bottom of the pyramid and working their way to the top. She or he can only move to the next level once the current need has been achieved (Burton, 2012).

- *"Alder's ERG Theory"*
  Alder's ERG theories believe are very similar to that of Malsow with the important deviation being the fact that with Malsow, the individual did not move onto a new need before the current one is satisfied. Within the three needs category being Existence, Relatedness, and Growth, the individual would refocus on a different need should the current need frustrates him/her (Semren, 2017).

- *"Herzberg dual-factor theory"*
  Herzberg dual-factor theory categorizes factors causing employee satisfaction as "Motivators" and factors causing dissatisfaction as "hygiene factors". Motivators stimulate employees to work hard through promotion, personal growth, recognition, and achievement. Hygiene factors demotivate through inadequate working conditions, salary, job safety, and interpersonal relations.

- *McClelland's Theory of Needs*
  Semren (2017) explains that McClelland's theory stipulates that individuals require all three categories of needs as an indication of their life experience. These individuals need to achieve in life, individuals also want to be affiliated, and have a feeling of power.

2.4 Process-Based Theory

The process-based theories refer to motivation as the development of reactions and feelings through analysing the environment and the individuals reacting in a specific way. This category deals with the "Equity Theory, Reinforcement Theory and Expectancy Theory".

- *Equity Theory*
  The Equity theory claims that employees compare the relation of their outcomes (numerator) relative to their inputs (denominator) as well as those of comparison other (Latham, 2012:45). Colquitt, et al. (2009) explain hree possibilities that can result from comparing inputs and outputs to a comparative other.
  - ➢ Equity – The ratio between A and B balance out.
  - ➢ Under reward Inequity – Inserts in A is less than B
  - ➢ Over reward Inequity – Inserts in A is greater than B

- *Reinforcement Theory*
  The reinforcement theory argues that someone's behaviour can be changed or altered by applying punishment, reinforcement, and extinction. Through a rewards system, you can reinforce behaviour and for such behaviour to be

prevented, punishments can be applied. Extinction is a method to prevent someone from performing a learned behaviour.

- *Expectancy Theory*

    Expectancy theory is fixated on the motivation-based decisions made by an individual in seeking to reach a goal (Furlich, 2016). With the expectancy theory, it is important to understand the overall context of the motivation-based interactions between the manager and employees. Vroom (1964) who proposed the expectancy theory attempts to explain the decision process which an individual goes through around various behavioural alternatives. After all the behavioural options are known, the individual would choose the option with the greatest motivational force (Furlich, 2016). This can be illustrated as soon below: Motivational Force = Expectancy X Instrumentality X Valence.

2.5 Literature review

2.5.1 Organizational Communication

As mentioned under the definition of terms in chapter 1, Beattie and Ellis (2014) define communication as the transition of information using the human language. According to Miller (2014), definitions vary depending on the theoretical frames used and what aspect of the total process is emphasised. There are five components within the communication process, an initiator will start the process that will be received by the recipient. The mode or vehicle used can also be the "how" the message gets delivered. There should be the message itself followed by a reaction or an effect.

Elements within the communication process as illustrated by Sandra (2014:2) below:

Fig 1: Communication process
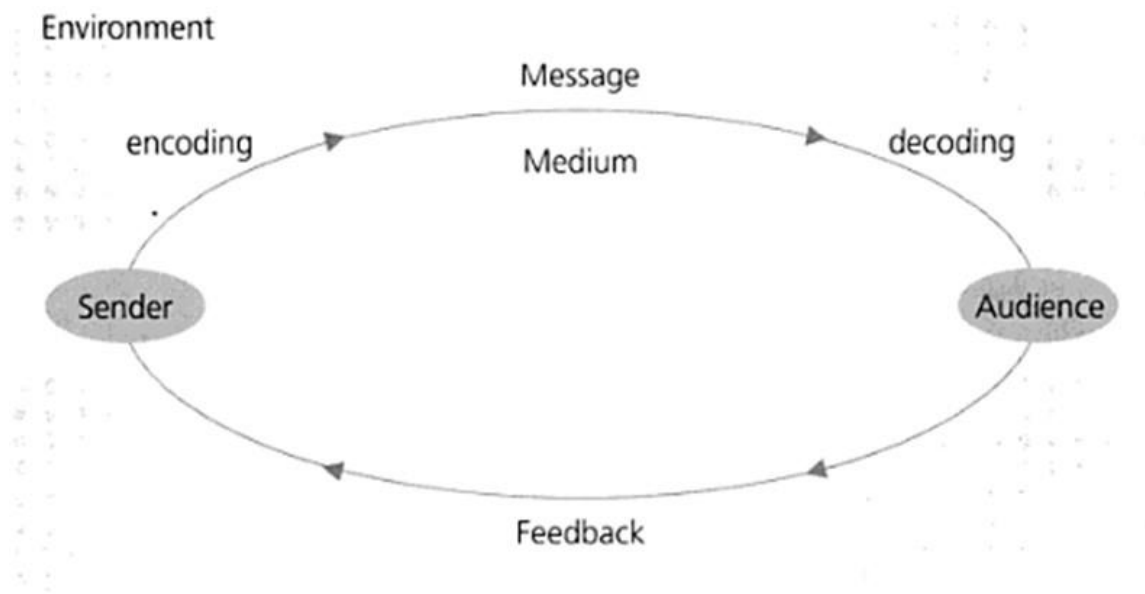
Sender: The person that initiates communication can also be the source or the encoder.

Encoding: It is the process of placing the message into a code to make it perceptible to the receiver.

Message: The message is the information that is, the concealed idea that the sender wishes to transfer.

Medium: The medium refers to the way the message is transmitted, and it needs to be in a concrete form.

Audience: The sender directs the message to the receiver or the audience and needs to understand the message.

Decoding: When the audience or receiver receives the message, it needs to be interpreted and understood.

Feedback: When the audience or receiver responds to the message.

Communication Environment: The environment is the physical location and/or social/emotional space where the communication takes place.

Efficient communication is critical for an organisation to succeed and important for achieving organisational goals (Fussell & Kreuz, 2014). It is of the utmost importance to communicate effectively due to the potential cost involved should communication be inadequate. People that are not able to communicate effectively may be incapable

of motivating their associates. Therefore, adequate communication inside and outside the organizational boundaries can largely contribute to the success of the organisation. It is on these grounds that Jurkovic (2012) states that to succeed in organizational communication, it is important for all participants to conduct interactive exercises, have appropriate language skills, and to process intercultural awareness.

It is considered that the development of organizational communication is a critical component in the organization and should be used to motivate people. Ahmed, Shields, White, and Wilbert (2010:107) support the notion that when an organisation invests in its employees, it provides an incentive scheme, and employees are given enough resources to perform their function at an optimal level, the overall organisational performance would improve. It is a leadership attribute to be able to communicate effectively and these attributes contribute to managers becoming the expected leaders and or managers of their organizations. The downward, horizontal, or upward transfer of information through either a formal or informal medium are referred to as managerial communication that permits managers to achieve their goals (Bell & Martin, 2008:130).

Organisational performance can, be linked to the effective and efficient use of communication which inculcates confidence in employees and promotes employee satisfaction. In view of this, this study attempts to explain the different types of communication and how they contribute to employee satisfaction and organisational performance.

2.5.2 The importance of good communication

The basis of all relationships is built on communication and the importance of communication cannot be overestimated. However, there is a prediction that managers spend more than 80% of their day to communicate with others (Williams, 2012:434). Business matters are very dependent on the transfer of information and the business relies on the successful transfer of information as it could have an unmistakeable impact on the organisation's achievements. Almost every activity and

decision can be affected by communication from human communication to technology-based communication (Erasmus, et al, 2013).

Organisational performance is the product of a manager's ability to effectively and efficiently use available manpower to captivate customers and achieve organisational goals (Jones & George 2008:6). According to Jones and George (2008: 633-634), managers' ability to communicate well can lead to improved productivity and performance, enhance quality, assist in improved customer experience as well as promote innovation.

2.5.3 Theories of Communication

Johansson, et al (2011) argue that the advantages of good internal communication can promote job satisfaction, greater productivity, less absenteeism, improved quality of goods and services, reduced costs as well as improved levels of innovation. They further posit that the more committed employees tend to be more satisfied with communication from top management. The personal feedback from the organisation through the supervisors is important to employees' as this gives them a sense of belonging. However, a high level of commitment towards the organisation can improve organizational functioning. It is important to note that any changes made in the employee performance no matter how small it may be, can have a powerful impact on the bottom line.

Nonetheless, expectations of communication can become quite complex when considering each person's individual expectations regarding communication. Communication interaction can be influenced by the expectation of each individual and should be viewed as an interactive process (Gorges, & Kandler, 2012; Liden, et al 2000). The expectations of the employees towards their managers concerning their job performance may affect the behaviour of the employee. On the other hand, the expectation of the managers towards the performance of the employee may impact managerial communication. Both may alter their behaviours to conform to their expectations. Johansson, Miller, and Hamrin (2011) speak about two approaches to communication that have been very influential. The first approach focusses on the

transmission of information or data and the second approach dedicated to make sense of the information that has been transmitted. Since 1980 organisations have started to move away from the more traditional way of communicating via a simple singular process of sender transmitting a message and the receiver acting on it without question. Organisations now allow or even encourage a sense approaching communication where leaders or managers and the employees or staff are active participants in the communication process who can interpret information differently. Through this approach, a collective understanding of visions, goals, and initiatives is motivated.

Juneja (2007) believes that management theorists by default want to define why, what, and how an organization should be the way it is. Practitioners that shared their opinion on the theory of communication are Max Weber, Philip Tompkins, and George Cheney alongside Stanley Deetz. Max Weber's Classic Organizational Theory of Fixed Structures is the theory that explains the meaning of an effective communication process and defines the organizational structure. Weber's organizations theory clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of communication hence the hierarchical, structured, and clear structure of communication. As an extension of Weber's theory, Tompkins and Cheney's organizational control theory goes beyond the bureaucratic mode but not completely amorphous. This theory is developed on the concept of four types of controls that indicate how organisations exercise power namely: simple, technical, bureaucratic, and concertive.

2.5.4 Communication Channels

In defining communication channels, it can be explained as the medium through which a message is conveyed from a sender to a receiver (Erasmus, Ferreira, and Groenewald, 2013:88). There are several forms of communication such as interpersonal communication, network or team communication, organisational communication, and electronic communication. According to Fussell and Kreuz (2014), **interpersonal communication** focusses on smaller numbers of people, and in the form of oral and written communication it offers its own advantages and disadvantages. An example of this is that of communicative leadership where the

theory suggests that leaders have better communication qualities than other leaders and managers. Based on this, they may influence the employee attitudes, wellbeing, and performance to positively impact on the organisation. More so, **network of team communication** allows different groups of people to come together. **Organisational communication** includes forms of communication that flow among and between organisational units and groups. Some forms of communication in an organisation follow vertical and horizontal linkages (Cornelissen, 2014: 30). Vertical communication "usually takes place between managers and their subordinates and may involve several different levels of the organisation, namely 'Upward Communication' and 'Downward Communication'" (Cornelissen, 2014: 30). **Electronic communication** may have a significant effect on organisational and managerial communication as it may eliminate organisational hierarchies as well as may reduce barriers of communication.

Communication flows through a formal or informal channel in the organisation. Formal communication deals with the predefined channels of communication whereas informal communication flows freely through the organization in every direction. Both types of communication take place internally and externally of the organization (Greenberg and Baron, 2008). Greenberg and Baron (2008) explain below the formal communication flow:

- "Vertical downward communication is the downward movement of a message from management to the employees.
- Vertical upward communication is the movement between employees to management.
- Horizontal or Lateral communication is the flow between individuals on the same level".

Erasmus-Kritzinger et al, (2010:15) also refer to diagonal communication channels as "a channel that does not take place along the normal line of authority". It has become important for organisations to make use of diagonal communication using teams from various levels of authority.

Informal communication does not follow pre-determined lines, it is a form of communication that fails to consider official designated channels. Individuals using an

informal approach in communicating normally belong to specific groups. Management can knowingly or unknowingly transmit information of the organisation in the form of rumours and gossip (Etana, 2014). Rollinson (2008) stresses how all communication channels have their own advantages and disadvantages and are suitable depending on the type of message.

Cacciattolo (2015) refers to grapevine as management walking amongst the employees using non-verbal communication as forms of informal communication. The grapevine is normally a contributor to office politics and rumours. However, many employees see the grapevine as the main source of information within the organisation especially in cases where there is little or no information (Kandlousi et al, 2010). Management wandering around is a communication approach where the management engages with the employees by having spontaneous conversations. This approach is effective to obtain an understanding of what is happening on the floor or within the production and support areas. This approach assists in breaking down hierarchical barriers of communication and creates the impression that the management has a personal investment in the views of employees. Non-verbal communication is the transmission of information without using any words. This form of communication has been in existence since the 1800s and can be used to "convey a great deal of information by only taking facial expressions, body movement, physical contact, gestures and tone into consideration" (Cacciattolo, 2015:84).

Erasmus, Ferreira, and Groenewald (2013:90) refer to "gossip chain and cluster chain as the most common forms of grapevine". Griffin (2011:437) indicates that a gossip chain manifests when a single individual relays a message to multiple people. A cluster chain occurs when an individual relays the message to a selected group of people.

Below an illustration of a cluster and gossip grapevine chain:

Fig 2: Gossip and cluster chain
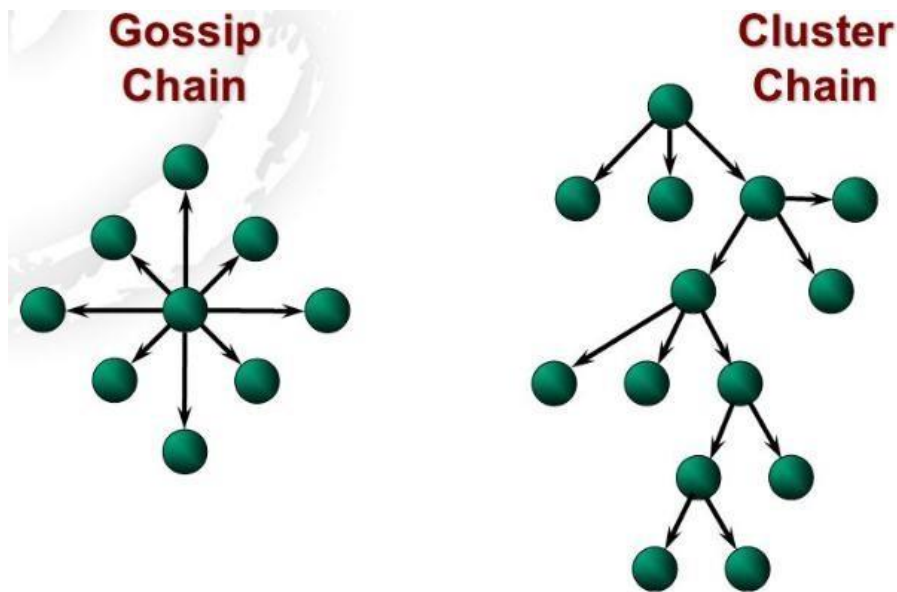
The grapevine can unfortunately cause resentment and work against organisational plans and objectives when the message gets distorted as it moves through the participants. The damaging effect of the grapevine can be managed to a bigger extent by keeping open channels of communication and responding aggressively to an incorrect information (Griffin, 2011:438). The likelihood of the grapevine being used according to Mersham & Skinner (2001:40) is when:

- "There is great upheaval or change to the organisation
- The information is new
- Face to face communication is physically easy
- Workers "cluster in clique-groups along the vine"

Many organisations have recognised the grapevine as an important part of their communication strategy and encourage and support employees to strengthen them. Cacciattolo (2015:83) agrees with this statement by confirming how important the informal communication process is to any organization. She also supports the notion of the grapevine being a major informal communication channel and that it transmits rumours. If management responds quickly to the discussions openly in public, it can mitigate or reduce the potential harmful impact of such rumours. Within organisations where there is a lack of formal communication, a considerable number of employees mainly rely on the grapevine as their primary source of information (Kandlousi et al, 2010:52). This comment suggests that grapevine can often have a more efficient effect

on employees than that of a message from a formal channel. Therefore, although the informal communication channel being grapevine can have a negative impact on the organisation should it not be addressed effectively, there is no doubt that it also has positive attributes. Some of the advantages and disadvantages are:

Advantages of Grapevine communication

- Information via the grapevine channel travels quicker than the other channels.
- The feedback received from the subordinates are quicker compared to the formal channel of communication
- The grapevine creates a form of networking amongst fellow employees as they discuss their opinions around what was relayed.
- There is an emotional supportive value in grapevine communication.
- In the cases where formal communication is not working, the grapevine serves as an appropriate alternative

Disadvantages of Grapevine communication

- The grapevine can relay the incomplete situation and partial information.
- Due to the nature of the grapevine not always following trustworthy channels, the information may not always be trusted.
- Employee performance can be negatively affected due to the time that the employee spends discussing the grapevine instead of working.
- The grapevine can create bitterness amongst executives.
- The grapevine can create a negative impression about the organisation or even do brand damage as it way carries false information about the high-level people of the organization.

2.5.5 Barriers to Communication

In any type of communication (downward, upward, horizontal, diagonal, or gripevine) there are inherent difficulties or barriers to overcome. Cacciattolo (2015) says that in creating the illusion that communication has accomplished is one of the biggest problems facing communication. Limitations to communication can occur both at an

organisational and individual levels. Riege (2005:23) explains how circumstances can result in a message not getting across as expected. These factors are:

- Lack of motivation and /or interest
- Improper language
- Defensive communication
- Deceitful dialogue
- Information overload
- Poor communication skills

A barrier is an obstacle preventing the smooth transmission of information from the sender to the receiver. Baker and Warren (2015:55) discuss the below nine barriers in communication:

- "Inattention during conversation ⬜ Restricted information channels
- Lack of feedback
- The culture of not asking questions
- Too much formality
- Overreliance on email
- Lack of role models
- Fear of Emotion
- Physical office layout"

There is no doubt that there are more barriers to assess, but through the elimination of limitations within organizational communication, the most adequate ways of communication can be chosen. This can be achieved through proper feedback tools by constructing an understanding of the organizations structure as a precondition for effective communication (Etana, 2014).

In order to overcome communication barriers within an organisation, managers and staff must start by acknowledging that barriers exist and that they can cause serious organisational problems. Schermerhorn and Chappel (2000:211), Rossouw (2000:168-76) and Hellriegel et al. (2012:463-64) highlight a few ways to overcome organisational and interpersonal communication barriers:

- **The flow of information should be managed:** Information should be prioritized within the organisation to only relay the messages that are relevant

and important to those concerned. This may help to prevent overloading employees with unnecessary information.

- **Promote feedback**: Follow ups with the recipients should be done to ensure that the messages are well received and understood.

- **Interpret the message in a relatable format:** To avoid confusion, the message should be conveyed in a manner that the subordinate can understand.

- **Listen attentively:** Part of the conversation is the ability to also listen to what the other parties must convey. Below are guidelines for listening:
  - o Listen to the content of the message
  - o Listen for emotions o Respond to emotions
  - o Note all suggestions as well as
  - o Rephrase and restate what was mentioned

- **Prevent showing negative emotions**: By showing negative emotions one can hinder the content of the message. Thus, participants should always be positive.

2.5.6 Work Motivation

Motivation at workplace is an important element that cannot be overlooked. Individuals by their nature would select the option that would enforce the highest motivational behaviour. "Motivation is a force directing specific behavioural alternatives, which are suggested when deciding among behaviour options" (Chiang, et al. 2008:328). Motivated employees have a greater potential to work hard resulting in a more satisfied individual with their jobs no matter how demotivated people tend to have the opposite effect towards their jobs (Elias, et al. 2012). Employee motivation can tremendously influence an organization through increased productivity and decreased expenses. Through awareness programs, managers should be more vigilant on the impact of their communication when interacting with employees. The managers should also be aware of how their communication affects their motivation and ultimately the organisation. As part of this awareness program, there should be a focus on motivational factors that can positively impact the employee. Some of these include competitive wages, additional benefit, and career development programs to optimize job satisfaction and create organisational engagement (ChampionHughes, 2001).

Compensation programs can be used to motivate, attract, reward, and retain workforce. There are three components to compensation which include its needs to justify the work that an employee has been tasked to do, competition in proportion to what the market offers, and being able to motivate the employee to perform as much as possible. Compensation or reward can be categorized into financial and nonfinancial rewards. Financial reward refers to the effectiveness of money as a motivator and non-financial reward concentrates on the needs of people.

Ganta (2014) refers to motivation as a requirement from employees to feel valued in the job function, they perform that can stimulate efficiency and performance. Some employees find their motivation through recognition and rewards whereas others get motivated through money. There are various motivational theories that assist in understanding the different motivators. This study elaborates on three theories namely Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg Motivation/Hygiene theory, and the Expectancy theory. For this to come out clear, the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are explained as well. In this regard, intrinsic motivation is being motivated by work itself whereas extrinsic is self-generated where people tend to seek the kind of work that they think would most satisfy their needs.

Motivating employees is an important part of an organisation and is a major component in employee performance. The more motivated employees are, the higher the tendency to improve performance in less time (Riketta, 2008). The fact that more motivated people perform better in less time is critical in the life of an organisation as this can impact on the organization's success rate. Producing more output in less time due to motivated employees can result in a lower cost of sale as the labour cost may be less than employees that are demotivated. This would mean that the organisation may optimize profitability and might, therefore, be in a better position to focus on investing in future employee motivation schemes. Organizational culture can explain and give clarity around employee motivation (Dimitrios, et al., 2014). According to Sokro (2012), organisational culture and employee motivation are joined by the hip. Through the bond that employees create with each other in their organizational culture, it can create a job experience with more motivation and satisfaction than employees

that do not share this bond (Scheers & Botha, 2014). With organizational culture, employees can get a sense of belonging and realize that employee motivation is important to the organization (Berry, 2011). Management can assist by building an organizational cultural framework that may restore employee motivation (Janssen, & Van Yperen, 2004; Mancini, 2010). By sharing the expectancy-valence theory with the employees, can assist in achieving the goal of an organizational framework that compensate certain employees.

Ashtalkosi and Ashtalkoska (2012) explain how job criteria is critical in motivating employees. It is essential for management to gain an understanding of what motivates employees within their jobs as this is the first step of expectancy-value theory. Step two of the expectancy-valence theory is understanding why employees value some of this detail and how it can be obtained through their workplace behaviours. The final stage of expectancy-valence theory is to adequately communicate to the employees what level of effort is expected to accomplish each valued outcome. There are multiple elements that drive an employee's motivation level such as intrinsic motivations and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivations result from satisfying an individual's beliefs and values.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are objective to motivate individuals. An individual's motivation level is often driven and determined by his/her individual goals (Jang, & Liu, 2012; Steele-Johnson, et al 2000). Eisenberger, et al. (1999) explain how intrinsic motivation a positive relationship with an employee's expectations of rewards has after performing a task. For example, employees who expect a reward when a particular task or project is completed have a higher level of intrinsic motivation than those who do not expect a reward at the end of the task or project. Employee's expectations before interaction with others may affect their motivation in different ways (Yuan, & Woodman, 2010:323-342). This may occur for instance when an employee who through communicating with the manager has a low expectation in receiving a performance reward. Such an employee may most likely not be as motivated as an employee who received communication from management informing them that there would be a reward at the end of the task.

2.5.7 Effective communication

It is indispensable for an organisation success to have an effective and efficient communication policy as it is a critical component for executing organizational goals (Fussel & Kreuz, 2014:6). Effective communication keeps people informed and can become costly to the organisation. Inefficient communication can result in demotivated associates, loss of enormous amounts of time due to bad communication techniques. To this effect, one may assume that "communication is the one way of motivating people, thus, resulting in better work performance and cooperation" (Fussel & Kreuz, 2014:6). Harris and Hatman (1992) argue that there is no such thing as effective communication or perfect communication due to the unpredictable nature of the communication process where things can constitute barriers to its effectiveness. However, through the enhancement and improvement of the communication process, one can overcome the barriers that may lead to an improved communication flow.

Semren (2017) holds that the company's management team must create an appreciation for the relevance of effective communication and how this may promote career development, create motivation and increase job satisfaction. Goetsch and Davis (2010) support this stance by stating that effective communication incorporates an appreciation for responding to the message between employees and managers who need to provide guidance, monitoring, and motivation. Similarly, ineffective communication can result in dissatisfaction among employees within an organization. Hence, work productivity decreases as a result of ineffective communication because on daily functions that are not performed optimally. Goetsch and Davis (2010) refer to several communication levels such as:
- One-on-one
- Team or unit
- Company
- Community

Robbins and Judge (2009) recognizes four basic functions of communication namely: Controlling, Motivating, Emotional expression, and Information. Below is a diagram to illustrate this:

Fig 3:   Basic functions of communication
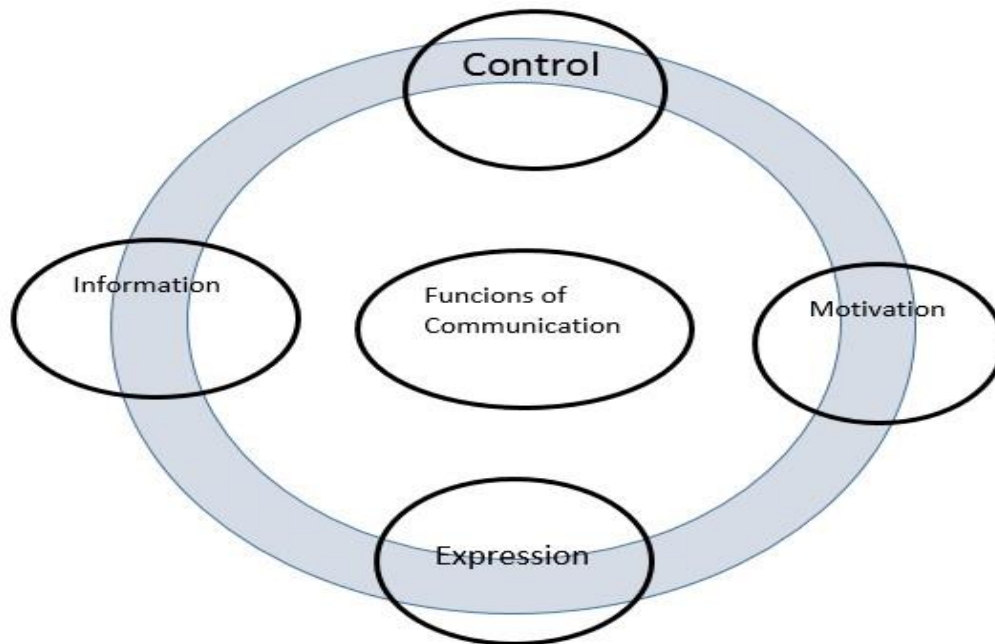
Managers motivate and stimulate their employees by providing regular feedback on their work creating social interaction.

2.5.8 Communication strategies

When defining communication, we keep referring to it as the exchange of information between senders to a receiver, but with communication strategy, we are referring to the blueprint of how this information is exchanged.

This implies that in developing a communication strategy, an organisation must establish the primary communication objective such as creating awareness of a product, promoting certain practices, or even creating goodwill (Kanuk & Schiffman, 1997:291). Secondly, the organisation should select the correct audience and the medium of communication as each individual or group of individuals have a preferred way in which they prefer to be communicated to. Due to this barrier, it can be suggested that groups should be segmented to ensure acceptance or interest in the information being transmitted.

Concurrently, an organisation must have an effective leadership communication and employee engagement strategy to ensure that employees continuously contribute to

the organisation and want to remain with the organisation for longer periods (Mishra, et al. 2014). They also argue that leadership communication and employee engagement are important components for success within the organisation. Implementing leadership communication strategies improves the odds of holding on to long-term high performing employees. Bradler, et al (2013) notes that a simple "thank you" in many cases would be sufficient to some employees as a form of recognition and it does not always have to be extravagant.

According to Kulvisaechana (2001:24), communication strategy is "the use of a combination of communication facets, which include frequency and formality of communication". Communication strategy is an important aspect of organisational policies and needs to be communicated to stakeholders through their preferred communication channels (Haynes, 2014:6). Policies that are developed under communication strategies are used to guide organisations to achieve their strategic plans towards the shareholders through channels of communication (Hernandez, 2011:290). Friedman and Miles (2001:1) refer to stokeholds as the people within the organization that affect the organization's objectives and goals. Considering this, ensuring that the appropriate communication strategy is being followed would promote organizational performance and enforce efficiency within the organization.

2.5.9 Motivation and performance

Even in the current competitive environment, all organisations strive towards success. By so doing, these companies, strive to retain valuable employees through acknowledging their contribution to the organisation and their influence on the organizational effectiveness. Through task fulfilment, organisations can overcome these challenges by building a strong and positive relationship with their employees. Maimuna and Rashad (2013:91-93) support this notion by emphasising the importance of human resource. They further state that one of the most vital components within an organisation and that the human capital is what separates   organization from the others. Therefore, for an organisation to have a competitive advantage and to survive, they must tempt efficient and effective employees to remain with the organisation to remain productive (Sunia, 2014).

Aluko (2014) asserts that the workforce of an organisation is a direct reflection of how good the organisation is. Thus, the strength of an employee's motives drives their ability to be motivated. Considering this, motivation is the ability to incite and sustain behaviour by directing it in a precise direction. In this way, the needs and desires of the organisation may influence the employees to act.

As Kalimullah (2010) explains, if employees focus their efforts towards their own goals and if these goals are in alignment with the organisation, they are being motivated. These motivated individuals continuously seek ways of improving the organisation and by so doing tend to contribute directly to the success of the organisation.

According to Lunenberg (2011), when employees are aware of being evaluated on their performance bases and whether if they achieved their goals may improve the motivation level to achieve the goals leading to improved performance. Through regular engagements with your teams when they must provide feedback on reaching their goals can promote motivation levels and performance.

2.5.10 Conclusion

Organizational communication can have a different meaning from person to person. It may be written documents and for others it is speaking or even group meetings. Organisational communication is a complex process that consists of a wide range of message transactions – written, spoken, and non-verbal (Ferreira et al. 2013). It is especially important in today's business administrative environment to have the skills to communicate since it forms part of the heart of information collection, processing, and dissemination.

Cacciattolo (2015) argues that the critical component of a successful communication process is the ability to communicate to the correct people with relevant information on a timeous basis. In doing so, an organization may create a positive attitude and so can manage to gain the trust and commitment of its employees in no time. This approach may always be easy to implement effectively and sustainably. More so,

Semren (2017: 19) states how essential it is for a functioning organization to have cooperation and transparent communication in all directions. Although formal communication is more prevalent, informal communication has a stronger effect on the employees. Hence, the combination of listening, providing feedback, writing, and speaking effectively is essential for an organization to survive.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to respond to the research questions within the study. The chapter focuses on the Research Paradigm, research design, and the research approach. It also deals with sampling and sampling size of the research population as well as the data collecting instruments used. The chapter ends with the data analysis as well as the ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Paradigm: Interpretive

Kuhn (2012) describes "Paradigm" as a belief system of how the world works and the nature of the world (ontology) as well as an understanding (epistemology) shared by other researchers in the field. A Paradigm according to Scotland (2012) consists of four elements being ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods.

- Ontological are the assumptions or believes refer to what represents reality in the researcher's eyes. Researchers need to commit to what they see as reality and how they think of the world (Scotland, 2012:9).
- Epistemology is the theory of knowledge referring specifically to its validity, scope, and the difference between justified belief and opinion (Cohen, et al., 2007:7).
- Methodology is the application of a chosen method. Scotland (2012:9) describes methodology as the why, what, from where, when, and how data is analysed and collected.
- Methods are the approaches and actions used to collect and analyse data (Scotland, 2012:9).

With interpretive research, the goal is the comprehension of a specific situation than the uncovering of laws and/or rules. Based on this, an interpretive approach was deemed to be the most adequate because of its "sense-making" process. With relativism, there is no universal truth and the view may differ from person to person

(Scotland, 2012). "The interpretive epistemology is one of subjectivism which is based on real-world phenomena. The world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it" (Grix, 2004:83). According to Creswell (2009:8), "Interpretive methodology is directed at understanding a phenomenon from an individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as the historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit". The interpretive paradigm accepts ideologies without questioning (Scotland, 2012). Based on this, the interpretive paradigm was used by observing the participants and interpreting their behaviours to make meaning of the information and draw conclusions. Hence, the researcher gained an understanding through the interpretive paradigm on how participants present their views and experiences on the impact of communication on their performance.

3.3 Research Design: Case Study

Wilson (2011) explains that before undertaking research, there must be a plan, and this is where the design comes in. In view of this, Toledo-Pereyra (2012) states that once the hypothesis and research idea are established, the research design should the first step in proceeding towards the research process. Research design is not merely a work plan but the full process from conceptualizing a problem to writing the research question, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing. The purpose of the study guided in selecting a specific type of case study and the options to choose from included: Instrumental, explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, and much more. This study made use of the instrumental case which provided an understanding of the issues as well as refined a theory (Baxter & Jack, 2008). At the same time, it ensured that the issues were explored through a variety of lenses which allowed more than one view to be revealed and understood. Thus, the instrumental case study was used to enable the conclusion to be applied to a larger audience and not just to the focus on the area discussed within this study.

3.4 Research Approach: Qualitative research

Research approach is defined by Johnston (2014) as the foundation for the way the research is being executed within a study. In order to understand and appreciate the reasoning behind an individual's research approach, one has to acknowledge his/her view of reality (ontology) and what he/she sees as acceptable knowledge (epistemology) (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This allows the reader to fully grasp where the researcher is coming from. Edmondson and McManus (2007) explain that the research questions with the research design and the ultimate result of output drive the study towards being qualitative or quantitative nature. Through ontology and epistemology, the researcher developed the philosophy and the methods used to determine the methodology (Walshaw, 2012). The researcher was influenced by the interpretivist stance towards the research design. The interpretive case study research design was used in this study. Open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and observation were used to assess participants and to understand how communication affects performance.

3.5 Sampling and sample size

In comparison, quantitative data are generally larger than a qualitative sample (Mason, 2010). Thus, qualitative research is not too focused on frequency as one can understand the purpose behind the topic with as little as one occurrence. This is due to qualitative research being more concerned with meaning in the data and not developing generalised statements (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). As the study progressed, the number of subjects become clearer due to the stabilization of new categories, themes, and explanations. Sampling can be done by using three approaches in qualitative studies: "convenience sampling, purposeful sampling, and theoretical sampling". For this study, a purposeful sample also known as judgemental sampling was used. The sample size is 12 participants, comprising 4 Managers, 4 Supervisors, and 4 Clerk Level staff. The participant sample was a fair representation of all levels within the organisation. Managers represented senior management; supervisors represented middle management while the clerks were seen as the workforce. This participant sample assisted in understanding and confirming the

communication flow from top management through to the workforce and if the message reaches its destination as intended. The purpose of this selection was to find out the communication strategy used by the organisation and how it impacts on performance.

3.6 Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling falls into the category of nonprobability sampling where the researcher only selected those subjects that suit the study as they evolved across time (Marshall and Rossman, 2010). Patton (2002) posits that with limited resources, the most effective technique to be used within qualitative research to obtain information from rich cases would be through purposeful sampling. The key was to identify and involve individuals that were area specialists or had a thorough background in the area of interest (Cresswell and Clark, 2011).

Bernard (2002) explains how important it is for a participant to be willing and available to participate in the study. Their willingness and availability contribute to their ability to communicate their experiences and opinions in an articulated, expressive, and reflective manner that adds value to the data gathered. For this research, corporate staff was used to understand how communication affects their performance at the workplace. By using various authority levels within the corporate structure (Management, Supervisor, and Clerk), a better understanding was developed on how communication flows in the organization.

3.7 Data Collection and Procedures

Polkinghorne (2005) refers to the reason for data gathering within qualitative research as providing proof of the involvement in the investigation. The proof is in the form of feedback or experiences provided by the people. "Data has come to mean an array of information, as data set or data bank" (McLeod, 2001:137). McLeod (2001) and Van Manen (1990) are of the opinion that another term should be used in the place of data such as accounts. Nevertheless, it has become a norm to refer to the term data when

describing the accounts gathered by qualitative researchers. The following data collection tools were used.

3.7.1 Semi-Structured interviews

Dunn (2005:79) sees interviews as "verbal interchanges where one person- the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person-the interviewee". The investigation of a social phenomenon is better understood through qualitative methods such as interviews that provide a "deeper" understanding (Silverman, 2000). However, it allows the interviewer and the interviewee to diverge from the original set of questions to elaborate on an idea or response (Britten, 1999). Additionally, the interviewer followed a guideline but could use topical trajectories in the interview that might have strayed from the original guideline when it seemed appropriate. Some advantages of Semi-Structured interviews are:

- Semi-structured interviews allowed for questions to be prepared prior to the actual interview. In this way, the interviewer was prepared and projected competence during the interview.
- Semi-structured interviews also gave freedom to the participants to express their opinions in their own words.
- It further provided data that was reliable and comparable.
- It promoted a two-way communication or discussion where both the interviewee and the interviewer asked questions and provided feedback.
- The interactive nature of the interviews left the participants comfortable enough to discuss sensitive issues.

Based on the advantages above, a semi-structured interview data collection process was followed as it allowed the researcher to observe the interviewee.
For this process to be effective, the following measures were taken:

- The participants received formal consent in which the purpose of the interview and how the information would be used was explained to them.
- Impartial interviewer conducted the interview to prevent the participant from feeling pressured to answer in a direction.

- Open-ended questions were used to get an opinion and experiences from the participant.
- During the interviews, the participants could comment on a question and to diverse a little for the interviewer to observe the participants.
- All answers, comments, and observations were documented in a logical way to allow ease of data analysis.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions

The purpose of a focus group discussion was to obtain a wide range of opinions on the research topic over 90 minutes. During this time, the researcher wanted to create a participant friendly environment Although there are common features between focus groups and semi-structured interviews, the focus groups created an opportunity to discuss the questions that were asked whereas the interview process collected data from many participants at different times set with them. Focus groups provided an opportunity to enhance the data collected through an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and beliefs (Morgan, 1998). The focus group discussions had various characteristics that determined the method.

Focus groups usually consist of between 6 and 8 participants:
- Participants were preselected and have similar backgrounds.
- The discussion was focused on a limited number of issues.
- The aim was not to reach any consensus but to gather perspectives and experiences.

The focus group participants emphasized important issues, hence adding emphasis to the participant's view on the research.

3.7.3 Observation

This is when a researcher observes and performs an activity as an outsider by taking notes of an activity or event. Even though the researcher may have pre-participated in the activity or event, the outcome was still documented because it contributed to the overall study (Foncha, 2013). In view of this, the interviews, focus groups,

administering questionnaires, observing what people say about themselves served as a powerful tool.

Through participant observation, a new understanding emerged from the research problem that was not known initially (Foncha, 2013). Through observation of the behaviour of the participants, the researcher documented the properties of the object. In performing this valuable technique, new data emerged, and it became clearer through interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires by providing new insight into the study.

3.8 Reflexivity

Hibbert, et al. (2010) describe reflexivity as two components. One being a reflection and more commonly used and more explicit than the process of recursion. Hibbert et al. (2010:47-62) suggest reflection as a "mirror image which allows engaging in an observation or examination of our ways of doing". With reflection, we become witnesses of our own practices and as a result expose or question our own ways of doing. With recursion we are going through a process that suggests we are doing things in our own way. Reflexivity is not just referring to reflection, through the process of questioning our own understanding reflexivity brings a change in reflection.

In any qualitative research, reflexivity is of paramount importance as it helps the researcher during data collection, data analysis, and discussion of the findings (Foncha, 2013). Viewed in this light, this study gathered data by using an open-ended questionnaire, observation, and interviews. Davies (2008) is of the opinion that researchers cannot completely divorce themselves from the investigation as they are to some extent connected to or are part of the object to their research. Through this attempt, the researcher maintains distance by using observation such that self-interaction was minimized or highly controlled. During interview sessions, standardised wordings were used to promote controlled responses from the participants to limit the personal influence on encounters. Hence, the researcher at best could only attempt to avoid excessive subjectivity from him/herself and that of the researched (Foncha, 2013).

3.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness

Credibility refers to the reliability of the data or the participants' views and the representation and interpretation of them by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). "A qualitative study is considered credible if the descriptions of human experiences are immediately recognized by the individuals that share the same experience(s)" (Sandelowski, 1986:27-37). Based on the credibility and trustworthiness of the research, the researcher can apply strategies within every phase of the research process (Polit & Beck, 2012).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) initially presented four criteria that may enhance trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. They also added authenticity in 1994 as a fifth criterion. Simultaneously, multiple methods called triangulation were used during data collection, and these helped to add more value in forming a comprehensive view of the phenomenon.

3.10 Data Analysis

Neuman (2011:518) believes that "no single qualitative data analysis approach is widely accepted". It can, be suggested that each qualitative data analysis is unique in some way or form. A qualitative content analysis was used to scrutinize the data collected for this study. The qualitative content analysis involves the following procedures:

- Recording of data
- Verbatim transcription
- All field notes were reviewed and analysed before the abstraction process of coding started to give meaning to the text that was extracted for labelling.
- The codes were assessed in line with the research aims.

The analysis aimed to record the details around the keynotes and issues considered in the interviews to connect these keynotes and interviews under a reasonable category system. This process also referred to as coding means that the variable within the data was identified and analysed statistically. The researcher gained an

understanding by familiarising himself with the data collected. This allowed the investigator to create labels for categories into which data segmenting took place.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

Due to the nature of this study involving human behaviours, a morally acceptable approach was followed. Fox and Bayat (2007:148) talk about the three basic ethical principles which include: respect of people, beneficence, and justice should be maintained for research involving human subjects. Considering this, the participants were assured of their anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy by signing a confidentiality agreement. One of the many problems facing researchers aiming at conducting research studies into organisations is gaining access, even more so if the topic being researched focuses on a sensitive matter. A Non-Disclosure Agreement was offered to the organization to ensure that sensitive information was not to be disclosed in a discriminating way. Assurance was provided to the organization that the focus was not to cause reputational damage but to assist in identifying and potentially improving motivational and communication strategies to the benefit of the organization itself.

3.12 Conclusion

Through the chapter, it has been proven that the research methodology chosen was suitable for the research questions. The research method used with the research design and approach has a common message linking them to the sampling approach, data collection, and procedures, and other components that were described in this chapter. The common objective was to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

All the components of the research were explained and justified through correlating the common message back to the research questions and title. By combining multiple sources of data and taking into consideration the credibility, trustworthiness, and ethical consideration, the researcher gained an appreciation for this profession.

Chapter 4

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses data generated through interviews, focus groups discussion, and observation. The study set out to investigate the impact of communication on employee performance in a Retail chain's head office in Cape Town. The participants included four (4) assistant managers, four (4) supervisors, and four (4) clerks within the organization. The chapter discusses the synopsis of the organization as well as presents and analyses the data gathered from the previous chapter. Through the presentation and analysis of the data, the researcher identified the impact of communication on performance in an organization.

4.2 Synopsis of the organisation

Pichard (2001) explains the history of Pick n Pay as a major retailer founded by Raymond Ackerman in 1967 that was comprised of only 4 small stores at the time, but which is now one of South Africa's major supermarkets. The group comprises both Corporate and Franchise owned stores and is also listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Pick n Pay's head office is based in Cape Town South Africa within the Southern Suburbs and house about 300 staff members on the campus and about 50 000 employees on a group level. Pick n Pay also has a footprint in Namibia, Lesotho, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. It is constantly expanding into other African countries as it is an industry leader when it comes to innovation that focuses on the needs of the consumer. Although Pick n Pay is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, it is still a family-owned business with the philosophy of the founder being maintained to give the family feels to the business.

4.3 Coding

Within the presentation and analysis of data, the Assistant Managers are coded as AM 1-4, the Supervisors as S1-4, and the Clerks as C1-4. In order to keep the participants anonymous, this coding approach was taken. Italic words would be used to represent the actual words of the participants. 2 Focus groups were created to enrich the data, and this would be referred to as FG1 and FG2.

4.4 Presentation and analysis of data

The data collected was immense to present and analyse hence the researcher had to select and categorize the data strands appropriate for the themes. The researcher used italics to present the data from participants' interviews verbatim. These participants' responses were clustered into segments. The researcher used two strands of data to represent these categories with an attempt to answering each interview question. The analysis of the data was based on content analysis as Burtun, et al. (2008) state that qualitative data by its nature is more open to ambiguity and requires the identification of emergent key themes for it to be organized, collated and interpreted. The themes which emerged from the data were listed and the two data strands for each interview question that prompted the views of the participants on the role of communication on employees' performance in the retail chain were quoted verbatim and italicized.

4.4.1 Communication within the organisation

Organizational communication can be defined as the transfer of information, ideas, and views within and outside the organization. The first question posed to the participants was how they find communication within the organization. The follow up question was to express the importance of communication to them as employees. The question aimed to establish whether the participants are satisfied with the communication within the organization and if it is important to them as employees. The responses below were received from the interviews:

Data segment 1: Interviews.

The question below helped to elicit the theme of communication within the organization.

Q. How do you find communication within the organization?

S1: *Communication in the organization is good, I appreciate the information received via emails on an ad hoc basis.*
S2: *Communication within the organization is bad, the company is not transparent enough with what could be considered as important details.*

AM 2: *Communication is an important component within the organization and it's therefore important for the information to always filter through from top management.*
AM 3: *The communication within PnP has deteriorated in the past years, in the past the staff was informed on a more regular basis.*

C1: *On a departmental level I am satisfied that we are regularly kept up to date, however on a wider company level due to the size the staff does not always know what is going on in other departments.*
C3: *PnP has sufficient information; they send mail on a regular basis informing staff.*

Although there were mixed responses, it does seem as if the participants were not co satisfied with the transparency with communication within the organisation.

A follow-up question on this theme was on how important communication is to the employees.

Q. Is communication important to you as an employee?

S1: *Yes, it keeps you informed*

S2: *Yes, I do not get involved in grapevine talks and therefore are dependent on formal communication to be informed. The information communicated needs to come from a reliable source.*

AM 2: *Yes, communication is key to success in any company. If I do not receive the correct and relevant communication or information how can you expect a company to be efficient and effective?*

AM 3: *Yes, it is important to be informed in order to perform your daily functions.*

C 1: *Yes, communication is key to success to any company.*

C 3: *Yes, staff can keep up with what is going on in the company and the organization.*

The participants agreed that communication is a critical component to reaching organisational goals. The benefit can be anything from being able to perform daily tasks to being informed of what is going on in the organization. The one key point brought up by S 1 was to receive information from a reliable source which is a valid point to avoid confusion.

Data segment 2: Focus groups

Q. Is communication important to you as an employee?

FG 1: *It is important to communicate seeing that not receiving important information could negatively affect your daily work. Information is also important to ensure awareness in a big team to ensure redundancy should some team member not be available.*

FG 2: *It is needed to know what is going on in and around the organization. It also creates a sense of belonging amongst the employees.*

Although the reason for receiving communication is different, the overarching message is the same from both focus groups. It's important for every employee to receive

communication to avoid redundancy, build a sense of belonging, or just to ensure awareness within the organisation.

Data segment 3: Observations

The following information is based on the observation that was made by the researcher.

It was observed earlier during the interviews that participants that have been with the organisation for a long time could draw comparisons on how communication used to be. On the other hand, participants that became part of the organisation for a shorter period seemed to be satisfied with the quality and amount of communication received. Based on this observation, one can only assume that due to the lack of experience within the organization and not having anything to compare communication to, the participants with short service terms were satisfied with what they got. However, this also means that the more senior participants when comparing to earlier years create the impression that the quality of communication has deteriorated.

Drawn from the views of all the participants in this study, one can say that not all the parties are satisfied with the current communication process within the organisation. Although the participants responded differently, the overarching message was that communication has deteriorated. Hence, there is a need to have an efficient communication process for efficiency and effectiveness.

4.4.2 Frequency of communication

Frequency of communication refers to how often an organisation should engage with its employees and or staff. As the study deals with communication and its impact on employees' performance, the question aimed to understand how often the organisation shares information with the employees.

Data segment 1: Interviews

The question below was posed to elicit responses from the participants based on the frequency on which communication happened within the organisation.

Q. How frequent do you get communication within the company?

S1: *Communication relating to the department should occur immediately. Communication not directly affecting me can be communicated on a monthly basis.*
S3: *For more important detail it should be communicated once a week or as soon as possible, however for more generic information it should be at least monthly*

AM 1: *For more important detail it should be communicated once a week or as soon as possible, however for more generic information it should be at least monthly*
AM 4: *I only want to be communicated to when it's related to my function, the information should be focused communication.*

C 2: *The information should be filtered before it gets communicated to only have relevant information and therefore a monthly communication should be sufficient.* **C 4:** *For more important detail it should be communicated once a week or as soon as possible, however for more generic information it should be at least monthly.*

It is evident from the above information that employees prefer to receive communication as frequent as possible. However, the frequency attached to information relating to the participant's immediate function should receive priority seeing that it can impact negatively on their work responsibilities. The information that is more of an informative nature can be distributed on an ad hoc basis as it might not have a negative effect on anyone's work performance.

Data segment 2: Focus Groups

Q. How frequent do you get communication within the company?

FG 1: *For more important detail it should be communicated once a week or as soon as possible, however for more generic information it should be at least monthly.* **FG 2:** *The urgent communication that could directly impact you should go out as soon as possible, however for the more trivial items it can be discussed either monthly or quarterly.*

The responses from the focus groups were like that of the interviews whereas the more important detail should get priority over the more trivial information.

Data segment: Observation

The following information is based on the observation that was made by the researcher. During the interviews, it was observed that there was no specified time frame in terms of the frequency in which communication was done. The participants wanted information to be filtered/prioritized. Based on the level of priority, a level of urgency needs to be attached to it. This level of priority would then be the guide on how urgent the message should be shared with the bigger audience.

In view of the data collected, there was a clear correlation between the various responses. The more important/urgent information should be communicated as soon as possible to ensure that it reaches the receiver timeously. Although the participants have a passion for the company, they have a more urgent need to focus on information related to themselves and the function they perform. As such, the information should be prioritized and shared as soon as possible.

4.4.3 Effects of Communications on daily work/function

Communication plays a fundamental role in our daily lives and we still struggle to perfect this function. Hence, there was a need to investigate the effects of communication on the daily work/function of the participants.

Data segment 1: Interviews

The following questions were asked to elicit the effects of Communication: **Q. How does communication affect your daily work?**

S1: *Communication can negatively affect your work if you are not adequately informed*

S3: *If communication does not reach me, I would not be in the position to do my work efficiently. The nature of my work requires me to be informed about management changes to know what the escalation process should be.*

AM 1: *If communication does not reach the employee, he or she would not be in the position to do their work efficiently. We would also not be able to excel in what we are doing as what could be expected from us.*

AM 3: *Communication is important to establish accountability within a specific function. This would avoid confusion.*

C1: *If communication does not reach me, I would not be in the position to do my work efficiently. By formalizing the communication via for example email would avoid confusion.*

C2: *Communication is seen as the number one priority for me. I am also of the opinion that listening should form a bigger part of the process as a lot of detail gets lost by not spending more time on receiving the message that can impact your daily work.*

The data above indicate that not receiving communication can have a negative impact on the employees' work performance. It is therefore critical for the organisation to ensure that the information is given to the correct audience to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Data segment 2. Focus Group

Q. How does communicate affect your daily work?

FG1: *If we do not receive communication on a timely basis it could result in timelines being missed and the team not reaching its goals.*

FG2: *Should we not receive communication on a specific function we will not be able to complete the task.*

Both focus groups had the same views that if communication is not received, it may result in timelines being missed and the inability of the employees to complete tasks. This may result in poor performance.

Data segment 3: Observation

The following information is based on the observation that was made by the researcher when collecting data for this study.

The body language of the participants indicated that effective communication is essential in productivity, but it is not made a priority within their working environment and thereby causing some level of frustration. Based on this, there is no doubt that lack of communication affects productivity as inadequate information was given to staff to complete their tasks.

This was supported by the research participants and focus groups who concurred that to perform and or complete daily tasks, there is a need to know and understand what your tasks are. Hence, the lack of this valuation communication may directly impact employees' performance.

4.4.4 Direction of communication flow and its efficiency.

Upward communication is the flow of communication from a subordinate (junior) to a senior colleague. Downward communication is the flow of communication from top management (senior) to those working under them (subordinates). Some of the information could pertain to organization's objectives, policies, and strategies. This theme unpacks the participants understanding of communication flows. Two questions

were asked: one on the direction of flows and the second on which is the more effective.

Data segment 1: Interviews

Q. Which direction of communication flow is more evident in the company?

S 1: *The organisation has a top-down approach.*
S 3: *The organisation has a top-down approach*

AM 1: *Organization has a bottom-up approach.*
AM 3: *The organisation has a balance between bottom-up and top-down*

C 1: *The organisation has a top-down approach. However, there is an opportunity for bottom-up to voice their opinion.*
C 4: *The organisation has a top-down approach.*

Most of the participants viewed the organisation as having a top-down communication approach with only one participant saying bottom up. AM3 believed there was a presence of both top-down and bottom-up. C1 agreed with AM3 by adding that it creates an opportunity for everyone to voice their opinion.

Q. Based on your experience within the company, which flow of communication would be more effective?

S 1: *The top-down is more effective. There are more channels for top-down communication to flow freely.*
S 3: *The better approach should be from top-down. When communication filters down efficiently it will allow the bottom staff to be more effective.*

AM 1: *The better approach is from top-down. When communication filters down efficiently it will allow the bottom staff to be more effective.*
AM 3: *The current flow is a balance between the 2 types of flows works well, it creates an opportunity for both sides to raise their opinion.*

C 1: *The better approach should be a combination of both top-down and bottom-up.* **C 4:** *Organization needs a combination of top-down and bottom-up to create an interactive approach.*

Looking at the above information, most of the participants agreed that the top-down approach was more effective as communication flows better from top-down and would reach the correct audience. However, others (AM3, C 1, and C5) felt that a combination of both top-down and bottom-up approaches would create an interactive approach for everyone to voice their opinion.

Data segment 2: Focus Groups

Q. Based on your experience within the company, which flow of communication is more effective?

FG 1: *To have a balance between bottom-up and top-down would be the most effective approach as both approaches have advantages.*
FG 2: *To have a Top-down is good, however, the message does not always reach the receiver. Therefore, to have a balance between top-down and bottom-up creates an opportunity for discussion.*

Within the focus group discussions both focus groups suggested that a combination of both bottom-up and top-down communication approaches are preferable because it allows both workers and management to discuss and share opinions on issues within the organisation.

Data segment 5: Observation

The researcher observed that there were mixed responses as far as this theme was concerned as the needs and expectations of the participants guided their responses. Some participants believed with a top-down approach, the message got distorted or did not reach the right target. On the other hand, the bottom-up approach messages are known to have reached the desired audience. Upon discussing these questions in

the focus group, it was observed that a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches would yield a more desired result.

Although there was a variety of responses all based on the opinion of the participants, it seems that the bottom up and top-down communication approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. As a matter of principle, a consensus was reached that a combination of the two approaches would be best suited at a workplace.

4.4.5 Preferred medium of communication

The channel or system of communication relates to the process through which the message is broadcasted between the sender and the receiver. The question below was used to elicit the theme of the medium of communication in the preferred by the employers.
Data segment 1: Interviews

Q. What is the medium of communication used in the company?
S 1: *Company mainly uses emails and at times one on one conversations.*
S 3: *Company mainly uses emails.*

AM 1: *Company mainly used emails, some visual representation and on occasion on ones with the staff.* **AM 2:** *One on one interactions*

C 2: *Company mainly used mails and at times social media*
C 3: *Company mainly used mails*

The above responses indicated that the company mainly uses email as the preferred medium of communication. There were only a couple of participants that mentioned one on one conversations as a preferred medium of communication.

As a follow up to the question above and to know the opinion of the workers, a question was asked on their preferred choices.

Q. What forms of communication do you prefer on workday?

S 1: *One on one interactions is preferred, better to chat with someone face to face.*
S 3: *Social media is the preferred way of communicating.*

AM 1: *One on one interactions are the more preferred approach; I would like to interact with someone.*
AM 2: *I prefer a message such as a WhatsApp or email, face to face also allows the information to come from the source.*

C 2: *Social media interaction is the preferred approach in personal life*
C 3: *One on one interactions is the preferred approach, would like to interact with someone*

There was a strong response from the participants to have a one on one discussion when communicating. Ironically, a couple of participants preferred an App driven communication tool. This signified that the staff still have an urge for the personal touch in the form of being present with the sender when receiving the message.

Data segment 2: Focus groups.

Q. What are the modes of communication used in the company?

FG 1: *One on ones are the most effective approach, it allows both parties to interact and have follow-up questions should there be uncertainty.*
FG 2: *Although one on one interactions are the preferred approach as it allows a face to face discussion. The type of message should also drive the medium used to communicate.*

Both focus groups agreed that the one on one communication process is their preferred approach as it allows both parties to interact face to face and have follow-up questions should there be uncertainty.

Data segment 3: Observation

Based on the observation, the researcher noted that the organization tries to enable efficiency and effectiveness in an ever-changing environment by introducing various forms of media of communication. The reality is that most people still enjoy the personal touch when receiving a message. Overall, all the staff members prefer a face to face conversation which afforded a conversation with someone.

Individuals have different personalities and preferences in life. One of which is how to communicate and to be communicated to. With social media consuming a lot of people's time, the personal touch is still desired. The face to face discussion with an actual person is something that is desired and craved for. Although we have effective media of communication, the one-on-one discussion appears to be the most desired approach to be used at workplaces. This is true because it provides an opportunity for different opinions that can improve work performance and output.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data collected by the researcher. The data was coded under themes that were generated by the literature. Five themes were recurrent within the data collected that were suggested by the literature. The specific problems experienced made the researcher be mindful and guarded against the one-size-fits-all. In view of this, the researcher adopted an approach that moulded interventions according to the participant's needs and strengths. The data collected from the three data collection techniques for the research was analysed through content analysis. The findings obtained from the data collection tools were outlined, presented verbatim, and analysed to answer the research questions.

Chapter 5

Discussion of the findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings derived from observations, interviews, and focus group discussions on the narrative of understanding the impact of communication on an organisation and its impact on performance. In this chapter, the researcher could retell, interpret, and discuss the findings through the lived experiences of the participants. Conversely, these findings connect with the literature reviewed in chapters 2 and the data analysed in chapter 4. In this regard, the discussion of the findings guided by the research questions identified the need to discuss the following factors to reinforce the research perspective:

- Communication within an organisation
- Frequency of communication
- Effects of communication on daily work/functions
- Directions of communication flow and efficiency preferred medium of communication.

The discussion of the findings is presented under categorised themes suggested by the literature review and the data presentation and analysis in chapters 2 and 4. Hence, the investigator presented and analysed the data to respond to the research questions below:

- What channels/modes of communication are put in place?
- Which communication strategies are employed by the organisation to enhance effective performance?
- How do communication strategies affect employee performance?
- Who are the main stakeholders for effective communication and what roles do they play?

5.2 Subjectivity and objectivity

According to Ratner (2002), the researcher's subjectiveness is personally involved in scientific research using qualitative methodology. The researcher needs to reflect on

the values and objectives that he/she brings to the research affecting the research project.

Objectivity is the concept of being true independently from individual subjectivity caused by emotions, perceptions, or imagination. An important issue with the admission of subjectivity is its impact on objectivity. Objectivity can negate subjectivity as it places the researcher in an unassertive state when receiving information from participants. Ratner (2002) also mentions that this could have a similar impact on objectivity knowing a social psychological world. Based on this, it is evident that the researcher needs to apply his experience and /or knowledge to establish a balance between these two pulling forces. He always kept the view of the world but remained neutral as this positively contributed to unravelling the data and to present and discuss the findings.

5.3 Narration as a way of experiencing their experiences

Akinsanya and Bach (2014) refer to a narrative as a string of events that take place over sometime. It normally follows a chronological order and usually contains a link to be presented in the form of a lesson learned by the narrator. According to Berger (1997:4):

> a narrative is a story, and stories talk about things that have happened or are happening to people, animals, and aliens from outer space, etc. Narratives are very important in the culture of human beings as they tend to showcase the values being taught by our culture as a whole, less formally and more enjoyable.

Schiff (2012) describes a narrative as a convenient placeholder configured for each user who can define the term in any way that he or she likes. The narrative stands in for something else. As Hyvärinen (2006) posits, in the social sciences, the something else is, often, life; the narrative is a powerful metaphor for understanding life.

Based on the above discussion, the current chapter attempts to create meaning from the data presented. The narrative is essential for understanding psychological processes and social reality. Through retelling the stories of the participants, the

researcher intended to create knowledge and meaning through an interpretive explanation of the participants' perception of understanding life.

5.4 Impact of communication on employee performance

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of communication at a retail chain's head office in Cape Town and the impact it has on performance. The main aim of the study is to determine the role of communication and how it impacts employees' performance as well as how it links to organisational performance. One of the difficulties faced by many organisations "is to meet its corporate objectives for effectiveness and productivity with the needs of the employee for motivation, reward, and job satisfaction" (Manolopoulos, 2008:1740). Organizational communication can be viewed as cultural dependent and highly contextual through face-to-face, written, and mediated channels of messaging. This is supported by FG 2 in section 4.4.1.2 where it was said that communication creates a sense of belonging amongst people. Some of the participants in the study are not happy with the inadequate communication within the organisation. This inadequate communication can have an adverse effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. Ahmed, et al (2010:107) support the notion that when an organisation invests in its employees, provides an incentive scheme, and is given enough resources to perform their function at an optimal level, the overall organisational performance would improve. The findings of this study are discussed under the following subheadings as earlier presented in chapter 4.

5.4.1 Communication within the organisation

Beattie and Ellis (2014) define communication as the transition of information using the human language. On the other hand, Miller's (2014) definition varies depending on the theoretical frames used and what aspect of the total process is emphasised. Fussell and Kreuz (2014) posit that efficient communication is critical for an organisation to succeed as well as it is important in achieving organisational goals. This is supported by one of the participants in 4.4.1.1 who argues strongly that communication is an important component within any organisation and that it is critical

for information to filter through to the relevant parties. However, this was not always the case as indicated in the data collected as AM3 feels that communication has deteriorated in the past years. Jurkovic (2012) states that to succeed in organizational communication, it is important for all participants to conduct interactive exercises, have appropriate language skills as well as to process intercultural awareness. Looking at the data presented above in 4.4.1.2, the participants in the focus group discussion (FG1) supported the notion of having interactive sessions through the creation of awareness within big teams. This is believed to avoid confusion and reduce redundancy among team members should other team members step in to assist in the absence of a colleague.

Furthermore, it was noted that business matters were very dependent on the exchange of information while the success of the business depended on the successful exchange of information. This resulted in a direct impact on the performance of the organisation. Section 4.4.3.1 portrayed that almost all the participants agreed that by not receiving adequate information, their work performance was negatively affected. This confirms the argument that communication affects every decision and almost every activity in the organisation from human communication to technology-based communication (Erasmus, Ferreira & Groenewald, 2013).

Another question asked was linked to this theme to check the participants' experiences with communication within the organisation and if they deemed it important as employees. This gave rise to a variety of answers in the interviews but differed slightly in the responses from the focus groups. The variation between the individual interviews and the focus groups was justified by the fact that communication expectations of an individual can influence others (Gorges, & Kandler, 2012; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000). Hence, during the focus group discussion, there was some influence as some of the responses that came up did not reflect what the individuals raised in their responses. Based on this, section 4.4.1.2 stipulates that some of the participants changed their views on similar questions when asked in a group setting than asked in the individual interviews. Although this was also evident in the responses in section 4.4.1.1 where there was a balanced view on how communication was within the organisation, the researcher's observation spoke otherwise. Firstly, the researcher

observed that participants who have been with the organisation for a much longer period could draw comparisons with how communication used to be. Based on his comparison, they believed communication has deteriorated to some degree. On the other hand, participants that have been part of the organisation for a shorter period seemed to be satisfied with the quality and amount of communication received. This indicated that communication was better in the past. Although communication may be at an acceptable level as per the responses, there is still room for improvement.

Nonetheless, drawing from the views of all the participants, it was evident that not all the parties were satisfied with the current communication process within the organisation. Although the participants responded differently, the overarching message was that the communication process has deteriorated and that all the participants agree with Jurkovic (2012) on the importance of communication. This came across powerfully as all the participants responded with an overwhelming "Yes" as indicated in 4.1.1.1. Within the Focus group discussions (4.1.1.2), the participants elaborated in this affirmation by explaining that one's work could be negatively affected should he/she not receive important information. This again supports Fussell and Kreuz (2014) position that efficient communication is vital in the success of an organisation. Furthermore, FG2 added that effective communication also creates a sense of belonging when you are properly informed and up to date with what is going on in the organisation. Therefore, it is important to improve communication by creating transparency in the organisation as well as ensuring that information filters through to all the correct recipients.

5.4.2 Frequency of communication

According to Kulvisaechana (2001:24), communication strategy is "the use of a combination of communication facets, which include frequency and formality of communication". This view came across in the data collected in 4.4.2.2 where the participants in FG 2 mentioned that information that may impact job performance should be distributed as soon as possible. This means that an appropriate communication channel should be used to get the message to the recipient quickly. Hence a proper communication strategy is an important aspect of organisational

policies that need to be communicated to stakeholders through their preferred communication channels (Haynes, 2014:6). It is important to mention that all responses from the participants as reflected in 4.4.2 highlighting the need to frequently communicate information to foster efficiency. By so doing, it is believed that communication may influence the need for the organisation to identify the preferred communication channel to ensure that all information should reach the correct people on time. Thus, all policies developed under communication strategies should be used to guide the organisations to achieve their strategic plans towards its shareholders through the preferred channels of communication (Hernandez, 2011:290). Friedman and Miles (2001:1) refer to stokeholds as the people within the organization that affect the organization's objectives and goals. Therefore, ensuring that the appropriate communication strategies are being followed would promote organizational performance and enforce efficiency within that organization.

The questions asked associated with frequency and to establish how often the participants would like to receive communication from the organisation and whether they deemed it important for themselves as employees. The responses relayed a strong message that although the participants have an interest in the general wellbeing of the organisation and the future strategy, their focus was on their immediate functions. Hence, the participants were mainly focused on what their tasks were, and they preferred receiving information relating to their functions as frequent as possible. Any other information relating to the organisation that was not affecting their immediate functions could be communicated on a monthly or even quarterly bases. This message came through from all the participants as can be seen from the data in segment 4.4.2. Within 4.4.2.3, it was suggested that frequency needs to link the priority of the information to be communicated. Seeing that it would be difficult to create a generic frequency to all forms of communication when information is prioritized, it was meant to understand the frequency needed.

5.4.3 Effect of Communication on daily work

Effective communication prevents failure by keeping people informed and can become costly to an organisation. One may assume that communication is the one way of

motivating people, thus resulting in better work performance and cooperation (Fussel & Kreuz, 2014:6). Looking at the response from S1 in section 4.4.3.1, the participants hold that they may not be able to perform their work efficiently should they not receive certain information. This is supported by AM 1 who concurs with S1 that lack of information can make them not to excel in their work, thus leading to demotivation. This argument ties with Goetsch and Davis (2010) who posit that effective communication incorporates leadership, motivation, and monitoring from managers when responding to messages between employees and employers. Similarly, ineffective communication can result in dissatisfaction amongst employees within an organization. Goetsch and Davis (2010) refer to several communication levels such as:

- One-on-one
- Team or unit
- Company
- Community

Based on Goetsch and Davis' argument on effective communication, the participants were asked to comment on how communication or the lack thereof may affect their work. Looking at the responses from sections 4.4.3.1 to 4.4.3.3 in chapter 4, employees' work may be negatively affected if they are not informed adequately. The participants in FG1 in section 4.4.3.2 added that information not received, and their timeous distribution of the information could result in workers not meeting the required timelines as well as their goals. This shows the need to combine all communication elements such as frequency and urgency as indicated in section 5.4.2. The responses from the participants support Goetsch and Davis' (2010) assertion that work may be negatively affected if workers are not adequately informed or if communication does not reach them on time.

5.4.4 Direction of communication flow within organisation

Communication can flow through a formal or informal channel in the organisation. Formal communication deals with the predefined channels of communication whereas informal communication flows freely through the organization in every direction. Both

types of communication take place internally and externally within the organization (Greenberg and Baron, 2008). Greenberg and Baron (2008) also argue that formal communication flow involves:

- The downward movement of a message from management to employees referred to as Vertical downward communication.
- The vertical upward flow of communication from the employees to management.
- Horizontal or Lateral communication which refers to when a message flows freely between individuals on the same level.

Although some of the participants prefer either bottom-up communication, the majority of the participants in 4.4.4 see the top-down communication flow as the preferred approach. The only reason for this could be that the participants want to be told what to do because they need leadership instructions through the communication process to go about their daily work.

Informal communication does not follow pre-determined lines. It is a form of communication that does not consider official designated channels. Individuals using an informal approach in communicating normally belong to specific groups.
Management can knowingly or unknowingly transmit the organisation's information in the form of rumours and gossip (Etana, 2014). Rollinson (2008) stresses how all communication channels have their advantages and disadvantages and are suitable depending on the type of message.

Based on this, the participants were asked their preferred direction of communication flow within the organisation. A follow-up question was asked to comment on which communication flow would be the more effective one. Although there were mixed responses, most of the participants believed the current flow within the organisation is from top to down and that they prefer it to stay that way. This choice was influenced by the fact that with top-down communication approach, management could filter information to ensure that it remains relevant and only important information gets transmitted. Based on the responses from section 4.4.4.1, most of the participants preferred the top-down approach. S1 when asked which flow of communication would be more effective responded that there were more channels available to top

management to do so. To AM3, a combination of top-down and bottom-up would be the better approach since it creates an opportunity for both parties to have an opinion. Rosinski (2014: 27) refers to participative approach (Bottom-up) and directive approach (Top-down) as equally effective in many cases, Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2000: 390 - 392) agree that the duality between participative and directive approach is found in all aspects of organisations.

This view was supported by C1 and C5 as well as FG1 and FG2. With the top-down approach, there were also limitations whereby information does not necessarily reach everyone it was intended for. This is supported by Matland (1995: 147), who says that the biggest criticism of the Top-down approach is the mere focus of the stature and the discussion process fades. In this regard, 4.4.4.2 have a combination of top-down and bottom-up to create an opportunity for information to flow freely. Only one participant (AM1) believed the bottom-up is currently the preferred approach. However, this is not the view of any of the other participants in any of the data segments. Lastly, three of the participants were in agreement that the current process is a balance of top-down and bottom-up and that it remains as is to allow both management and staff to collaborate to ensure that communication reaches its audience.

5.4.5 Preferred modes of communication

In developing a communication strategy, an organisation must establish the primary communication objective such as creating awareness of a product, promoting certain practices, or even creating a goodwill (Kanuk & Schiffman, 1997:291). Secondly, the organisation should select the correct audience and the medium of communication as each individual or group of individuals has a preferred way in which they prefer to be communicated to. This is shown in the responses under 4.4.5.1 where the participants were asked what medium they would prefer, the feedback from S1 was to have a one on one discussion, S3 preferred social media and AM 2 preferred communication via WhatsApp. This supports the argument on the need to select the correct audience and their preferred medium.

Implementing leadership communication strategies may improve the odds of holding on to long-term high performing employees (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). The fundamental success factor for an organization is that of leadership communication and employee engagement (Mishra et al., 2014). Bradler, et al. (2013) noted that recognition can be something simple such as a "Thank You" that does not always need to be a big gesture as this may make employees feel rewarded. Looking at the responses from S1, AM 1 and C3 from segment 1, they all preferred one on one interactions. In this light, they prefer a face to face interaction as evident in section 4.4.5.2 where the participants think that it allows both parties to interact and have follow-up questions should there be any uncertainty. Considering this, such interaction may create a sense of belonging through employee engagement. Furthermore, section 4.4.5.3 seems to suggest that although there are effective communication media, the one-on-one discussion remains the most desired approach.

Finally, the preferred mode of communication was the mode of communication that was more evident within the organisation. Based on this, participants from sections 4.4.5.1 to 4.4.5.3 indicated that the organisation focused mainly on the use of email communication. There is also at times communication in the form of one on one conversations and/or the use of social media. Although this is mainly in line with industrial standards, section 4.4.5.1 (FG1 and FG2) preferred a more direct face to face engagement.

5.5 Conclusion

Reviewing the responses from 5.4.1, it is apparent that not all the parties were satisfied with the current communication process within the organisation. Although the views of the participants vary, the overall message was that the communication process has worsened and that all participants agreed that communication is a critical component in the organisation. Therefore, creating transparency in the organisation as well as ensuring that information filters through to all the correct recipients may add value to the employees and the organisation in achieving their goals.

Concerning how often the participants expect to receive communication, the responses were that although the participants have an interest in the general wellbeing

of the organisation, their focus was on their immediate roles and functions. Hence, the participants were focused on their tasks and they preferred receiving information relating to their functions as frequent as possible. Participants in 5.4.3 and section 5.4.2 said that should information not be received; it could affect work performance negatively.

In addition, 5.4.4 showed various views on what the best participant saw as the current direction of communication flow and what the preferred flow should be. The preferred p flow of communication was a combination of top-down and bottom-up or as referred to by Rosinski as a participative approach and directive approach because this allows both management and staff to collaborate and ensure that the message reaches the audience it was meant for. Although the industrial standard is to the use of emails, the participants prefer a face to face engagement when communicated to. This is because such interaction allows communication to have a more personal feel and to reach the correct audience as well as it allows for follow-up questions leading to two-way conversations.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and recommendation

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the study on the impact of communication on employee performance in a retail chain's head office in Cape Town. It was based on the current understanding and experiences of the employees of the retail chain. It addressed the research questions and elucidated as well as the responses from the participants to conclude. This chapter also provides a conclusion and suggests recommendations from the findings. Each recommendation and conclusion are presented in a way that addresses all the research questions.

As a point of departure, the study indicated that communication in an organisation has a great role to play in the performance of the employee leading to productivity. The different participants have their views, opinions, and expectations of how what, and where they should be communicated to. The discussion was meant to address some of the expectations and how the organisation currently meets their expectations or not. Although there is a large amount of data and research available on communication, very little has been done on how communication affects employee's performance especially in South Africa. Due to the ever-changing needs of people in South Africa and the world in general, there is a constant need to investigate how to communicate with employees to optimise productivity.

6.2 Overview of the study

The previous chapters are summarized in this chapter and offer recommendations on the participants' experiences on communication within the organisation and how it impacts their performance. The chapter focuses on the channels or modes of communication being used. It also speaks to the communication strategies in the organisation and how communication affects performance. It finally looks at the main stakeholders for effective communication and what roles they play in the organisation.

The study made use of a qualitative research method. The target population was a combination of management, supervisors, and clerk employees from the Pick 'n Pay retail chain based in the Western Cape Province in South Africa. Purposeful sampling was used to collect the data.

6.3 Relating the findings of the study to the research questions.

The benefits of effective communication include increased employee motivation, job satisfaction, productivity, profitability, efficiency, etc. Ahmed, et al. (2010:107) support the notion that "organisational performance markedly improves when communication is permitted to flow uninterrupted and employees are empowered, provided incentives and given the necessary resources to perform at an optimal level". Efficient communication is critical for an organisation to succeed and of course important for achieving organisational goals (Fussell & Kreuz, 2014). Communicating effectively is of utmost importance due to the potential cost involved. People who are not able to communicate effectively may not be capable of motivating their associates. Seen in this light, adequate communication inside and outside organizational boundaries can contribute largely to the success of the organisation. It is in this light that Jurkovic (2012) states that to succeed in organizational communication, it is important for all participants to conduct interactive exercises, have appropriate language skills, and to process intercultural awareness. Ahmed, et al. (2010:107) support that when an organisation invests in its employees and provides an incentive scheme as well as enough resources to perform their function at an optimal level, the overall organisational performance would improve.

In view of the above, this study explored the ability of the organisation to communicate effectively and efficiently to enhance performance. It also looked at the participants' preferred method of communication and if it was in line with the organisation's strategy. The findings revealed that communication has many personal components to each receiver, from the medium used to communicate to the content within the message and the audience intended message. All these components have priority and expectancy attached to them that make it difficult to comply with all the employees'

needs. Based on the findings derived from the research questions and data analysed, the researcher has some recommendations per research question.

6.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What channel/modes of communication are put in place?

Kanuk and Schiffman (1997:291) emphasise the importance of communication strategy and how this needs to create awareness and direction on the importance of using the correct communication channel. Throughout the study, mention was made of the direct and indirect communication process in line with Rollinson (2008) who stresses how all communication channels have their advantages and disadvantages and which are only suitable depending on the type of message. This has been illustrated by the responses from the participants within the data analysis. Due to the diversity of the participants, their expectations and needs differed, hence making it challenging for the organisation to conform to everyone's expectation(s). However, the technological advancements such as smartphone application driven communication channel within the organisation and the constant need to market products to the consumers in the retail environment made use of electronic gadgets. The organisation can apply these techniques to its staff members by sharing information through these channels. By so doing, it may allow the organisation to make the message relevant to the audience seeing that the organisation might know who the recipients are from the recipient's profile from the registration process. This means that the message type may get a personal feel by reaching the employees anywhere at any time. Using an app-driven communication platform, information can be pushed to employees by the click of a button. The app may be able to filter the information to make it more relevant to the receiver by categorising employees in certain buckets. By so doing, it allows information to be directed to specific categories and therefore ensuring that the correct people receive the information.

6.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: Which communication strategy is employed by the organisation?

In developing a communication strategy, an organisation must establish the primary communication objective such as creating awareness of a product, promoting certain practices, or even creating goodwill (Kanuk & Schiffman, 1997:291). Secondly, the organisation should select the correct audience and the medium of communication as each individual or group of individuals have a preferred way which they prefer to be communicated to. According to Kulvisaechana (2001:24), communication strategy is "the use of a combination of communication facets, which include frequency and formality of communication". Based on this, communication strategy is an important aspect of organisational policies and should, be communicated to stakeholders through their preferred communication channels (Haynes, 2014:6). Furthermore, policies developed under communication strategies are used to guide organisations to achieve their strategic plans towards its shareholders through channels of communication (Hernandez, 2011:290).

From the interviews, it was apparent that the staff members were not aware of any organisational communication policy. Some of the participants acknowledged that there is probably a communication policy but that they did not know the content. This was a clear indication that the policy is not made available to the employees. However, on reviewing the organisations communication policy, it was apparent that the strategy was very broad and did not cater for all employees and/or departments within the organisation. Based on this, it may, be recommended that the organisation should create awareness and training to ensure that all the employees know and understand the communication policy. Secondly, the current policy found on the organisations internal websites should be updated such that it includes all divisions and caters for the needs of all as far as possible.

A communication policy according to Lawson (2006-2020) is a powerful method of creating clarity of the organisations attitude, stipulating the duties of those involved in describing the communication methods that are being used. An adequate policy should include:

- The policy itself needs to be clearly stated including aspects such as the purpose of communicating, highlighting the need for management to communicate and it should be a two-way process and not just one-sided.

- Details around the communication level and the responsibility that resides there.

- The communication method

- Arrangements for consultation and participation

- A training arrangement of skills and processes relating to communication between managers and employees and,

- The policy should be monitored.

6.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: How does the communication strategy affect employee performance?

Hernandez (2011:290) confirmed that policies that are developed under communication strategies are used to guide organisations to achieve their strategic plans towards its shareholders through channels of communication. This effectively means that should the organisation not focus on effective and efficient communication with its employees, it would be challenging to reach the goals of the organisation. On an individual employee basis, the employees need to understand how, when, and why certain goals should be achieved. This strategic organisational goals and plans need to be communicated to all the affected employees in their preferred channels of communication to ensure that those goals are reached. It is worth mentioning that should this not be the case, it may have a direct impact on organisational performance as the employees might not be aware of the strategic goals set by the organisation and may therefore not have a sense of direction or a goal to work towards. This could result in deadlines being missed and performance targets set via the strategic planning not being met as employees would be unaware of these goals/targets.

6.3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 4: Who are the main stakeholders for effective communication and what roles do they play?

Managerial communication can be defined as the downward, horizontal, or upward exchange of information and transmission of meaning through informal or formal channels that enable managers to achieve their goals (Bell & Martin, 2008:130). It is a leadership attribute to be able to communicate effectively and this is known to contribute to managers becoming the prospective leaders of their organizations.

According to Johansson, et al. (2011:5), the concept of "Communicative Organizations" has to do with effective communication that creates value and has a competitive advantage. Moreover, decision making integrates effective communication and leaders as role models in communication to provide core competence. This confirms the great need for management to be able to communicate effectively and to assume the role of communication stakeholders. Thus, the need to enforce the efficient flow of communication through channels like "bottom-up" and "top-down" cannot be over-emphasized. It remains the responsibility of the management team to promote and motivate this type of communication flow. This would no doubt assist in the uninterrupted flow of communication from the bottom (staff) to top (management) and for important information to filter from top to bottom.

6.4 Recommendation

It is therefore important that every organization understands the audience to select the correct tools when trying to relay a message. Although it is not always possible in the fast-paced working world to have one-on-one conversations, a balance is needed to project that sense of belonging with the employees when having a real conversation. Hence, people need to realise that although they could work quicker, faster and smarter, they also need to force themselves to slow it down and go back to the basics. Additionally, they need to use technology and give it a personal feel given that people still want to feel appreciated and needed. Therefore, the organisation's communication strategy should be enhanced to include all the divisions within it and to ensure that the message reaches the correct audience in their preferred communication channel. This

communication strategy should then be formally or informally be communicated to all the staff members and to form part of their induction training.

Secondly the organisation needs to utilise their current consumer communication channels to also communicate the organisation's related information to staff members. The use of the app may enable the organisation to reach the correct audience with information related to that employee or division. In this view, it might create a sense of ownership to ensure that the employees know exactly what is expected from them to enhance organisational performance.

Lastly, the emphasis should be placed on not only new employee(s) but also on the management team to take responsibility for becoming stakeholders for communication. Management should receive refresher courses on how to interact with staff members to give them the willingness to approach the management team. Management staff should also be reminded of the importance of communication and to ensure that information is filtered down to share goals and objectives to enhance organisational performance.

6.5 Conclusion

The organisation has come a long way in communicating with their staff. Although the organisation communicates on a regular basis and with good intentions, there is still some work to be done to enhance a more effective communication that can foster employees' performance and of course improve output. Most of the staff have adopted industrial best practices such as emails to communicate. However, this is not always the preferred method of communication nor the best approach given its limitations.

In conclusion, it is the opinion of the researcher that the employees are well informed and are communicated to but there is still room for improvement. Through the implementation of the above recommendations, it is believed that the organisation may be able to ensure that all communications reach the targeted audience. Thus, every organisation also is required to enhance the knowledge base of the employees through awareness campaigns and training provided to staff and management to up their skills

on how the communication policy works. Such a knowledge base may create a more personal feel to bridge the gap between management and staff and to create willingness for all to speak freely leading to improved productivity within the organisation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Editing Certificate

University of the Western Cape

Cape Town, South Africa

06 April 2020.

CONFIRMATION OF EDITING

This is to confirm that I Dr. Henry Akum Njom edited for language use, this thesis entitled "**The Impact of communication on employee performance in a Retail chain's head office in Cape Town**" by Marthinus Jakobus Wagener from Cape Peninsula University of Technology. This editing involved issues such as spelling, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structures as well as language usage.

Regards

Dr. HA Njum

Cell no: 071 096 4382   07 April 2020

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance Certificate

Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

P.O. Box 1906 • Bellville 7535 South Africa •Tel: +27 21 4603291 • Email: fbmsethics@cput.ac.za
Symphony Road Bellville 7535

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: **BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

At a meeting of the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee on **30 April 2019**, Ethics **Approval** was granted to **Marthinus Jacobus Wagener (216019281)** for research activities of **M Tech: Business Admin** at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A RETAIL CHAIN'S HEAD OFFICE IN CAPE TOWN Lead Researcher/Supervisor: Dr J A Abongdia

Comments:

Decision: Approved

	14 May 2019
Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	Date

Appendix 3: Signed consent Letter from Employment

Pick n Pay

Letter of Request

March 20, 2019

PICK N PAY RETAILERS PROPRIETARY LIMITED

In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree Masters of Technology: Business Administration, I am conducting a research entitled, "Impact of communication and motivation on employee performance in a well-known Retail chain's head office in Cape Town".

I am in the process of gathering data through an interview process that will be used in our study. Regarding this issue, I would like to ask your permission to conduct these interviews with members of the organization that will help us obtain information we need in relation to our topic.

We would greatly appreciate your consent at our request.

Thank you for your time and positive action.

Respectfully yours,

Marthinus Jakobus Wagener

Noted by:
Dr Jane-Francis A. Abongdia
Thesis Adviser

Approved By:
Jacque Du Toit

GM Finance

Appendix 4: Turnitin Report

Final dissertation

9%	4%	0%	7%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Mancosa Student Paper	1%
2	www.slideshare.net Internet Source	<1%
3	libdspace.ufh.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	etd.cput.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
5	Submitted to MODUL University Vienna Student Paper	<1%
6	Submitted to Cape Peninsula University of Technology Student Paper	<1%
7	www.jiss.org Internet Source	<1%
8	Submitted to University of South Africa Student Paper	<1%
9	eujournal.org	

Appendix 5: Interview Questions

The interview questions aim to understand the impact of communication and motivation on employee performance in a well-known Retail chain's head office in Cape Town. Due to the purposeful sampling approach only, selected individuals can be considered as area specialists and will therefore have a thorough background in the area of interest. For the purpose of this research, corporate staff will be used to understand how communication affects their performance at work. Therefore, the questions below are based on the sub research questions in order to meet the objectives of this research.

1) How do you find the communication within the organisation?

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....
....

2) Is communication important to you as an employee? Why or why not?

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....
....

3) How frequent do you get communication within the company?

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....
....

4) How does this communicate affect your daily work?

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

5) How often do you think the company should communicate with the employees and why?

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

6) Does the company have a communication policy?
   a) If Yes, what does is
      state…………………………………………………………………………………………
      …………………………………………………………………………………………
      …………………………………………………………………………………………
   b) If No, how is the policy
   operating?...
   ....
   ....

7) How effective is the communication policy of the company if any?
   ....
   ....
   ....

8) What effect does communication affect your work performance?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

9) Which direction of communication flow more evident in the company?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………

10) Do you think the communication flow in 5 above is effective? Why/why not?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

11) Based on your experience within the company, which flow of communication would be more effective and why?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

12) What are the modes of communication used in the company and how effective are they?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

13) What forms of communication do you prefer in your personal and work day and why?

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14) Do you think communication affect your work performance? Give reasons.

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15) Who would be the main stakeholders for effective communication in the company?

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16) What role does your manager or supervisor play in the organisations communication policy?

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17) What could be done to improve communication in the company?

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18) Give your overall observation/remarks on communication in the company

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....

Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussion Questions

The focus group aims to understand the impact of communication on employee performance in a retail chain's head office in Cape Town. Through a focus group, a wide range of opinions can be catered in a short period of time. Due to the purposeful sampling approach, only selected individuals can be considered as area specialists and will therefore have a thorough background in the area of interest. For the purpose of this research, corporate staff will be used to understand how communication affects their performance at work. Therefore, the questions below are based on the sub research questions in order to meet the objectives of this research.

1) Is communication important to you as an employee? Why or why not?

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………

2) How frequent do you get communication within the company?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………

3) How does this communicate affect your daily work?

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………

4) How often do you think the company should communicate with the employees and why?

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………

5) Based on your experience within the company, which flow of communication would be more effective and why?

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6) What are the modes of communication used in the company and how effective are they?

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7) Do you think communication affect your work performance? Give reasons.

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8) What role does your manager or supervisor play in the organisations communication policy?

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9) What could be done to improve communication in the company?

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10) Give your overall observation/remarks on communication in the company

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Appendix 7: Sample Interview data

Data collection Participant 1

1) How do you find the communication within the organisation?

☐ PnP is more open with communication, they send mail on a regular basis informing staff of new appointments etc.

2) Is communication important to you as an employee? Why or why not?

• Yes, communication is key to success to any company

• If you don't communicate how can you expect a company to be efficient and effective?

3) How frequent do you get communication within the company?

• For more important detail it should be communicated once a week or as soon as possible, however for more generic information it should be at least monthly.

4) How does this communicate affect your daily work?
• If communication does not reach the participant, he or she would not be in the position to do their work efficiently
• The participant also feels that they would not be able to excel in what they are doing as what could be expected from them.

5) Does the company have a communication policy?
• No, the based on the current communication approaches the participant does not get the indication that there is a communication policy.
• Participant indicated that a policy in their opinion should provide guidelines on how to communicate and enforce a two-way steam of communication.
6) How effective is the communication policy of the company if any?
• Due to the lack of communication policy it could have negative effects on the business. The industry needs clear guidelines on how to communicate to ensure it is done properly.
7) What effect does communication affect your work performance?
• Participant is of the opinion that communication is not clear enough and therefore is could have a negative impact on performance.
8) Which direction of communication flow more evident in the company?
• Participant is of the opinion that the organisation has a bottom up approach.
9) Do you think the communication flow in 8 above is effective? Why/why not?

□
There is value in bottom up, however the top down according to the participant is the more important one.

10) Based on your experience within the company, which flow of communication would be more effective and why?
- Participant feels the better approach should be from top down
- When communication filters down efficiently it will allow bottom staff to be more effective

11) What are the modes of communication used in the company and how effective are they?

- Company mainly uses mails

- There is also visual representation

- One on one interactions

12) What forms of communication do you prefer in your personal and workday and why?

□ One on one interactions are the more preferred approach; participant would like to interact with someone.

13) Do you think communication affect your work performance? Give reasons.

- Depending on your nature of work and what you are busy with at that point in time would indicate your preferred way of communicating

- When you need to address something in a formal way an email would be sufficient, however if you need to explain a one on one would be better.

14) Who would be the main stakeholders for effective communication in the company?

□ The Head of Departments would be the main stakeholder seeing that they would be the closes to the important information.

15) What role does your manager or supervisor play in the organisations communication policy?

□ Everyone plays a critical role especially the managers and supervisors as they would be part of the flow of communication as the detail filters down to the staff.

16) What could be done to improve communication in the company?

- Participant does not feel fully informed

- Organisation needs to have more regular communication to the staff

□
- Staff would like to feel more a part of the bigger picture
  Staff would like to be informed on a more pro-active basis

17) Give your overall observation/remarks on communication in the company

□ Bring back the group one on ones, it gave a personal feel

Data collection Participant 2

1) How do you find the communication within the organisation?

□ Communication is good; within the department the communication is good.

2) Is communication important to you as an employee? Why or why not?

□ Yes, communication is important in all areas.

3) How frequent do you get communication within the company?

- For more important detail it should be communicated once a week or as soon as possible, however for more generic information it should be at least monthly.

4) How does this communicate affect your daily work?
- If communication does not reach the participant, he or she would not be in the position to do their work efficiently
- The nature of the participant work requires the participant to be informed about management changes to know what the escalation process should be.

5) Does the company have a communication policy?
- No, participant is not sure if there is a policy.
6) How effective is the communication policy of the company if any?
- The current forms of communication are not effective, it is sometimes a hit and miss.
7) What effect does communication affect your work performance?
- The more informed you are you better you would be able to perform.
  8) Which direction of communication flow more evident in the company?
- Participant is of the opinion that the organisation has a bottom up approach.
9) Do you think the communication flow in 8 above is effective? Why/why not?
- There is value in bottom up, however the top down according to the participant is the more important one.
10) Based on your experience within the company, which flow of communication would be more effective and why?

☐
- Participant feels the better approach should be from top down
  When communication filters down efficiently it will allow bottom staff to be more effective

11) What are the modes of communication used in the company and how effective are they?

- Company mainly uses mails

12) What forms of communication do you prefer in your personal and workday and why?

- Social media is the preferred way of communicating

13) Do you think communication affect your work performance? Give reasons.

- Depending on your nature of work and what you are busy with at that point in time would indicate your preferred way of communicating

- When you need to address something in a formal way an email would be sufficient, however if you need to explain a one on one would be better.

14) Who would be the main stakeholders for effective communication in the company?

- The Head of Departments would be the main stakeholder seeing that they would be the closes to the important information.

15) What role does your manager or supervisor play in the organisations communication policy?

- Everyone plays a critical role especially the managers and supervisors as they would be part of the flow of communication as the detail filters down to the staff.

16) What could be done to improve communication in the company?

- Have a more proactive communication process
- Communicate immediately

17) Give your overall observation/remarks on communication in the company

☐ Information needs to filter through to the bottom quicker.

Data collection Participant 3

1) How do you find the communication within the organisation?

Communication is an important component within the organization, the participant feels that the information does not always filter through from top management.

2) Is communication important to you as an employee? Why or why not?

 Yes, if you are not properly been communicated to how you would know what is expected from you.

3) How frequent do you get communication within the company?

   • Participant feels that once a quarter there should be a group communication keeping the staff up to date.

4) How does this communicate affect your daily work?

   • If communication does not reach the participant, he or she would not be in the position to do their work efficiently
   • The participant also feels that they would not be able to excel in what they are doing as what could be expected from them.

5) Does the company have a communication policy?

   • No, the based on the current communication approaches the participant does not get the indication that there is a communication policy.

6) How effective is the communication policy of the company if any?

   • Based on the quality of communication received the participant is of the opinion that there is no communication policy.
   • Information is received that is not relevant and this contributes to staff not reading any communication even the potential important once.

7) What effect does communication affect your work performance?

   • Participant is of the opinion that communication is focused to the correct audience therefore it could have a negative impact on performance.

8) Which direction of communication flow more evident in the company?

   • Participant is of the opinion that the organisation has a bottom up approach.

9) Do you think the communication flow in 8 above is effective? Why/why not?

   • There is value in bottom up, however the top down according to the participant is the more important one.

10) Based on your experience within the company, which flow of communication would be more effective and why?

   • Participant feels the better approach should be from top down

- When communication filters down efficiently it will allow bottom staff to be more effective

11) What are the modes of communication used in the company and how effective are they?

    ☐ Company mainly uses mails

12) What forms of communication do you prefer in your personal and workday and why?

    ☐ Participant prefers a message such as a WhatsApp or email ☐ Face

    to face is also allows the information to come from the source.

13) Do you think communication affect your work performance? Give reasons.

- Depending on your nature of work and what you are busy with at that point in time would indicate your preferred way of communicating

- When you need to address something in a formal way an email would be sufficient, however if you need to explain a one on one would be better.

14) Who would be the main stakeholders for effective communication in the company?

    ☐ The Head of Departments would be the main stakeholder seeing that they would be the closes to the important information.

15) What role does your manager or supervisor play in the organisations communication policy?

    ☐ Everyone plays a critical role especially the managers and supervisors as they would be part of the flow of communication as the detail filters down to the staff.

16) What could be done to improve communication in the company?

- Participant does not feel fully informed
- Organisation needs to have more regular communication to the staff
- Staff would like to feel more a part of the bigger picture
- Staff would like to be informed on a more pro-active basis

17) Give your overall observation/remarks on communication in the company

    ☐ Ensure that staff gets information formally before it reaches them via an informal medium