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INEFFICIENT COMMUNICATION AMONGST THE RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

By

Sithembile Hlatshwayo

212535600

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Supervisor: Dr Elias Munapo

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Supervisors Report of Revised and Corrected Thesis/ Dissertation

Name: **Sithembile Hlatshwayo**		No: 212535600		
Title: **Miss**				
Qualification: **Master of Business Administration**		School: **Graduate School of Business & Leadership College of Law and Management Studies**		
			Yes	No
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Supervisors Name: Dr Elias Munapo				
Signature: *Emunapo Samudzimu*				
Date: 19/02/2016				
School Academic Leader/DHOS:				
Signature:				
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College of Law and Management Studies

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Name: **Sithembile Hlatshwayo**		No: **212535600**		
Title: **Inefficient Communication amongst the relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations**				
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ABSTRACT

The study was on inefficient communication amongst the relevant stakeholders in manufacturing operations at Simba PepsiCo. It aimed at ensuring that elements or causes of inefficient communication that hindered seamless execution in manufacturing operations are identified and eliminated. Due to constraints in the resources the research was focused on Johannesburg employees who had email access. Efficient communication is not only about conveying a message that you want said, rather it is more about conveying the message so that other people can understand it. Inefficient communication can be described as communication systems that are disorganized, feeble, incapable, incompetent, ineffectual, wasteful and inefficient or ineffective time usage the study used a questionnaire as the research instrument. The questionnaire was made up of 19 questions. The total of 103 questionnaires were sent through email access to all the 103 employees in Simba PepsiCo Johannesburg. The data obtained from the respondents was analysed using SPSS and Excel format. It found that stakeholders were aware that communication inefficiencies existed within the organisation and could identify what they were. Participants also identified themselves as part of the problem as well also being part of the solution. Overall participants had a positive attitude towards the designing and implementation of communication strategies and expressed significant buy-in to the concept. Leadership were respected for their roles, but it was felt that they too should get more involved and develop themselves to become even better leaders. Although expressed permission was obtained to conduct the study, many of the target population were reluctant to do so in fear of potential negative consequences that might accrue to them for participating in it. Many felt that they would be betraying the company if they participated.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

Simba PepsiCo is the biggest snack and Beverages Company in South Africa. It is committed to bringing new and exciting products to market. At Simba PepsiCo, their mission is to be the world's premier consumer Products Company focused on convenient foods and beverages. In everything that they do, they strive for honesty, fairness and integrity. This research focused exclusively on Johannesburg Simba PepsiCo's employees which has 750 employees in Manufacturing Operations (MOs). Inefficient communication can be described as communication systems that are disorganized, feeble, incapable, incompetent, ineffectual, wasteful and inefficient or ineffective time usage (Houghton, 2014). Efficient communication is not only about conveying a message that you want said, rather it is more about conveying the message so that other people can understand it.

This dissertation is structured in five chapters. Chapter one presents the problem statement and the purpose of the study. Chapter two is a literature review of the topic and creates the academic argument to evaluate what other writers/authors said about this topic. Chapter three will discuss the research methodology of the study. Chapter four presents' tabulated and graphical presentations of the acquired data as well the analysis of this data, and outlines the interpretation, and discussion of the research findings of the study in conjunction with readings. Finally, Chapter five of the report presents the recommendations and conclusion that the researcher considered to be cardinal for the realization of efficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.

1.2   Motivation for the Study

This research aimed at investigating the elements that hindered efficient communication within Simba PepsiCo. The underlying objective was to develop the design and implementation of better solutions that will ensure the enhancement of efficient and effective communication in Simba PepsiCo. It is envisaged that through systems interventions and management processes inefficient communication can be overcome. The study also makes recommendations to the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry by identifying

gaps that can be exploited by the industry to eliminate elements or causes of inefficient communication.

The findings of the study, therefore, are intended to be of benefit to the FMCG industry in general and Manufacturing Operations in particular. The benefits include better planned orders which are achieved on time and in the right quantities demanded. Efficient communication will create good conversation amongst key stakeholders in manufacturing. In addition, it is foreseeable that better communication strategies, better quality assurance and procedures will be created that will benefit the industry and protect customers and/or consumers. PepsiCo Simba would be able to retain talent through efficient communication because it creates healthy employment relations.

The national sphere of FMCG industry may also harmonize the manufacturing operation policy framework towards efficient stakeholder communication. The study reinforces the understanding that the Manufacturing sector, although considered too inflexible, has potential to employ the strategic approaches to manufacturing operations at the same level as FMCG industry sector.

It is also hoped that this study will confirm that the Manufacturing Operations communication approach can be used and is a useful tool for manufacturing sector programmes because these programmes have business and social benefit(s) that are difficult to measure either in return on investment or in time value for money.

1.3 Focus of the Study

The study focussed on efficient communication among relevant stakeholders within Simba PepsiCo. In particular, it investigated the causes of inefficient communication within Simba PepsiCo. The Balanced Scorecard concept was used as the framework to evaluate whether Simba PepsiCo were meeting employees' and business' expectations. The desired outcome of the research was also to serve as a tool to design and implement better communication solutions that would enhance organisational productivity.

1.4 Problem Statement

The state of Manufacturing Operations and issues caused by inefficient communication amongst the relevant stakeholders in Gauteng, Johannesburg, shows that communication

programmes are not efficient (Schultz and Waibel, 2014). The evaluation of manufacturing operations uncovered the existence of poor leadership, poor operations management, poor financial management, poor quality assurance management system, and poor human resource management. These elements, both individually and collectively, hinder the implementation of efficient communication amongst the relevant stakeholders.

Due to poor leadership and competition amongst departments, inefficient communication affected MOs in that planned orders were not achieved on time and in the right quantities demanded. The improper communication tends to create dysfunctional conflict amongst key stakeholders in manufacturing operations. Quality assurance systems and procedures need a clear communication strategy to ensure that the business and customers / consumers are protected. Inefficient communication promotes unhealthy employment relations, which increases high turnover rates of employees in manufacturing operations.

These challenges are attributed to be the main cause of inefficient communication. To achieve customer satisfaction, as articulated by the concept of efficient communication, is the cornerstone of the mission of Manufacturing Operations. It is argued by the National Archive (2013) that stakeholder's perspective of communication from manufacturing operations should be considered and the relationship evaluated.

The study therefore aimed to evaluate the quality of communication amongst the relevant stakeholders of Simba PepsiCo in Johannesburg and strives to bring to light any communication challenges that could be improved upon and used to enhance communications within Simba PepsiCo's manufacturing operations.

1.5   Research Objectives

Based on the aim of the study and the research problem articulated above, the research objectives were to:

- To identify barriers and causes of inefficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations
- To identify solutions to enhance efficient communication
- To identify solutions that can be implemented to enhance and enable efficient communications amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations

1.6   Research Questions

Below are the critical questions which the researcher intended to answer in support of the study objectives. Each group of questions is presented under their relevant study objective.

- What are the main barriers to efficient communications within Simba PepsiCo?
- Are stakeholders committed towards eliminating inefficient communication within Simba PepsiCo?
- What solutions do stakeholders envisage that will enhance communications within Simba PepsiCo?
- What measures are in place in the organisation that if used successfully could improve communications?
- What solutions could be used to enhance efficient communication at Simba PepsiCo?
- Does Simba PepsiCo have the necessary infrastructure and expertise to implement solutions to enhance efficient stakeholder communication?

1.7   Methodology Summary

1.7.1   Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Lind, Marchal and Wathen (2014) noted that a sample is a portion, or part, of the population of interest. Curwin, Slater and Eadson (2013) stated that the sample size is determined by the accuracy required, the variability of the population, and the detail required in the analysis. Both Lind *et al*. (2014) and Curwin *et al*. (2013) also noted the need of representation of the sample on the population for the purpose of generalization.

In this study, a non-probability sampling (convenience sampling) approach was used to obtain information from members of the population in a quick and inexpensive way, Sekaran and Bougie, (2013), the sample size that would be representative of the population under study. The convenience sampling approach involves the collection of information from members of the population who were conveniently available to provide it (Sekaran *et al*. 2013). According to Kader (2009), a research population includes all units from which data can be collected, and that a sample is a proportion or subset of the population. According to Polit and Hungler (1999), a sample is a subset of the entities that make up the entire population.

In order for a representative sample to be drawn, the researcher should make the sampling criteria known before data collection begins. Sampling criteria is regarded as "the characteristics that are essential for conclusion in the target population" (Burns and Grove, 1999:227). The present study sample included employees involved in communication programme. PepsiCo Simba in Johannesburg has 750 employees in its Efficient Communication Programme (ECP). The ECP is the internal communication that Simba PepsiCo uses to ensure that people are committed to achieving ground-breaking business results, by helping to improve collaboration, productivity and performance (Melcrum, 2015).

1.7.2 Administering of Questionnaires

Curwin, Slater and Eadson (2013), observed that secondary data, although cheaper to collect, may not be adequate for a specific study. Therefore, the primary approach (such as the use of a questionnaire) method employed in this study provided data as presented in chapter three, which is the subject of discussion in chapter four. The questionnaire containing structured questions (refer to Appendix A) was administered to support staff from the Manufacturing Operations section of Simba PepsiCo.

1.7.3 Identifying and Targeting Respondents

The target sample was identified using a non-probability sampling technique (Convenience sampling). Participation ranged from employees that worked on the shop floor all the way up to the executive management level. The purpose of the non-probability grouping was to guarantee that each group represented in the sample with their convenient accessibility to have e-mail address, and who chose to complete the questionnaire stood a chance of being selected (Lind, Marchal and Wathen, 2014).

1.8 The Scope of the Topic

The study is limited to the Manufacturing Operations employees within Simba PepsiCo Johannesburg, Gauteng. Currently the function of the Manufacturing Operations programme is to ensure that the value chain is streamlined. This ensures that customer orders are fulfilled as demanded. The streamlining process ranges from the input to the output of the products, the involvement of different departments (e.g. Sales Department, Planning Department, etc.), procuring raw materials, to manufacturing the finished product and distributing that product to the end user i.e. the customer/consumer. All these departments are stakeholders

responsible for communicating efficiently with each other. However, a gap exists when they do not work together towards common goals. This creates dysfunctional operations which in turn cause (or are a consequence of) inefficient communication amongst them.

The study applies to the investigating, designing and implementing of solutions that will enhance and enable efficient communication amongst the relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations. Inefficient communication, in the context of MOs stakeholder communication, is determined by the existence of gaps within communication systems. These gaps include:

- Planned orders not achieved on time and in the right quantities demanded.
- Improper communication creating dysfunctional conflict amongst key stakeholders in Manufacturing.
- Quality assurance systems and procedures need clear communication strategy to ensure that both the business and customer/consumer are protected.
- Unhealthy employment relations

1.9   Limitation of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

- Limited organisational support
  Although expressed permission was obtained to conduct the study, many of the target population were reluctant to do so in fear of potential negative consequences that might accrue to them for participating in it.

- Access to study participants
  Simba PepsiCo's Johannesburg branch has in the region of 750 employees. Although every effort was made to get access to a comprehensive emailing list to invite as many employees as possible to participate in the study, this was, however, not possible. The study population was therefore limited to the emailing lists that were provided by the relevant persons to the researcher, possibly excluding other potential participants from the population under review.

- Technical challenges with getting invite to target population

The survey invitation had to be resent several times to some participants because they had claimed of not having received any email invites.

1.10 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured into five main chapters as follows:

Chapter one: This Chapter presents the problem statement and the purpose of the study, it gives a brief introduction to the study. It presents the scope of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, the formulated research questions, brief research methodology and limitations that the study faced.

Chapter two: The chapter focuses on the theoretical aspects of the study in terms of literature review of the topic and creating the academic argument to evaluate what other writers/authors said about this topic.

Chapter three: Presents the study methodology. In this chapter the procedures that were used to collect the data are discussed. These steps include the selection of sampling method and statistical justification, construction of the research instrument, pretesting of the research instrument, measuring the reliability of the research instrument, administration of the research instrument, study limitations and ethical issues.

Chapter four: This chapter presents study data in graphical and tabulated forms. The presented data is also analysed, interpreted and discussed.

Chapter five: Presents the conclusion and recommendations, although not exhaustive, but those that this researcher considers to be cardinal for the realization of the efficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.

1.11 Summary

Over and above the evaluation of inefficient communication amongst the relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations, the study focused on investigating, designing and the implementation of possible solutions that will / could enhance and enable efficient communication in Manufacturing Operations. The study findings may be useful in the improvement of the current communication structures and / or re-adjustment of the company

policy framework. It is therefore beneficial to Manufacturing Operations employees at Simba PepsiCo. The population studied includes the employees (stakeholders) that are directly or indirectly involved in the communication process. A convenience sampling approach was used to identify and target the respondents (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). This chapter provided the motivation, focus, problem statement and the objectives of the study. Chapter two presents a deeper evaluation of issues, concepts and other elements that are cardinal to the study through the review of literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Communication could be considered as one of the primary essentials of the human condition. It is through communicating that people are able to express themselves and understand what another wishes to say or do. Unfortunately, there are instances where communication breaks down, frustrating all the parties involved. In the workplace, effective and / or efficient communication among relevant stakeholders could determine the survival of organisations.

This study, therefore, investigates the causes of inefficient communication within manufacturing operations, and strives to find solutions that could enhance / improve the communication process within this environment. The study focuses specifically on Simba PepsiCo in Johannesburg. In the sections that follow, an overview of communication, its challenges and solutions are discussed. This sets the necessary background on which the study is based.

2.2 Communication

Broadly stated, communication is the process of exchanging thoughts, ideas, emotions, and understanding between entities. These entities are often referred to as sender (originator of message) and receiver (the recipient of the message). Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang (2014) state that communication is a way of conveying information to others and making oneself understood by them. In this, it emerges that a very critical and fundamental component of communication is "understanding" or "to be understood". The end result of communication is that the message gets received as intended and results in a form of response (Guo and Sanchez, 2005). In the words of these authors, "To make oneself understood as intended is an important part of communication." (Guo and Sanchez, 2005, p78). Marques (2010) goes as far as saying that communication is the basis for successful human interaction regardless of the environment in which it occurs.

2.2.1 Communication Process

The communication process is thought to consist of 2 main players, the sender and the receiver (Guo and Sanchez, 2005, Winer and Dhar, 2011). The sender is the entity that

originates the message. Because this entity serves as the source of the message, they are also referred to as the "source". The source can be a person, a department, a unit or a system within an organisation, *inter alia* (Guo and Sanchez, 2005, Winer and Dhar, 2011). This process is depicted in Figure 2.1.
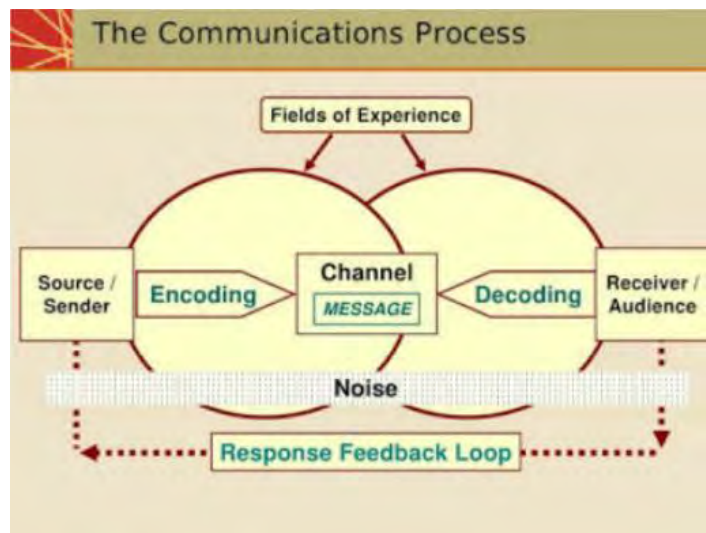
Figure 2.1: The Communication Process
Source: Shillong Sultans. Integrated Marketing Communications (www.shillongsultans.blogspot.co.za)

With the aid of words and symbols, the sender is able to code (or encode) the information that needs to be conveyed into a message for the receiver or audience (Guo and Sanchez (2005). In addition to words and symbols, Winer and Dhar (2011) include pictures as the third aid available to the sender with which to encode their message. The message is packaged is some form of medium or channel that is usually predetermined by the sender (Winer and Dhar, 2011). The receiver i.e. individual(s) receiving the message, then decodes and / or interprets the message (Guo and Sanchez, 2005, Winer and Dhar, 2011). Decoding, however, is affected by the receiver's prior experiences and reference frames. According to Guo and Sanchez (2005), accurate decoding is the antecedent to effective communication. In other words, the closer the decoded message gets to the intent of the sender, the more effective will be the communication.

There are, however, barriers that may hinder, interrupt or disrupt the communication process. These barriers are often collectively referred to as "noise" (Guo and Sanchez, 2005, Winer and Dhar, 2011). Longest, Rakich, and Darr (2000) classify these barriers as being either

environmental or personal in origin. They describe personal barriers as arising from the nature of individuals and how they interrelate or interact with others. In addition, personal barriers are thought to arise from an individual's frame of reference, beliefs and values; and based on their socioeconomic background and experiences, which shapes how messages are encoded and decoded (Guo and Sanchez, 2005). Environmental barriers, on the other hand, pertain to the surroundings that the individual(s) finds themselves. This could take the form of an organisational setting e.g. competing for attention and time between senders and receivers. According to Guo and Sanchez (2005), Mphotwana (2013), these barriers tend to block, filter or distort the encoding of messages sent by the sender, and also exert similar effects on the decoding process when the message is received by the intended recipient(s).

Finally, feedback is the last critical component necessary to complete the communication process. Van Petten and Williams (2014), describe feedback as any information that individuals receive about their behaviour. The Oxford Dictionary (2002) mentions that this feedback is normally used as a basis for improvement. This description of feedback is perhaps a bit limited in that it creates the impression that the receiver is the one for whom the feedback, and subsequent improvement, is intended. Feedback, as intended in this study, refers more to the resultant actions of the receiver. In other words, did the communication process lead to intended action or inaction by the receiver.

Feedback forms a crucial component of communication because it facilitates the sharing of information between receiver and sender in a two-way process (Guo and Sanchez, 2005). It provides a method for the source to evaluate whether the original message had its desired outcome. The feedback loop of the communication process also involves the coding and decoding of a message. In this instance though, the receiver is the one that codes the message and the source then decodes it.

2.2.2 Effective Communication

Understanding communication within an organisation is challenging and is often a disruptive process, especially if measures aimed at addressing inefficient or ineffective communication are to be implemented (Suchan, 2006). In addressing the challenges posed by implementing effective communication strategies, Suchan (2006) and Cummings and Worley (2014), proposed a framework that would assist top management communicate organisational goals, vision, mission and strategy using hardcopy. He mentions that there are two levels of

employees' resistance to communication changes in an organisational setting, namely first-order and second-order change. These changes disrupted the traditional communication norms practiced within an organisation.

The first level of change resistance, first-order change, he described as small progressive changes within an existing framework that caused minimal disruptions and produced little improvement. In this type of change, people usually experienced minimal uncertainty and distress because the resultant actions arising from this type of change were sufficiently in agreement with their way of thinking. According to Suchan (2006), in most organisations these changes did not really destabilise stakeholders' cognitive and interpretive schemes (i.e. message decoding mechanisms).

Suchan (2006) described second-order change as arising when first-order changes were implemented in a relatively short space of time. This caused inadvertent disruptions in an organisation's underlying thoughts about communication and the rules governing direct communication practices within the organisation. The reason for the disruption was that this change involved severing past communication assumptions and required that employees rethink and practice communication in novel ways. This may involve employees redefining and / or reconceptualising the systems that they traditionally used to interpret communicated messages in order to support very different communication practices. Resultantly, this would solidify into new communication norms.

It is therefore evident that when any measure taken to improve communication will result in some form of resistance from relevant employees. Puvanasvaran, Megat, Hong and Razali (2009) support this view. In order to implement communication measures that will enhance the communication process, it is thus important to understand the communication dynamics within the workplace and to investigate what methods would best suit that work environment.

2.2.3   Workplace Communication and Communication Technologies

The modern workplace is an environment, which relies significantly on collaboration (Turner, Qvarfordt, Biehl, Golovchinsky and Back, 2010). The antecedent to successful collaboration, according to Turner *et al.* (2010), is effective communication among co-workers. These authors argued that effective communication allowed work colleagues to

advance new ideas, establish common understanding and to cultivate complex interpersonal relationships. Guo and Sanchez (2005) go as far as terming employees as the "brain cells" of an organisation, with communication serving as the "nervous system" that carries information to vital parts of the organisational body. In saying so, Guo and Sanchez (2005) are essentially calling communication the "life line" of an organisation. Without it, there would be no coordinated action or effort towards the attainment of organisational goals. This view is supported by Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang (2014) and stresses how vital it is for organisations to have efficient and effective communication systems in place.

Communicative interactions among employees at the workplace could also serve to create and sustain work relationships among team and organisational members, as well as between those members and key organisational stakeholders (Myers, 2009, Sias, 2009). Communication that is based on shared values and reflects unified commitments to organisational goals, in particular, enables co-workers to create and sustain productive relationships in organisations (Herriot, 2002). Organisational performance can also be directly and indirectly affected by communication (Greenbaum and Query, 1999). In addition, Jablin and Krone (1994) found that interactions and relationships in the work environment were impacted on by individual differences in communication (e.g. communication technology / channel preference, communication style, *inter alia*) and that these differences in turn affected co-workers' productivity and job satisfaction.

Communication technologies have also been found to impact on interpersonal relationships (Turner *et al.*, 2010). According to Nardi (2005) successful interpersonal communication is dependent on an individual's readiness to communicate. In explaining this, Nardi (2005) states that communication technologies alone are insufficient in gearing individuals towards communication readiness. Rather, the combinational use of different communication media that is required to foster appropriate social bonds and commitments. In similar fashion, Olson and Olson (2000) found that irrespective of there being sufficient common ground and well explained responsibilities, distance collaboration was not very successful when stakeholders were unable to build interpersonal connections.

However, building group relationships in the workplace has become increasingly more complex among work groups with different backgrounds, especially in light of globalisation (Barker and Gower, 2010). In addition, tight deadlines and time pressures hamper the ability

of any work group to build relationships. Barker and Gower (2010) Mention that in the present workplace landscape the luxury of stakeholders and organisations to adapt in tandem with the evolving environment has dissipated over the past two decades. This they attribute to increased expectations for meeting the demands for the availability and immediacy of goods and services because of the benefits of using technology in global business activities. This in turn imposes time constraints that deter stakeholders from networking and building relationships between organisational members. As a possible solution, Barker and Gower (2010) suggest that organisations should strive towards what they termed a "swift communication" environment to assist all stakeholders, regardless of cultural or other diversified background, understand each other [to a degree] and work together towards giving an organisation its competitive edge.

Despite the challenges faced by employees in the workplace to forge meaningful relationships, the workplace remains seen as a continually evolving environment that embraces new communication technologies as they emerge (Turner, Qvarfordt, Biehl, Golovchinsky and Back, 2010). In their study, Turner *et al.* (2010), investigated communication practices used by co-workers in a small company in the United States of America. They specifically investigated the effectiveness of the communication channels used in getting the receiver to decode messages and to give feedback to the sender (i.e. either in a message being sent back to the sender or translation of the message into actual action or work). Turner *et al.* (2010) Found that study participants used a wide variety of different communication tools for different purposes. They also found that the introduction of new tools was not significantly disruptive. These types of tools perhaps fall under what Suchan (2006) classified as first-order changes . Turner *et al.*, (2010) also identified that certain groups of employees were more partial to particular types of communications channels.

Communication channels in the workplace have expanded significantly over the past years to beyond their traditional forms of telephone, electronic mail (email) and facsimile (Turner *et al.*, 2010). New communication technologies in the workplace that have been found to be useful include the successful use and adoption of instant messaging / chat (Handel and Herbsleb, 2002, Isaacs *et al.*, 2002, Kim *et al.*, 2007), social networking (Brzozowski, Sandholm and Hogg, 2007), virtual worlds (Bessière, Ellis and Kellogg, 2009), wikis, twitter and blogs (Turner *et al.*, 2010). The use of these technologies in the workplace has afforded

employees opportunities to forge their own ecologies of communication technologies allowing different expressions in providing critical services (Turner *et al.*, 2010).

Turner et al. (2010)Turner et al. (2010)Turner et al. (2010)Turner et al. (2010)Turner *et al.* (2010) state that different communication tools support different levels of information, depth of expression and context. However, each tool has its own strengths and weaknesses. Email, for instance, provides an electronic record of messages, but does not convey non-verbal signals. Face-to-face communication, in contrast, offers a wealth of information about the communicating parties. Face-to-face provides clues for interpreting messages through facial expressions, body language, verbal pauses, and other sources, but the most often leave an imperfect picture or log (in participants' memories) of precisely what was said (Turner *et al.*, 2010).

2.3   Communication Theories and Models

In efforts to understand the communication process and to make it more effective / efficient, many researchers have proposed different models and theories that diagnose and / or provide guidelines on how to improve communication. Four such models and / or theories are discussed below. These are the "agenda model for organisational communication", "media richness theory", "channel expansion theory" and "narrative paradigm theory".

2.3.1   Agenda Model of Organisational Communication

Tukiainen (2001) proposed a novel way of assessing organisational communication through the lens of employees. Based on his agenda model, organisational communication is a function of the communication culture that exists within the organisation. Tukiainen (2001) defined communication culture as being generated by shared learning and experiences. It was also seen as a unifier of functions and sub-cultural groups within an organisation. In generating his model, he observed that two subcultures emerged within communication culture. These were communication systems and communication climate.

Communication systems, as stated by Tukiainen (2001), referred to the communication channels used, information richness, rules of communication and the relationship between the aforementioned characteristics. The functioning of a communication system is a process that involved managing messages in different ways and gives rise to the communication climate (see Table 2.1 for dimensions and categories).

Table 2.1: Dimensions and categories of communication system subculture

Dimension	Categories
Subculture - Communication system i. The use of communication system	*Communication channels* Meetings, trainings, official records, graphic and electronic bulletin boards, personnel magazine, newspaper and magazines outside the organisation, radio and TV, other oral channels, other written channels, anything else or general about communication channels *Information contents of communication categories:* Future and goals of own work, feedback of own work, organising own work, development projects of the working community and unit, personnel activities, development projects of the organisation, products and clients, economic issues and investments, training and courses, social activities, anything else or general about information contents *Self conducted communication* The respondent is himself/herself the subject of the communication system and not merely a receiving object.

The communication climate was comprised of the subjective views, interpretations and satisfaction of employees with the communication mechanism(s) in specific circumstances and at particular points in time. The communication climate is noticeable in meanings and valuations. It is therefore, the aggregation of observations, feelings and valuations of individuals and comes about from the working process of a communication system (see Table 2.2 for dimensions and categories).

Table 2.2: Dimensions and categories of communication climate subculture

Dimension	Categories
<u>Subculture – Communication Climate</u>	
i. Superior communication and ways of conduct	Communication of the immediate superior and the ways to conduct communications Management communication, the ways of management, organisational structure and the rules of communication
ii. Horizontal face-to-face communication	Peer communication, social intercourse and the general willingness to communicate of own working community Grapevine.
iii. Functioning of the communication process	General functioning of the communication flow The right timing of the information flow The quality and quantity of the information

Adapted from Tukianen, T. 2001. An agenda model of organisational communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal,* 6(1)**,** pp51.

The agenda model is a method of gathering the information needed to plan and develop communication within a working organisation. It shows that members of an organisation view communication culture from the four dimensions of meaning that are depicted above, namely the use of the communication system; superior communication and ways of conduct; horizontal face-to-face communication; and the functioning of the communication process.

2.3.2 Media Richness Theory

The media richness theory forecasts that face-to-face communication will be more effective than any other media or communication channel (Turner *et al.*, 2010). Face-to-face communication has been heralded as the richest medium since it provides rich feedback through multiple cues, body language, personal focus, language variety, gestures and mannerisms (Turner *et al.*, 2010). This theory, however, is not without its shortcomings. DeLuca, Gasson and Kock (2006) for instance, point out that individuals seem to adapt to communication media and in so doing compensate for signals that a channel cannot carry. Consequently, it has been difficult to prove that seeing somebody's face makes a difference in the performance of tasks (Ochsman and Chapanis, 1974, Sellen, 1995). Virtual teams, on the other hand, seem to bridge the gap between technology and its use to capture the richness of face-to-face communication (e.g. through the use of videoconferencing as a medium) Tavčar, žavbi, Verlinden and Duhovnik (2005).

2.3.3   Channel Expansion Theory

According to Turner *et al.* (2010) this theory explains the richness of media to be a consequence of individual knowledge building experience with using the media and not the mere characteristics on media. Turner *et al.* (2010) further asserted that the perception of a medium is based on what a person knows about it as well as the knowledge that the people that they are communicating with have about it, rather than the frequency with which they use the medium.

2.3.4   Narrative Paradigm Theory

The narrative paradigm theory (NPT) recognises that every individual is both a story teller (sender) and a listener (receiver) of messages (Barker and Gower, 2010) . Each individual is rational and uses logic to assess (decode) messages that are told as stories (i.e. encoding and channelling of messages). As said by Barker and Gower (2010), the strength of this theory is that individuals recreate a reality based on what is put before them and that the stories are often laden with value. Further, these authors state that the NPT has global business environment applications as it presents untapped efficacy of using stories as a means of communication, especially in the workplace and in transnational teams.

2.4   Implementation of Communication Initiatives

According to Suchan (2014), organisations differ significantly in their openness, readiness, and means to change or to accept change. Gaining a holistic view of an organisation's receptiveness to embracing change is essential if its leaders are determined to design change strategies and processes that employees will view as plausible and of value to both themselves and the organisation (Suchan, 2014). Suchan mentions that many leaders, in attempting to alter inefficient and dysfunctional communication practices, often try to alter employees' thought processes and to develop them with new skills. However, leaders are often met with resistance from employees because their communication habits have become well-established routines that continually reaffirm the rationale and structure of the traditional communication practices. This, according to Suchan (2014), results in employees (or their superiors) resisting change initiatives.

Guo and Sanchez (2005) recommend overcoming personal and environmental barriers as a possible solution to improving communication. The first step to effective communication, they suggest, is to recognise that personal and environmental barriers exist. Once the

organisation becomes aware of these barriers, they can then consciously take measures to minimise their impact. Longest *et al.* (2000) presented guidelines that could assist in overcoming these barriers. These include:

- receivers and senders ensure that they give proper attention to their messages and that sufficient time in dedicated to listening to what is being communicated
- adopt a constructive management philosophy that encourages the free flow of communication
- minimise opportunities for distortion by reducing the number of levels of hierarchy and the number of steps between senders and receivers within an organisation
- remove the power / status barrier by tailoring symbols and words to make messages more understandable, reinforcing words and symbols with appropriate action
- making use of multiple channels to emphasize complex messages, in so doing reduce the chances of being misunderstood
- consciously engage in efforts that takes other people's frame of reference and beliefs
- understand that people will engage in selective perception, fear, prejudices and jealousy to help minimise the barriers
- empathy

In support of Longest *et al's* guidelines to removing barriers (especially the listening component) Johnston, Reed and Lawrence (2011) state that listening is a skill that is critical for work teams, managers and leaders to acquire. Listening is also thought to be a critical linkage necessary for translating information into action (Helms and Haynes, 1992). Johnston *et al*. (2011) mention that listening accounted for about one third of the characteristics that co-workers viewed as an essential for an effective and competent communicator. Understanding the communication climate among stakeholders, therefore, may enable organisations with the necessary tools to track, monitor, and improve team performance (Johnston *et al.*, 2011).

In addition to the suggestions made above by Longest *et al.*(2000), Porter (1985) proposed a number of approaches that managers could use to overcome these barriers and achieve linkages between business units. These include:

- Using techniques that go beyond traditional organisational lines to assist in communication (e.g. using diagonal communication that flows through teams and committees boosts communication throughout the organisation.)

- Utilising management processes that are cross-organisational

- Employing human resource policies and procedures (job training and job rotation) to improve cooperation among members in organizations

- Using management processes to resolve conflicts equitably to produce effective communication.

Puvanasvaran, Megat, Hong and Razali (2009) did a study on communication in the implementation of lean practices of a manufacturing company within the aerospace industry in Malaysia. They found that communication was an important aspect of implementing lean practices within manufacturing. In addition, when implementing lean manufacturing processes, Puvanasvaran *et al.* (2009) found information pertaining to implementation should be clearly stated for all organisational stakeholders (from top to bottom) to understand. This communication process, they argued, would pave the way for stakeholder buy-in and acceptance of the concept. In this way, the organisation can overcome any resistance towards new changes in their work environment and their work.

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter gave background to the study and set out the context on which the study is based. A holistic view of the communication process was put forward in which the role players were presented and explained. Critical to communication were the elements that ensured that the sender and receiver reached common ground in the communication process. This entailed proper coding, channel usage, decoding and feedback. Barriers to effective communication were also presented. These were broadly grouped as either personal barriers or environmental barriers.

A few research models that aimed to assist in diagnosing barriers that lead to communication breakdown and possible solutions to overcoming these barriers was also discussed. These models and / theories assessed communication in the context of the workplace, with emphasis on the vital role that employees play in the communication process. Guidelines to the factors that should be considered when designing and implementing communication

solutions were also discussed. These guidelines had a strong leadership involvement component, signalling them out as the main decision makers in solution design and implementation.

The implementation of communication-enhancing solutions was generally resisted by stakeholders. The main challenge lay in the adoption of proposed measures. Depending on the magnitude or the dynamic nature of the communication solution, employees either viewed such measures as mildly disruptive (first order change) or significantly disruptive (second order change). Acceptance of change hinged on the readiness of the individual to accept the change, familiarity with the technologies that will be implemented (if any) and to some degree, involvement in the solution making / implementation process.

In reviewing the literature, much research has been done on communication. However, literature is very scant in respect of communication within manufacturing operations. This research, therefore, aims to bridge the existing gap of communication within manufacturing operations. Specifically, it investigates inefficient communication in manufacturing operations within Simba PepsiCo, a Fast Moving Consumer Goods company, based in Johannesburg. It also intends to use this knowledge to assist in the design and implementation of communication solutions that will benefit all stakeholders.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the theoretical framework of the study through the review of literature on communication in Manufacturing Operations and its inefficiencies. This chapter outlines the methodology that was used in conducting the study. Research methodology can be defined as a systematic way to solve a problem or as the science of studying how a specific study is supposed to be carried out (Punch, 2013). A quantitative research approach was used to gather the data. This approach entails gathering data in the form of numbers through structured questions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). In addition, this chapter also looks at the rationale behind the design and execution of the study. It details   how the study was conducted and how the data was attained. The chapter also lays out the aim and objectives of the study, identifies the study participants and the study location. An in depth description of the construction of the research tool, the research design and data collection is also presented.

3.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to ensure that elements or causes of inefficient communication that hinder seamless execution in Manufacturing Operations are identified and eliminated.

The objectives of the study, therefore, were:

- To investigate causes of inefficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.
- To design solutions that will enhance and enable efficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.
- To identify how solutions can be implemented to enhance and enable efficient communications amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.

3.3 Research Type/Design

The questionnaires were guided by questions, statements and concepts obtained from the review of the literature. These questions, statements and concepts were adjusted to have relevance to the PepsiCo (Johannesburg) working environment. Every precaution was taken

to ensure that the questionnaire was participant-friendly. This included making sure that questions or statements were clear and unambiguous; and that the layout of the survey was easy to work through.

3.3.1 Description and Purpose

The research focussed on the challenges of the employees who are in Manufacturing Operations. The quantitative research method was used in the study because the researcher aimed at quantifying data and generating results from a sample of the population. The researcher also wanted to measure the prevalence of different observations and views in the selected sample.

3.4 Respondents

3.4.1 Population and Location of the Study

The targeted participants of the study were PepsiCo Simba employees in Johannesburg, Gauteng. Study participation was extended to permanent employees from lower levels to Senior Directors. As communication and participation was almost exclusively through electronic means, participants with electronic mail (email) access were specifically targeted. Non-probability sampling (Convenience sampling) technique was used in the study, because the researcher wished to collect information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it This meant that only those employees who happened to have e-mail address and who chose to complete the questionnaire stood a chance of being selected as subjects of the study.

3.4.2 Sample Frame

The sampling frame is defined as a representation of all the elements in the population from which the sample is drawn (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). For the purposes of this study, the shop-floor, operations, supply chain planning, finance, procurement, engineering, logistics, quality assurance, executives, human resources and R&D departments served as the sampling frame from which the study sample was selected.

3.4.3 Sampling

Convenience sampling was used to select one of the Simba PepsiCo branches in Johannesburg, namely Simba PepsiCo. The study targeted only employees in MOs at Simba PepsiCo. The total population size of employees at Johannesburg site was 750. The study,

however, focused on staff members who had email access. Of the 750 employees, only 140 had email access. Consequently, the 140 employees served as the study population. Based on this population size, the sample size needed was 103 for findings, the sample cannot be confidently generalized over the entire population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.4.4 Recruitment of Study Participants

Prior to recruiting participants, permission was received from PepsiCo to perform this study with its employees. Ethical clearance was also obtained from the University of Kwazulu-Natal's Research Ethics Committee. Electronic invitations were sent to the targeted study participants to enrol into the study. The invitation gave an overview of the study, detailing its objectives and the need for their participation. It was made clear from the onset that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from participating at any stage during the study. Participant confidentiality was also assured. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher was kept blind as to who the participants were by getting an independent researcher to remove any participant identifiers that might have been given by participants in error. Data that was independent of participant identifiers was then given to the present researcher to perform analyses.

3.5 Data Collection Strategies

A questionnaire was used to gather the biographical data of each participant as well as the information required for statistical analysis. The questionnaire consisted of 3 sections, each specific to the study objectives. Each section comprised questions aimed at addressing the relevant objective. The questionnaire was loaded onto QuestionPro, an electronic database, and invitations to study participants sent via electronic mail. Collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and Microsoft Excel.

3.5.1 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was coded and uploaded onto QuestionPro (an online electronic survey tool and database). A total of 140 email invitations were sent to Simba PepsiCo employees inviting them to participate in the online survey. Respondents were given two weeks to complete the questionnaire and those who were not able to complete were given some extra time to do so. Queries or clarification on some of the questions were done at the point of collection. A total of 103 participants completed the study giving a response rate of 73.6%.

3.5.2 Construction of the Instrument

The construction of the research instrument involved a multistep process. Objective-specific initial test variables were obtained from a review of the literature. These were collected and presented in an Adobe Framemaker document. The constructed instrument was then reviewed to ensure that they addressed the set objectives. Thereafter, the first draft of the instrument was piloted among 3 volunteers, 2 from within PepsiCo and a third non-PepsiCo employee. The first two served mainly to assess whether the questionnaire was relevant to the PepsiCo environment. The third participant served to test for readability and ease of use. The feedback obtained was then used to construct the second draft of the instrument. This was then piloted with another 2 PepsiCo volunteers. Upon satisfaction with the hardcopy of the research tool, an online survey was constructed using QuestionPro. The online survey served a dual purpose. The first was to ask respondents for their insights; the second was that it contained a background database. The online database was coded using the survey hardcopy as a template. Data coding involves assigning a number to the participants' responses so that they can be entered into a database (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). Once the online survey was coded for, it was then piloted with an additional 4 PepsiCo employees. Final feedback received from them was incorporated into the final version of the research instrument. This made a total of 9 volunteers that participated in the construction of the final version of the survey. Email invitations were then sent to all study participants. The following questions were asked as per research objectives:

Objective 1: To identify barriers and causes of inefficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations

1. Which of these do you think are the barriers to efficient communication?
2. Which of these do you think are the causes of inefficient communication?
3. To what extent do language and culture contribute to inefficient communication?

Objective 2: To Identify Solutions to Enhance Efficient Communication

1. What can you as individual do to eliminate barriers to efficient communication?
2. What can be done by the organization in eliminating barriers to communication and causes of inefficient communication?
3. What types of solution do you envisage that will enhance communication?
4. To what extent do shop floor employees play a role in designing solutions in regards to efficient communication?

5. From your perspective, can the business design solution in-house or should this solution be designed by an external consultant?

<u>Objective 3: To identify solutions that can be implemented to enhance and enable efficient communications amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations</u>

1. How successful is your organization in implementing change management initiatives?
2. What role will you play in helping the organization to implement the solutions?
3. What are other methods that can be used in implementing initiatives or solutions?
4. What measures can we put in place that can depict successful implementation?

3.6 Analysis of the Data

Data obtained from QuestionPro was analysed using SPSS and MS Excel. Data analysis was almost exclusively descriptive. This tied in with the objectives of the study as the aim was to get an overview of causes and remedies to "inefficient communication" from employees' viewpoint. Findings are presented using tables, pie charts, bar charts and histograms. Most often these tables and graphs presented frequency distributions of employee responses.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

As mentioned in section 3.5.2, the research instrument was piloted among 9 volunteers. At each step, feedback was received and incorporated into the final version of the instrument which was then distributed to study participants.

The reliability of the instrument was tested via a consultative process. This process involved consulting with stakeholders to get a sense of some of the issues that hindered efficient communication and to get some insight into what suggestions they might make to improve things. Although every effort was made to refer to previous studies' questions to guide the construction of the survey, this did not prove very fruitful as previous studies did not test the specific elements which were relevant to Simba PepsiCo. Nonetheless, some elements were obtained from previous studies. The reliability of the research instrument, therefore, lay in its specificity and in the process of its construction rather than on its individual components.

3.8 Limitations

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the study had the following challenges:

- Limited organisational support

  Although expressed permission was obtained to conduct the study, many of the target population were reluctant to do so in fear of potential negative consequences that might accrue to them for participating in it.

- Access to study participants

  Simba PepsiCo's Johannesburg branch has in the region of 750 employees. Although every effort was made to get access to a comprehensive emailing list to invite as many employees as possible to participate in the study, this was, however, not possible. The study population was therefore limited to the emailing lists that were provided by the relevant persons to the researcher, possibly excluding other potential participants from the population under review.

- Technical challenges with getting invite to target population

  The survey invitation had to be resent several times to some participants because they had claimed of not having received any email invites.

3.9   Ethical Considerations and Limitations

In carrying out the study it was crucial to ensure that ethical issues adhered to. Before the study could be done permission had to be sort in the form of ethical clearance letter from the university through presentation of the study proposal and questionnaires. Measures were taken to protect the autonomy of respondents and to prevent social stigmatisation and secondary victimisation of respondents. In order to abide with the institution's ethical policies the collection of data was not to include the following:

- Access to confidential information without prior consent of participants.
- Participants being required to commit an act which might diminish self – respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment or regret.
- Participants being exposed to questions which may be experienced as stressful or upsetting, or to procedures which may have unpleasant or harmful side effects.
- The use of stimuli, tasks or procedures which may be experienced as stressful, noxious, or unpleasant.
- Any form of deception.

An informed consent form was given to the potential respondent for their acknowledgement. The informed consent form is given in Appendix A. The consent noted that the participation in the study would be voluntary. The potential respondent had the choice to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence. It was highlighted on the consent documents and the questionnaire that confidentiality and anonymity was to be upheld (UKZN, 2015).

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, we discussed the overall scheme of the study. This entailed the study rationale, study design; and construction and distribution of the study instrument. The coding and construction of the online database was also detailed. Finally, the analysis and presentation of results was also presented. The next chapter involves the analysis of the study data and enters into a discussion around these results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate elements or causes of inefficient communication within Manufacturing Operations. This chapter, therefore, presents an analysis of the data obtained from the study. It begins by evaluating participants' demographic data. Thereafter, the objectives of the research are presented. A total of 103 participants started and completed the survey.

4.2 Demographics

In order to gain an overall impression of the research participants' backgrounds, demographic data for each of the participants was gathered. This section therefore contains participants' age ranges, genders, race, highest qualifications, number of years employed at Simba PepsiCo; and job type / description. Each of these will be discussed in the sections that follow.

4.2.1 Participants' Age Profiles

This section sought to get understanding of the age spread of the participants. These are presented in Figure 4.1.
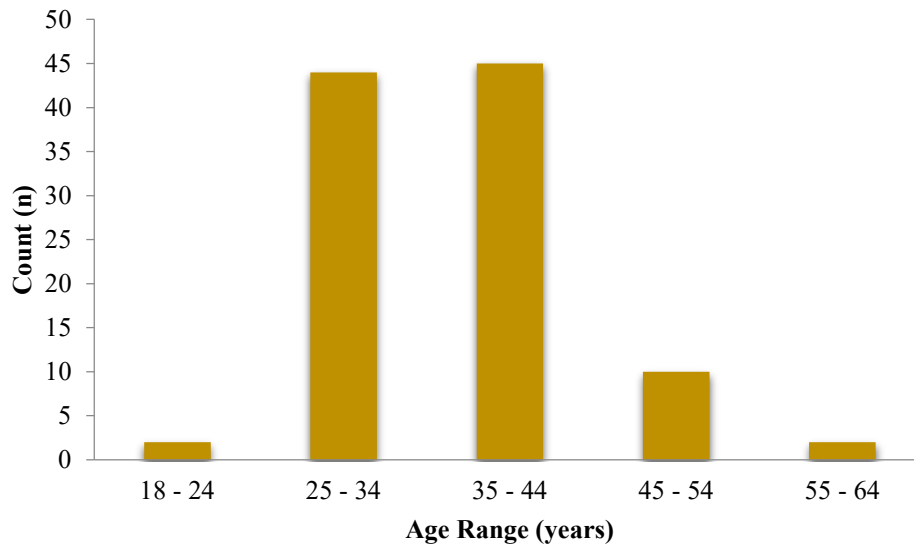
Figure 4.1: Age distribution of respondents

As can be seen from Figure 4.1, the participants most frequently fell within the 35-44 (43.7%) and the 25 – 34 (42.7%) year age categories. These differed by only 1 participant and jointly constituted 86.4% of the 103 study participants. Based on the findings in Figure 4.1, it could be inferred that Simba PepsiCo is driven predominantly by young adults and middle-aged employees. There were no participants younger than 18 years or any older than 65 years.

4.2.2 Gender

This section evaluated the gender composition of the participants. The findings are presented in Figure 4.2.
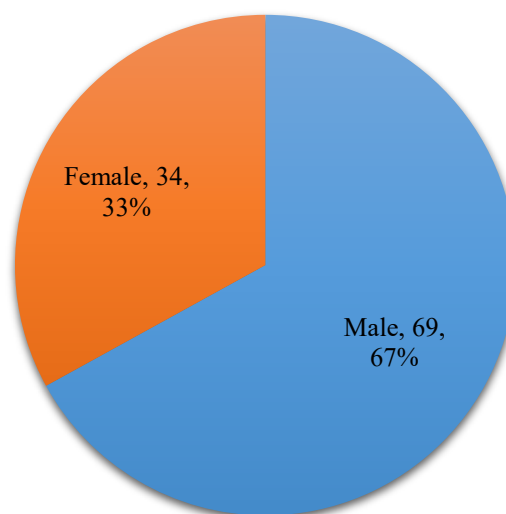
Figure 4.2: Gender profile of respondents

As illustrated in Figure 4.2, males formed the majority of the respondents. More specifically, male respondents represented 67% of the 103 participants, with females representing the remaining 33%. This suggests that for every female participant there were 2 male equivalents. Based on the gender findings for the 103 participants, it appears that females are not adequately or equally represented. This is quite concerting and conflicts with the transformation and women empowerment plans laid out in the National Development Plan (NDP) under the directive of the president of the Republic of South Africa (Zuma, 2015). However, it could be argued that because participation was limited to 140 emails (i.e. the email list that the researcher was presented with which served as the population for this study), this infact limited the study to staff members on the emailing list and consequently cannot be seen as a true reflection of Simba PepsiCo's gender distribution. The findings, therefore, can only be generalised to the population within this list and cannot be generalised over the entire staff compliment at Simba PepsiCo's Johannesburg branch.

4.2.3   Race

This section sought to understand the racial representation of study participants. Figure 4.3 therefore details the groupings of study participants by their race groups.
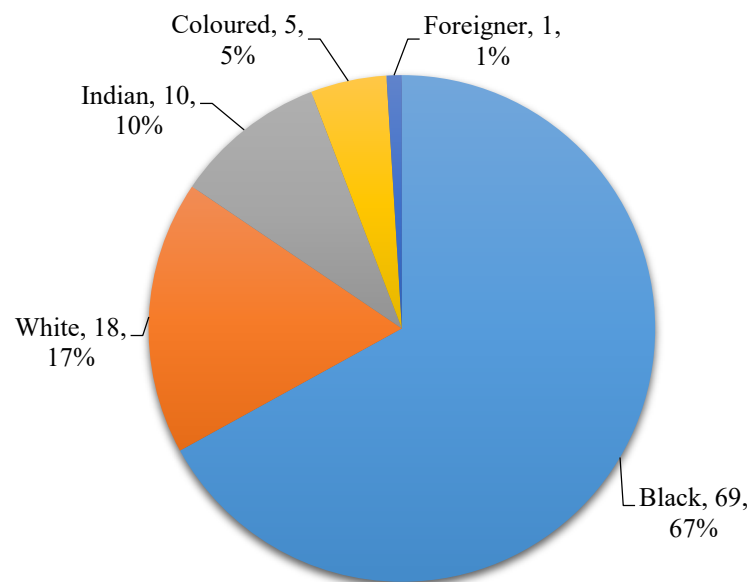
Figure 4.3: Employee Racial Classification

As seen in Figure 4.3, Blacks made up the majority of the participants, with 67% of the study participants coming from this race group. They were followed by Whites (17%), Indians

(10%) and Coloureds (5%). One participant was a foreign national. This indicates that Blacks had ample representation within the study and hence significantly represented within the confines of the study population. The racial distribution could possibly be a hindrance to efficient communication as language and cultural diversity (or background) have been found to be contributors towards communication breakdown (Guo and Sanchez, 2005, Suchan, 2006, Barker and Gower, 2010, Suchan, 2014)

4.2.4   Home Language

In order to investigate the languages spoken by the participants, each was asked to indicate the predominant language that they spoke at home. The results are depicted in Figure 4.4.
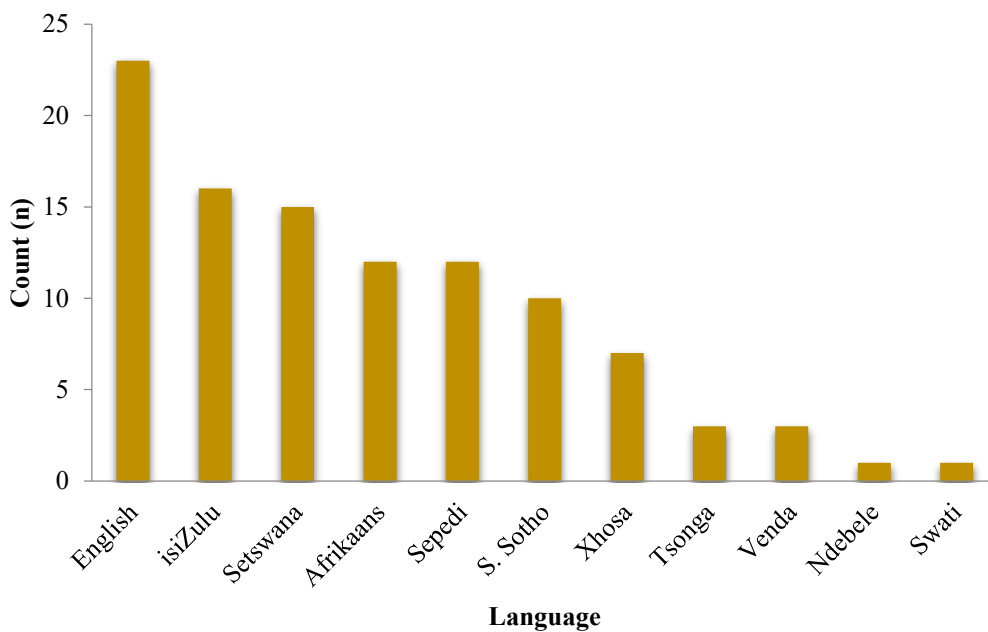
Figure 4.4: Home languages spoken by participants

As shown in Figure 4.4, English was the most frequently selected home language spoken by the participants at home. English-speaking participants represented 22% of the 103 participants. They were followed by isiZulu (16%) and Setswana (15%) speaking participants. Sepedi and Afrikaans each had 12 respondents speaking it as a home language. Swati and Ndebele were the least spoken mother tongues, each with 1 participant speaking it at home. Further investigation (not shown) revealed that Afrikaans was spoken exclusively by Whites as a home language. They also constituted the second highest English-speaking race second to Indians (all of whom spoke English as a home language). Blacks mostly spoke

Setwana, isiZulu and Sepedi with 22, 19 and 17 members from this group speaking each of these languages respectively. Coloureds had 60% of them speaking English at home. As English is the most common medium of communication within the workplace (especially in transnational companies such as Simba PepsiCo), this perhaps highlights the communication challenge that stakeholders faced at work as the majority of them (78%) did not speak English as a mother tongue.

4.2.5   Education

To assess the highest qualifications held by the participants each was asked to indicate this from the six options presented in Figure 4.5.
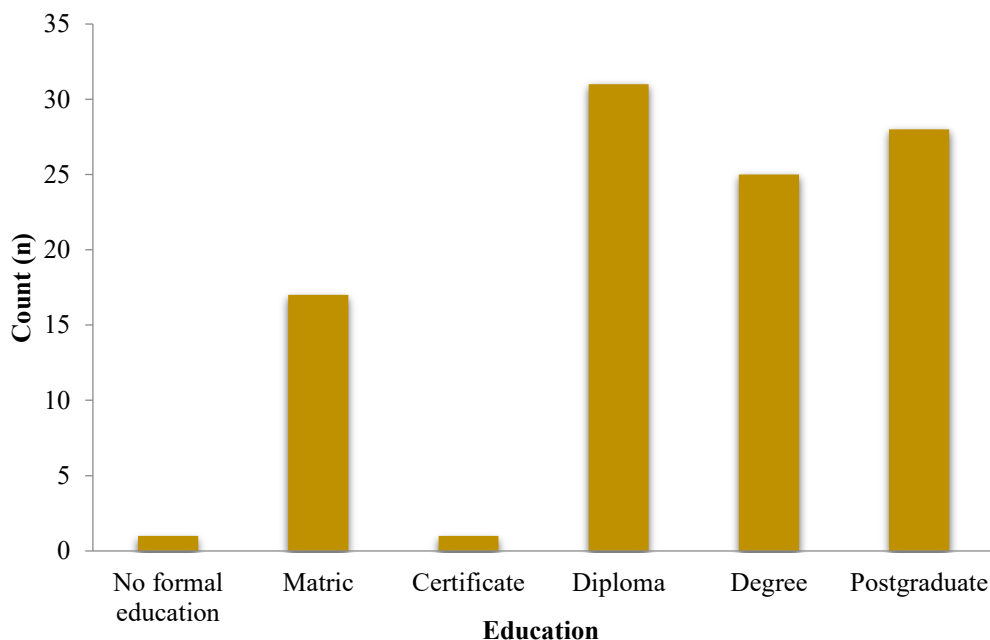
Figure 4.5: Participant highest level of education

As shown in Figure 4.5, respondents most often had some sort of diploma relative to other levels of education or qualification. Diplomas were held by 30% of the 103 participants. Postgraduate qualifications were the second most frequently held qualifications with 27% of the participants possessing at least one postgraduate qualification. Twenty five participants held junior or undergraduate degrees. Combining both degree and postgraduate qualifications, it emerges that 53 (51.5%) of the participants were in possession of at least 1 degree. Seventeen participants had matric as their highest level of education, while 1 participant stated that they had never had any form of formal education. This indicates a

diverse spread of qualifications among different stakeholders and may be indicative of a communication hierarchy (and hence complexity) that might exist between stakeholders based on their qualifications.

4.2.6   Job Description

This section aimed to profile the different stakeholders involved in the communication process by functional area or department in which they worked. The occupational profiles of participants are shown in Figure 4.6.
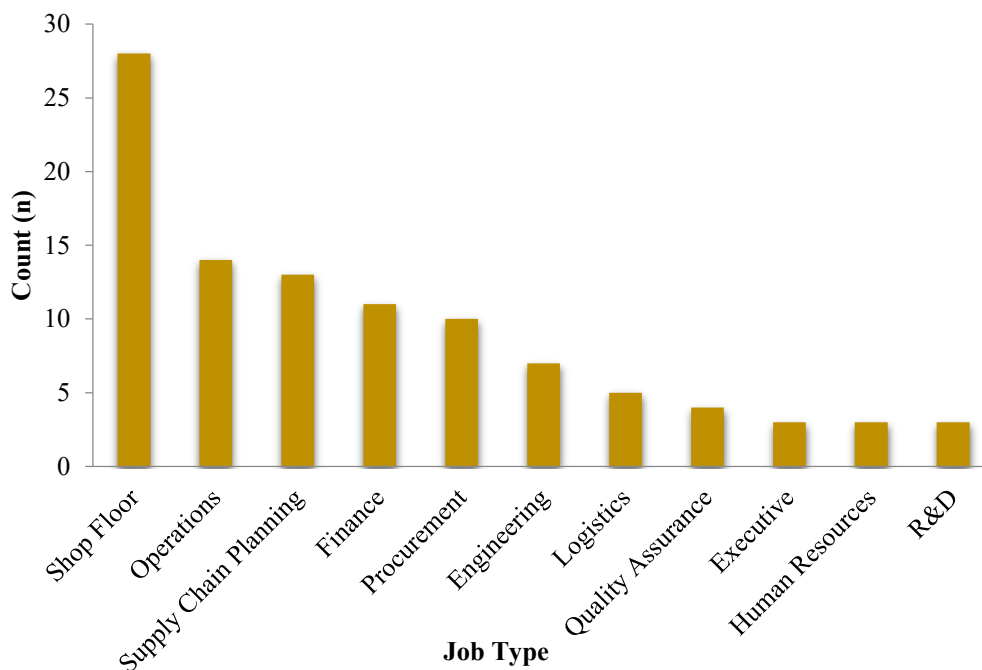
Figure 4.6: Job functional areas of respondents

As illustrated in Figure 4.6 "shop floor" employees were the most represented group in the study. They formed 27.7% of the 101 participants that indicated their organisational functional area. Operations (14%), Supply Chain planning (13%), Finance (11%) and Procurement (10%) were the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th most represented groups respectively. The above figure also gives a snapshot of the diverse stakeholders involved in making Simba PepsiCo a success. For instance, participation ranged from employees that worked on the shop floor all the way up to the executive management level. It also highlights the degree of complexity involved in ensuring that all stakeholders worked together towards attaining organisational goals.

4.2.7 Years employed in the Organisation

In this section information pertaining to the employment history of the participants was gathered. Participants were asked to indicate how many years they had been in the employ of the organisation. The outcome is presented in Figure 4.7.
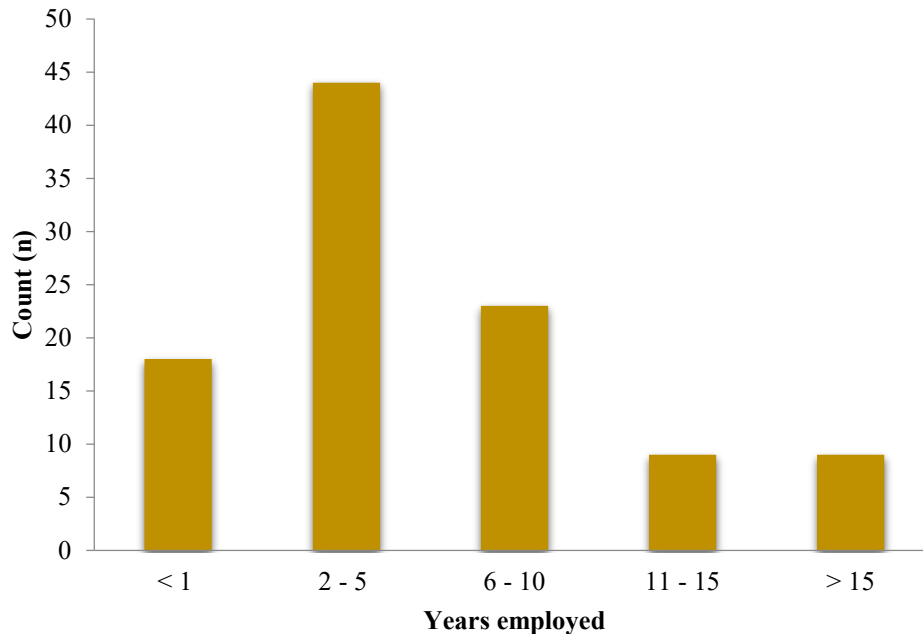
Figure 4.7: Number of years employed at Simba PepsiCo

As evidenced by Figure 4.7, participants most frequently worked between 2 – 5 years (inclusive) for the organisation. This group represented almost 43% of the 103 participants. Eighteen participants were fairly new to the organisation having less than 1 year of experience as members of the staff compliment. These two groups (i.e. less than one year and 2 – 5 years) represented 60.2% of the study participants. In other words, a little over 60% of the participants had at most 5 years' experience within the organisation. On the other hand, approximately 17.4% of the participants had 11 years or more experience within the organisation.

4.3 Study Objectives

This section addresses the objectives that the study aimed to achieve. These objectives were to identify the barriers and causes of inefficient communication among relevant stakeholders in manufacturing operations, to identify solutions that will enhance efficient communication, and to identify solutions and strategies that can be implemented to enable and enhance

efficient communication. Each objective is presented, together with supporting questions where necessary, in the upcoming paragraphs.

4.3.1 Objective 1: To Identify Barriers and Causes of Inefficient Communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.

To assess the probable or possible barriers and causes of inefficient communication in manufacturing operations, the stakeholders identified in section 4.2.6 above were asked to indicate what they thought were the barriers or causes of inefficient communication. These findings are presented below.

4.3.1.1 Barriers to Efficient Communication

In this section participants were presented with 6 variables from which they were asked to indicate which ones applied to their work environment. Their responses to what they thought were the barriers to efficient communication within their environment are tabulated in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Barriers to efficient communication

Communication Barriers	Frequency	Percent (n=103)	Percent (n=234)
Lack of communication channels	53	51.5	22.6
Lack of stakeholder knowledge sharing	45	43.7	19.2
Lack of stakeholder involvement	43	41.7	18.4
Lack of stakeholder interest	34	33.0	14.5
Competition between departments	32	31.1	13.7
Difficulty in understanding what is being communicated	27	26.2	11.5
Total	234		100

As can be seen in Table 4.1 the lack of communication channels featured as the most frequent hurdle faced by participants in their work setting. Slightly over 50% of the respondents indicated that this was a frequent challenge that they experienced. Of the 234 selections (or hits) received, the lack of communication channels represented 22.6%. It was also the only barrier to which more than half the participants highlighted. This seems to indicate that stakeholders at Simba PepsiCo were not utilising technological advancements that are characteristic of the modern workplace as mentioned by (Turner et al., 2010). The remaining hurdles had at most 45 participants identifying them. Specifically, the lack of knowledge

sharing featured as second highest barrier with 45 participants selecting it. In terms of the overall hits, this variable represented 19.2% of the 234 hits. This barrier was closely followed by the lack of stakeholder involvement in the communication process which had 18.4% of the 234 hits. Participants also indicated that the lack of understanding of what was being communicated was not a major challenge. This is evidenced by it having the least amount of hits relative to the other 5 variables. It was selected by 27 of the 103 participants, representing 11.5% of the total number of hits.

In order to assess which stakeholders responded most frequently to each of the communication barriers, cross tabulations were performed between the each proposed barrier and the departments or functional areas that the respondents hailed from. In each barrier the top 2 or 3 departments were selected and presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Departments that most frequently selected barriers to efficient communication

Communication Barrier	Department	% of Total Responses
Lack of stakeholder involvement	Shop Floor	25.6
	Supply Chain Planning	16.3
Lack of stakeholder interest	Shop Floor	20.6
	Supply Chain Planning	17.6
Lack of stakeholder knowledge sharing	Supply Chain Planning	22.2
	Shop Floor	17.8
	Operations	17.8
Competition between departments	Supply Chain Planning	19.4
	Shop Floor	16.1
	Engineering	16.1
Lack of communication channels	Shop Floor	26.9
	Supply Chain Planning	13.5
	Operations	11.5
Difficulty in understanding what is being communicated	Operations	22.2
	Shop Floor	18.5
	Supply Chain Planning	18.5

As seen in the above table, the Shop Floor and Supply Chain Planning Departments most often had the highest representation in terms of selecting the barriers listed in Table 4.1. Based purely on numbers, this indicates that stakeholders from these departments felt quite strongly that all these communication barriers were relevant in their particular environment. Operations featured in the top 3 on 3 occasions, namely "lack of stakeholder knowledge",

"lack of communication channels" and "difficulty in understanding what is being communicated". Engineering was the only other department to feature among the other 4 departments. Participants from Engineering most often (other than Supply Chain Planning and the Shop Floor) indicated that they felt that competition among departments was a barrier to efficient communication.

However, grouping responses as proportions of respective departments revealed a very different picture of communication barriers thought significant in / by each department. These findings are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Responses to Communication Barriers as Proportions of Respective Departments

Communication Barrier	Department*	% of Responses within Departments
Lack of stakeholder involvement	Executives	100.0
	Engineering	71.4
	Quality Assurance	25.0
Lack of stakeholder interest	Logistics	60.0
	Supply Chain Planning	46.2
	Shop Floor	25.0
Lack of stakeholder knowledge sharing	Supply Chain Planning	76.9
	Engineering	71.4
	Finance	9.1
Competition between departments	Engineering	71.4
	Logistics	60.0
	Shop Floor	17.9
Lack of communication channels	Human Resources	100.0
	Quality Assurance	100.0
	Logistics	20.0
Difficulty in understanding what is being communicated	R&D	66.7
	Operations	42.9
	Shop Floor	17.9

*Only the two departments with the highest proportion of responses and the department with the least number of responses in each category are presented

As can be seen in Table 4.3, all the Executives felt that the lack of stakeholder involvement was a barrier to efficient communication. Seventy one percent of the Engineers felt the same. With relevance to this barrier, the Shop Floor had the least among their ranks selecting it. The lack of stakeholder interest was seen by 60% of respondents from the Logistics Department as a barrier to efficient communication. Respondents from the Shop Floor did

not view this as a significant barrier as only 25% of them indicated the lack of stakeholder interest as a barrier to efficient communication. The lack of stakeholder knowledge sharing was thought to be a significant barrier by both the Supply Chain Planning and Engineering Departments with 76.9% and 71.4% of respondents from these departments selecting this barrier respectively. The Finance Department felt that this was not such a significant barrier.

Competition between departments was mostly viewed by the Engineering Department as a barrier to efficient communication. The converse held true for the Shop Floor as they had the least number of members selecting this as a barrier to efficient communication. The lack of communication channels was selected by all the members of staff from the Quality Assurance and Human Resources Departments as a barrier to efficient communication. The Logistics Department, on the other hand, had the least number of respondents identifying the lack of communication channels as a barrier to efficient communication.

The Research and Development Department had the majority of its members (66.7%) identifying that a challenge existed in understanding what was being communicated. This could either be communications from this department to other stakeholders or *vice-versa*. All the other departments did not find this to be a significant barrier as more than 50% of the remaining departments did not select it. This is evidenced by the second highest represented department in this category, i.e. the Operations Department, having 42.9% of its members selecting this as a barrier. The Shop Floor did not find decoding messages an important challenge in their department as only 18% of them selected this as a barrier.

4.3.1.2   Causes of Inefficient Communication

The causes of inefficient communication were also assessed to gain better understanding of what participants thought was / were the root cause(s) of communication breakdown. This defers to the above section in that the above section was more a consequence of communication breaking down, whereas this section concerns itself more on the underlying or foundation for its breakdown. In other words, if the barriers were all eliminated, communication would still breakdown if the real causes were still present. The causes then set the foundation upon which communication is based. The findings are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Causes of inefficient communication

Causes of inefficient communication	Frequency	Percent (n=103)	Percent (n=223)
Poor leadership	63	61.2	28.3
Unclear goals	57	55.3	25.6
Personal issues	35	34.0	15.7
Demoralisation	35	34.0	15.7
Cultural diversity	33	32.0	14.8
Total	223	-	100.0

As evidenced in Table 4.4, poor leadership was cited as the main reason for communication inefficiency. Here 63 of the 103 participants (i.e. 61%) indicated that leadership was the main determinant of communication outcomes. This supports Longest *et al.* (2000) when they urge management to adopt a constructive philosophy that will encourage the free flow of information. The second most important foundation for effective communication indicated by participants was that of clear goals. Based on their responses 55.3% of the 103 participants indicated that the communications that they received had unclear goals. This highlights the gap between sender, receiver and the feedback mechanism. In other words, a gap exists between the encoding and decoding of messages between stakeholders. Taken jointly, poor leadership and unclear goals comprised 53.9% of the 223 hits received for this parameter. This brings to light the importance of these two variables in effecting efficient communication.

Personal issues, demoralisation and cultural diversity featured among the least important causes of inefficient communication. Of these, cultural diversity appeared to be the least contributor towards communication breaking down. This is somewhat corroborated by the findings presented in Figure 4.8 which assessed the impact of language and culture on inefficient communication. Identifying which departments most frequently responded to each of the causes of inefficient communication revealed that the Shop Floor and Operations were the departments with the most responses to each cause stated in Table 4.4 (results not shown).
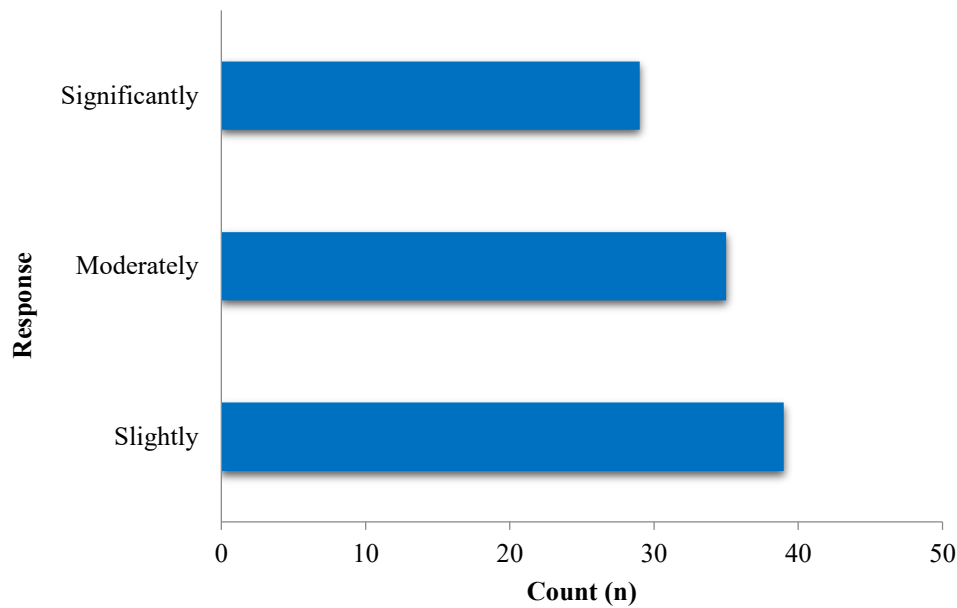
Figure 4.8: Impact of language and culture on inefficient communication

As illustrated in Figure 4.8, language and culture were predominantly seen to have moderate to negligible impact on inefficient communication. In total, 74 of the 103 participants selected one of these two. This represents almost 74% of the study participants. However, slightly less than 30% of the participants felt that language and culture played a significant role in inefficient communication. As this particular parameter was race and culture specific, further investigation was entered into to discover which race felt that culture and language played a significant role in the breakdown of communication. The findings are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Cross tabulation of impact of culture and language by race

Response	Race					Total
	Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Other	
Slightly	26	9	3	1	0	39
Moderately	20	7	5	2	1	35
Significantly	23	2	2	2	0	29
Total	69	18	10	5	1	103

Table 4.5 shows that Blacks overwhelmingly felt that culture and language contributed significantly towards inefficient communication. This, however, is perhaps because this race group formed the majority of the participants. In order to eliminate this factor, responses within this category (i.e. in the "significantly" category) were assessed as percentages of

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respective race groups. This revealed that 33% of Black people felt that language and culture were significant contributors to inefficient communication. This made this group the second highest race to choose this option with Coloureds being the highest with 40% of them selecting this option. Whites felt that this contributed the least when this response was taken as a percentage of total White responses.

4.3.1.3 Objective 1 Summary

In summary, this section evaluated the causes of inefficient communication. The lack of communication channels was identified as the main barrier to efficient communication while the understanding of what was communicated was ranked the least significant by participating stakeholders. The main causes of inefficient communication identified by participants were poor leadership and unclear organisational goals. Cultural diversity was seen to be the least significant contributor towards communication inefficiency by participants.

4.3.2 Objective 2: To Identify Solutions to Enhance Efficient Communication

This section sought to extract from stakeholders what they thought would contribute positively towards eliminating inefficient communication within manufacturing operations. It aimed to get a holistic view of different elements that should or could be incorporated into designing efficient communication systems that will best benefit all stakeholders. The findings are presented in the forthcoming sections.

4.3.2.1 Stakeholder Commitment towards Eliminating Barriers to Efficient Communication

This section aimed to extract from individual stakeholders what contributions they would make towards eliminating inefficient communication in the workplace. Their responses are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Individuals' contributions towards eliminating barriers to efficient communications

Individual contributions	Frequency	Percent (n=103)	Percent (n=370)
Use honesty and integrity in your communications	73	70.9	19.7
Use the right communication channels	65	63.1	17.6
Get feedback from the receiver	63	61.2	17.0
Speaking face-to-face as often as possible	61	59.2	16.5
Understand that others see things differently to you	57	55.3	15.4
Use language that the audience understands	51	49.5	13.8
Total	370		100.0

As seen in the above table, stakeholders were most often committed to using honesty and integrity in their communications henceforth. This is evidenced by 73 of the 103 participants selecting this as a commitment that they were prepared to make. This commitment also constituted 19.7% of the 370 hits assessing this parameter. Using the right type(s) of communication channel(s) ranked as 2nd and 3rd highest commitment by stakeholders respectively. This is also in line with Longest *et al.* (2000) where they encourage the use of multiple channels to emphasise messages in order to reduce misunderstanding. Communicating in the appropriate language for receiver to understand received the least number of responses. Nonetheless, almost 50% of respondents selected it. The above findings perhaps highlight the preparedness of stakeholders to improve the current communications *status quo* within their work environment. This is evidenced by the high response rate to all the variables mentioned above.

In addition to the above, participants also felt that by following up on agreed outcomes, putting personal issues aside, and by understanding the organisation's communication culture would also assist them to eliminate the barriers to efficient communication that they experienced.

4.3.2.2 Organisation's Contribution towards Eliminating Barriers to Efficient Communication

This section aimed to extract from individual stakeholders what measures they thought the organisation could make towards eliminating inefficient communication in the workplace. Their responses are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Organisation's contribution(s) towards eliminating barriers to efficient communications

Organisational contribution	Frequency	Percent (n=103)	Percent (n=350)
Keeping managers and colleagues well informed	80	77.7	22.9
Room for feedback	63	61.2	18.0
Communication training	57	55.3	16.3
Clear organisational objectives	56	54.4	16.0
Clear organisational policy	51	49.5	14.6
Reduce formal restriction on who can communicate with whom	43	41.7	12.3
Total	350		100.0

Based on the above table, participants most frequently felt that management and colleagues needed to be kept well informed by the organisation. In this particular instance 77% of the 103 participants raised this as an important area that the organisation needed to concentrate on to improve stakeholder communication. The opportunity to give and / or receive feedback also featured highly as an area of weakness within the organisation. This implies that by concentrated on improving feedback mechanisms, the organisation could contribute significantly to improving stakeholder communication. Communications training and clear organisational goals featured as 3rd and 4th highest priority of improvements that the organisation could make with 16.3% and 16% of the 350 hits respectively. The least important improvement that stakeholders felt the organisation could make was to reduce formal restrictions on who can communicate with whom. This element seemed not to have been a present hurdle experienced by stakeholders within the organisation.

4.3.2.3 Envisaged Solutions to Enhance Communication

This section aimed to extract from participating stakeholders what they envisioned could improve communication between them. Their responses are presented in Table 4.8 below. The results are labelled by number of selections per item followed by the total number of hits of that item as a percentage of the 394 hits for this particular parameter.

Table 4.8: Envisaged solutions to enhance communications

Proposed solutions	Frequency	% (n =103)	% (n = 394)
Feedback updates	81	78.6	20.6
Proactive Communication	79	76.7	20.1
System	55	53.4	14.0
Notice boards	48	46.6	12.2
Desktop / TV Screens	44	42.7	11.2
Newsletters	44	42.7	11.2
Electronic mail	43	41.7	10.9
Total	394		100.0

As shown in Table 4.8, feedback updates had the most hits of the solutions proposed. This solution was selected by almost 78.6% of the participants and represented 21% of the 394 hits for this parameter. It can be deduced from this that feedback updates rarely or never occur within the organisation. Proactive communication was the second most frequently selected solution that participants thought could contribute towards improving communication with 20% of the 394 hits. Newsletters and electronic mail featured among the lowest envisaged solutions, each having 11% of the total hits. This perhaps indicates that these channels are already in extensive use as a means of communication between stakeholders.

Over and above this, some stakeholders felt that television screens and notice boards were currently used for decorative purposes and were not really being put to use. It was also suggested that mobile applications and texts, Whatsapp forums, and website sharepoints be made available to employees on their cell phones.

4.3.2.4 Role of Shop Floor employees in Designing Communication Solutions

Participants were also asked on the extent to which they thought that shop floor employees could play a role in designing communication solutions. Their findings are presented in Figure 4.9.
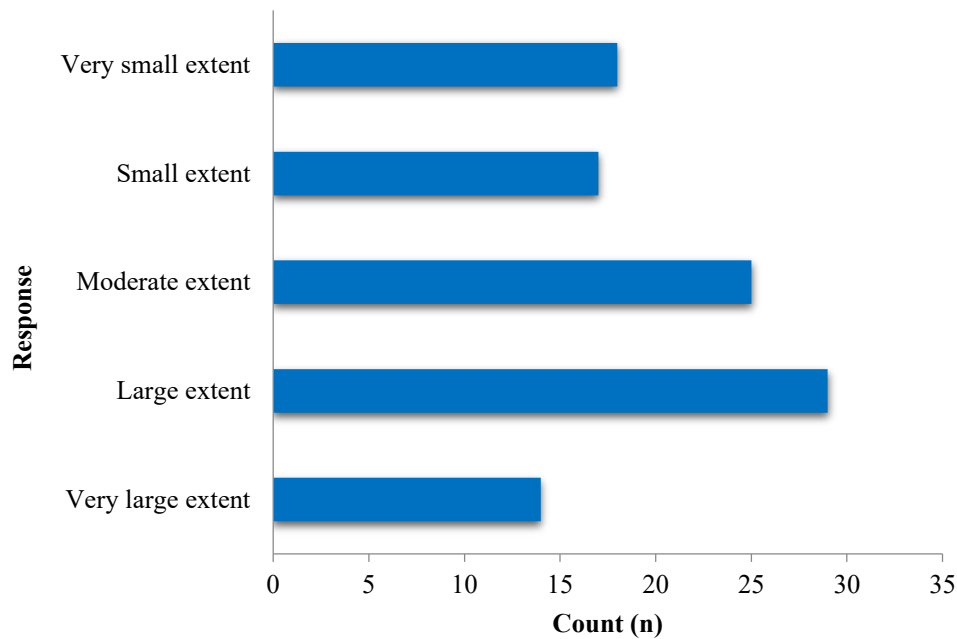
Figure 4.9: Role of shop floor employees in designing communication solutions

It can be seen in Figure 4.9 that most participants most frequently felt that shop floor employees had a large role to play in the design of communication solutions that could eliminate inefficient communication. Approximately 28% of the participants indicated that they felt this. A further 13.6% felt very strongly that shop floor employees were crucial in the design of communication solutions. Taken jointly, these two response types in favour of the instrumental role that shop floor employees can play in eliminating communication inefficiencies represented 42% of the 103 responses. Twenty five (24.3%) participants felt that shop floor employees could play a role, but not a very significant one. Thirty four percent felt that their role was either minimal [i.e. small (16.5%)] or negligible [i.e. very small (17.5%)].

Participants were also asked whether they preferred to have communications design to be performed in-house or whether to outsource to other experts. Seventy eight percent felt that the best solution would be to have this done internally (results not shown).

4.3.2.5 Objective 2 Summary

In summary, this section investigated the commitment that stakeholders were prepared to make in order to eliminate barriers to communication. Stakeholders most often indicated that they were prepared to use honesty and integrity in their communications as well as to make

use of the right communication channels when communicated with other stakeholders. In addition, they also committed themselves to face-to-face communication as often as they were able to. They envisioned that initiatives and measures such as feedback updates, proactive communication and proper systems would greatly enhance communication among them. The organisation seemed to have lacked in keeping managers and colleagues informed, creating room for feedback and in not offering communications training to employees. They indicated that if management addressed these concerns, among others, it would greatly improve communications within the organisation and among all stakeholders.

4.3.3 Objective 3: To Identify Solutions that can be Implemented to Enhance and Enable Efficient Communications amongst Relevant Stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations

This section set out to address the third objective of the study, namely how to implement solutions that would enhance and enable efficient communication among stakeholders in manufacturing operations. It begins by evaluating the organisation's success rate in implementing change management initiatives. Thereafter it discusses the role that participating stakeholders are prepared to play to implement proposed solutions, as well as methods and measures that could be employed to implement these solutions. Much of this section is free text, responses therefore are predominantly presented as summaries of predominant themes raised by stakeholders.

4.3.3.1 Organisation's success rate in implementing change management initiatives
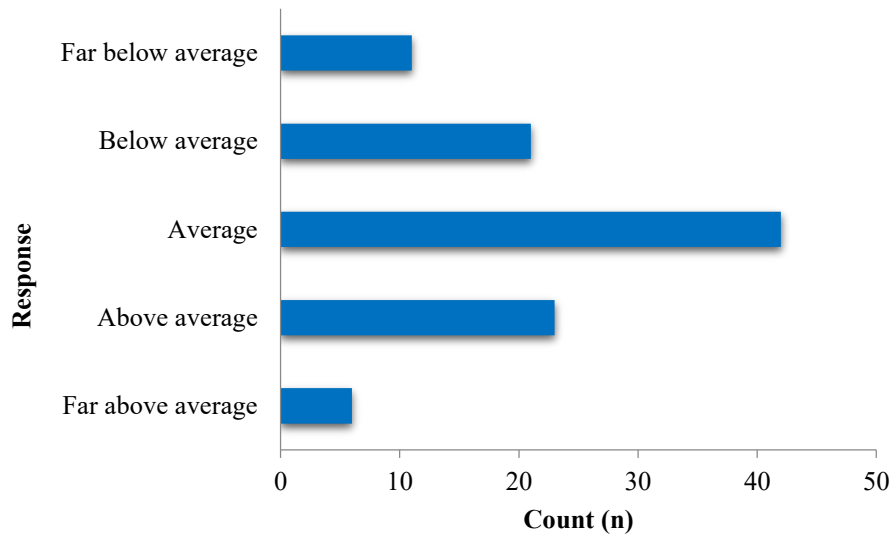
Figure 4.10: Change management implementation success rate

As can be seen from Figure 4.10 the majority of participants viewed the organisation's success rate at implementing change management initiatives to be at best average. This is evidenced by almost 41% of the participants selecting this option. Only 28.1% of them thought that implementation was either above average (22.3%) or far above average (5.8%). The remaining 31% felt it to be either below average (20.4%) or far below average (10.7%).

4.3.3.2 What role can your organisation play to implement solutions?

There was an overall optimistic view that implementing a communication solution would be of great benefit to all stakeholders. This came through in participant responses as many indicated that they were prepared to play active roles in supporting the implementation of solutions which would enhance efficient communication. Some participants felt very strongly that they were in a position (based on qualifications and experience) to help in the design and implementation of communication systems and / or strategies. Others felt that they would best be able to help by being change agents. Adopting and living a communications culture that honoured agreements also emerged as solutions that would aid in the implementation of communication solutions.

4.3.3.3 What are other methods that can be used in implementing initiatives or solutions?

Here respondents offered a very wide array of suggestions. It was virtually impossible to group the responses into different themes without losing their meanings. However, it was very encouraging to observe that participants took a keen interest in offering suggestions. Nonetheless, the overall view was that any such method(s) should involve team work for its / their success. Participants suggested that there should be informal exchanges among stakeholders from different levels facilitated through informal coffee or tea break discussions. Teambuilding also featured as a method that would bolster stakeholder communications as it would build relationships that would improve the ease of communication among stakeholders. An open-door policy was also suggested as a tool through which feedback or clarity could be given or attained. The feedback mechanism, it was suggested, should be a two-way process, i.e. from top down and bottom up. Yet other participants felt that more visual aids should be used, e.g. posters, corporate videos, online applications, etcetera. It was also thought that shop floor staff played a crucial role in the manufacturing process, as such they should be more engaged in the design and implementation of communication solutions. To somehow facilitate this to some degree, it was proposed that computer monitors be placed on the shop floor and made available to shop floor employees.

4.3.3.4 What measures can be put in place that can depict successful implementation?

Feedback featured quite regularly as a way to gauge whether implementation was successful or not. Other measures mentioned included digital monitoring of key performance areas, getting both an in-house and external "Big Brother" to periodically assess whether the different elements of implemented communication strategies were meeting desired outcomes, before and after stakeholder surveys, and the signing off on completed tasks. Training also featured as a method through which success could be attained. This training revolved around change management and it was proposed that both management and frontline staff attend these. It was further suggested that an open communication culture should be adopted. Such a culture should be based on respect and attentive listening. Finally, recognition and rewarding employees or teams that achieved predetermined outcomes was seen as a great motivator that could / would encourage employees to implement communication solutions successfully.

4.3.3.5 Objective 3 Summary

This section evaluated how to implement solutions that would enhance and enable efficient communication among stakeholders in manufacturing operations. Simba PepsiCo's track record at successfully implementing change was first assessed and was found to be average overall. Participants were very optimistic and eager to play active roles in supporting their organisation to successfully implement communication solutions. Participants were also very keen to assist in the design of communications solutions, which they felt would best be done internally as opposed to outsourcing.

4.4   Conclusion

This chapter began by discussing the demographic data of participants. In this it was found that the majority of employees were aged from 25 to 44 years. The majority of employees were male with Blacks having the most representation among the different race groups. Shop floor staff were the most represented of all the participating stakeholders. In terms of study objectives, the lack of communication channels and poor leadership were attributed as the main barriers or causes of inefficient communication. Using honesty and integrity in communication, being kept well-informed across ranks and feedback were seen as vital to eliminating barriers to efficient communication. Employees also communicated a strongly positive and keen attitude towards adopted and implementing communication solutions. There was however, a strong view that such solutions should be holistic and involve active participation from all stakeholders. In the following chapter the research study comes to its conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1   Introduction

This chapter summarises and concludes the research. It ties up the three objectives that the study sought to address namely, the causes on inefficient communication, eliminating inefficient communication and implementation solutions within Manufacturing Operations. These objectives in turn had as their single purpose, to investigate the elements that hindered efficient communication within Manufacturing Operations in Simba PepsiCo Johannesburg.

5.2   Study Outcomes

This study has evaluated the barriers and causes of inefficient communication among stakeholders in Simba PepsiCo Johannesburg's Manufacturing Operations. It also assessed possible solutions that could be used by the organisation to improve communications among its stakeholders.

5.2.1   Objective 1: To Identify Barriers and Causes of Inefficient Communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations

The majority of the participating stakeholders felt that the lack of communication channels was the greatest barrier to efficient communication. This indicated that stakeholders felt that the packaging and delivery of messages needed much improvement and would reduce any tension and / or stress related to communication between them. The lack of stakeholder knowledge sharing and involvement were also highlighted as critical barriers to efficient communication. This brought to the fore that stakeholders felt that they also played an important role in the communication process. This is a good find because it indicates that stakeholders were taking responsibility for their role in communication breakdown. It is therefore foreseeable that initiatives taken to eliminate barriers to efficient communication are more likely to be supported by stakeholders as they see themselves as part of the problem and solution.

The causes of inefficient communication were assessed to gain insight into what participants thought were the root causes of communication breakdown. Poor leadership was attributed as the main cause of inefficient communication according to the participants. This indicated

that participants felt that Simba PepsiCo' leadership was not performing very well in communicating with relevant stakeholders and implies that communication should feature as part of the agenda at strategic meetings. In this way communication gets prioritised. The perception that poor leadership was the root course of inefficient communication could also be a consequence of other factors that the majority of stakeholders were unaware of. These may include transparency in the recruitment process, succession and promotion criteria and processes, or the lack of the ability of leadership to communicate with stakeholders effectively.

Participants also indicated that unclear goals were an important cause of inefficient communication. It is possible that current employees and new recruits lacked the ability to successfully decode messages communicated to them (e.g. by leadership). It might be that leadership does state clear goals and that employees lack the necessary skills to interpret and understand these goals. This suggests that proper communication channels need to be set in place to assist relevant stakeholders to decode messages.

Language and culture were most often seen to have moderate to negligible impact on inefficient communication. However, Blacks predominantly felt that culture and language contributed significantly towards inefficient communication. This was perhaps a result of sheer numbers as Blacks constituted the majority of respondents. As a percentage of the total number of respective races that responded, Blacks were second to Coloureds in their view of the influence that language and culture had on communication.

5.2.2 To Identify Solutions to Enhance Efficient Communication

Participants were most often committed to using honesty and integrity in their future communications. This was in keeping with Simba PepsiCo's values and commitment to speaking with truth and candour and to show integrity in how they operated. Respondents also committed themselves to using appropriate communication channels, to give and receive feedback, and to communicate face-to-face more frequently. These findings are encouraging as they signify stakeholder buy-in to the concept of improving communication among them. In addition, participating stakeholders also felt that by following agreed outcomes, putting personal issues aside and understanding the organisation's communications culture would assist in eliminating barriers to efficient communication that they experienced. This possibly suggests that organisational culture should be adjusted such

that it becomes commonplace to practice good etiquette within the organisation. This should extend beyond stakeholder communication to embracing a culture that is courteous and respects all individuals.

Keeping managers and colleagues well informed was seen as critical measure that the organisation could put in place towards eliminating barriers to efficient communication. This implies that stakeholders felt that Simba PepsiCo was not doing enough to keep them well-informed. This is an undesirable situation as it can create tension in the workplace and reduce the self-worth of employees because they can become unwilling bystanders in corporate decisions that affect them. It may also lead to situations where rumours get spread in the organisation which may have negative impact on employee morale.

Employees also felt that presently they were not given much room for feedback. This was of grave concern to many participants. It also meant that by virtue of the lack of feedback, stakeholders were most often uncertain as to whether messages were encoded / decoded successfully. It also implies that there were many unresolved issues which stakeholders would have liked the opportunity to have addressed.

The least important improvement suggested was that the organisation reduced formal restriction on who can communicate with whom. This showed that employees understood that there were structures in the organization that caused segregation within the communication process. However, this segregation was not seen as a major factor. It may also imply that many employees did not experience restrictions on who they spoke to and that the organisation had some sort of open-door policy in place.

Participants most often felt that feedback updates were vital to the stakeholder communication enhancement process. This reiterates the need for Simba PepsiCo to have feedback updates for their employees in Manufacturing Operations. Newsletters and electronic mail featured the lowest envisaged solutions. This implied that these already existed and they were currently tools used to facilitate communication amongst stakeholders. However, there may be incidents where some stakeholders did not read the newsletters. As such, the use of this method, although used extensively, may not be as effective a tool in communicating to stakeholders, especially if not supplemented with other forms (or channels) of communication. Most often newsletters served to keep employees informed on

matters relevant to the organisation and may not necessarily have contributed towards enhancing communication between stakeholders. Electronic mail, on the other hand, tends to personalise communication. However, the overload of communication via this channel often resulted in employees not receiving (e.g. full inboxes and filtering controls which treat some mail as spam) nor responding to correspondence in a timely manner.

Technology was also suggested as a possible solution to enhancing communication. This is very relevant to keep apace of advancing technology and the platform that it has provided for formal and informal communication. Applications such as WhatsApp forums (or groups) and SharePoint were proposed by participating stakeholders as applications (Apps) that could leverage efficient communication amongst the stakeholders. These Apps facilitate the exchange of communication in real time and could help to coordinate efforts.

Most participants felt that shop floor employees had a large role to play in designing communication solutions that could eliminate inefficient communication. This was particularly so because of the vital role that these employees play in converting raw material into finished goods.

The design of solutions should be done in-house because Simba PepsiCo understands its operations and culture better than any outsiders. This view was held by the vast majority of respondents. Some stakeholders were keen to lend a hand in the process because they had the necessary expertise and experience to do so. Internal solutions could translate to cost cuts for the organisation. Designing communication systems internally will therefore have the benefit of having more stakeholder buy-in and support (as they will be part of the solution) when compared to outsourced consultants. However, external consultants are often very experienced in identifying communication gaps and in finding systems that will address the gaps that they identify. This option should still remain open because there are instances where an objective party is able to see clearly what could be missed internally by an organisation.

5.2.3 To identify solutions that can be implemented to enhance and enable efficient communications amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations

Participants viewed the organisation's success rate at implementing change management initiatives as average at best, which is not good and not bad, but reveals that there is still

room for improvement within the organisation. Stakeholders also had an overall optimistic view that implementing communication solutions would be of great benefit to all stakeholders. They were also prepared to play active roles in implementing communication solutions. This is in keeping with the Simba PepsiCo saying, "One team, One Goal and One Simba", which needs to be put into practice. Participants also felt they were in a position to share their knowledge based on their qualifications and experiences to the benefit of the organisation when implementing communication systems and or strategies. More informal communication amongst the stakeholders and teambuilding were highlighted as alternative methods that could be used to compliment / supplement the implementation of communication initiatives. Taken jointly, these two initiatives could break down walls that prevent effective communication between stakeholders and improve stakeholder relations.

From the feedback received it is evident that an open-door policy does not exist at Simba PepsiCo. Having an open door policy will benefit the organisation because people will be free to communicate any concerns or make recommendations to management and other relevant stakeholders. The feedback mechanism was suggested to be two way process from top down and bottom up.

Key performance indicators will be needed to periodically assess whether different elements of implemented communication strategies were meeting desired outcomes. This sentiment was expressed by participating stakeholders as a means that will also guide and monitor their performance. It was also suggested that Simba PepsiCo conduct surveys before and after the implementation of communication solutions. Training was seen to be foundation upon which implementation should be based and was recommended for both management and frontline staff by participants. Participants also felt that rewards and recognition initiatives would motivate employees to strive towards better communication practices. Simba PepsiCo should therefore bare this in mind when strategising the implementation of communication solutions.

5.2.4   Objectives Review

The study set out to address the 3 objectives above in order to attain the study's aim, namely to identify factors that can be used in the design and implementation of communication strategies that could enhance efficient communication among stakeholders at Simba PepsiCo. Each of the objectives contained a summated discussion of feedback received from

participating stakeholders. The feedback received, once used appropriately will be of benefit to the organisation, its employees and other relevant stakeholders. To this end, a few recommendations are mentioned in the following section (section 5.3).

5.3   Recommendations to solve the Research Problem

The study set out to extract feedback from stakeholders within Simba PepsiCo of barriers and causes of inefficient communication that they experienced at the organisation. Stakeholders were also encouraged to make suggestions of how communication between them could be improved. The following recommendations, therefore, are addressed to the organisation with the intent to help in the design and implementation of communication strategies that will improve organisational communication.

i.   In order to eliminate existing barriers and causes of inefficient communication, the organisation should optimise the use of existing communication channels as stakeholders acknowledged the existence of these and felt that these were not being used to their full potential. Related to this, the organisation should consult with stakeholders on suggestions of incorporating new and / or appropriate communication channels.

ii.   Simba PepsiCo should also create a platform to facilitate the sharing of knowledge among stakeholders and create an environment that enables a feedback mechanism to allow for stakeholders to share their insights and concerns.

iii.   Stakeholders were very keen to embrace the concept of improving communication within the organisation and were prepared to give of themselves to improve communications. It is therefore recommended that Simba PepsiCo tap into this resource as they already have stakeholder buy-in.

iv.   Leadership should also play a proactive role in improving communication within the organisation. This may entail implementing a communications training strategy for all stakeholders, including themselves. Partnered with this, leadership should also set clear organisational goals for stakeholders to adhere to.

v.   The organisation was rated as average in terms of implementing communication strategies. However, employees were keen to play active roles in the design and

implementation of communication strategies. Once again this shows stakeholders' commitment and support of the organisation in terms of improving communications. To keep stakeholder support, it is recommended that any communications strategies should be via an in-house consultative process. This is particularly important because stakeholders expressed their preference in favour of in-house solutions over outsourced ones.

vi.   Stakeholders also felt that an informal platform should be created for them to interact with each other and build relationships. This indicates that many stakeholders do not really know the people with whom they interact with. It is therefore suggested that facilities and events should be put in place to facilitate this. In addition, team building activities should become more commonplace.

Therefore, in order to eliminate the barriers and causes of inefficient communication, it is important that the organisation use a holistic approach in designing and implementing communication strategies that would improve organisational communication. This will help to bridge the existing gap in communications among stakeholders within Simba PepsiCo.

5.4   Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Researchers

In conducting this study, a few challenges were experienced. These are each described below and accompanied with recommendations of how to overcome these for future researchers.

i.   Limited organisational support

Although expressed permission was obtained to conduct the study, many of the target population were reluctant to do so in fear of potential negative consequences that might accrue to them for participating in it. Many felt that they would be betraying the company if they participated.

It is therefore, proposed that the employer communicate to all staff members that there will be a survey which will be distributed to employees and that the research that it encompassed had the full support of the organisation. The organisation should also reassure employees that the study will be anonymous and that the findings will have enormous benefit to them and the company. This should be done prior to the distribution of survey invitations.

ii. Access to study participants

Simba PepsiCo's Johannesburg branch has in the region of 750 employees. Although every effort was made to get access to a comprehensive emailing list to invite as many employees as possible to participate in the study, this was, however, not possible. The study population was therefore limited to the emailing lists that were provided by the relevant persons to the researcher, possibly excluding other potential participants from the population under review.

It is recommended that buy-in from top management should be obtained and the IT department be informed of the study. Communication should also be sent to staff members that a study will be conducted and it required distributing their email addresses to the researcher. It should also be mentioned that participation will be optional. This should give IT the flexibility to provide future researchers with more comprehensive emailing lists to conduct their studies with.

iii. Technical challenges with getting invites to target population

The survey invitation had to be resent several times to some participants because they had claimed of not having received any email invites. Further investigation revealed that the invitation email was being filtered into their "junk mail".

A possible solution would be to have the IT department set up the filtering system to accept the email address from which the invitations were sent. IT should also remind employees to manage their email accounts because it was not possible for some emails to be delivered because employee inboxes were full.

5.4 Summary

This study sought to investigate the elements that hindered efficient communication within Manufacturing Operations in Simba PepsiCo, Johannesburg. It found that stakeholders were aware that communication inefficiencies existed within the organisation and could identify what they were. Participants also identified themselves as part of the problem as well also being part of the solution. Overall participants had a positive attitude towards the designing and implementation of communication strategies and expressed significant buy-in to the

concept. Leadership were respected for their roles, but it was felt that they too should get more involved and develop themselves to become even better leaders. The predominant themes that emerged through the study were the need for better communication channels and the needs for training of all stakeholders.

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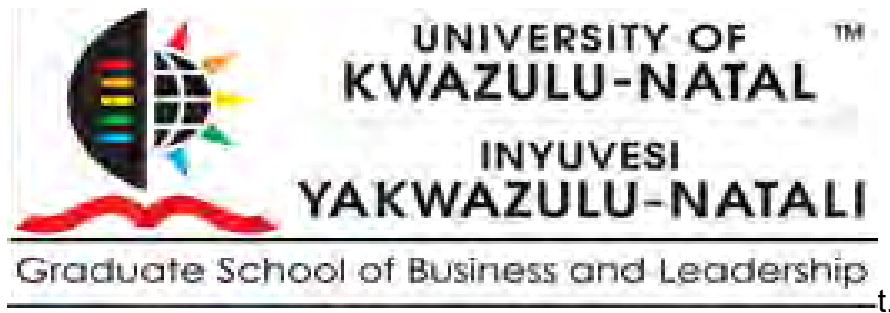
MBA Research Project
Researcher: Sithembile Hlatshwayo (0027 71 181 3616)
Email Address: sthe.hlatshwayo@gmail.com
Supervisor: Dr. Elias Munapo (0027 31 260 8943)
Email Address: munapoe@ukzn.ac.za
Research Office: Ms Mariette Snyman (0027 31 260 8350)
Email Address: Snymanm@ukzn.ac.za hssreclms@ukzn.ac.za

I, Sithembile Hlatshwayo, (Student Number: 212535600), an MBA student at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, kindly invite you to participate in a research project entitled:

INEFFECIENT COMMUNICATION AMONGST RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Investigating the causes of inefficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.
- Designing solutions that will enhance and enable efficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.

- Implementing solutions that will enhance and enable efficient communications amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations.

The study will provide elements or causes of inefficient communication that hinders seamless execution in Manufacturing Operations are identified and eliminated. The study would therefore assist in establishing recommendations to allow Manufacturing Operations to understand better the needs of all stakeholders by ensuring proper communication amongst key stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations and to take note that efficient communication will promote healthy employment relations.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequences. There would be no monetary gain emanating from participating in this research. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor, the details of which are listed above.

The survey should take about 15 - 20 minutes to complete. I hope you will take some of your precious time to complete it.

Sincerely

Student/Researcher Signature: …………………..Date: ……………………………

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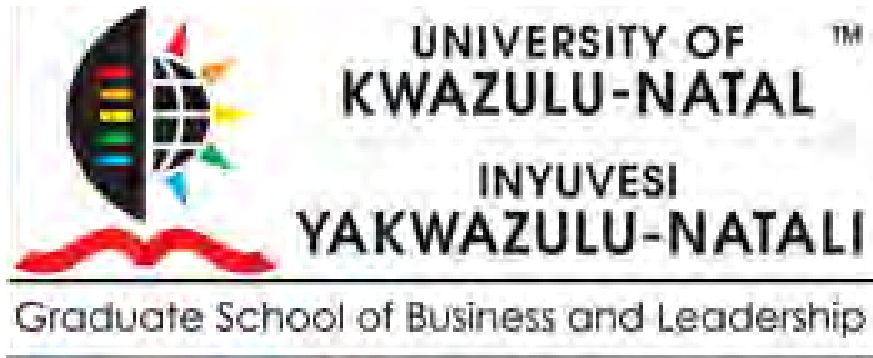
Dear Respondent,

MBA Research Project
Researcher: Sithembile Hlatshwayo (0027 71 181 3616)
Email Address: sthe.hlatshwayo@gmail.com
Supervisor: Dr. Elias Munapo (0027 31 260 8943)
Email Address: munapoe@ukzn.ac.za
Research Office: Ms Mariette Snyman (0027 31 260 8350)
Email Address: Snymanm@ukzn.ac.za, hssreclms@ukzn.ac.za

Research Project Title:

INEFFICIENT COMMUNICATION AMONGST RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

CONSENT

I ……………………………………………………………………………………………..
(Full names of participant)

Working   for
…………………………………………………………………………………… (Full
company name)

Hereby confirm that I fully understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I consent fully to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT: …………………………………….

DATE :   …………………………………..

QUESTIONNAIRE -
The participant or respondent is the head of the household.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

Date Questionnaire Was Completed

                                                    (dd/mm/yyyy)

Agreed to Participate
1. Yes   ☐

2. No (Then stop completing questionnaire)   ☐

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Please tick or mark with an X on the appropriate block.

Q1. What is your age?
    1. Younger than 18   ☐

    2. 18 – 24   ☐

    3. 25 – 34   ☐☐

    4. 35 – 44   ☐☐

    5. 45 – 54   ☐☐☐

    6. 55 – 64   ☐☐

    7. 65 or older   ☐☐
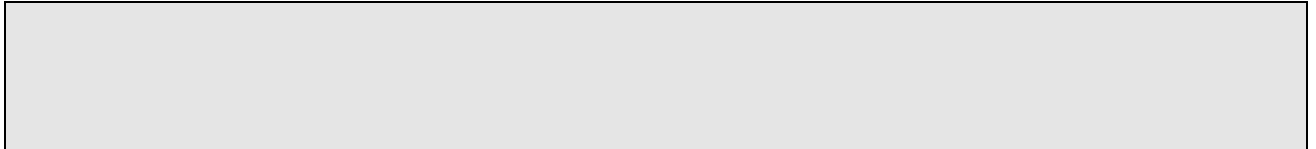
    8. Prefer not to answer   ☐☐

Q2. What is your gender?
    1. Male   ☐
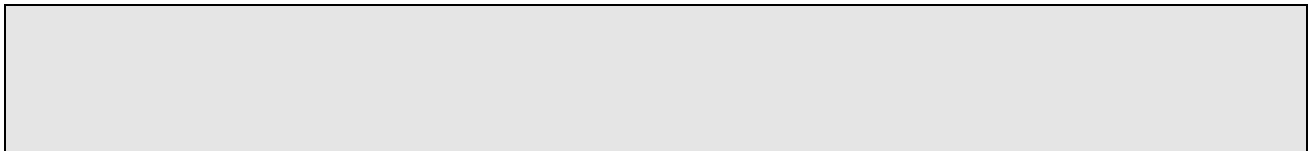
    2. Female   ☐

Q3. Race
    1. Black   ☐

2. White ☐

3. Indian ☐

4. Coloured ☐

5. Other ☐

Q4. Home Language:
1. Afrikaans ☐

2. English ☐

3. Ndebele ☐

4. Sepedi ☐

5. Setswana ☐

6. Southern Sotho ☐

7. Swati ☐

8. Tsonga ☐

9. Venda ☐

10. Xhosa ☐

11. isiZulu ☐

12. Other ☐

Q5. Highest level of education:
1. No formal education ☐

2. Matric ☐

3. Diploma ☐

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4. Degree ☐

5. Postgraduate ☐

6. Other ☐

Q6. Please state your occupation:

Q7. How long have you been employed at Simba PepsiCo?
   1. < 1 year ☐

   2. 2 - 5 years ☐

   3. 6 - 10 years ☐

   4. 11 - 15 years ☐

   5. > 15 years ☐

SECTION B: The causes of inefficient communication

Q8 Which of these do you think are the barriers to efficient communication? (Select all that apply)
   1. Lack of stakeholder involvement ☐

   2. Lack of stakeholder interest ☐

   3. Lack of stakeholder knowledge sharing ☐

   4. Competition between departments ☐

   5. Lack of communication channels ☐

   6. Difficulty in understanding what is being communicated ☐

   7. Other ☐

Q9. Which of these do you think are the causes of inefficient communication? (Select all that apply)

1. Unclear goals ☐
2. Cultural diversity ☐
3. Poor leadership ☐
4. Personal issues ☐
5. Demoralisation ☐
6. Other ☐

Q10. To what extent do language and culture contribute to inefficient communication?

1. Slightly ☐
2. Moderately ☐
3. Significantly ☐

SECTION C: Eliminating Inefficient Communication

Q11. What can you as individual do to eliminating barriers to efficient communication? (Select all that apply)

1. Understand that others see things differently to you ☐
2. Get feedback from the receiver ☐
3. Speaking face-to-face as often as possible ☐

4. Use language that the audience understands ☐

5. Use the right communication channels ☐

6. Use honesty and integrity in your communications ☐

7. Other ☐

Q12. What can be done by the organisation in eliminating barriers to communication and causes of inefficient communication? (Select all that apply)?

1. Clear organisational policy ☐

2. Clear organisational objectives ☐

3. Communication training ☐

4. Keeping managers and colleagues well informed ☐

5. Room for feedback ☐

6. Reduce formal restriction on who can communicate with whom ☐

7. Other ☐

.

Q13. What types of solution do you envisage that will enhance communication? (Select all that apply)

1. Proactive Communication ☐

2. Feedback updates ☐

3. Notice boards ☐

4. Desktop / TV Screens ☐

5. Newsletters ☐

6. Electronic mail ☐

7. Other ⬜

Q14. To what extent do shop floor employees play a role in designing solutions in regard to inefficient communication?
1. Very large extent ⬜

2. Large extent ⬜

3. Moderate extent ⬜

4. Small extent ⬜

5. Very small extent ⬜

Q15. From your perspective, can the business design solution in-house or should this solution be designed by an external consultant?
1. In-house ⬜

2. External consultant ⬜

SECTION D: Implementation Solutions

Q16. How successful is your organization in implementing change management initiatives?
1. Far above average ⬜

2. Above average ⬜

3. Average ⬜

4. Below average ⬜

5. Far below average ⬜

Q17. What role will you play in helping the organization to implement the solutions?

Q18. What are other methods that can be used in implementing initiatives or solutions?

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Q19. What measures can we put in place that can depict successful implementation?

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The End
Thank you for your time and co-operation.

SIMBA (PROPRIETARY) LIMITED
Reg. No. 1995/003667/07

10 March 2015

Miss. Sithembile Hlatshwayo
Isando
Kempton Park
Sithembile.hlatshwayo@pepsico.com

Dear Miss S Hlatshwayo

Re: PERMISSON TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FOR MBA PURPOSES

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at Simba (Pty) Ltd, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA), provided Ethical Clearance has been obtained. We noted that the title of your research project is:

"Inefficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations"

It is noted that Questionnaires shall be sent out to Simba (Pty) Ltd Isando Manufacturing management and employees as part constituting of the sample of study.

Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity. The outcome will be shared with the organization once completed.

Yours Sincerely

Chereen Godwin
HR. Director
SIMBA PEPSICO INTERNATIONAL
Tel: 011 928-6000
Email: chereen.godwin@pepsico.com

PEPSICO
INTERNATIONAL

23 March 2015

Ms Sithembile Petronella Hlatshwayo (212535600)
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Hlatshwayo,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0185/015M
Project title: Inefficient communication amongst relevant stakeholders in Manufacturing Operations

Full Approval – Expedited Approval

With regards to your application received on 18 March 2015. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and **FULL APPROVAL** for the protocol has been granted.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Elias Munapo
Cc Academic Leader Research: Mr M Hoque
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj / Ms Gina Mshengu