

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

The impact of interpersonal skills of managers on business performance

By

Freedom Nkululeko Ndlovu

961066985

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of**

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Supervisor: Mr. Martin Challenor

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Declaration

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Abstract

This study assessed various communication skills which a manager must possess in order to effectively communicate. This communication commonly would take place between or among individuals through a common system of symbols, signs and behaviour in friendship, circles, groups, and businesses, which would result in an improved business performance. This study concentrated on these two aspects of communication as follows:

- 1) Verbal communication
 - Vague statements
 - Ambiguous statements

- 2) Nonverbal communication
 - Physical appearance
 - Eye contact
 - Body language
 - Confidence
 - Manner of approach
 - Listening skills
 - Active communication

The study looked at the impact of each of these communication skills without concentrating on the causes of each in detail. The study therefore would reveal the impact of each without identifying the specific cause/s of each skill.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The intention and aim of this study was to assess the impact of interpersonal skills of managers and employees in the private sector in Durban. Interpersonal skills incorporate how a manager relates to employees, to other managers, individuals or a group in a work environment through communication. The extent of the impact of these communication skills will be thoroughly examined in order to make recommendations on how to improve business performance by improving management communication skills.

Lehman and DuFrene (2005:4) state that “communication is the process of exchanging information and meaning between or among individuals through a common system of symbols, signs and behaviour in friendship, circles, groups, and businesses”. Goodall and Goodall (2006:2) added that “more and more, especially in traditional professions such as law, accounting, architecture, design, engineering, education, business managers with communication skills as well as technical skills are being sought. It is therefore important that a person identifies and critically analyses these factors of communication”.

The findings of this study will show that the most important component of communication skills, which the respondents perceived as having a highest negative impact in business performance, is the manner of approach.

1.2 Background of the study

Goodall and Goodall (2006:2) stated that as organisational communication professionals, managers spend most of their lives communicating in business and professional contexts. Moreover, Lehman and DuFrene (2005:4) add that “effective business communication is essential to success in today”. In career activities, communication may take place in a wide variety of ways, including:

- Attending meetings and writing reports related to strategic plans and company policy.
- Presenting information to large and small groups.
- Explaining and clarifying management procedures and work assignments.
- Coordinating the work of various employees, departments, and other work groups.
- Evaluating and counselling employees.
- Promoting the company’s products, services and image.

Indeed, Ober (2007:3) said “communication must have occurred before a common goal can even be established because communication is the means by which information is shared, activities are coordinated, and decisions are made. Understanding how communication works in business and how communicate competently within will help participate more effectively in every aspect of business”.

Hamilton (2005:4) said an organisation’s success “depends on the communication skills of all its employees that many consider communication skills to be more important to job than specific technical skills”. Hattersley and McJannet (2005:3) stated that “in business, as in most areas of life, the best idea in the world will fail if it is not communicated effectively”. Every form of communication is both situational (organisational) and personal (stylistic). Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:4) stated that “effective business communication involves both the sender and the receiver.

The sender must take responsibility for achieving the four basic goals of business communication:

- Receiver understanding
- Receiver response
- Favorable relationship
- Organizational goodwill

Sender must take responsibility for achieving the four goals of business communication". Hynes (2008:3) said that managers should possess the "sophisticated skills required to communicate to a diverse work group in a rapidly changing environment". O'Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:3) stated that indeed communication skills were central to promoting excellence now and in the coming years for business sustainability.

This background indicates the importance and motivation of conducting studies on communication because of the evolving business environment. This study will assess various communication skills which a manager must possess in order to effectively communicate. This communication commonly takes place between or among individuals through a common system of symbols, signs and behaviour in friendship, circles, groups, and businesses, which will result in an improved business performance.

1.3 Motivation for the study

The motivation for this study was to assess the quality of certain types of communication skills which affect the business performance in the private sector in Durban. Due to different people with different cultural background in the workplace, communication can play a vital role in making sure that managers and employees all have a clear and shared understanding of what needs to be done. Only through effective communication can both employees and managers achieve personal and organisational goals. Therefore, managers and employees need each other's support in order to improve business performance either as an individual or organisation.

1.4 Focus of the study

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:11) said that "there are two types of communication: verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication uses words; nonverbal communication does not. Although many people associate the term verbal only with spoken words, verbal communication actually includes both written and oral messages". O'Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:119) stated that "nonverbal communication is any message – other than spoken or written words – that conveys meaning. How you use your voice, face, and body language; how you dress; and even how you arrange your office or the seating configuration at a meeting – all these signals have meaning to other people".

This study will concentrate on these two aspects of communication as follows:

- 1) Verbal communication
 - Vague statements

- Ambiguous statements
- 2) Nonverbal communication

- Physical appearance
- Eye contact
- Body language
- Confidence
- Manner of approach
- Listening skills
- Active communication

The study will look at the impact of each of these communication skills without concentrating on the causes of each in detail. This means the study will reveal the impact of each without identifying the specific cause/s of each skill.

1.5 Problem statement

This study attempted to determine the communication factors which are identified in Chapter 1 Section 1.2: Focus of the study, and their effects on the interpersonal skills required by management to improve their communication skills. This study will examine the impact of these factors in order to identify and recommend the requirements that are necessary to improve management interpersonal skills. Hamilton (2005:4) said, “the best way to improve communication is, first, to understand what it is”. Based on this statement, the study will not attempt to identify the root cause of failure in a specific communication skill, rather the study will reveal what employees perceive as the most sensitive communication skill. In other words, the one which affects the business the most. In summary, Ober (2007:3) stated “communication is necessary if an organisation is to achieve its goals”.

1.6 Research objectives

The research sets out to explore questions raised by the dynamic of communication.

The questions are:

- the extent to which a manager's facial expression affects the way in which the message is intended by the manager ?
- the extent to which a manager's use of vague statements affects the way in which the message is intended by the manager ?
- the extent to which a manager's manner of approach affects the confidence of the employees?
- the extent to which a manager's confident appearance affects the way in which employees interpret and carry out instructions?

The study will ask employees to give their perceptions on the extent to which the points above affect effective communication.

1.7 Research design and methodology

The study will use a quantitative research survey to be completed by the respondents (i.e. employees). The study will be formatted in a self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The questions were simple and designed with careful consideration of the guidelines mentioned in Section 3.3 (Formulation of key questions). The literature study was conducted by using textbooks, journals, periodicals and the internet, as set out in Chapter 2. The results of this empirical study will then be directly correlated to the theoretical aspects to determine the sensitivity of these communication factors and to assess areas that need to be improved, or examples which managers need to implement, or, in some cases, cease in order to improve business performance.

1.7.1 Ethical requirement

The ethical process and procedure of this study met the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) requirements. It was obtained before the questionnaire was sent out to potential respondents and it is attached as Appendix B.

1.7.2 Representative sample

The study focuses on employees to get their perceptions of their manager's communication skills in the private sector in Durban. The qualifying criterion for eligible respondent is described in Chapter 3 Section 3.5.1 (The kind of people to interview). The sample for the survey was relatively easy to identify.

1.7.3 Data analysis

In Chapter 4 the results which were generated by using SPSS software, are discussed in detail. The results were analysed and presented in a form of regression analysis, descriptive analysis and correlation analysis.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the data analysis were as a result of:

- The use of closed-ended questions which prevented the respondents from expanding on certain points,
- The study was restricted to Durban organisations only
- The number of respondents was adequate for this study but more respondents are needed.
- This was quantitative work only.

1.9 Overview of the dissertation chapters

1.9.1 Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter explains the theory behind communication skills. It will explore the key communications skills which affect business performance and their impacts.

1.9.2 Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter covers the research methodology used to get the results. The chapter will discuss and justify the research methodology used. The data collection, data processing, sample identification, data quality and research limitations will be discussed in this chapter.

1.9.3 Chapter 4: Results analysis

Using the SPSS software, the results will be presented and interpreted in this chapter. Regression analysis, correlation analysis and descriptive analysis will be done in order to determine the relationship between and the impact of these communication skills.

1.9.4 Chapter 5: Discussion, recommendation and conclusion

The results of the survey will be discussed in this chapter. The perception of the employees who participated will be compared to the studies which were discussed in literature review in Chapter 2. The discussion will be followed by the recommendations as based on the findings of the study. The chapter will then conclude the study.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the broad field of study and this study specifically. The next chapter explains key communication skills which impact on management skills and business performance. The next chapter forms the core and foundation for understanding the impact of communication skills.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains, identifies, and explores the key effective communication skills which a manager must possess in order to improve workplace performance in the private sector. The communication skills are divided into two parts: verbal and non-verbal signals. The verbal signals are spoken and/or written words which may vary, dependent on the level of expectation from the listener. The non-verbal signals are in a form of the body language, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and physical appearance. O'Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:119) pointed out "that successful verbal and non-verbal communication requires careful planning, analysis, execution, delivery".

2.2 Verbal Communication in a business

All forms of communication are a two way stream. Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:4) stated that "effective business communication involves both the sender and the receiver, but the sender must take responsibility for sending clear, articulate and simple statements". Moreover, Lehman and DuFrene (2005:4) stated that "the sender must carefully design a message by selecting

- words that clearly convey the message and
- nonverbal signals (gestures, stance, tone of voice, and so on) that reinforce the verbal message".

The receiver also has an obligation to listen carefully to the sender's message and Hamilton (2005:87) stated that effective listening can help your relationship with your boss by helping you understand the boss's "expectations and frame of reference".

2.2.1 Selection of key words in business communication

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:93) stated that "the basic principle is to keep your message short and simple. Communicators remember this principle by its initials, KISS, which stands for Keep It Short and Simple. Application of this principle means using short and simple words, sentences, and paragraphs to compose a business message. As a result, the message will be concise, and easy to understand". The baseline on good writing is the correct use of words, as confirmed by Hattersley and McJannet (2005:233). It is vital and critical that the employer selects and uses the words which the receiver can easily understand. This makes it easier for the employee to carry out the manager's wishes.

Goodall and Goodall (2006:65) stated that the first step in a 'choose, create, coordinate, and deliver' process was to establish a goal for the message. To effectively define the goal, the sender must:

- Assess the audience. Determine who the listeners are, and be familiar with their needs and expectations. Think about the ways in which the listener will be helped if they accept the idea. It is also advisable to examine the ways in which they, as the presenter, may be negatively affected if the communication episode does not proceed as planned.
- Generate outcomes. Determine what they want the listener to know, believe, or do as a result of the presentation.
- Establish criteria for measuring success. Determine how they will know if they have been successful in attaining their goal.

2.2.1.1 Choose understandable words

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:94) stated that the first principle of word selection is to choose words that the receiver would be able to understand. Figure 2.1 shows the comparison between the two words:

Figure 2.1: Less understandable versus more understandable words

Less Understandable	More understandable
Abdicate	resign
Amble	walk
Apprehend	arrest
Ascend	climb
Demonstrate	show
Emulate	copy
Exonerate	clear
Expedite	rush
Facilitate	help
Finality	end
Gregarious	sociable
Incite	provoke
Incriminate	blame
Initiate	start
Prerogative	right
Petulant	rude
Utilize	use
verbalize	say
Zealot	fanatic

Adapted from Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:95)

Figure 2.1 illustrates some examples of words which are short and simple for a receiver in business communication to understand.

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:95) also pointed out that, in certain situations, technical terminology had to be used. Technical words are terms that have a specific meaning in a particular field. The appropriate choice of technical words was a special consideration in choosing understandable words. Figure 2.2 below shows the comparison between the technical words and their simpler equivalents:

Figure 2.2: Technical versus Nontechnical words

Technical words	Nontechnical words
acceleration clause	immediate repayment demand for late loan payments
amenities	features of the property
arrears	an unpaid debt
brief	summary of legal case
capital-intensive	requiring large sum of money
cerebellum	lower part of the brain
COLA	cost of living adjustment to income
de facto	actual
equity	owner's value beyond debt
gelding	neutral male horse
font	typeface or print style for characters
freeware	free software
haute couture	high fashion
juried	judged
symposium	conference
synchronous	at the same time
underwriter	sponsor or insurer

Adapted from Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:95)

Figure 2.2 illustrates some key nontechnical words which make it easier for a receiver in business communication to understand.

In summary, Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:96) concluded that the presenter could best choose understandable words by selecting simple words, short words, and technical words appropriate to the receiver.

2.2.1.2 Use specific, precise words

The specific words are clear and precise in meaning. Moreover, Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:96) advised that “in business messages use the words that are clear and that will leave no question in the receiver’s mind about the intended meaning. Words selected in the message should be precise so that they accurately mirror what you want the receiver to understand”. Vague or abstract words are indefinite words so they do not have a specific meaning. This means that the meaning is not the same for each receiver of the message. Figure 2.3 below shows the comparison between certain vague and specific words:

Figure 2.3: Vague versus specific words

Vague words	Specific words
many	1,000 or 500 to 1,000
early	5:00 AM
hot	100 degrees Fahrenheit
most	89.9 percent
others	College of Business Administration students
poor student	has a 1.6 grade point average (4.0 = A)
very rich	a millionaire
soon	7 pm Tuesday
furniture	an oak desk

Adapted from Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:96)

Figure 2.3 shows that, as Hynes (2008:69) also pointed out, accuracy of information transmission is another advantage of writing.

Writing permits greater control of words and message organisation in effective communication. Accuracy, in turn, often eliminates confusion, ensures clarity, and further contributes to economy and efficiency.

A further example of how a manager can avoid the use of vague and inefficient statements is depicted by Albee (2008:1) in the two examples below:

Example one:

Vague: *The business streamlines business processes, increasing the employee productivity.*

Specific: The business helps other businesses to finely tune the hiring process to ensure the company engages qualified, highly motivated salespeople that hit the ground running with minimum ramp time.

Example two:

Vague: *The business helps the other businesses to improve business intelligence for better insights.*

Specific: The business helps the other businesses to design evaluation tools to ensure the businesses have the best insights and coaching options to keep the salespeople on track with the company's selling objectives.

2.3 Nonverbal communication in a business

Lehman and DuFrene (2005:53) stated that “people constantly send meaning through kinesic communication, an idea expressed through non-verbal behaviour. In other words, receivers gain additional meaning both from what they see and hear – the visual and vocal:

- Visual – gestures such as winks, smiles, frowns, sighs, attire, grooming, and all kinds of body movements.
- Vocal – intonation, projection, and resonance of the voice”.

Nonverbal communication in business management is critical and Hynes (2008:176) proposed that “nonverbal factors are clearly a crucial element of managerial communication. Without nonverbal communication as a source of information, most richness and much of the meaning in messages would be lost. In many cases, conversations would be complicated by the need to repeat messages for clarity, and the time required to convey the information, would multiply enormously”.

2.3.1 Physical appearance

Bixler (2008:1) said “books are judged by their covers, houses are appraised by their curb appearance, and people are initially evaluated on how they choose to dress and behave. In a perfect world this is normally not fair, moral, or just. What is inside should count a great deal more. And eventually it usually does, but not right away. In the meantime, a lot of opportunities can be lost”.

“Knowing whether to dress to impress or to take a step back and dress conventionally is key to making the right impression”, added Steadman (2009:1) who believed that looking the best at work could not only determine how colleagues perceived the individual, but could also impact on his/her chances of advancement. It is vital that managers are conscious of their appearance at work and the impact it has on making the right impression.

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:406) stated that “physical appearance is an important nonverbal communication. An individual first impression from, for example, a letter’s envelope, stationery, letterheads, format, and neatness. This first impression will definitely influence the receiver’s reaction to the letter. The physical appearance of a speaker influences an oral message as much as the appearance of a letter influences a written message. Listeners use physical appearance as a clue to the speaker’s credibility. Physical appearance also influences a receiver’s perceptions of a speaker’s socioeconomic status”.

2.3.2 Eye contact

Hamilton (2005:107) stated that eye contact signalled the wish to participate. Eye contact signals to others that it is okay to talk. Because nonverbal expressions have different meanings in various cultures, be careful about assigning the culture’s “meanings for eye to all people”. Towne (2009:1) said that a manager who makes good eye contact establishes confidence, authority and expertise.

2.3.3 Body language

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:407) stated that “whether used in conjunction with spoken words or viewed independently, body sends messages to those with whom one communicates. Other forms of body language include posture and gestures. The way a person sits or stands, communicates a nonverbal message. An individual standing or sitting erectly conveys confidence and pride, whereas a person slumping over may be perceived as being tired or depressed”. If an individual leans towards another person during a conversation, the body language indicates that the person likes or is interested in the other communicator. If a person leans away from the other person, the posture shows a dislike or disinterest in the other individual.

Research done by Sterling (2008:1) found that “not only is it important for managers to be aware of own body language, but it is as important to understand what body language so effectively assess and react to others. The most significant fact should remember is that non-verbal signals have five times the impact of verbal signals”.

Bjorseth (2008:1) stated that the body language impacted the success of conveying the message and “success of any encounter begins the moment someone lays eyes on” other person. One of the first things they noticed about the person was the aura, that distinctive atmosphere that surrounded the person. The aura enters with the person and starts speaking long before the person opens mouth. To summarise, Hynes (2008:181) stated that movement is a very important category of nonverbal communication and we pay attention to various aspects of a communicator’s “body – head, trunk, arms, legs – as we watch and listen, drawing inferences from their movements”.

A list of common interpretation of kinesic cues appears in Figure 2.4 below:

Figure 2.4: Kinesic cue

Body Segment	Movement	Interpretation
Head	Gazing	Attentive; honest
	Shifting eyes	Uncertain; lying
	Eyebrows up	Challenging; open
	Smiling mouth	Enjoyment; pleasure
	Nodding	Listening; agreeing
	Tilting head	Interested
	Head down	Defensive
Trunk and Shoulders	Leaning toward	Interested; rapport
	Leaning away	Lack of interest; skeptical
	Posture slouched	Low self-esteem
	Expanded chest	Confident
	Shrunken chest	Threatened
	Buttoning jacket	Formal; leaving
Hands and Arms	Touching others	Powerful
	Touching self	Nervous; anxious
	Repetitive movements	Lying; unsure of self
	Hand over mouth while speaking	Want to escape
	Arms crossed	Bored; closed to idea
	Fingers steeled	Confident
	Hands on hips	Challenging; arrogant
	Hands in pockets	Secretive
	Palms showing	trusting
	Pointing	Authoritative; aggressive
	Clenched hands; wringing hands	Need assurance

Adapted from Hynes (2008:181)

2.3.4 Confidence

A study done by Taub (2007:1) found that people wanted “to work for companies where they have confidence in the organization and trust what senior management is doing. Fostering that trust is especially important in today's global market as it creates an environment in which employees understand that changes to the workplace may be necessary to remain competitive”.

McCrimmon (2007:1) pointed out that “many managers were not as confident as they wanted to be. Why was this? It's a matter of what base confidence on. Managers are seen as decision makers, people who know their stuff. To change style at work, therefore, to manage the expectations of key stakeholders. This means selling them on the advantages of being a facilitator rather than a know-it-all, pointing out that role is to get the best out of people reporting to. This requires to stimulate their thinking, not disempower them by creating the impression that the manager knows all the answers.”

“Self-confident people inspire confidence in others: Their audience, their peers, their bosses, their customers, and their friends. Gaining the confidence of others is one of the key ways which a self-confident person finds success. Level of self-confidence can show in many ways: behavior, body language, and so on” (Essential Skills, 2008a). This perception could be caused by lack of confidence in the global economy since the news in September 2008 of the collapsed economy in the world as Nell (2009) pointed out. The global economic meltdown makes people unsure of whether South Africa has managers who are capable of weathering the storm. The 2009 first quarter Gross Domestic Product figures (GDP) released by Statistics South Africa (2009) confirmed that South Africa is indeed in recession.

2.3.4.1 Giving criticism of a person's behaviour

Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland (2005:27) stated "that in order for a person to be" able to express criticism, he/she should feel self-confident enough. General points to take into consideration when giving criticism of an opinion are as follows:

- Indicate clearly which aspects of the other person's behaviour are being criticised.
- Speak in "I terms": "I think" instead of "You are", "You think". By speaking in "I terms" a person keeps the criticism focussed on oneself and is therefore less accusing.
- Give the other person a chance to reply: for example, by asking "What do you think about it?"

2.3.4.2 Reacting to criticism

When reacting to criticism about one's behaviour, Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland (2005:31) stated that this entailed first listening calmly, and ensuring that the criticism is clearly understood. If there are any areas of doubt, ask the person to clarify. The following points are important when reacting to criticism:

- Listen carefully and try to remain as calm as possible.
- Ask for clarification and explanation if you do not understand something.
- State what you are in agreement with and what you are not in agreement with.
- Explain how the situation came about and state what can be done about it

2.3.5 Manner of approach

Managers give instructions to employees on a regular basis. Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland (2005:24) advised that a manager should choose a good moment for making a request or giving an order. In general, there are three clear ways in which a problem situation can be approached: the submissive way, the assertive way, and the aggressive way.

- Submissive means not assertive enough, in other words, timid, shy and self-conscious. When managers are 'submissive, they let others dominate them, they are often dependent on others, they don't dare to say what they want to and they are afraid of entering into conflict with others' (Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland, 2005).
- Aggressive means: standing up for themselves, but in an overbearing way. They silence others, and come across as threatening. Another term which approximates this behaviour is 'authoritative'. (Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland, 2005)
- Assertive means: being outspoken, standing up for themselves, being independent, daring to express their feelings. The main principle here is that they are responsible for themselves and their actions. They decide 'if what they do is 'good' or 'bad'. They do not allow themselves to be influenced by what others think of them, or by what they think that others think of them' (Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland, 2005).

2.3.6 Use body language as a competitive advantage

Samuel (2008:1) suggested the following ten ways in which a person could improve their use of body language to their advantage:

- “Make good eye contact to show that you are sincere and honest. Look anywhere in the eye-nose triangle for 2/3 of the time, then look away for 1/3 of the time.
- Smile, it will give the impression of a positive, friendly, enthusiastic personality.
- Give a firm, but not aggressively strong, handshake. One pump is adequate. Make sure that the webs of both hands are toward the ceiling and that the joined hands are not closer to one person than the other. This is the handshake that says, ‘I seek to co-operate with you on equal terms.’
- Show true interest in the other person by using active listening (being attentive and asking questions to keep up the conversation.) Also, remembering and using the person’s name is the single largest, ‘I am interested in you’ statement that a person can make.
- Match energy level of the other person. It is also good practice to match the rate, pitch and rhythm of the other person’s voice. A person will especially want to use this tool during phone interviews and sales calls.
- Eliminate nervous gestures like hair twirling, clothes picking, shaking feet, and saying ‘err’ and ‘um.’ These gestures are annoying, and can be death to credibility in a meeting or an interview.
- Develop good posture, be seen as confident and self-controlling. Bad posture can distract people from what is trying to communicate.
- Use postural echoing, or mirroring, to create rapport with the other person. Mirroring a person’s posture conveys that you acknowledge and accept the other person’s emotional state.
- Use postural dissonance, or dissimilar body language, when you need to establish yourself as the leader of the group. For example, may need to stand up during a meeting to gain control of the meeting participants.

- Recognize personal space boundaries. The boundaries will vary by the situation, how well the person, and by culture”.

2.4 Listening skills

“Listening is one of the most important skills a person can have. How well a person listens has a major impact on one’s job effectiveness, and on the quality of one’s relationships with others. Clearly, listening is a skill that we can all benefit from improving. By becoming a better listener, a person will improve the productivity, as well as the ability to influence, persuade, and negotiate. What’s more, a person will avoid conflict and misunderstandings. All necessary for workplace success”, (Essential Skills, 2008b).

Indeed, most working professionals recognise that “listening is a skill that can be improved, says Hamilton (2005:84). Listening is “an integral part of the communication process”, adds Goodall and Goodall (2006:99). People have various reasons for listening: “for entertainment, to gain information, to receive instructions, to hear, and to show respect”, conclude Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:399).

2.4.1 Hearing versus listening

“Hearing is a physical process; listening is a mental one. Listening involves comprehending and retaining” what is heard, add Krizan, Merrier and Jones, (2005:399). “Listening is a voluntary process that goes beyond simply reacting to sounds and includes understanding, analyzing, evaluating, and responding. Listening is also more than just part of ‘spoken communication’. Messages are both verbal and nonverbal, use more than just sense of hearing to understand, analyze,

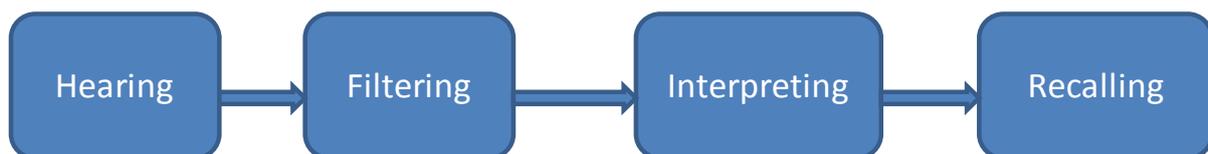
evaluate, and respond. Listening requires concentration, which means holding a key idea in mind while consider alternative or conflicting concepts”, say (O’Hair, Gustav and Dixon, 2005:95).

Goodall and Goodall (2006:99) stated that listening was process of hearing and interpreting the message. The failure to listen is often as a result of a lack of formal training on listening process. The problem is that managers spend 80 percent of their time communicating, and they often receive training in the speaking, reading, and writing aspects of communication. They do not seem to have time learn to listen. Johnson (2008:1) stated that the contrast between hearing and really listening could be as different as night and day. In a business environment, not listening effectively to customers, employees, and peers can mean the difference between success and failure.

2.4.2 Listening process

The listening process consists of four elements (Krizan, Merrier and Jones, 2005:399) as shown below by figure 2.5. Hearing is one of these elements; the other three are filtering, interpreting, and recalling.

Figure 2.5: The Listening process



Adapted from Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005)

2.4.2.1 Hearing

The first element in the listening process, hearing, is a physiological process. When people hear, their auditory nerves are stimulated by sound waves. Everyone hears a sound unless they have an impairment (Krizan, Merrier and Jones, 2005:399). Hearing has been further described by Goodall and Goodall (2006:100) as the passive and physical process of listening. Managers may hear an employee's words, but they do not necessarily "understand their meaning. Hearing is simply what happens when a message vibrates their eardrums and causes a signal to move to the brain".

2.4.2.2 Filtering

"The second element of the listening process, filtering, is the elimination of unwanted stimuli", says (Krizan, Merrier and Jones, 2005:399). Filtering allows an employee or manager to focus on the stimuli that are of interest (Krizan, Merrier and Jones, 2005:399). In order to be able to select the right information, Hamilton (2005: 95) suggested that a manager had to learn to become highly selective. They should pay attention to things that were important or of interest to them and tune out all other interferences. Schneider (2008:1) stated that listeners should "be able to filter those emotions and understand how they impact their ability to listen. Distractions include noise in the room, people walking in and out of the office, e-mails popping up on the screen, or a person's own" physical or emotional discomfort unrelated to the conversation.

2.4.2.3 Interpretation

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:399) stated that the third element of the listening process was interpreting. When interpreting what is being heard, the manager's 'mind assigns meaning to the stimuli', add Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:399). Employees and managers tend to 'consider nonverbal cues as well as verbal cues when interpreting' oral messages. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, it is critical and vital for the receiver (employee) to interpret stimuli in the same way the sender (manager) intended and vice versa. Hamilton (2005:96) explained that each needs to decode what the other is trying to convey and as a result "some of the most serious listening problems occur" in the interpretation stage. Ober (2007:12) added that "sometimes senders and receivers attribute different meanings to the same word or attributed the same" meaning to different words. When this mismatch occurred, miscommunication would be the result.

2.4.2.4 Recalling

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:400) stated that the "fourth element, recalling, involves remembering, at a later time, the information that was interpreted earlier. The success of this element depends heavily on the association (relationship) placed on the stimuli during the interpretation phase". Hamilton (2005:96) added that in this stage of communication, listeners thought "about the message, make more extensive inferences, evaluate and judge the speaker and message. In assigning a value judge to what they have sensed and understood, listeners decide whether the speaker is qualified, the information and evidence are accurate, and the comments are relevant and worth time". 'A listener's evaluation was often affected by their attitude towards the speaker. Listening skills are as important as feedback skills for the manager. Listening involves being present and allowing communication to occur. A person or audience does this through the use of open body language, a

friendly voice tone, and a genuine respect for the other person's concerns' (The University of Iowa, 2008).

In conclusion, "the success of the listening process depends on all four elements. If one of the elements is omitted or fails to function properly, the entire listening process is jeopardized", says Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:400). To ensure that the listening process is carried out properly, certain guidelines need to be followed.

2.4.3 Improving listening skills

Bacal (2008:1) stated that "whether you are an executive, manager or line employee, one of the best things you can do for yourself is to improve your listening skills. People who listen effectively are perceived as more helpful, more 'in tune' and tend to exert more influence over others than those that are less effective listeners, gain the trust and confidence of their employees by showing that they are interested in the" points, concerns, ideas of employees.

O'Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:91) stated that improving listening skills could be used to help persuade, motivate, improve productivity, boost morale, obtain cooperation, sell, teach, inform, or achieve other goals. In organisational settings, managers who are perceived as most competent, are those who know their employees well and who are sensitive to their ideas and concerns. These managers are also rated as the best listeners in the organisation. It is essential to develop listening skills in order to work in the teams that will be required in the workplace.

Hynes (2008:155) added that a number of essential managerial skills involve listening because:

- “Much of the data necessary for decision making comes through listening to employees, and poor listeners miss important information,
- Listening makes a person more dependable. People, who listen well, follow directions better, make fewer errors, say foolish things less often, and generally become the kinds of people others will ask for advice or direction.
- Good listeners are more respected and liked by those they work with”.

2.4.4 Listen to determine the purpose of the message

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:401) state that oral messages have purpose, as do written messages. As listeners, people need to determine the purpose of the oral message so that they can decide the mode that they will use when listening. Hynes (2008:163) added that effective listeners were those who search a message for information that had special meaning to them. The three modes commonly used to listen to messages were: cautious listening, skimming, and scanning.

- Cautious listening is used when one needs to understand and remember both the general concept and all the details of the message. ‘This mode requires more energy than the others because of the amount or complexity of material on which one must concentrate. When listening in this mode, one’s mind has no time to relax’ (Krizan, Merrier and Jones, 2005:401).
- Skimming is used when one needs to understand only the general concepts of the message. ‘When using this mode of listening, one’s mind has time to relax because one does not need to remember all the details being presented’ (Krizan, Merrier and Jones, 2005:401).
- Scanning is used when one concentrates on details of specific interest instead of on the message’s general concept. ‘No energy is wasted trying to retain information that is not of specific value. One shortcoming in using this mode

is that one's mind may wander; and one may miss material that is important' (Krizan, Merrier and Jones, 2005:402).

Figure 2.6 below shows the characteristics of bad and good listeners.

Figure 2.6: Characteristics of a Good and Bad Listener

Good listeners	Bad listeners
maintain steady eye contact	interrupt
devote full attention to the speaker	are inattentive and easily distracted
keep posture and demeanor alert	use negative body language
give verbal cues	change the subject
paraphrase to clarify	give no short verbal prompts
demonstrate empathy	are very critical
are patient	are impatient
share the limelight	take over the conversation
indicate an open mind	are discouraging
leave the answer for the speaker	play "Mr. Fix-it"
listen for intent as well as content	think what they will say next

Adapted from O'Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:109)

In order to be a good listener O'Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:102) suggested that managers should ask three key and critical questions:

- "What must a person get out from this listening situation?
- What would the sender like to get out of this situation?
- What should the other persons get out of my listening to them?"

2.4.5 Barriers to listening

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005:403) described a listening barrier as anything that interfered with the listening process. O’Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:110) added that competent listening involved dismantling the barriers to a listener’s own reception of the message. The most common listening problems are the three D’s: distraction, disorientation, and defensiveness. These three D’s are better explained in Figure 2.7 below.

Figure 2.7: The three D’s

Problem	Components	Consequences	Actions
Distraction	Mental	Missing needed information	Place greater emphasis on the speaker
	Environmental	Appearing uninterested	Withhold attention to distraction Take notes to stay on track.
Disorientation	Confusion	Appearing dazed	Simplify information on its basic level
	Boredom	Seeming apathetic	Focus on the main points
	Self-reflecting	Appearing self-centered	Relate what the speaker is saying
Defensiveness	Disliking the speaker	Making biased judgements	Understands that it's not about "you" personally
	Resenting the situation	Reducing alternatives	Ask objective quations to self about content

Adapted from O’Hair, Gustav and Dixon (2005:111)

Hamilton (2005:90) noted that some barriers to effective listening were not directly under a person’s ‘control, for example, a hearing loss, noisy office equipment’, or a loud conversation could prevent a person from hearing an important message.

2.4.6 Benefits of effective listening

Hamilton (2005:99) said effective listeners used their skills to uncover the 'values, needs, expectations, goals of those with whom they' worked. "When listening is effective, people get a better understanding of what motivates their superiors, colleagues, and subordinates", adds Hamilton (2005:99). They recognise that other people's values and expectations are either similar to or different from their own, and this information facilitates their own and the organisational goals. A well-developed listening skill will:

- Improve productivity and management/employee relationships
- Reduce misunderstandings and prevent labour disputes
- Provide clear messages and opportunity to learn from others
- Provide room for employees to express their opinions

2.5 Improving communication skills

"The ability to communicate clearly is the critical core competency for successful managers at all levels and in all industries. In addition, they need to learn how to:

- Develop and use their listening skills to solve problems, diffuse conflict, teach staff, and be a more productive manager or team leader
- Ask the right type of question to elicit information, encourage a response, or create a relationship
- Understand their audience before communicating their ideas in any format
- Choose the most appropriate mode for communicating their message

- Use effective language to express their ideas clearly in well-constructed letters, proposals, memos, and e-mail”, says (American Management, 2008).

2.6 The impact of business performance on economy

Schiller (2007:343) stated that managers must learn to motivate employees to their maximum potential in order to increase business performance. To maximise productivity, managers must develop confidence and trust in employees to believe in their decision. The business profitability and performance improve the economy of the country.

2.7 An hiatus in the debate

This study is part of the attempt to address and explores the hiatus on the private sector in Durban on factors of communication which affect the business performance. There has been no study to date in private sector Durban in this field therefore this work will add value to the further research on this field in this area.

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion the theory stated that the manager (sender of the message) directly or indirectly sent a message and signal verbally or nonverbally to the employee (receiver of the message) in a form which created a certain perception with the employee. This perception drives and leads the employees to be able to trust, believe, listen, and be confident in the manager. The next chapter forms the core and foundation for the research methodology for this research work.

Chapter 3

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains, identifies, and explores the research methodology of this work. The research methodology is critical in research because it explains the logic in data collection, questions asked, sample quality and results interpretation. Based on this, the limitations and implications of this work can be identified.

Lind, Marchal, Wathen (2006:5) stated that research was “the science of collecting, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting data to assist in making more effective decisions”. Keller (2007:1) said “statistics is a way to get information from the data. Statistical analysis is of great importance to managers and decision makers” because it shows the extent of the problem. Weiers (2005:4) added that “statistics and its applications were an integral part of people’s lives. In such diverse settings as politics, medicine, education, business, and the legal arena, human activities are both measured and guided by statistics”.

Keller (2007:19) stated that “data are observed values of a variable. The collection of data can be classified as either quantitative or qualitative”. Sweeney, Williams and Anderson (2006:7) stated that “qualitative data includes labels or names used to identify an attribute of each element”. Qualitative data uses either a ‘nominal or ordinal scale of measurement’ and maybe nonnumeric or numeric. In this study quantitative data has been used.

3.2 Quantitative method

According to Neill (2008:1) “quantitative research is commonly used to investigate research questions”. The research questions can collect either primary data or secondary data. Keller (2007:19) added that quantitative data were real numbers, such as heights, weights, incomes, and distance.

3.2.1 Primary data

Weiers (2005:125) said that primary data referred to the data generated by a researcher for the specific problem or decision at hand. Kriel (2008:1) added that “primary sources of a specific type of information are the original works, books, magazine articles, films, sound recordings, which reflect the information firsthand. Secondary sources include commentaries, explanations, elucidations, which other writers have produce on the primary sources. It is desirable (especially in historical research) that, where possible, the primary source should be consulted. There are, however, problems with consulting primary sources: the primary source may be so complicated and advanced that the researcher cannot understand it. It then helps to read explanations in technical dictionaries, encyclopaedias or elementary handbooks”.

Kriel (2008:1) added that “this does not mean, however, that secondary sources are of no value whatsoever. The researcher could possibly encounter many useful references to primary sources in their study of secondary sources”. In this research a primary source will be used to get data in order to analyse and interpret the key communication factors of management in the private sector in Durban area.

Kriel (2008:1) added that the “four most important data-gathering techniques in which questioning plays a role were:

- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Check lists
- Critical incidents”.

3.2.1.1 Interviews

Kriel (2008:1) says “In the interview, the researcher talks to the respondent and obtains information directly.

Advantages:

- Flexible. In-depth. The questions can be asked in order to get clarity
- Situation can be adapted. The interview can take place where it convenient.
- Reasons for answers can be sought.
- Clues can be followed up.
- Yields a higher percentage of answering.

Disadvantages:

- Time. It take long time to interview people
- Costs. It more because one’s doing interviews need to be paid.
- Difficult to analyse responses.
- Subjectivity. Depends on the interpretation of the interviewer”

3.2.1.2 Questionnaires

The questionnaire is usually more superficial than the interview because of its impersonal nature. It is usually administered in a group situation. The questionnaire is especially useful to obtain information about reasonably big groups. In this study a questionnaire was used.

Advantages:

- Relatively low costs. Cheaper to use paper than to pay a person to conduct interview
- Can involve large groups.
- Usually provides information that can be easily interpreted.

Disadvantages:

- Inflexible. It does not allow the interviewee to expand on certain points.
- Information not in great depth.
- Individuals may ignore the questionnaire.

Types of questions (Interviews and questionnaires)

- Closed-ended questions: only indicated responses are allowed.
- Open-ended questions: any response is allowed.

3.2.2 Types of Research

Weiers (2005:123) stated that business studies could be categorised according to the objective involved. Accordingly, there are four types of studies: exploratory, descriptive, causal, and predictive.

3.2.2.1 Descriptive Research

Weiers (2005:123) said that a descriptive research study had the goal of describing something. This research study will be used to report the key communication factors which affect managers in the workplace in the private sector Durban businesses. Sweeney, Williams and Anderson (2006:12) stated that most of the statistical information in newspapers, magazines, company reports, consisted of data that was summarised and presented in a form that was easy for the reader to understand. Such summaries of data, which may be tabular, graphical, or numerical, are referred to as descriptive statistics. Lind, Marchal and Wathen (2006:6) added that descriptive statistics were methods of organising, summarising, and presenting data in an informative way.

3.3 Formulation of key questions

Below are key guidelines on the formulation of a questionnaire: (Stat Pac Software, 2009b)

- “Keep it short;
- Use simple clear, unambiguous language;
- Check for unwarranted assumptions implicit in the questions;
- Word questions in ways that they do not give clues about preferred or desirable responses;
- Determine in advance how responses will be coded;
- Keep the respondent’s task simple;
- Provide clear instructions;
- Give a rationale for any items whose purpose may be unclear;
- Make the questionnaire attractive and professional looking;
- Conduct a pilot test;

- Scrutinise the almost final product carefully to make sure it addresses the specific desired needs”.

Following the above proposed questionnaire creation, this study has created various questions which deal with a specific factor of communication. The key communication factors which this study is testing and the questions based on are:

- Facial expression used by manager
- Maintaining eye contact by the manager
- Confidence shown by the manager
- Employee’s trust in the manager
- Employee’s extent of listening to the manager
- Vague statements used by the manager
- Ambiguous statements used by the manager
- Objective listening shown the manager
- Active communication shown by the manager
- Manner of approach used by the manager
- Employee’s confidence in South African economy

These questions emerged from the problem statement and objectives were shaped by the literature review. This research is concerned ‘with both external and internal validity. Internal validity referred to the rigor with which the study was conducted (e.g. the study design, the care taken to conduct measurements, and decisions concerning what was and was not measured) and the extent to which the designers of study had taken into consideration’, adds Colorado State University (2009).

Bryman and Bell (2007:41) said “in many ways the most important criterion research is validity, is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research. The main types of validity are

- *Measurement validity*: essentially, it is to do with the question of whether or not a measure that is devised of a concept really does reflect the concept that is supposed to be denoting. In other words, the assessment of measurement validity presupposes that a measure is reliable.
- *Internal validity*: is concerned with the question of whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables holds water. Internal validity raises the question of assurance that magnitude of consequences and perceived social consensus really do cause variation in moral awareness and that this apparent casual relationship is genuine and not produced by something else.
- *External validity*: this issue is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context”.

These ways of validity are used to indicate whether or not an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measure that concept.

3.4 Data quality

Sweeney, Williams and Anderson (2006:5) said data were facts and figures that were collected, analysed, and summarised for presentation and interpretation. They also pointed out that using erroneous data could be ‘worse than not using any data at all’. An error in data acquisition occurred whenever the data value was ‘not equal to the true or actual value that would be obtained with the correct procedure’.

3.5 Sample size

Lind, Marchal & Wathen (2005: 251) said the population was an entire group of individuals or subjects under consideration, and a sample was part or subset of that population. Levine, Krehbiel & Berenson (2006: 213) added that, “as a general rule, statisticians have found that for many population distributions, when the sample size is at least 30, the sampling distribution of the mean is approximately normal”. Trochim (2006a:2) said “validity refers to the degree a study accurately reflects or accesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure”. This study can only be valid if the number of respondents exceeds 30.

Peck *et al* (2006:20) stated that when deciding on a sample “a great deal of care is taken in deciding whose opinion is to be measured. There are two main components in determining who a researcher will interview. The first is deciding what kind of people to interview. Researchers often call this group the target population. If a person is conducting an employee attitude survey or an association membership survey, the population is obvious. If a person is trying to determine the likely success of a product, the target population may be less obvious. Correctly determining the target population” is critical.

“If a person does not interview the right kinds of people, the research will not successfully meet the goals. The next thing to decide is how many people need to be interviewed. Statisticians know that a small, representative sample will reflect the group from which it is drawn. The larger the sample, the more precisely it reflects the target group. However, the rate of improvement in the precision decreases as the sample size increases beyond the optimum level”, says The Survey system (2008). Bryman and Bell (2007:63) said “external validity or generalisation deals with a question: how can a single case possibly be representative so that it might yield findings that can be applied more generally to other cases?”

3.5.1 The kind of people to interview

The criteria used to determine a respondent who was suitable for this study were:

- An employee reporting to a manager.
- An employee who is not working at educational institutions, government service institutions, state-owned enterprises and municipalities.
- An employee working in Durban.

These characteristics have been clearly indicated on the questionnaire to ensure that the respondent checks the qualification requirements before they begin to respond. “External validity refers to the extent to which the results of study are” generalisable says Colorado State University (2009). Trochim (2006a:3) added that “we are likely to make some claims that our research findings have implications for other groups and individuals in other settings and at other times. When we do, we can examine the external validity of these claims”.

According to Durban Local Agenda (1999: 1) the “Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) has a population of about 2.5 million people. In broad terms, the DMA’s demographic characteristics are typical of cities in South Africa. Although working age people make up the bulk of the population (61.5%) there is relatively large portion of children under the age of 18 years (34.4%). There is a significant variation in the distribution of youth, working age and aged people throughout Durban”. The ratio between private sector and public sector population was difficult to find. In this way it is not possible for this research to generalise the findings as a true representative of the private sector population.

“Purposive sample targets a particular group of people and when taking the sample, reject people who do not fit a particular subset of people. When the desired population for the study is rare or very difficult to locate and recruit for a study, purposive sampling may be the only option”, says Wadsworth Cengage Learnig, (2005). “Snowball sampling is an approach for locating information-rich key informants. Snowball sampling is used when the desired sample is rare. It may be extremely difficult or cost prohibitive to locate respondents in these situations”, says (Stat Pac Software, 2009a). Purposive and snowball sampling were used because the respondents selected needed to have certain characteristics in order to provide a meaningful contribution to this work.

3.5.2 The number of people to interview

A total of 85 questionnaires were sent out and 79 were returned, which made a response of approximately 93%. The questionnaires were sent out via email and 70 completed copies of the questionnaire were received by email while 9 were hand-delivered. Trochim (2006b:1) stated that “the Likert Scale is an ordered, one-dimensional scale from which respondents choose one option that best aligns with their view. In scoring, numbers are usually assigned to each option (such as 1 to 5). The final score for the respondent on the scale is the sum of their ratings for all of the items”. The measurement scale code of this research work is interpreted and used as:

- 1 = strongly disagree = scale 1 and 2 from the questionnaire
- 2 = disagree = scale 3 and 4 from the questionnaire
- 3 = neutral = scale 5 and 6 from the questionnaire
- 4 = agree = scale 7 and 8 from the questionnaire
- 5 = strongly agree = scale 9 and 10 from the questionnaire

3.6 Conclusion

In this study quantitative research methodology in a form of descriptive research has been used. In the data collection closed-ended questions in a form of selecting either strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree or strong agree has been used to test the key communication factors. In the next chapter the results will be analysed and presented using, descriptive, regression and correlation analysis from SPSS computer software.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis of results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings in a form of descriptive frequency analysis, central tendency statistic, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. A copy of the questionnaire was sent to 85 people and only 79 were returned, which makes a respond return rate of approximately 93%. The copies of questions were emailed to respondents and 70 copies of them were returned through email and 9 copies were submitted by hand.

The data collected was entered and analysed using SPSS computer software. Some of the questions were not fully answered where the respondents left some blank spaces on some questions.

4.2 Analysis of results

Results will be analysed in a form of descriptive frequency statistics, central tendency statistics, correlations analysis and regression analysis.

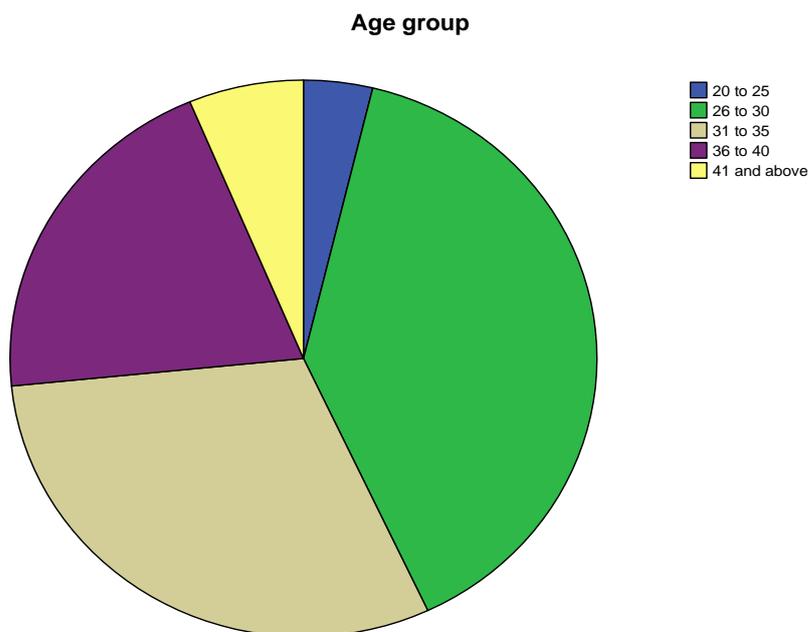
4.2.1 Descriptive frequency statistics

This section is the descriptive analysis of the respondent sample.

Table 4.1: Age group

		Age group			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 to 25	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
	26 to 30	31	39.2	39.2	43.0
	31 to 35	24	30.4	30.4	73.4
	36 to 40	16	20.3	20.3	93.7
	41 and above	5	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.1: Age group

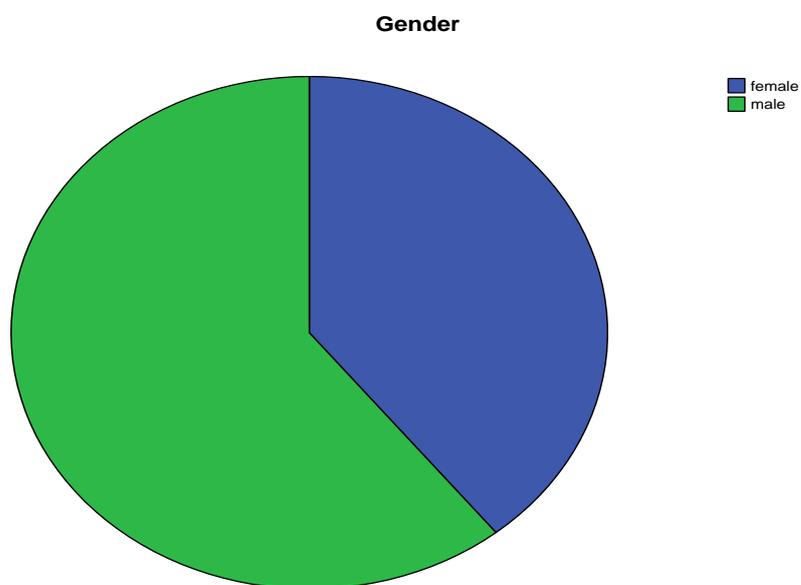


The above figure reveals that age group dispersion of the participating employees in this study in the private sector in Durban area, are 3.8% in between 20 to 25 years, 39.2% are between 26 to 30 years, 30.4% are between 31 to 35 years, 20.3% are between 36 to 40 years, and 6.3% are 41 years and older.

Table 4.2: Gender

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	31	39.2	39.2	39.2
	Male	48	60.8	60.8	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.2: Gender

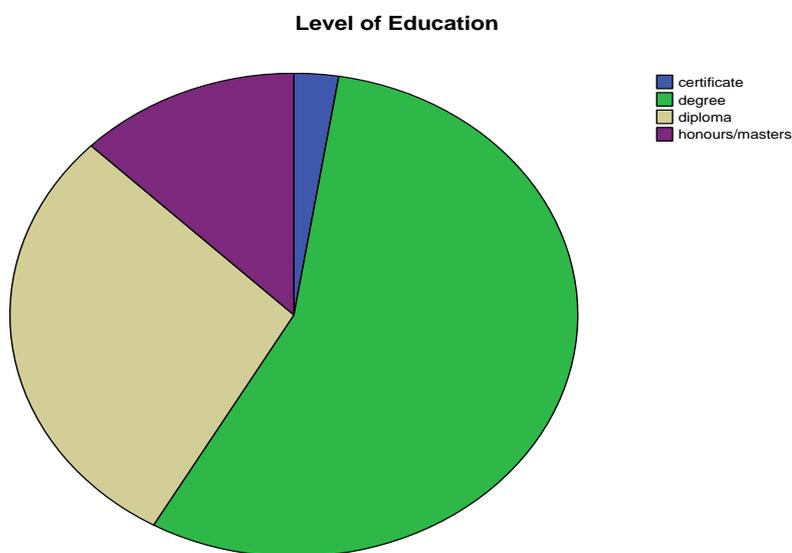


The above figure reveals that gender group of the participating employees in this study for private sector in Durban area, is 39.2% females and 60.8% males.

Table 4.3: Level of education

		Level of Education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Certificate	2	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Degree	44	55.7	55.7	58.2
	Diploma	23	29.1	29.1	87.3
	Honours/Masters	10	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.3: Level of education



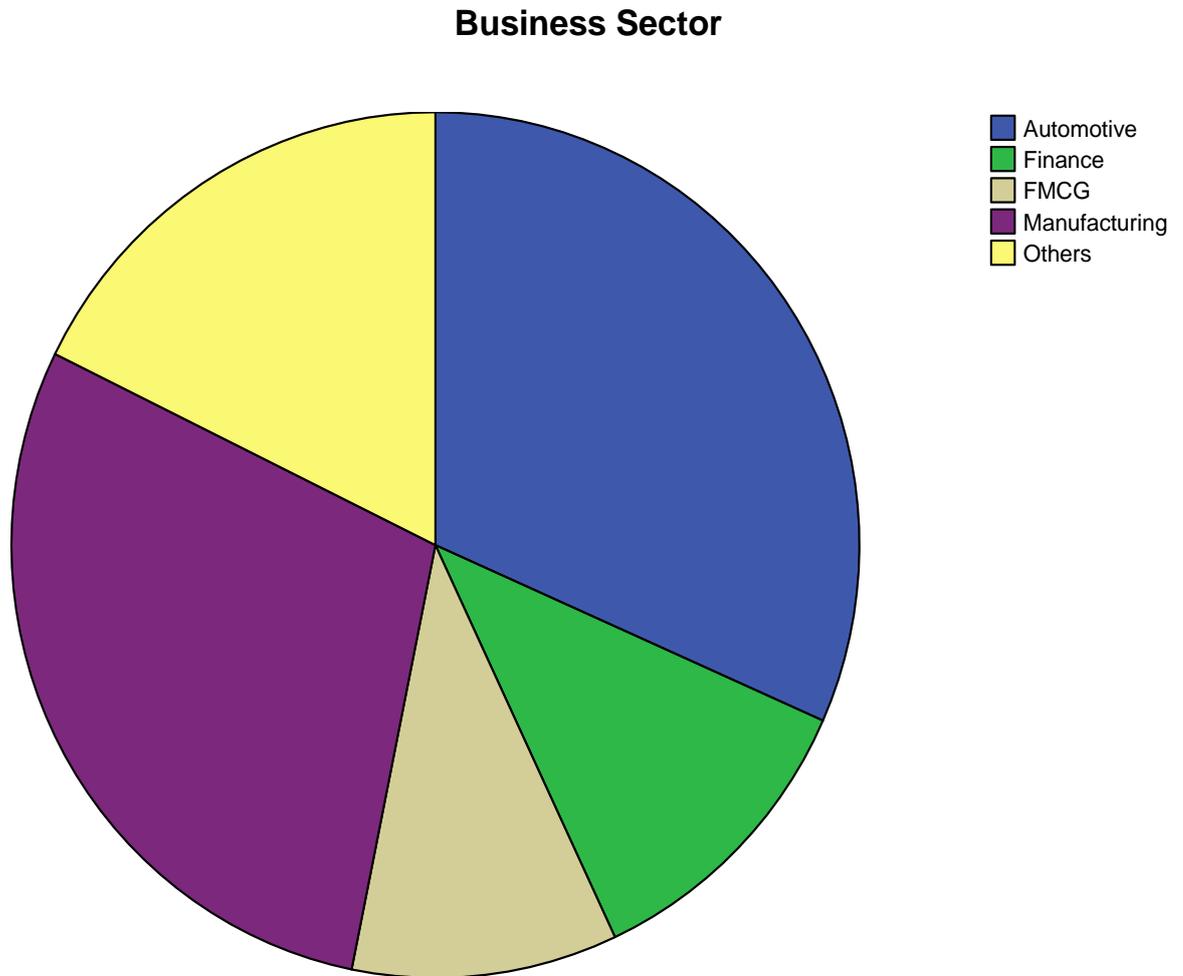
The above figure reveals that level of education amongst the participating employees in this project in the private sector in Durban area, is that 2.5% have certificates, 55.7% have degrees, 29.1% have diplomas, and 12.7% have honours/masters.

Table 4.4: Business sector

Business Sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Automotive	25	31.6	31.6	31.6
	Finance	9	11.4	11.4	43.0
	FMCG	8	10.1	10.1	53.2
	Manufacturing	23	29.1	29.1	82.3
	Others	14	17.7	17.7	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.4: Business sector



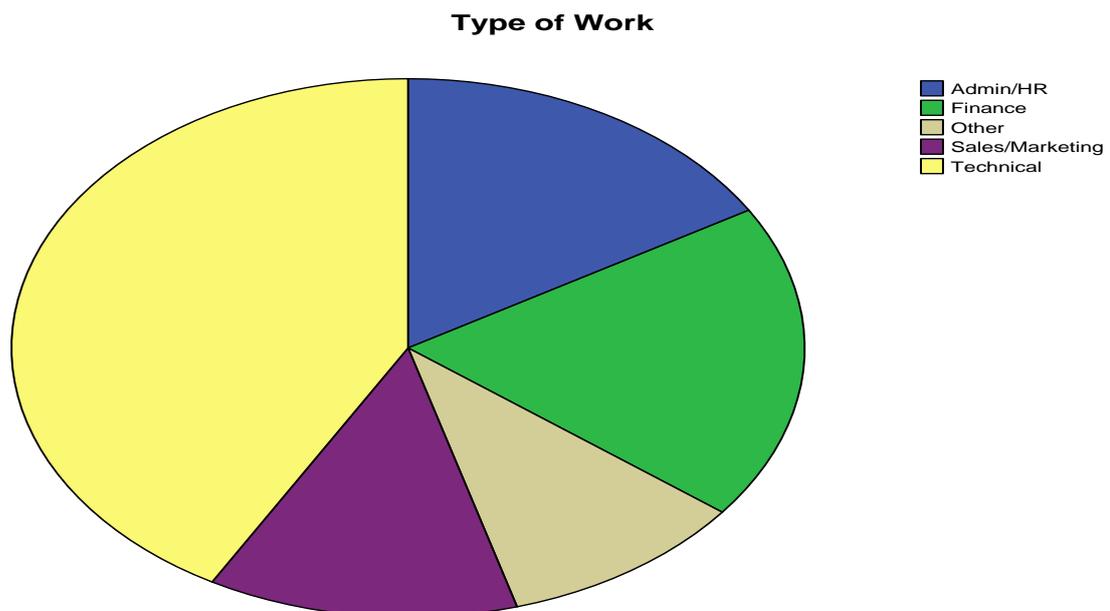
The above figure reveals that 31.6% of the respondents were from the automotive industry, 11.4% from the financial sector, 10.1% the FMCG sector, 29.1% from the manufacturing industry, and 17.7% were in the other industry sectors.

Table 4.5: Type of work

Type of Work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Admin/HR	13	16.5	16.5	16.5
	Finance	15	19.0	19.0	35.4
	Other	8	10.1	10.1	45.6
	Sales/Marketing	10	12.7	12.7	58.2
	Technical	33	41.8	41.8	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.5: Type of work



The above figure reveals that 16.5% of the respondents were in administration/human resources field, 19% in financial field, 12.7% in sales/marketing field, 41.8% in technical field, and 10.1% in other fields.

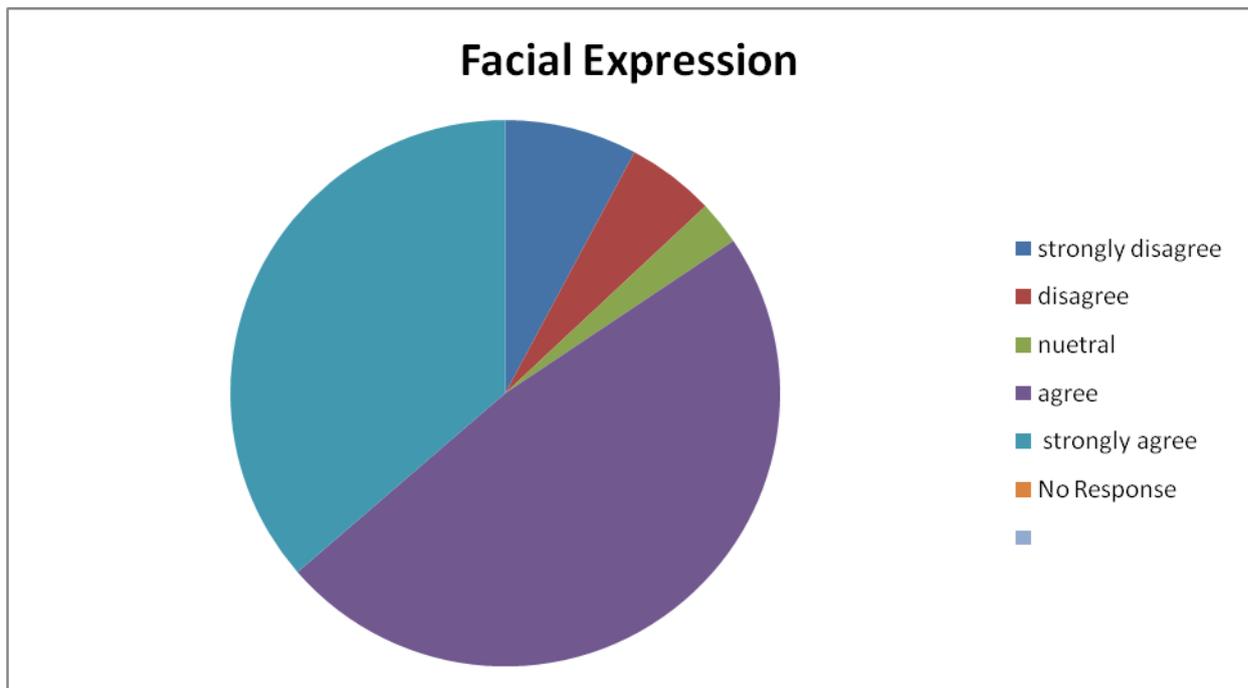
Facial expression

Question 6 asked: To what extent does the manager’s facial expression affect the reception of their message by the intended group and/or person?

Table 4.6: Facial expression

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	7.6	7.6	7.6
	2	5	6.3	6.3	13.9
	3	2	2.5	2.5	16.5
	4	37	46.8	46.8	63.3
	5	29	36.7	36.7	100.0
Total		79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.6: Facial expression



The above figure reveals that 7.6% strongly disagree, 6.3% disagree, 2.5% are neutral, 46.8% agree, and 36.7% strongly agree that the facial expression of management affects the communication in a workplace. From this data it can be assumed that this factor has a potential negative or positive effect during communication by management with their subordinates.

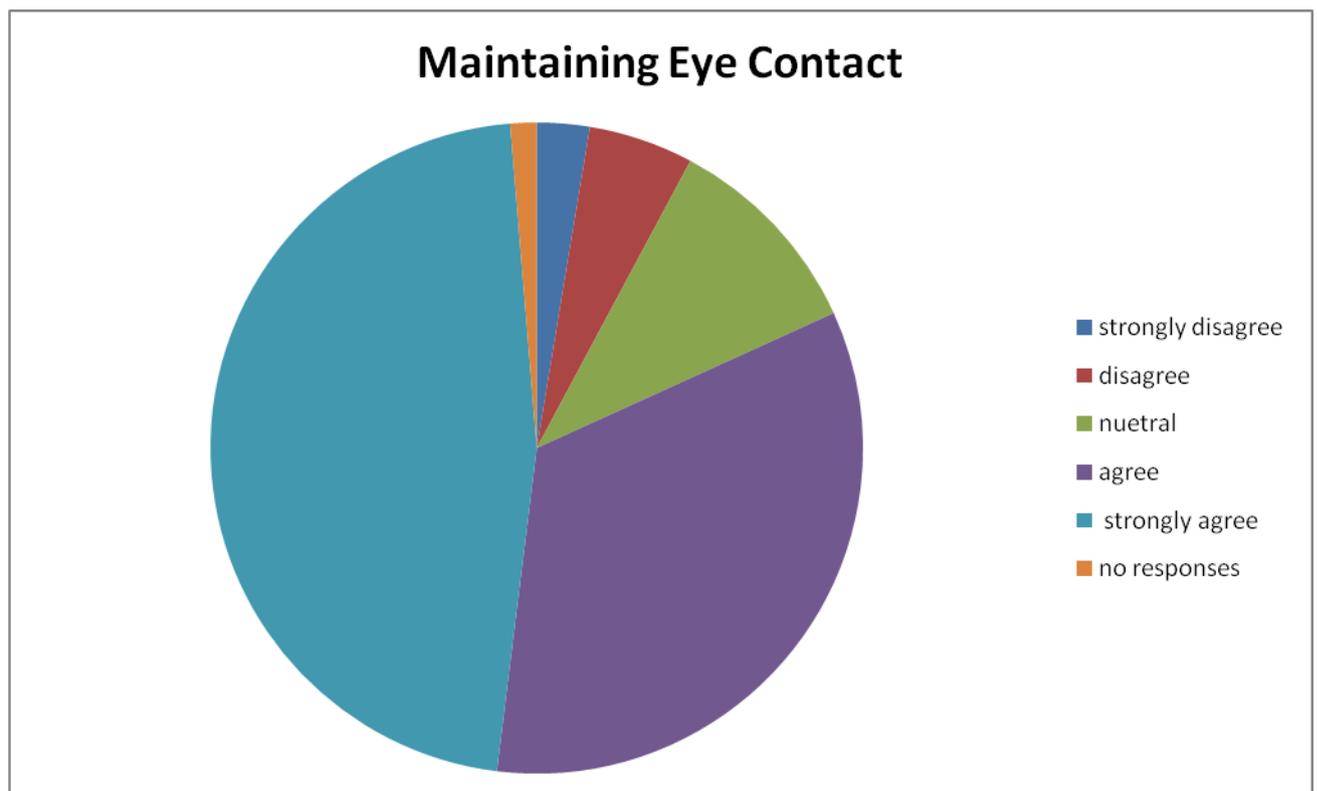
Maintaining eye contact

Question 7 asked: To what extent does the manager's maintaining eye contact lead you to attentively listen to them?

Table 4.7: Maintaining eye contact

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	1	2	2.5	2.5	3.8
	2	4	5.1	5.1	8.9
	3	9	11.4	11.4	20.3
	4	27	34.2	34.2	54.4
	5	36	45.6	45.6	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.7: Maintaining eye contact



The above figure reveals that 2.5% strongly disagree, 5.1% disagree, 11.4% are neutral, 34.2% agree, and 45.6% strongly agree that maintaining eye contact by management will make for good communication in a workplace. From this data it can be assumed that this factor has a potentially negative or positive effect during communication by management to their subordinates if managers fail to maintain eye contact.

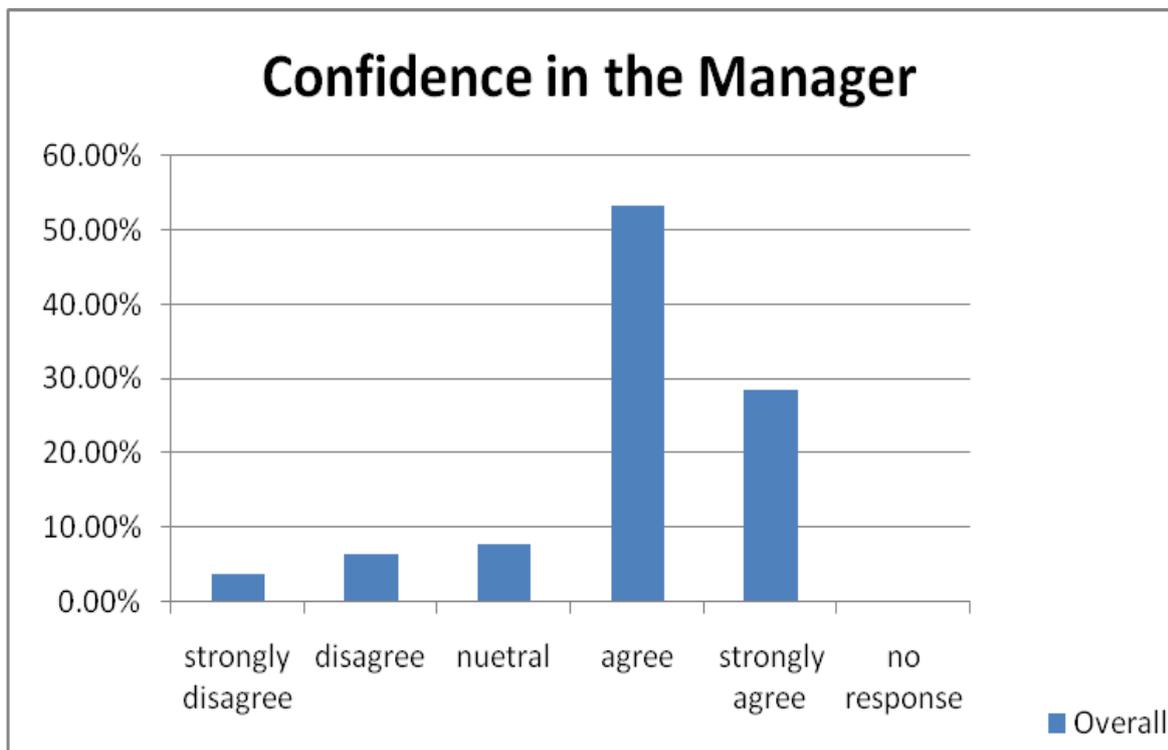
Confidence in the Manager

Question 8 asked: To what extent do you have confidence in the manager?

Table 4.8: Confidence in the Manager

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.8	3.8	3.8
	2	5	6.3	6.3	10.1
	3	6	7.6	7.6	17.7
	4	41	51.9	51.9	69.6
	5	24	30.4	30.4	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.8: Confidence in the Manager



The above figure reveals that 3.8% of the respondents strongly disagree, 6.3% disagree, 7.6% are neutral, 51.9% agree, and 30.4% strongly agree that they have confidence in management. From this data it can be assumed that employees have full confidence in their managers if they show confidence.

Trust in the Manager

Question 9 asked: To what extent do you trust the manager?

Table 4.9: Trust in the Manager

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	7.6	7.6	7.6
	2	5	6.3	6.3	13.9
	3	6	7.6	7.6	21.5
	4	42	53.2	53.2	74.7
	5	20	25.3	25.3	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.9: Trust in the Manager



The above figure reveals that 7.6% of the respondents strongly disagree, 6.3% disagree, 7.6% are neutral, 53.2% agree, and 25.3% strongly agree that they trust management. From this data it can be assumed that employees have full trust in management. This means managers are trustworthy.

Listen to Manager

Question 10 asked: To what extent do you listen to the manager?

Table 4.10: Listen to Manager

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3	1.3	1.3	1.3
	4	44.3	44.3	45.6
	5	54.4	54.4	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.10: Listen to Manager



The above figure reveals that 1.3% of the respondents were neutral, 44.3% agree, and 54.4% strongly agree that they listen to management. From this data it can be assumed that the employees do respect and recognise their managers' hierarchy position and they give them the attention they duly deserve as their superiors by listening to them.

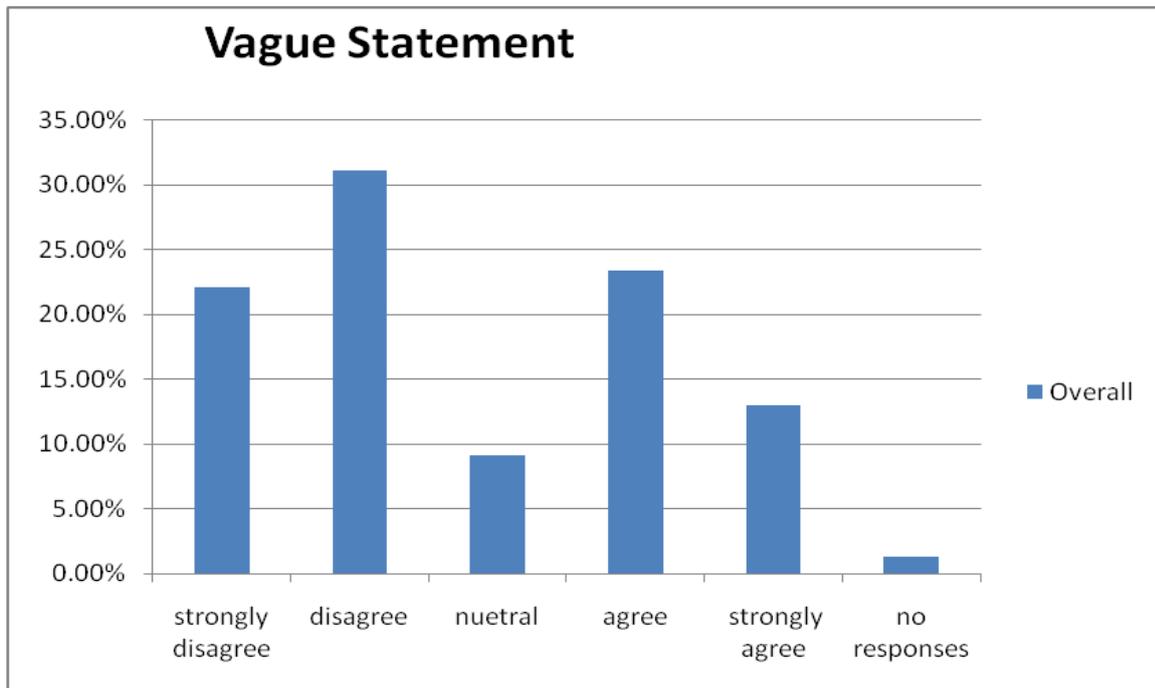
Vague statement

Question 11 asked: To what extent do the vague statements by the manager encourage staff to carry out their instructions?

Table 4.11: Vague statement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	1	18	22.8	22.8	24.1
	2	26	32.9	32.9	57.0
	3	8	10.1	10.1	67.1
	4	15	19.0	19.0	86.1
	5	11	13.9	13.9	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.11: Vague statement



The above figure reveals that 22.8% of the respondents strongly disagree, 32.9% disagree, 10.1% are neutral, 19% agree, and 13.9% strongly agree that vague statements by management affect communication in a workplace. From this data it can be assumed that approximately 56% of the respondents believe that ambiguous statements do not encourage staff to carry out the manager's instructions.

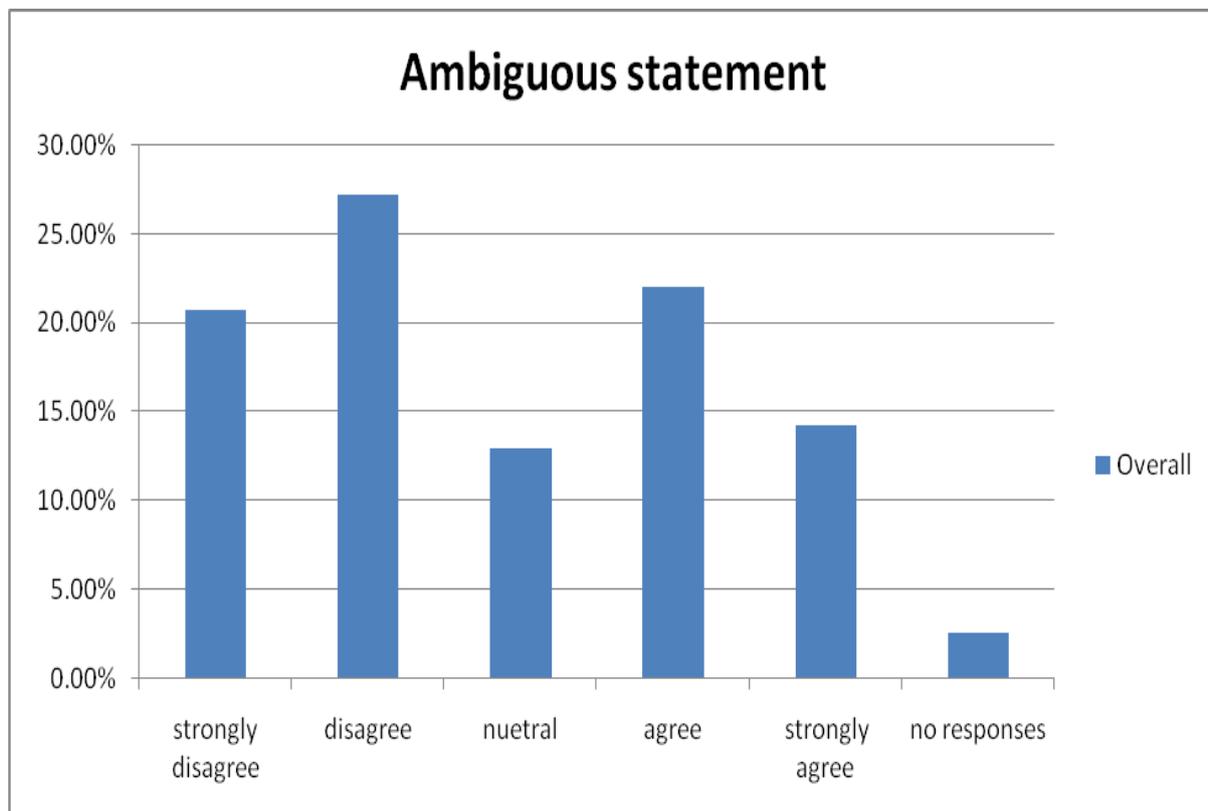
Ambiguous statement

Question 12 asked: To what extent do the ambiguous statements from a manager encourage staff to carry out their instructions?

Table 4.12: Ambiguous statement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2	2.5	2.5	2.5
	1	17	21.5	21.5	24.1
	2	24	30.4	30.4	54.4
	3	10	12.7	12.7	67.1
	4	15	19.0	19.0	86.1
	5	11	13.9	13.9	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.12: Ambiguous statement



The above figure reveals that 21.5% of the respondents strongly disagree, 30.4% disagree, 12.7% are neutral, 19% agree, and 13.9% strongly agree that the use of ambiguous statement by management affects communication in a workplace. From this data it can be assumed that approximately 52% of the respondents believe that ambiguous statements do not encourage staff to carry out the manager's instructions.

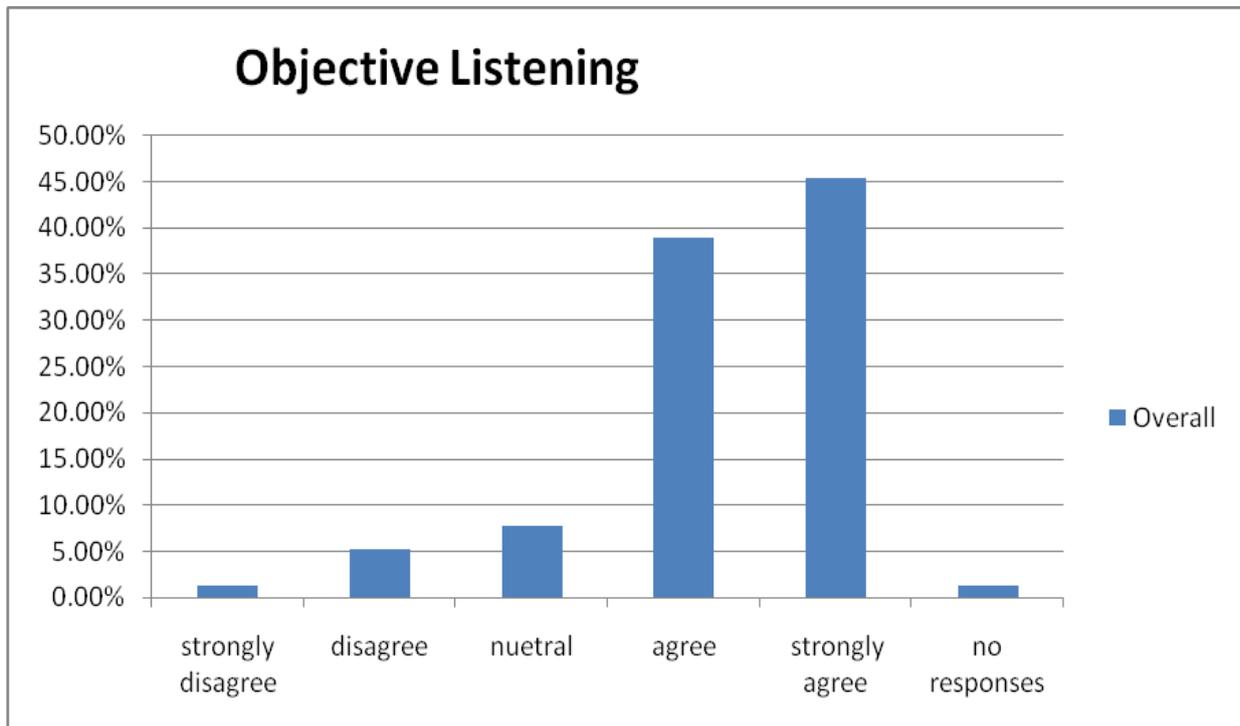
Objective listening

Question 13 asked: To what extent does the manager's objective listening affect their team's performance?

Table 4.13: Objective listening

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	1	1	1.3	1.3	2.5
	2	4	5.1	5.1	7.6
	3	6	7.6	7.6	15.2
	4	32	40.5	40.5	55.7
	5	35	44.3	44.3	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.13: Objective listening



The above figure reveals that 1.3% of the respondents strongly disagree, 5.1% disagree, 7.6% are neutral, 40.5% agree, and 44.3% strongly agree that objective listening by management affects communication in a workplace. From this data it can be assumed that employees feel that objective communication by managers can improve communication positively.

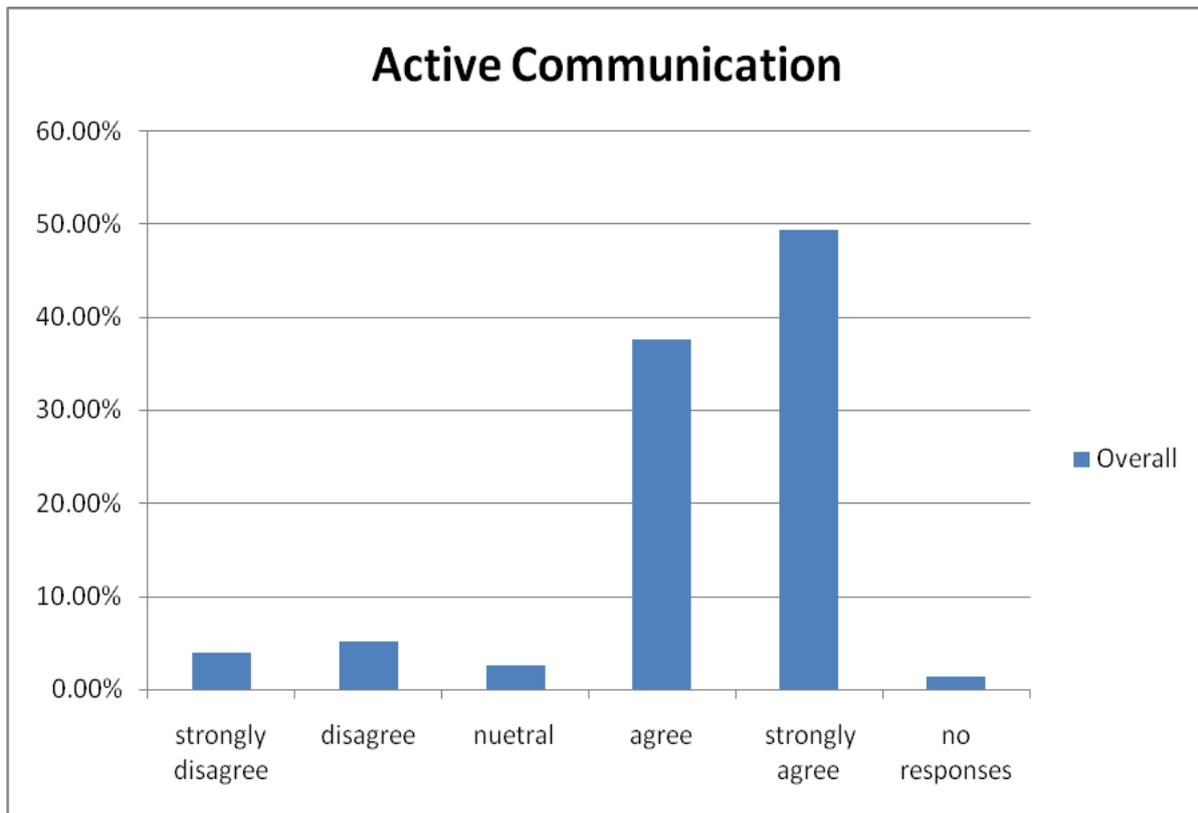
Active communication

Question 14 asked: To what extent does the manager's active communication affect their team performance?

Table 4.14: Active communication

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	1	3	3.8	3.8	5.1
	2	4	5.1	5.1	10.1
	3	2	2.5	2.5	12.7
	4	31	39.2	39.2	51.9
	5	38	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.14: Active communication



The above figure reveals that 3.8% of the respondents strongly disagree, 5.1% disagree, 2.5% are neutral, 39.2% agree, and 48.1% strongly agree that active communication by management affects communication in a workplace. From this data it can be assumed that the employees encourage managers to actively participate during communication.

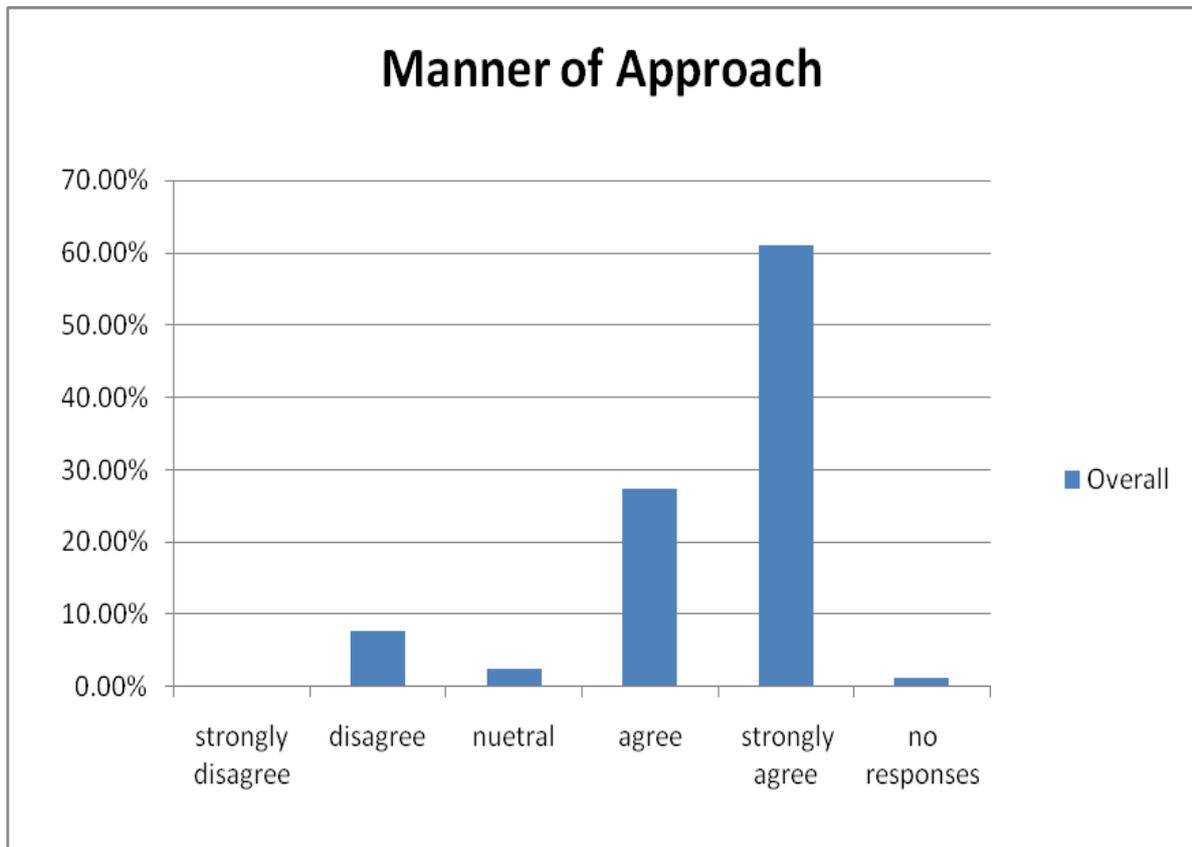
Manner of approach

Question 15 asked: To what extent does the manager's manner of approach lead to their instructions being carried out?

Table 4.15: Manner of approach

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	2	7	8.9	8.9	10.1
	3	2	2.5	2.5	12.7
	4	21	26.6	26.6	39.2
	5	48	60.8	60.8	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.15: Manner of approach



The above table data reveals that 8.9% of respondents disagree, 2.5% are neutral, 26.6% agree, and 60.8% strongly agree that manner of approach by management affects communication in a workplace. From this data it can be assumed that employees encourage managers to use appropriate manner of approach when communicating to their employees.

4.2.2 Central Tendency statistical analysis of communication factors

In this section, the central tendency statistic of communication factors which were discussed in Chapter 2 would be calculated for each variable. These statistics are: mean, standard deviation, and variance.

The abbreviations for factors of communication discussed in Chapter 2 are as:

V1 = facial expression

V6 = vague statement

V2 = maintaining eye contact

V7 = ambiguous statement

V3 = confident in the manager

V8 = objective listening

V4 = trust the manager

V9 = active communication

V5 = listen to the manager

V10 = manner of approach

Table 4.17: Central tendency test: variables

Statistics

		Facial expression	Eye Contact	Confident	Listen to	Trust	Vague statement	Objective listening	Active Communication	Ambiguous statement	Manner of Approach
N	Valid	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00
Std. Error of Mean		.131	.123	.112	.059	.126	.159	.114	.125	.161	.117
Median		4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	5.00
Mode		4	5	4	5	4	2	5	5	2	5
Std. Deviation		1.160	1.098	.993	.527	1.118	1.415	1.010	1.110	1.431	1.038
Variance		1.346	1.205	.987	.278	1.250	2.001	1.019	1.233	2.048	1.078
Skewness		-1.440	-1.544	-1.342	-.398	-1.277	.351	-1.747	-1.887	.251	-1.962
Std. Error of Skewness		.271	.271	.271	.271	.271	.271	.271	.271	.271	.271
Range		4	5	4	2	4	5	5	5	5	5
Minimum		1	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum		315	325	315	358	302	209	330	331	210	344
Percentiles	25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00
	50	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	5.00
	75	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00

The above table shows central tendency statistics of communication factors abbreviated as V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V6, V7, V8, V9, V10.

4.2.2.1 Mean

The mean results from Table 4.17 are as follows:

- The V1 – has a mean of 3. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of neutrality towards the statement that facial expression by management does affect the communication.
- The V2 – has a mean of 4. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of agreement towards the statement that maintaining an eye contact by management does affect the communication
- The V3 – has a mean of 3 .This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of neutrality towards the statement that they have confidence in management.
- The V4 – has a mean of 3. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of neutrality towards the statement that they trust manager.
- The V5 – has a mean of 4. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of agreement towards the statement that they listen to the manager.
- The V6 – has a mean of 2. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of disagreement towards the statement that vague statements by management does affect communication.
- The V7 – has a mean of 2. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of disagreement

towards the statement that ambiguous statement by the manager does affect the communication.

- The V8 – has a mean of 4. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of agreement towards the statement that objective listening by the manager does affect the communication
- The V9 – has a mean of 4. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of agreement towards the statement that active communication by the manager does affect the communication.
- The V10 – has a mean of 4. This reveals that the respondents who participated in this project have articulated an average perception of agreement towards the statement that the manner of approach by the manager does affect the communication

4.2.2.2 Standard deviation

The V1 to V10 (table 4.17) study variables have a standard deviation ranging from 0.527 to 1.431, which reveals that the respondents have variations in their perception.

4.2.2.3 Variance

The V1 to V10 (table 4.17) study variables have variances ranging from 0.933 to 2.001, which reveals that these variables have differences in respondent's perception.

4.2.3 Correlations and Regression analysis of factors of communication

A correlation is a single number that describes the degree of relationship between two variables. The symbol for correlation is r . The symbol r will always be between -1.0 and 1.0. If it is negative, it reveals a negative relationship. If it is positive, the relationship is positive (Research Methods, 2008).

“Regression Analysis is a statistical forecasting model, that is concerned with describing and evaluating the relationship between a given variable (usually called the dependent variable) and one or more other variables (usually called the independent variables)”, says (12 Manage, 2008).

Table 4.18: Facial expression vs. Eye contact correlation

		Facial expression	Eye Contact
Facial expression	Pearson Correlation	1	.505(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	79	79
Eye Contact	Pearson Correlation	.505(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	79	79

The table above reveals that facial expression does has a positive relationship with maintaining eye contact. So, the correlation in this case of 0.505 is a strong positive.

Table 4.19: Confident in vs. trust vs. listen to the manager correlation

		Confident	Trust	Listen to
Confident	Pearson Correlation	1	.852(**)	.356(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.001
	N	79	79	79
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.852(**)	1	.314(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.005
	N	79	79	79
Listen to	Pearson Correlation	.356(**)	.314(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.005	
	N	79	79	79

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above reveals that confidence and trust have a positive relationship. So, the correlation in this case is 0.852, which is a strong positive.

Table 4.20: Vague statement vs. Ambiguous statement correlation

		Vague statement	Ambiguous statement
Vague statement	Pearson Correlation	1	.693(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	79	79
Ambiguous statement	Pearson Correlation	.693(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	79	79

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above reveals that the vague statement and ambiguous statement have a positive relationship. So, the correlation in this case is 0.693, which is strong positive.

Table 4.21: Manner of approach vs. Confidence and Trust regression

ANOVA(b)						
Model		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.504	2	.252	.229	.796(a)
	Residual	83.572	76	1.100		
	Total	84.076	78			

a Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Confident b Dependent Variable: Manner of Approach

The table above reveals that confidence and trust have a positive relationship. So, the regression in this case is 0.796, which is strong positive.

Table 4.22: Active communication vs. confident in and trust regression

ANOVA(b)						
Model		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.702	1	.352	.249	.896(a)
	Residual	83.662	78	1.100		
	Total	85.076	79			

a Predictors: (Constant), Trust, Confident b Dependent Variable: Active communication

The table above reveals that confidence and trust have a positive relationship. So, the regression in this case is 0.896, which is strong positive.

Table 4.23: Active communication vs. vague statement and ambiguous statement regression

ANOVA(b)						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.234	0	.152	.229	.254(a)
	Residual	85.678	78	1.100		
	Total	85.678	78			

a Predictors: (Constant), Vague statement, Ambiguous statement b Dependent Variable: Active communication

The table above reveals that vague statement and ambiguous statement have a positive relationship. So, the regression in this case is 0.254, which is weak positive.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has covered the broad results of the various factors of communication. The data received from the respondents was captured and processed in SPSS software. Using SPSS the different tests were done which are:

- Descriptive frequency analysis
- Central tendency test
- Correlation analysis
- Regression analysis

The results of each test have been explained in detail. The comparative, implications, and recommendations of the test results will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, recommendations, and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the study will be discussed. The discussions of findings will cover results from Chapter 4 and these results will be compared to the theoretical study which was done in Chapter 2. Based on the discussion of results, recommendations will be made. The extent of the impact of the communication skills will be revealed in order to make recommendations intended to improve business performance by improving management communication skills. The results of this study will reveal the most important component of communication skills in which the employees who participated perceive as having a highest negative impact in business performance and environment. The chapter will also offer limitations of study, further research and conclusion.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The age group profile (Table 4.1) indicated that the majority of employees who participated in this project were between the ages of 26 to 30 years. This age group made up 39.2% of respondents, followed by ages of 31 to 35 years which made up 30.4%. Those aged from 36 to 40 years made up 20.3%, followed by 41 years and older which made 6.3%, and lastly the 20 to 25 year olds made up 3.8%. Based on this measure, therefore, 69.6% participated respondents are youth employees. It is therefore assumed that the respondents have a work experience of least ten years in the workplace.

Assuming that people normally retired at the age 65 years therefore the majority of respondents still have at least thirty (30) years left to work. Based on these results, it can be assumed that the respondents have fairly short periods (10/30) of experience in their work and still have a lot of things to learn in terms of a private corporate career. Therefore their exposure, judgement, and perception are limited to their experience. However, as is in sports, businesses need to concentrate on developing the talents of young professionals, therefore the managers need to consider their perceptions because they are the future managers of the organisation.

The government of South Africa established the National Youth Development Agency and a Minister for Youth which showed the importance of addressing and concentrating on the needs of youth because these youth would be future leaders in business, society and politics. In business, managers need to concentrate on youth development in their organisation to ensure that they are well developed to be able to take up key strategic position in the organisation in future. It is therefore important that managers create conducive environments and training programmes that ensure that the youth with potential in their businesses are well trained and retained in the organisation.

The gender profile (Table 4.2) indicated that the majority of the employees who participated in this project were males (60.8%). Females made up 39.2% of the sample. Based on this, it can be assumed that males have better representations.

In assessing the level of education of the respondents, the profile (Table 4.3) indicated that the majority of the employees who participated in this project possessed degrees (55.7%), followed by diplomas (29.1%), honours/masters (12.7%), and lastly matric certificates (2.5%). This indicated that 97.5% of participated employees were university or technikon institution graduates.

Based on this, it can be assumed that 97.5% of the respondents have a fairly high understanding of conceptual issues. Although 69.6% respondents are young, their views have an important impact on the way things should or should not be done. Their judgment may be questionable, if one bases one's assumptions purely on their lack of extensive experience, but their impact on the business and business performance plays a critical role because of their high level of education which means they make a thought perception in their assessment of the situation.

The private sector in Durban is made up of various types of sectors, therefore the respondents indicated that their business sector profile (Table 4.4) was in the automotive sector (31.6%), followed by manufacturing sector (29.1%), other sectors (17.7%), financial sector (11.4%), and lastly Fast Moving Consumable Goods (FMCG) sector (10.1%). This indicated that the majority of employees participated in this study in the private sector in Durban were spread between the automotive sector and manufacturing sector with automotive taking a slightly higher percentage. These two sectors required a lot of technical skills in order to make acceptable quality products.

Every business had various departments which work together in order to make goods or provide services. It was required that each department would be required to hire employees who had specific skills to carry out instructions pertaining to that department. This meant that employees with technical qualifications would work in engineering, those with accounting qualifications would work in finance and those with marketing qualifications would work in sales and marketing. The respondents indicated that the type of work profile (Table 4.5) technical field (41.8%) of respondents, followed by finance (19.0%), admin/hr (16.5%), sales/marketing (12.7%), and lastly the other combined field 10.1%.

Based on these results, 41.8% of 97.5% the respondents are technical employees. Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005) argued that these technical people liked to use the words which were less understandable to other people and that they should use more understandable words. It could then be assumed that these employees are likely to use their technical terms which can only be understood by them. This means there might be a miscommunication between departments. This miscommunication could cause poor performance if the manager of a different department is trying to convey the message to another department's employees.

Krizan, Merrier and Jones (2005) as cited in Chapter 2 also pointed out that technical terms usually apply to a specific field, therefore it means that even financial people could cause a communication breakdown by using words which are only able to be understood by employees in that financial field. It is therefore important that when employees communicate, they must use easily understandable words, irrespective of their field of work. Each department, in any business, provides and requires special skills in order to sustain a business performance therefore. It is essential that every employee communicates in an understandable way. For an example, if an engineer is presenting a project budget proposal to a financial manager, both the employee (engineer) and the financial manager must use understandable words in order to clarify and improve communication between them. Otherwise, a potential profit generating project might not be approved which might prevent a business from improving its performance.

During communication, employees use the facial expression of the managers to determine how important the instruction is. The mean response (Table 4.17) showed that they had a neutral perception on this factor, meaning that this factor was not a major concern for employees who participated in this study in the private sector in Durban. However facial expression is subjective to the interpreter therefore the interpretation can vary from one person to another. The question also did not clarify whether the facial expressed is positive or negative.

Employees assess the extent of seriousness of the manager during communication by assessing the extent to which the manager maintains eye contact with employees. The maintaining of eye contact profile (Table 4.7) indicated that the majority of the employees who participated in this project (45.6%) strongly agreed while 34.2% agreed that maintaining eye contact did indeed affect communication. The mean response (Table 4.17) revealed that maintaining eye contact did improve communication. In this study, the participants showed a similar view shared by Hamilton (2005). The study finding also agreed with Towne (2008) that managers maintaining eye contact showed that managers were confident. Therefore managers need to maintain eye contact in order to ensure that the listeners pay attention in their instruction although this may differ in South African context because of cultural differences.

Managers need to show confidence to their employees because employees look up to them as decision makers. Showing confidence is the way managers communicate to their employees that they know that they are doing the right thing so employees should believe in them. The mean response (Table 4.17) showed that employees had a neutral perception on this factor therefore the study revealed that the managers had presented themselves well enough to gain confidence from their employees. It was important that managers showed confidence so that employees could see them as people who are competent as stated by McCrimmon (2007:1) in chapter 2. Employees need to know that managers have the confidence to remain competent as stated by Taub (2007:1) in Chapter 2.

This finding was the good news for the management because if the employees doubted the manager's confidence it could jeopardise the performance of the business as that lack of confidence filtered through to the whole organisation. Managers are seen as leaders, therefore they have to inspire others to follow them or inspire others to take positive actions. This study revealed that managers are doing enough to convince their employees that they can be believed in.

A manager is a person who employees rely on to provide assistance and give direction in the business. It is therefore important that employees trust the managers in order for the managers to gain the support of their employees. The support they gain in this way, determines the lengths to which employees will go in order to achieve organisational and personal goals. The mean response (Table 4.17) showed that the respondents had a neutral perception of this factor, meaning that the managers had gained sufficient trust from their employees. The managers need to do more in order to remedy this situation.

A person who has confidence in another person surely will trust that other person. The correlation (0.852) profile (Table 4.19) indicated a fairly high positive relationship between Trust and Confidence, proving that these factors were intertwined. Both questions that asked the employees about employee trust in the manager and employee confidence in the manager produced the same perception of a neutral response. Essential Skills (2008b) pointed out that gaining the confidence of others was one of the key ways in which a self-confident person found success therefore it was important that managers do more in order to improve the levels of confidence and trust which employees had in them.

Managers give instructions in the hope that employees will execute the tasks as per those instructions. It is important that employees listen to their managers in order to carry out their duties as expected by their managers. The employee listening to the manager profile (Table 4.10) indicated that the 54.4% of the employees who participated in this project responded strongly agree and 44.3% agree that they listen their managers. The mean response (Table 4.17) showed that they agreed with this factor, therefore the study revealed that the managers had high rate of attention from their employees. The study revealed that employees (99%) do listen to their managers.

People who have confidence in other people will listen to them because they believe they are talking sense. Sometimes people listen to someone, not because they have trust and confidence in that person, but it is because they do not have a choice. The correlation (0.356) profile (Table 4.19) indicated a fairly positive relationship between both Trust and Confidence versus Listen To. The finding indicates that employees do listen to their managers.

The correlation results (Table 19) indicated that there was a positive relationship between the employees trusting, having confidence and listening to their managers. However, employees listening to managers had a lower correlation value (0.356) compared to employees having confidence in their managers (0.852). The mean results (Table 17) also indicated that employees listened more to managers than having confidence in them. The study finding simply means that employees listen to their managers only because the manager is their superior by virtue of the corporate structure. The managers therefore have significant influence to get employees to listen to them. This finding agrees with Taub (2007) in Chapter 2 that employees do listen to their managers.

People articulate their ideas by using clear and well constructed sentences when they communicate with other people. A good idea which is presented badly, sounds like a bad idea and it might not to be accepted. It is vital that managers give their instructions in a simple and clear way to avoid any confusion. The use of vague statements by managers profile (Table 4.11) indicated that 32.9% of the employees who participated in this project disagreed and 22.8% strongly disagree that the use of vague statements by manager did have an effect on communication. The mean response (Table 4.17) also showed that they had a disagreeing perception on this factor of communication, therefore, the study revealed that employees do not encourage managers to use vague statement. This finding agrees with Albee (2008:1) as cited in Chapter 2 that the use of vague statements can negatively affect business performance.

People use specific statements or words in order to avoid misinterpretation of the instructions. Therefore, it is important that managers use statements or words which mean only one thing. The use of ambiguous statements by managers profile (Table 4.12) indicated that 30.4% of the employees who participated in this project disagreed and 21.5% strongly disagreed that the use of ambiguous statements by manager did have a negative effect in communication. The data suggests that approximately 52% of respondents believe that ambiguous statements do not encourage staff to carry out their managers' instructions. It can be assumed that ambiguous statements do negatively affect communication and performance.

The use of clear and specific statements and words help people to interpret the instructions correctly and accurately. This interpretation helps the employees to carry out instructions the way managers expect them to. The correlation (0.693) between the use of vague statements and ambiguous statements by managers (Table 4.20) was fairly positive which meant these two factors were related. It may therefore be assumed that as the study showed that the employees who participated are fairly educated (97.5% had masters, honours, degrees or diplomas), they were more easily able to understand what the managers were trying to say and to carry out the instructions without any interpretation problems.

This finding agrees with Hynes (2008) who is cited in Chapter 2 that the use of ambiguous statements can negatively affect business performance. The finding revealed that the employees who participated did not perceive that the use of vague and ambiguous statements by managers could have a negative effect on communication.

People listen to other people because they want to understand what is being said to them. Some people choose not to listen to other people because they see them as not having anything of value to say to them. In order to listen to another person,

there must be some degree of interest, otherwise there will be no point in listening to them. However, under threat people might be forced to listen to others. It is important that managers listen to their employees, irrespective of their position in the business. The Objective Listening by Managers to their Employees profile (Table 4.13) indicated that 44.3% of the employees who participated in this project strongly agreed and 40.5% agreed that managers objectively listen to them. The mean response (Table 4.17) showed that employees had a positive perception on this factor. Therefore the study revealed that the employees were satisfied with the objective listening abilities of the managers.

Objective listening simply means the manager listens to his employees irrespective of the position. Managers could be failing to listen to employees if they have adopted an attitude of being their “corporate” superiors. In such cases, the communication becomes one-way where the managers give instructions without considering the feelings of their employees. It is assumed that employees want the managers to show that they care about their views, irrespective of the merits of their opinions. The finding can also indicate that the employees who participated felt that the managers showed that they cared for them by listening to their feelings. The study revealed that managers do listen to their employees as stated by Bacal (2008) in Chapter 2.

People show interest in the conversation by actively participating in discussion, and by asking questions to make that they understand what is being discussed. Asking questions also shows that the people are following the conversation. Active communication by managers to their employees profile (Table 4.14) indicated that the 48.1% of the employees who participated in this project strongly agreed and 39.2% agreed that managers actively participate when they communicate.

The mean response (Table 4.17) showed that the employees had an positive perception of this factor therefore the study revealed that the employees feel that

managers do actively take part in communication. Active communication simply means the manager is showing interest in what the employee has to say. The managers can show interest by asking questions during a conversation to get clarity or to make sure that they really understand the employees' views.

Productive communication is when people listen to other people's views, irrespective of the merits of their ideas and show interest in the conversation by asking questions for clarity. It is therefore important that managers show both objective and active listening abilities to their employees in order to improve business performance. The findings revealed that managers do show an interest in listening to their subordinates.

The same situation will be dealt with differently by different people because people are not the same. Some people can cope with public criticism while others cannot. Some people are not able to deal with criticism, even in private. Some people fail to express their views or feelings in a way that will not negatively affect the other people whether in public or private. It is therefore very important that managers give instructions to their employees in a way that will not hurt them. The approach used by managers to their employees profile (Table 4.15) indicated that 60.8% of the employees who participated in this project strongly agreed and 26.6% agreed that the manner of approach could have a negative effect on the success of the communication. The mean response (Table 4.17) showed that the employees had a positive perception on this factor, therefore the study revealed that the managers used their manner of approach to their employees in an acceptable way. This finding agrees with the study done by Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland (2005) as cited in Chapter 2 that manner of approach can negatively affect communication if it is not well managed.

The study revealed that the majority of the employees who participated are fairly well-educated (97.5%), are young (69.6%) and technical (41.8%) therefore they would not like to be embarrassed in front of other colleagues by being told publicly that they are not performing well. This means they need to be addressed privately and confidentially if the issue of non-performance is to be discussed. The managers can address non-performance issues by using any one of the following three approaches:

- Submissive approach: in this approach a manager will try to avoid conflict with the employee. This way coincides with the views of Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland (2005) in Chapter 2 that this approach may result in the manager allowing others to dominate them. They do not dare to say what they want and they are afraid of entering into conflict with employees. This study suggests that this is not the right approach to be used by managers because it shows a lack of confidence and an inability to provide constructive criticism.
- Aggressive approach: in this approach a manager will be instruct employees in a negative way. This approach makes employees feel unimportant. This approach is not good because it results in a one-way communication which silences the views and feelings of the employees. The findings (Table 4.17) revealed that the employees were happy with managers who were objective and active in communication so the aggressive approach would be in contradiction to what the employees who participated perceived to be right.
- Assertive approach: in this approach a manager will show confidence and address issues without any bias with aim of addressing the issues not the person. This approach helps the manager to be objective and seeks positive results rather than trying to punish the employee for non-performance.

The consequences' of embarrassing employees in front of other colleagues had a negative effect on employees because it damages their self esteem which results in:

- A vicious cycle of poor performance: The lack of self –confidence may result in making little or no effort towards meeting organisational and personal goals. The managers need to be aware that failures that result from a lack of effort are not a true reflection of a person's ability but are possibly the result of negative communication techniques.
- Lack of self-confidence: People with low self-esteem often doubt their abilities. This makes them think they are bound to fail again because they have failed before. This will result in projects and other assignments being delayed or poorly executed.
- Unhappy personal life: People with low self-esteem normally find it hard to socialise with other people which results in loneliness. The effect of this is that the employee will not take an active and meaningful role in their team at work. Teamwork is critical in order to achieve organisational and personal goals.

People who are self-confident inspire and influence others to achieve better things and they gain respect from them. They are able and willing to deal constructively with conflict. Managers need to be self-confident enough to be able to approach their employees when addressing issues of non-performance. The regression (0.796) profile (Table 4.21) indicated a fairly high positive relationship between trust and confidence as a determinant of manner of approach which means these three factors are intertwined. The finding agrees with McCrimmon (2007) as cited in Chapter 2 that confident managers can stimulate employees' thinking, not by disempowering them but by creating an environment in which a dialogue is encouraged.

The research study has to meet certain research characteristics in order for it to be used in other studies as valid. The concept, accuracy and the minimum number of respondents, as Trochim (2006a) and Peck *et al* (2006) suggested in Chapter 3, had been met in this work therefore this study is valid. The extent in which the research could be generalised depended on a number of characteristics including other researches in the same field, and enough sample size with respect to population as defined by Peck *et al* (2006) and different research methodologies. In the limitations of study section there are numbers of key limitations from the study itself and in further research there are a number of researches which need to be done therefore this work cannot be generalised.

5.3 Recommendations

The employees who participated in this study revealed a number of perceptions in Chapter 4. The discussion of results in Section 5.2 revealed what the employees perceived as the key communication factors which managers need to know to improve business performance. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made to the management:

- Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) need to encourage their managers to be articulate when communicating with their employees. They can do this by avoiding vague and ambiguous statements
- Business schools need to provide the soft skill courses which will be aimed at improving interpersonal skills to add to already established technical courses.
- CEOs need to emphasise on developing their staff interpersonal skills in order to improve business performance.
- Human Resources managers need to develop criteria which they can use to screen and select the best personnel based on their interpersonal skills.

- Managers, in general and in any capacity, are seen as leaders therefore they have to inspire others to follow them or inspire them to take positive action, therefore managers need to show more empathy to their employees.
- Managers need to maintain the employees' perception that they do listen to them because they are their corporate superiors. Showing self-confidence can inspire the employees to believe in management.
- Managers need to maintain eye contact in order to ensure that the listeners pay attention to their instructions although this may differ from culture to culture in South African context. In this way, employees feel that the managers are confident and serious.
- Managers need to be assertive in their manner of approach. This approach will help managers to handle conflict more effectively. In this way, a conducive environment is created where the dialogue between the manager and employee is productive.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study were:

- The effect of cultural difference was not considered in this study although the results would have been vastly different. In South Africa, culture is highly political and racial therefore the study avoided to be trapped in political and racial issues. The qualitative study would have explored each factor in details however the scope of this study was limited to factors of communication only without exploring in details the cause, nature, and environment of these factors.

- The study was done without considering the extensive international research on emotional intelligence. The already existing researched knowledge and understanding of emotional intelligence would have provided this study a better construction of questions and interpretation of data.
- The actual link between performance of business and factors of communication was not done therefore there is no empirical study linked between the factors of communication and business performance. Linking business performance of these factors of communication would have required a lot research and this study did not explore the link in details.
- The interpretation of data can vary depending on the reader because the data shows that it can be either positive or negative response. Better constructed questions would have directed the respondents to think in a single direction. Therefore the results interpretation is subjective to the researcher not the reader.
- Use of closed questions preventing the respondent from expanding on certain points. The respondents did not have a chance to elaborate on the questions. Elaborating would have given the respondents a chance to explain their answers. Because of this, the discussion was based on assumptions rather than on the views the respondents.
- Study was restricted to Durban only. Durban is only a small fraction of the industry of South Africa. In addition, not all businesses had a chance to express their opinions. Therefore the views and perceptions expressed in Durban cannot be presumed to be the same as the rest of South Africa's cities and provinces.
- This was a quantitative work only. The qualitative work is needed in order to generalise the findings. The findings therefore cannot be generalised.

- The number of respondents was adequate for this study but more respondents are needed. It is therefore concluded that the findings therefore cannot be generalised.

5.5 Further research

Based on the findings and discussion it is recommended that:

- further study be done to explore each of these communication factors in details and qualitative study would be appropriate for respondents to express their feelings.
- further study be done to explore in details the link between business performance and these factors.
- further study be done using a better constructed questions in order to avoid a double response which makes interpretation subjective.
- Further study be done exploring the emotional intelligence of the managers and employees.
- further study be done to get the managers' perceptions using this questionnaire.
- further study be done outside of Durban area.
- further study be on the confidence of the managers.
- further study be done using qualitative research which has an open-ended questions in order to get respondents' opinions on these different factors of communication.

5.6 Conclusion

The intention and aim of this study was to assess the impact of interpersonal skills of managers and employees in the private sector in Durban. Interpersonal skills incorporate how a manager relates to employees, to other managers, individuals or a group in a work environment through communication. The managers' communication provides directions to their subordinates therefore it is critical that they understand the environment they are working in especially because cultures, politics and race which play a big role in South African workplace environment. This study revealed, according to perception of employees, what might be the most important communication skill without identifying the specific cause/s of each skill. Whether this skill has an impact on business performance or not it remains to be seen through various further researches proposed earlier.

Communication in the workplace is unavoidable and it is the only way in which information can be shared, irrespective of the type of communication used. With respect to the problem statement of this study, this study found that listening to the managers was the most important communication factor. The study concludes that the employees do respect and recognise their managers' hierarchy position and they give them the attention they duly deserve as their superiors by listening to them. This shows that the beginning of any communication in a workplace starts from employees showing the willingness to listen to their managers. And it was followed by manner of approach as the second most important communication skill which could affect business performance negatively or positively. The study, then, concludes that managers need to use appropriate manner of approach after the employees have shown that they are willing to listen to them.

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