

*Achieving Effective Communication: The Impact of  
Defensive and Supportive Traits of Supervisors*

*By*

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## DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: Samuel.  
L. Samuel (Candidate)

Date: 29/08/2003

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### STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Administration.

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L. Samuel (Candidate)

Date: 29/08/2003

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### STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my independent work and investigation, except where otherwise stated. Sources are acknowledged by footnotes, giving explicit references. A bibliography is also appended.

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*This dissertation is dedicated to my family with all my love.*

## **ABSTRACT**

Communication is regarded as the lifeblood of any organisation. It plays a vital role in ensuring the smooth functioning of all organisational activities. Communication enables individuals and departments to work together harmoniously to achieve a common goal. It allows leaders to inform, influence and motivate employees towards goal attainment. The survival and profitability of the protection services department studied depends on their leaders ability to effectively communicate with its workforce. Effective communication should be an ongoing process in this organisation.

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the effectiveness of communication amongst supervisors at the protection services department. The key dimensions that were explored in this study are the defensive scores dimension (namely, evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) and the supportive scores dimension (namely, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality, and description). The research was conducted at the protection services department in Marianhill, Durban. Cluster sampling was used in this study.

Various statistical techniques were used to test the six hypotheses. The results were analysed and a presentation and discussion of the respondents perceptions were presented.

From this study, it is evident that there is an immediate need for development in the two key dimensions, namely, the defensive scores dimension (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) and the supportive scores dimension (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description). The limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are also outlined.

Furthermore, a discussion of the possible causes for the findings are included, along with recommendations to improve the effectiveness of communication amongst supervisors in the organisation.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction and Overview of the Study**

### **1.1. Introduction**

The task faced by public service institutions is to work together in partnership with the people of the community to bring about a society that ensures human dignity, progressive change and a better life for everyone. The protection services department in South Africa is a public institution that offers a service to the community. The objective of the protection services department studied are to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to protect and secure the community and to uphold and enforce the law. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary for all employed in the organisation to work together harmoniously. This however, requires a tremendous amount of communication.

The key ingredient to organisational success and survival is effective communication. Individuals, managers, supervisors and employees spend a great deal of time communicating with one another. Communication is inherent in all spheres of organisational activities. Leaders are often faced with the difficult challenge of getting employees to understand and achieve organisational objectives. Effective communication is the essential tool for meeting this challenge. The need to improve communication on a continuous basis is extremely vital since organisations are always dealing with a constantly changing environment and the varying needs of a diverse workforce.

This study will provide an insight into the effectiveness of communication amongst supervisors of the protection services department studied.

### **1.2. Focus of the Study**

This study will focus on the effectiveness of communication amongst supervisors at the protection services department studied and will analyse the two main dimensions which are: the defensive scores dimension (namely, evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority,

strategy and certainty) and the supportive scores dimension (namely, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description).

### **1.3. Problem Statement**

To what extent do the supervisors demonstrate defensive and supportive behaviour types when communicating with their subordinates?

### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

- To determine the extent to which supervisors display defensive and supportive behaviour types.
- To investigate whether there is a difference in the perceptions of employees varying in biographical data regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description).
- To evaluate whether there are significant inter-correlations amongst all the sub-dimensions that influence defensive and supportive behaviour of supervisors.

### **1.5. Hypotheses**

#### **Hypothesis 1**

There exists significant inter-relationships amongst all the sub-dimensions that influence the defensive behaviour of supervisors (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty).

#### **Hypothesis 2**

There exists significant inter-relationships between all the sub-dimensions that influence the supportive behaviour of supervisors (provisionalism, spontaneity, problem orientation, equality and description).

#### **Hypothesis 3**

There is a significance difference in the perception of employees differing in biographical data (age, marital status, tenure and education) regarding each of the variables of the

study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality, and description) respectively.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

There is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in gender regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

#### **Hypothesis 5**

The variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) significantly account for the variance in determining the defensive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.

#### **Hypothesis 6**

The variables of the study (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and empathy) significantly account for the variance in determining the supportive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.

### **1.6. Limitations of the Study**

The study was only conducted at one branch in Durban. The perception of employees from other branches was not included. A sample size of only 50 was used. This does not incorporate the opinions of other respondents.

Some of the employees were too busy to take the time to participate in the study. Respondents did not want to commit themselves into saying what their supervisors are really like but rather submitted an evaluation that might be bias.

Most of the theories of communication that have been discussed in chapter three and some of the information presented in chapter two and three are from an American perspective and not a South African perspective.

Despite these limitations it is safe to conclude that this study makes a substantial contribution to knowledge regarding the effectiveness of communication.

## **1.7. Summary outline per Chapter**

Chapter 2 commences with the literature review by focusing mainly on organisational effectiveness and organisational survival. In this chapter, the four factors of production, interpersonal relations and communication are also highlighted.

The literature review proceeds in chapter 3 with a detailed discussion on communication. The importance and functions of communication, the theoretical aspects, the flow of information, the types of communication, the barriers to effective communication and cross cultural communication are dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 4 entails the research methodology that will be used in this study. The sampling technique, data collection methods and the research instruments that were used in this study are explained. This chapter also includes the various tests conducted in the statistical analysis.

The results of the study are presented in chapter 5. The presentation of the results is displayed with the aid of graphs, tables and reports.

Chapter 6 incorporates the discussion of results whereby the findings are compared and contrasted to results of previous research.

Chapter 7 deals with recommendations that can assist in solving the problems identified and includes a model/framework for effective communication. A final conclusion is then given.

## **1.8. Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the focus and objective of the study, the problem statement, the hypotheses and the limitations of the study and the summary outline per chapter was also given. The literature review of chapter two proceeds by describing communication.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Organisational Effectiveness**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The aim of any organisation is to survive and to bring about organisational effectiveness. Organisational effectiveness can be achieved if all the goals and objectives of the organisation are satisfied. An organisation depends on four factors of production which includes entrepreneurship, natural resources, labour and capital. In order for an organisation to survive it needs to invest in these four factors of production which produces the outputs for customers and keeps the business running smoothly. An organisation also requires effective interpersonal relations which is a vital part of managerial activities. Managers spend a great deal of time working together with other people in order to obtain the set goals of the organisation. It is therefore important for a manager to form and maintain good interpersonal relations with every member in the organisation. When dealing with people it is crucial for managers to possess good communication skills. Communication contributes to the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. Many organisational activities and managerial roles would be impossible without some form of communication.

#### **2.2. Organisational Effectiveness and Organisational Survival**

“Organizational effectiveness refers to human judgements about the desirability of outcomes of organizational performance from the vantage point of the varied constituencies (stakeholders) directly or indirectly affected by the organization” (Zammuto, 1984 as cited in Robey, 1991: 55).

Organisational effectiveness can also be defined as “meeting organizational objectives and prevailing societal expectation in the near future, adapting and developing in the intermediate future and surviving in the distant future” (Kreitner, 1995).

Survival of the organisation, then is the long-run measure of organisational effectiveness. It requires adaptation, which involves predictable sequences. As the organisation “ages” it will go through different stages. This is called the life cycle of the organisation. It forms, develops, matures and declines in relation to environmental circumstances (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1994).

Changes in the environment often presents challenges to the survival of the organisation. The fitness of the organisation is measured by the effectiveness of the organisation, with which all parts of the organisation function harmoniously to achieve its goals even when threatened by outside forces. Survival of the organisation is much like survival of an organism – it is an ‘all or none’ process. It should be understood that when one speaks of survival, it means the survival of the organisation to discharge its social task and the test of performance is outside the organisation (Schroeter, 1970).

Two types of explanations have been proposed to account for the survival instincts of organisations. The first explanation argues that organisations are social systems characterised by a number of needs that must be satisfied if they are to survive. This view is linked to a broader theoretical framework known as functional analysis. This model argues that the organisation, has needs and requirements that must be met if it is to persist in its present form. The specific structures that make up the organisation are analysed in terms of the needs they meet; the functions they perform in ensuring the survival of the system. For an organisation to survive, information about salient changes in its environment must be communicated to decision makers; the internal communication system performs this function (Scott, 1987).

The importance of survival to an organisation cannot be overstated. An organisation may not maximise profit or minimize cost. It may not do many things. But one thing it must do if it is to be an organisation, is survive (Starbuck, 1971).

Clearly, long run survival is an organisation’s ultimate goal. In theory, the best way to ensure survival is to invest in the skills and resources of the business. Such investments

maximise the organisation's ability to create value and to be at the forefront of technical developments that will allow the organisation to meet new customer demands. There are constant problems in managing the resources environment to deal with competition from other organisations, all of which are seeking the same goals, that is, access to scarce and valued resources, including customers, raw materials and human capital (Jones, 2001).

Therefore, organisational survival can be achieved if an organisation is able to adapt and compete in a rapidly changing external environment.

### **2.2.1. Models of Effectiveness**

Organisational effectiveness can be judged by different models. The models of effectiveness are the systems resource approach, goal approach, internal process approach and strategic constituencies approach. The time dimension model of effectiveness is also used to evaluate an organisation's effectiveness.

#### ***2.2.1.1. Systems Resource Approach***

This approach focuses on inputs, that is, the extent to which an organisation can acquire the resources it needs. An organisation that acquires materials, human resources, finance and information resources is able to compete successfully in the market place (Griffin, 1990).

#### ***2.2.1.2. Goal Approach***

This approach to effectiveness focuses on the end result, such as, profit, quality and productivity. Organisations are effective if they achieve their production or service goals. Achieving output goals ensures a return on the owner's investment, continued survival and growth of the organisation and satisfaction of customer needs (Robey, 1991).

#### ***2.2.1.3. Internal Process Approach***

This approach deals mainly with the aspects of the organisation, such as, human relationships. It stresses the importance of worker motivation, good communication,

teamwork and good decision-making. In this approach, effectiveness is assessed by evaluating the quality of human resources since human performance is ultimately responsible for productivity (Robey, 1991).

#### ***2.2.1.4. Strategic Constituencies Approach***

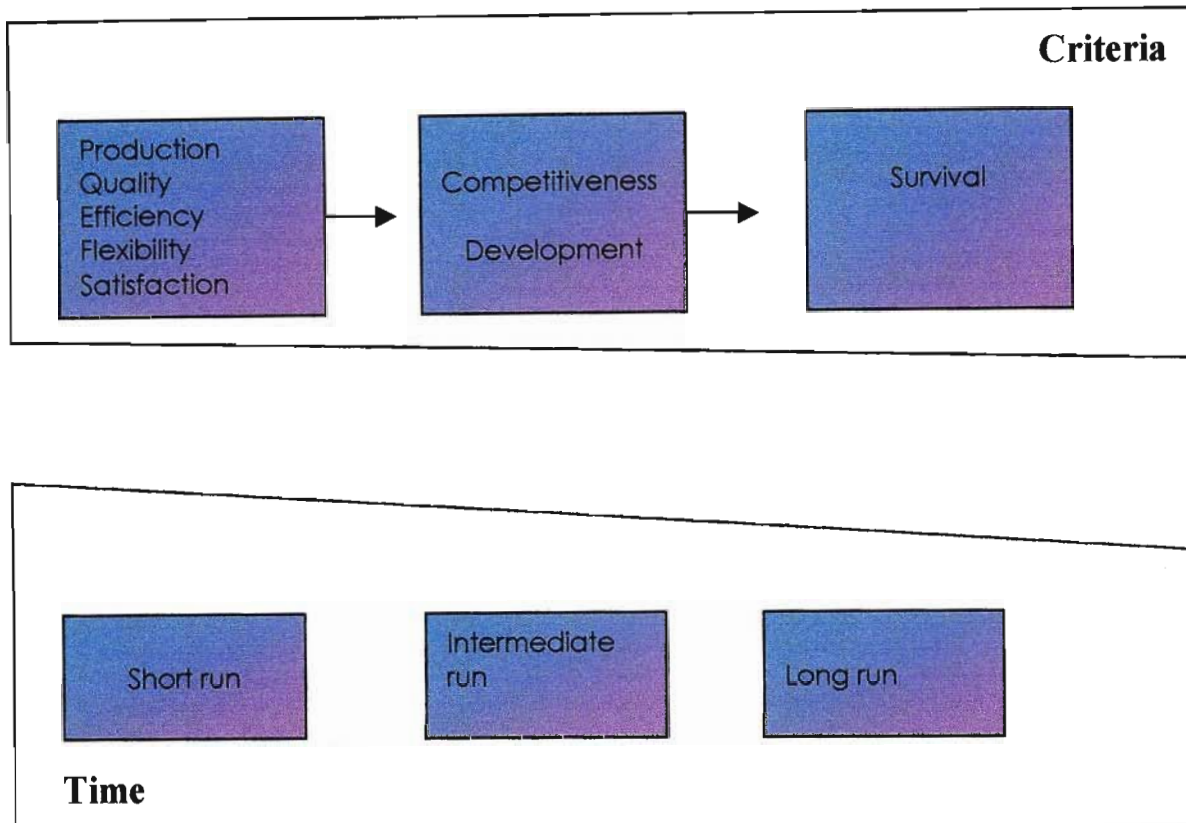
This approach places emphasis on the groups that have a stake in the organisation. In this view, effectiveness is the extent to which the organisation satisfies the demands and expectations of all groups (Griffin, 1990). The contributions of all stakeholders are needed for an organisation to be viable and to accomplish its mission of producing goods and services. For an organisation to be effective, it must at least minimally satisfy the interests of all stakeholders (Jones, 2001).

Clearly, organisational effectiveness requires that the organisation be able to acquire and manage resources, achieve its goals and satisfy the needs of all major stakeholders.

#### ***2.2.2. The Time Dimension Model of Effectiveness***

The time dimension model of effectiveness (Figure 2.1) enables one to understand the work of managers in the organisation. They are there to identify and influence the causes of individual, group and organisational effectiveness in the short, intermediate and long run (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1994).

**Figure 2.1: The Time Dimension Model of Effectiveness**



Gibson, J.L., Ivancevich, J.M. and Donnelly, J.H. 1994. Organizations: Behaviour, Structure and Processes. Eighth edition. United States of America: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. p. 42.

### **2.2.3. Criteria of effectiveness**

According to Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly (1994) managers and others who have interests in the organisation must have indicators to assess the probability of survival. Short-term, intermediate and long-run criteria are used to measure effectiveness in the organisation. Figure 2.1 shows the relationship between these criteria and the time dimension.

#### ***2.2.3.1. Short-term criteria of effectiveness***

Managers use a number of short-run indicators of long-run survival, including productivity, efficiency, quality, flexibility and satisfaction. For example, quality is the ultimate criterion of individual, group and organisational effectiveness and has become the necessary condition for survival. The source of measure and judgements of quality come from customers and clients (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1994).

#### ***2.2.3.2. Intermediate criteria of effectiveness***

Competitiveness and development reflect effectiveness in the intermediate time period. Competitiveness reflects the organisation's position within its industry. Development ensures organisational effectiveness over time through investing resources to meet future environmental demands. Properly managed development efforts are the keys to survival (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly, 1994).

#### ***2.2.3.3. Long-run criteria of effectiveness***

In the long-run the organisation seeks to survive and this can only be done when short-run and long-run effectiveness is achieved (Gibson et al., 1994). It is important for organisations to develop a strategy to ensure high performance and effectiveness in future operations. This kind of meaningful survival requires the development of long range plans which considers the forces of the external environment, the needs of the internal environment and mitigating actions required to achieve success and there must be a concern for people (schroeter, 1970).

### **2.2.4. Measuring effectiveness : Organisational Goals**

There are two types of goals that a manager uses to assess how well an organisation is performing. These are the official goals and operative goals. Official goals refer to the guiding principles that the organisation formally states in its annual reports and in other publications. These goals usually lay out the mission of the organisation. These goals are meant to legitimise the organisation and its activities and allow it to obtain resources and the support of its stakeholders (Jones, 2001). Operative goals are specific long-term and short-term goals that guide managers and employees as they perform the work of the

organisation. Managers can use these goals to measure how well they are managing the environment and how well the organisation is functioning. They can also measure how efficient they are by creating operative goals that allow them to “benchmark” themselves against their competitors (Jones, 2001).

### **2.2.5. Managerial Performance and Organisational effectiveness**

Achieving organisational effectiveness is not an easy task. It requires managers to perform at a high level. Managerial performance is measured by the extent to which managers set appropriate goals, develop valid plans and systems for achieving them, and implementing those plans efficiently and effectively. The key to performing at a high level is being aware of one’s environment and its meaning for the organisation (Griffin, 1990).

### **2.2.6. An effective organisation in terms of ten characteristics**

Beckhard (1969), as cited in Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum (1981), describes an effective organisation in terms of the following ten characteristics:

- The total organisation, the subparts of the organisation and the individuals manage their work against goals and plans for achievement of these goals.
- The problem or task determines how the human resources are organised.
- Decisions are made by and near the sources of information regardless of where these sources are located on the organisation chart.
- The reward system is such that managers and supervisors are rewarded and punished comparably for short-term profit or production performance, growth and development for their subordinates, creating a viable working group. According to a study conducted by Towers Perrin in Summer 1999, where 750 North American companies participated, high performing companies are moving away from salary-based compensation into total rewards and an increase use in non-cash rewards. By linking high performance to rewards and rewarding and recognising top performers, leading organisations provide more incentive for employees to succeed and exceed.



High performance companies are committed to recognising and rewarding employees who contribute the most to the organisation and also provide stock options to top talents. In today's labour market companies compete for top talent by providing rewards on a feature-by-feature basis or by focusing on a single element, such as, incentive and stock options. Instead, they need to integrate pay design and delivery into a broader total rewards framework that reinforces the behaviour and actions required of employees (Gherson and perrin, 2000).

- Lateral and vertical communication is relatively undistorted. People are generally open and confronting. They share all relevant factors and feelings.
- Constant effort exists at all levels to treat conflict and conflict situations. According to Brook (2001), unresolved conflicts cost organisations millions every year. Conflict can appear in many situations, for example, during restructuring, when two organisations merge, or when problems occur between a company and an outsourcing partner.

Brook (2001) developed eight steps to help organisations identify and bring resolution to conflict:-

1. Assess the Symptoms: This allows the organisation to see whether conflict is being approached positively or is becoming unhealthy. This allows key stakeholders to realise that there is a problem with relationships.
2. Choose expert facilitators: These facilitators should be from outside the teams involved, with no bias or vested interests other than to achieve a positive outcome. They should work with the group to resolve the conflict.
3. Involve the people at the top: These facilitators will be unable to influence fundamental issues that top managers have the power to change.
4. Set the scene for impartiality: This involves making it clear that the facilitator's role is to address the breakdowns in relationships that are preventing progress and second, to help create working methods that promote co-operation.
5. Explore individual issues: Arrange for facilitators to meet each individual in a private setting, to discuss how the situations affect them personally. This will build trust between team members and facilitators which is vital when dealing with emotional issues.



6. Clear the air: Bring the whole group together to clear the air and explore the conflict from different perspectives.
  7. Declare an amnesty: This involves gaining an emotional commitment to ditching “old baggage” and working together to move forward.
  8. Approach the problems: Deal with the outstanding practical problems that started or worsened during the period when relationships were deteriorating.
- There is high “conflict” about tasks and projects and little energy spent in clashing over interpersonal difficulties.
  - The organisation and its subparts see themselves interacting with each other and with a larger environment. The organisation is an “open system”.
  - There is a shared value and management strategy to support it.
  - The organisation and its members operate in an “action research” way. General practice is to build in feedback mechanisms so that individuals and groups can learn from their own experience. The 360-degree appraisal feedback process is taking hold in American business. A recent survey of 280 Midwest companies indicate that 25% use annual upward appraisals, 18% are using peer appraisals and about 12% are using full 360-degree appraisals. In a 360-degree appraisal system, individuals evaluate themselves and receive feedback from other employees and organisational members. The 360-degree appraisal results provide appraisees and appraisers with an excellent opportunity to discuss and work out expectations in the work relationship. Research has indicated that organisations considering implementing 360-degree feedback appraisal would do well to first define specific desired outcomes and then develop specific processes to attain these outcomes (Antonioni, 1996).

Employee feedback mechanisms are also essential. This type of feedback system generates valuable information that can be used to effectively run a company. This system provides ongoing feedback from the front line and it ensures that there are no misunderstandings between what is in the hearts and minds of employees and what management believes is in the hearts and minds of employees. Experience has suggested that approximately 70% of the information received from employee

feedback mechanisms can benefit an organisation. These include streamlined processes, new product ideas, suggestions for improved productivity and ways to enhance management effectiveness (Lilienthal, 2000).

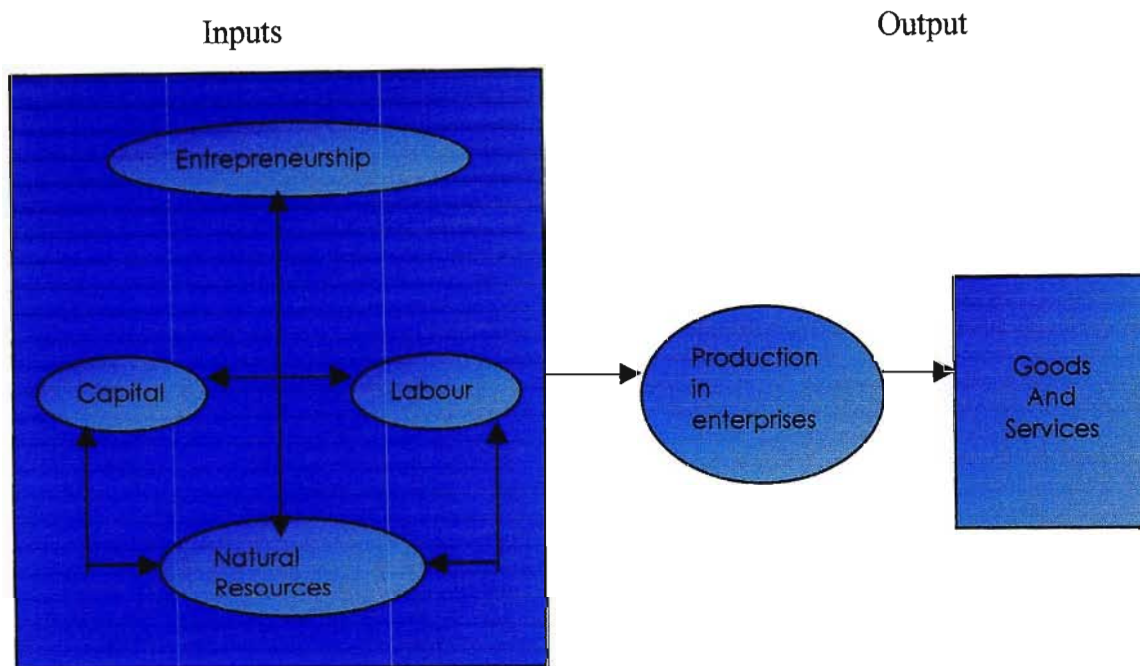
A healthy organisation is one that reflects an open and trusting atmosphere, with free flowing communication, procedures for confronting rather than avoiding conflict, and a willingness to share responsibility and authority, coupled with expectations of excellence in performance (Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

The organisation uses the four factors of production to ensure organisational effectiveness and survival. Without the factors of production goods and services cannot be provided.

### **2.3. Factors of Production**

The factors of production are divided into four main groups, namely, entrepreneurship, natural resources, labour and capital. These are known as inputs in the production process that are then transferred into outputs required by consumers (Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2: Transferring inputs into outputs through the production process system**



Archer, A.A., Brandt, A.M., Du Plessis, P.G., Hill, L.A., Lambrechts, I.J. and Zungu, Z.N.D. 1997. Exploring Business Economics. Second edition. Western Cape: Via Africa. p. 134.

### **2.3.1. Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship refers to the ability and willingness of those persons taking the lead in establishing institutions which provide goods and services (Marx and Van Aswegen, 1989). The entrepreneur is the person with the pioneering spirit, initiative, inspiration and willingness to work and the one who has to take risks (Archer et al., 1997).

Research states that entrepreneurs are people that make a contribution to the world. Entrepreneurs display the following three qualities:

- they are positive;
- they are cautious; and
- they are decisive (Apteker, 2000).

Furthermore, they are always moving ahead; they make decisions and they grow from them. Many entrepreneurs are famous for starting visionary institutions while there are those entrepreneurs who have joined a company and made greater contributions. For example, Jack Welch is considered to be one of the world's greatest entrepreneurs, yet he did not start General Electric. A true entrepreneur is encouraged by a deep belief in what he or she is doing. The contribution they can make and the emotions they can feel from their customers and people around them is what inspires them more than anything else (Apteker, 2000).

### **2.3.2. *Natural Resources***

Natural resources are the means provided by nature, such as, land, water, minerals, precious stones and forestry products (Marx and Van Aswegen, 1989).

According to James Gustave Speth (1984), resource problems are now coinciding with environmental concerns which pose a serious challenge for business but offers considerable opportunities as well. Business has both direct and indirect reasons to care about specific environmental and resource management issues. It is important for companies to have a corporate outlook aimed at addressing an increasingly pressing and prominent concern in resource management. He also states that new strategies and a sense of mission are essential in building a new global system in which expanding markets and development support a better management of the world's resources. Business needs to commit to developing better information regarding natural resource condition and trends at the international level.

### **2.3.3. *Labour***

Labour also known as human resources, include the physical talents, skills and mental abilities employed to create products and services. For the production process to be successful in an organisation, the members of its labour force have to be trained to a certain level of skill. The skills of human resources is crucial, for without it natural resources cannot be productively utilised (Cronje, Hugo, Neuland and Van Reenen, 1995).

According to Martha H. Peak (1997), managers perceive a training need to make a good employee better or turn a problem employee around. An organisational planning process is incomplete if it does not address long-term training and personal needs to meet corporate goals. The boardroom is demanding that trainers determine the needs of the organisation and develop human capital around these needs (Peak, 1997).

According to Shari Caudron (1998), in order for companies to keep up with the rapid growth rate, Human Resource (HR) professionals need to grow the skills and capabilities they need internally. To stay competitive, training and all other HR activities have to work together to support and reinforce corporate strategy. In high performing companies, HR departments are more closely integrated and HR professionals can clearly identify the people practices needed to help the company reach its strategic goals.

#### ***2.3.4. Capital***

Capital consists of the funds and other assets such, as land, buildings and equipment used in the production of goods and services (Marx and Van Aswegen, 1989). In today's business the factor of capital includes technology. Technology is the application of knowledge to production, physical equipment and machinery. Firms that invest in technology, usually in the form of research and development or advanced equipment usually produce more attractive and useful goods and services (Luthans and Hodgetts, 1989).

According to research conducted by the Business Development Bank of Canada on the economic impact of venture capital, technology scored the most points for generating economic growth and creating jobs. It also indicated that technological companies alone account for 93% of all research and development expenditures and are therefore, making a significant contribution to the economic growth of the company (Re, 1999).

According to Hickins (2000), many companies are now seeking help from other companies in the form of strategic alliances. Many strategic alliances are driven by the realisation that no single company can offer customers everything they need, particularly

when it comes to technological needs. Companies know that they cannot satisfy many aspects of their customers' technological requirements. Therefore, they form strategic alliances with other firms that can. For example, Dun & Bradstreet in the United States is a company that provides critical and time sensitive data to financial services company. Dun & Bradstreet realised that its customers had a complex set of technological needs which it could not provide. It then joined forces with a company called SAP and SAS Institute Inc, in order to provide customers with a better product (Hickins, 2000).

Besides the factors of production an organisation also depends on efficient interpersonal relations in order to be effective.

## **2.4. Interpersonal relations**

Interpersonal relations refer to the interaction between two or more people. Interpersonal communication focuses on listening and responding empathetically, sharing information, holding effective conversations and developing, maintaining or improving relationships (Verderber, 1999). According to O'Hair, Friedrich and Shaver (1995) the workplace promotes several types of relationships, including relationships between managers and employees, between co-workers, between employees and customers and mentoring relationships.

Interpersonal skills are regarded as a prerequisite for managerial success. Since management is dealing with people for about 60 percent of the time, it is therefore important for a manager to be able to communicate and motivate groups as well as individuals (Cronje, Hugo, Neulland and Van Reenen, 1995).

Furthermore, interpersonal relations are critical to achieving organisational goals. Strong interpersonal skills can help overcome many obstacles in the workplace and also build strong relationships that may benefit oneself and the organisation (O'Hair, Friedrich and shaver, 1995).

Within organisations the nature of human interactions plays a major part in the levels of performance and productivity. The quality of working relationships between people is crucial for organisational survival and success (Senge, 2001).

Interpersonal relations in organisations can be a source of need satisfaction for people who have the need for belongingness and affiliation. It can also be a tremendous source of synergy. People who support one another and who work well together can accomplish much more than those who do not have support and who do not work well together (Griffin, 1990).

Research indicates that managers working in a top-down environment often lack the interpersonal skills needed to manage people in an empowered organisation (Swinburne, 1995). Managers are expected to give bad news, such as, restructuring or redundancy, hold constructive performance discussions, speak about career and personal issues affecting performance, coach people on new skills and methods and generally, adopt a more people-oriented approach. Adopting a people-oriented approach and listening to people's feelings and facts can help resolve discussions about poor performance more quickly. Today, flatter organisations emphasise the manager's ability to manage people and the encouragement of greater responsibility as the key to their competitive success. Interpersonal relations is the essential nature of the manager-employee relationship. The interpersonal skills helps managers to deal with difficult interpersonal situations. It is also the key to the empowered organisation because it enables employees to take on more responsibility for issues, and enables managers to take on a supporting role (Swinburne, 1995).

Further research indicates that Coke's CORE team had to undergo intensive training to gain the knowledge, skills and competencies that will assist them in any future work environment. One of the skills which was primarily important, was interpersonal skills. The interpersonal skills included communication and other interpersonal relationship skills that the team members needed to be effective individuals. Coke's team culture demands a sophisticated level of interaction among potential team members. Therefore,



all associates in the plant received training in listening, handling conflict and influencing and negotiating with internal and external customers. Through this training, it was clear that the foundation of true teamwork is interpersonal communication training. If individuals do not have the tools to interact and communicate effectively with each other, then the team's success will be drastically reduced (Phillips, 1996).

All forms of relationships requires individuals communicating with one another.

## **2.5. Communication**

Communication is the sharing of meaning, whether the context is informal conversation, group interaction or public speaking. Communication serves many functions. People communicate to meet a certain need, to fulfill social obligations, to develop relationships, to exchange information and to influence others (Verderber, 1999).

Communication is regarded as the lifeblood of an organisation. Managers experience communication as the means by which the people in the organisation and all organisational activities are managed. A well designed communication strategy and effective communication skills can enable a manager to be highly successful (Puth, 1996).

An organisation's success depends on effective communication skills. Effective communication contributes to organisational goals, reduces many organisational problems, facilitates understanding between individuals and provides information on job tasks. Without effective communication many organisational activities are most likely to fail.

A survey conducted by the American Management Association for senior executives from a cross section of more than 10 000 U.S. manufacturing companies found significant gaps, and even discontinuities, in the foundation for effective communication at many firms. Among the survey's findings were the following:



- Stockholders were deemed to understand the company's vision, mission and values better than its employees, competitors, customers and suppliers.
- A majority of managers and supervisors across a range of specific functions (that is, finance, human resources, marketing) lacked a high level of understanding.
- Less than half of the respondents believed that managers and supervisors working in the companies different functions understood its financial and market objectives (Lowy and Reimus, 1996).

Furthermore, less than a third of the executives surveyed said that their firms regularly sought feedback to make sure their messages were received as intended. Despite these gaps and discontinuities, the study also found that, companies which were open and communicative as they navigated through changes stood a better chance of succeeding than those that were not (Lowy and Reimus, 1996).

## **2.6. Conclusion**

It is clear that organisations seek effectiveness and survival. The ability to acquire and manage the factors of production ensures the achievement of the organisation's goals and objectives. The quality of working relationships and the effectiveness of communication are crucial in determining the success of the organisation.

## Chapter 3

### Communication

#### 3.1. Introduction

One of the greatest difficulties faced by management is getting people to understand and achieve organisational objectives. Effective communication can be seen as a tool to meet this challenge. Communication is an important method used by managers to influence the behaviour of employees. It is inherent in all spheres of human interaction and is responsible for the continuing success of an organisation. In this chapter, communication is defined, the importance and functions of communication is considered and a description of the communication model is given. The theoretical aspects, the flow of information, and the types of communication including interpersonal communication are taken into account. Furthermore, the barriers to effective communication and ways of overcoming these barriers and more importantly cross-cultural communication are highlighted.

#### 3.2. Definitions

“Communication is the process by which information is exchanged between a sender and receiver with the goal of achieving mutual understanding” (Kolb, Rubin and Osland, 1995: 170). Communication can also be defined as “the process by which one person, the communicator (or encoder), conveys a particular message to another, the receiver (or decoder)” (Cronje, Neuland, Hugo and Van Reenen, 1995: 399). According to O’Hair, Friedrich and Shaver (1995: 13), “Organizational communication is the exchange of oral, non-verbal and written messages within (and across the boundaries of) a system of interrelated and interdependent people working to accomplish common tasks and goals.” Similarly, Kreps (1990: 26) as cited in Rensburg (1996: 100), defines organisational communication as “the dynamic, ongoing process that enables people to work together, to co-operate with each other, and to interpret ever-changing organizational needs and activities.”

It is thus evident that communication involves the interaction between two or more people working towards goal achievement.

### **3.3. Importance of Organisational Communication**

Almost everybody belongs to an organisation and most would agree that it is communication that gives life to an organisational structure. Communication is the lifeblood of an organisation and if removed, there would be no organisation. Communication is an important work tool through which individuals understand their work role and by which they integrate organisational sub-units. It provides a means for making and executing decisions, obtaining feedback and correcting organisational objectives and procedures as the situation demands. Organisational communication includes many varied activities, such as, giving directions, counseling workers, interviewing, evaluating staff, motivating people, resolving conflicts and monitoring work groups (Mersham and Skinner, 2001). Several studies have shown that managers spend 70 to 80% of their time communicating. Communication time can be spent during meetings, writing, speaking on the phone, chatting in the corridors and doing performance reviews (Schonfelder, 1998). Organisational communication is an area of expertise that is evolving as a consequence of the rapid cultural changes taking place in most organisations. Organisational communication is a holistic approach to communication within an organisation. It assumes that everyone is involved in, and responsible for, communication. Organisational communication's focus is on the behaviours and processes needed to create an effective "communication culture" in an organisation. An effective communication culture will ensure the proactive exchange of knowledge, opinions, ideas, by everyone in the organisation. The effect should include faster decision making, increased productivity and empowerment (Schonfelder, 1998).

### **3.4. Major Functions for Communication**

According to Fielding (1997), effective communication has three major functions:

- Ensuring that products and services are the best.

- Helping staff generate new ideas and adapt to changes. According to Krieg (2002), during a process of change communication is vitally important. All internal and external stakeholders need to be informed at all times about the changes taking place in an organisation. All members of communication need to be considered. Staff need to be informed at least once a month about the progress made. If progress is slow, people need to know. Research has shown that staff find messages from their own supervisors more credible than those from top management. Therefore, supervisors need to be utilised as communicators to staff, which means that they must be properly informed. The top leader, however, must be made very visible during this stage. Effective feedback channels must be built into the communication strategy (Krieg, 2002).

According to Aquanni and Taylor (2000), in an era marked by rapid shift in markets, corporate alliances and boundaries, employees can no longer rely on the institutional framework to define their environment. During these tough times, executives must learn to keep the lines of communication opened. For example, Hughes Space and Communication company had to make strategic changes (downsizing, product development). CSC consulting worked with the managers to train them to become better listeners and be more receptive to new ideas. The lines of communication were opened through one-on-one interviews. The aim was to look at people's true thoughts about a variety of issues ranging from product strategy to competency of managers, to understand their aspirations and identify any gaps in knowledge and understanding. The team helped develop a strategy for replacing the command-and-control hierarchy with a culture that relied on open communications. In order to convince employees of the need for change Hughes had to share information more openly.

- Ensuring that staff work well together, understand the organisation's objectives and work to achieve those objectives (Fielding, 1997). According to James C. Smith (1999), the chief executive officer of Ryobi die casting, companies do not get where they want to go because they do not have a developed plan to clearly communicate at all levels. Smith's primary goal was to change the company from an aluminium die cast manufacturer into an information and knowledge enterprise that competes in the

aluminium die casting market. In order to achieve this kind of change, a clear road map of what is expected, had to be delivered to every employee as part of an ongoing communication. This road map was presented in a series of small informational meetings across all departments. With this method, information can be communicated to employees that will guide them toward the organisation's goals. This will allow employees to understand the corporate goals and share in the benefits of reaching them. Ryobi die casting achieved the world class award from Ford Motor Company, which is presented each year to only a top few suppliers from the thousands that do business with Ford. These results were achieved because of good communication, which enabled employees to clearly understand the task ahead and what is expected of them. As a result, they clearly understood the benefits of success (Smith, 1999).

According to Swift (1999), corporate survival in the present day South Africa hinges on the ability of managers to motivate people and inspire them to take pride in both their own and corporate achievements. Every employee needs to know where the company is headed and whether it is meeting the mark on an ongoing basis. The starting point is communicating a realistic vision. Eskom's vision of building the nation is an excellent example. Employees are continually informed about how many houses the company has electrified throughout South Africa. It is important to brief employees timeously on all changes which affect them. They need to know what is happening, how, when, why and what is in it for them.

Strategic management researchers, drawing upon case studies, have found that top managers can inspire workers with communicated vision (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989 as cited in Baum, Locke and Kirkpatrick, 1998). Furthermore, entrepreneurship theorists point to the importance of communication of the entrepreneur's vision to new venture teams and to the management that supervises venture growth. Thus, a study was conducted to test the importance of communicating a vision and venture growth. Thirty one structured interviews were conducted with practicing business founders. In this study, 61% of the subjects said that they had communicated their vision to employees.

However, over 90% of the interviewees felt that most businesses benefit from having a clear, well communicated vision. A questionnaire was also constructed for statistical analysis. In this study, vision communication had a significant relationship with venture growth. It also found vision and vision communication to have positive effects upon organisational level performance. However, this does not mean that having and communicating a well formulated vision is enough to guarantee results because many leaders and many companies fail to 'walk the talk'. In summary, vision affects performance directly as well as indirectly through vision communication (Baum, Locke and Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Communication also assists in conflict situations that occurs during times of mergers and organisational change. For example, the financial services merger in the Caribbean. In 1997, the Republic bank, the leading bank in Trinidad and Tobago emerged with another local institution, the Commerce bank. There was a feeling of animosity between the CEO and the deputy managing director. The latter felt that information was being withheld and decisions being made without consulting him. These two individuals were working at cross-purpose and there were huge amounts of conflict between them. The two men experienced a common fallout of fast paced organisational change, stress and tension which led to misperceptions and miscommunications. In coming months, these two used their personal communications breakdown to help build a culture of trust within the organisation. They hosted a series of meetings with general managers. Republic bank continues to work hard to keep the lines of communication open. General managers held quarterly "feedback sessions" with staff to discuss problems and exchange information. Trained coaches sat in to observe and raise issues that were lurking beneath the surface (Aquanni and Taylor, 2000). It is thus evident that continuous and open communication enabled these two men to overcome their differences and to establish a good working relationship.

Communication also influences an employee's level of job satisfaction and productivity. A study was conducted to test whether job level significantly moderates the relationship between superior-subordinate communication and job satisfaction. Previous research has

found positive relationships between superior-subordinate communication and job satisfaction (Goldhaber, Yates, Porter and Lesnaik, 1978 and Schweiger and Denisi, 1991 as cited in Miles, Patrick and King, 1996). One study found that communication behaviours accounted for more than 60% of the variance in employee job satisfaction (Golhaber, Yates, Porter and Lesnaik, 1978 as cited in Miles, Patrick and King, 1996). The current study conducted by Miles, Patrick and King (1996), has indicated a significant relationship between superior-subordinate communication and job satisfaction. These results provide support for past research. The study found that supervisors reported a high level of job satisfaction than did hourly employees and secondly, communication with one's superior was a significant predictor of job satisfaction irrespective of job level. This strong relationship between superior-subordinate communication and job satisfaction indicates a need for managers to consider communication practices as part of any effort to improve job satisfaction. For practicing managers, these results indicate that the communication relationship they have with their subordinates is a critical lever in affecting subordinates job satisfaction (Miles, Patrick and King, 1996).

Research conducted by Weiss (2002) also indicates that the effectiveness of an employee depends on how well managers communicate with them because they must be informed, trained and directed. Without good communication, workers would not be efficient, would not work well with others nor help the company keep up with the competition. When the channels of communication are kept opened, employees feel motivated, interest is maintained and cooperation is promoted. When employees know how to do their job and why they are doing them, then they are inclined to do better. Since the ambitions, hopes and goals of employees are sensitive to motivation, they should be encouraged to pursue their desires and try to gain satisfaction from their work. If managers can inspire employees, there should be no limits to the increase in productivity that can be achieved. One of the best ways to inspire them is to communicate with them personally. The information that is given to employees helps them in doing their work and it is also helpful for supervisors to have additional news delivered on a personal basis. Furthermore, team effort, support and agreement on goals begin with the manager's willingness to communicate and this results in more productivity (Weiss, 2002).



According to Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum (1981) and Rensburg (1996), communication also serves four other major functions, that is, the informative, regulative, persuasive and integrative functions.

#### ***3.4.1. The Informative Function***

Employees in an organisation require a large amount of information to operate efficiently and effectively. Managers need accurate, timely and well-organised information to reach decisions effectively and to resolve conflicts. Workers require information to do their jobs. As each worker is provided with information about his or her job, the employee sets new goals and develops the proper behaviour to achieve those goals. Most organisations have regular meetings so that managers can report actions in each area of the total organisation. Although the primary function of these meetings are informative, problems are shared and methods for developing and implementing solutions are adopted (Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

#### ***3.4.2. The Regulative Function***

The regulative function of organisational communication is to control and co-ordinate the activities of the organisation to ensure its successful operation. Manual, policies, memoranda, rules and instructions compromise a set of guidelines for managing an organisation. Regulatory messages are work oriented and have two main purposes:

- They inform employees about what tasks they are expected to perform in order to accomplish a specific assignment.
- They inform employees about restrictions that are placed on their behaviour. Managers send orders downward to employees, and expect compliance on their basis of their authority (Rensburg, 1996).

#### ***3.4.3. The Integrative Function***

The integrative function is used to bring about organisational unity and cohesion. It is largely concerned with creating identity and uniformity in the organisation. As well as defining goals and tasks to facilitate the assimilation of new members, integrative



messages are used to co-ordinate the work schedules of individuals, groups and departments, thereby eliminating wasted time and effort (Rensburg, 1996).

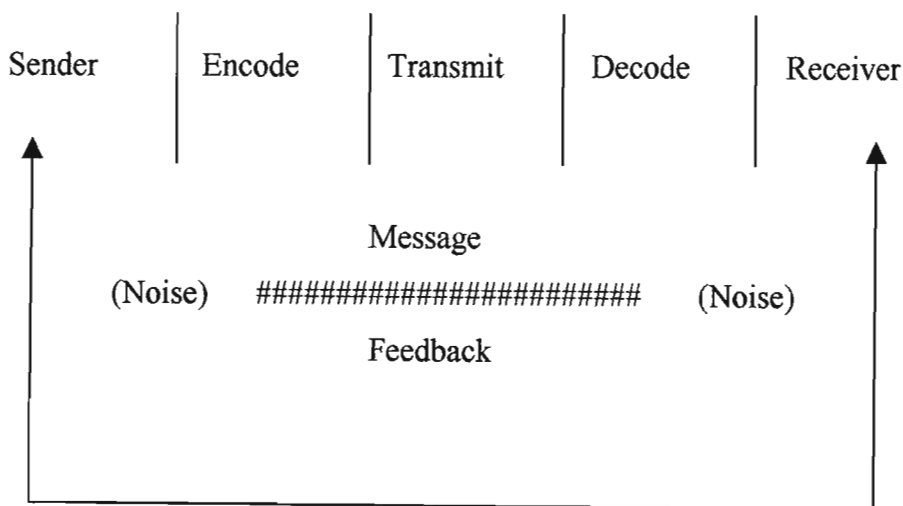
#### **3.4.4. The Persuasive Function**

Managers must often regulate through persuasion, which is used at all levels in the organisation, such as, employees requesting a raise from the boss. Many superiors prefer to persuade a subordinate rather than issuing orders. Successful managers realise that voluntary compliance by employees result in greater commitment than commands or appeals to authority (Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

### **3.5. The Communication Model**

The communication model (Figure 3.1) illustrates the entire communication process by providing a picture of how each component is related to each other.

**Figure 3.1: The Communication Model**



Source: Kolb, D.A., Rubin, J.M. and Osland, J.S. 1995. Organisational Behaviour: An Experiential Approach. Sixth edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. p. 170.

Very simply, this model (Figure 3.1) depicts that the sender thinks of what message he or she wants to convey to another person. The next step would be to encode that message, that is, put it into verbal or non-verbal form and transmit it to the receiver. The receiver must then decode the message, that is, put into a form that has meaning for him or her (Kolb et al., 1995).

### 3.5.1. Components of the Communication Process

- **Communicator/ Sender:** A communicator forms purposeful messages and attempts to express them to others through non-verbal or verbal signs. He or she uses words and gestures to put the message across. The communicator's purpose may be the need to share his or her thoughts and feelings, or to persuade someone to change an attitude, opinion or behaviour (Steinberg, 1997).
- **Receiver:** Communication only occurs if there is a receiver for the message transmitted (Cronje, Hugo, Neuland and Van Reenen, 1995). According to Steinberg (1997), a recipient does not only receive messages but also has to intentionally and consciously pay attention to the message in order to understand and interpret it.
- **Message:** This is the idea or information being transmitted. There are two kinds of messages, namely, verbal, (spoken or written) and non-verbal (body language). The message must be simple, and the words and other non-verbal communication content must convey the same meaning for both communicator and receiver (Cronje et al., 1995).
- **Encoding and decoding** - The process of transforming thoughts and ideas (messages) into verbal and non-verbal signs is called encoding; the process of transforming verbal and non-verbal signs back into messages is called decoding (Steinberg, 1997).
- **Meaning** - Messages contain two types of information to which meaning is attached. Firstly, content information which refers to the factual information about the topic of the message. Secondly, relational information which determines how the participants understand their relationship. It provides information about the feelings of the communicator and how the content should be interpreted (Steinberg, 1997).

- **Interpretation** - Messages contain meaning that must be interpreted. Interpretation depends on both social (shared) meanings and individual (personal or subjective) meanings (Steinberg, 1997).
- **Medium and channel:** The message is sent through a channel, which is the communication carrier. The channel can be a formal report, a telephone conversation or a face-to-face meeting (Draft, 1991).
- **Noise** - Any stimulus that interferes with the transmission and reception of messages is called noise. There are external noises in the environment that distracts a person's attention, for example, a cold room, an uncomfortable chair or even a pair of sunglasses (Steinberg, 1997). In written communication blurred typing or creased pages can create noise because it interferes with the clarity of the message. Internal noises refer to the thoughts and feelings in people that may interfere with the communication process. There are also semantic noises which are interferences due to the meaning of words. For example, a doctor using unfamiliar terms to explain why a patient is ill (Steinberg, 1997).
- **Feedback:** The communicator of the message needs to know what effect it has on the receiver or target audience. This is possible through feedback (Cronje et al., 1995). Feedback is the response of the receiver to the information that he or she has received, which may be verbal or non-verbal. Feedback ensures that the cycle of communication is completed by linking the communicator to the receiver (Cronje et al., 1995).

### **3.6. Theoretical Approaches to Organisational Communication**

Theoretical approaches to organisational communication provide an historical overview of changing perceptions of organisations and the role of communication since the nineteenth century (Rensburg, 1996). Many theories have been developed to explain how organisations work, what relationships exist between management and labour, and what function communication serves in the operation of an organisation. The theories examine the structure of an organisation in relation to its communication techniques and also the

atmosphere of an organisation and the flow of messages through that organisation (O'Hair, Friedrich and Shaver, 1995). The most widely used theories are the classical theory and the humanistic theory.

### **3.6.1. The Classical Theory**

The Classical approach includes theories that emphasise structures, rules and control. These are Taylor's scientific management theory, Weber's bureaucracy theory and Fayol's administrative management theory (O'Hair et al., 1995).

#### ***3.6.1.1. Taylor's Scientific Management Theory***

Frederick Taylor founded the scientific management theory. Taylor's concern was to increase productivity by improving workers' techniques and methods. He also developed the time and motion study, which provided minute-by-minute analyses of individual jobs. He broke each job down into its basic parts and then advocated strategies for finding the most efficient way of doing things and improving productivity (Rensburg, 1996).

#### ***3.6.1.2. Weber's Bureaucracy Theory***

Max Weber was regarded as the father of bureaucracy. Weber acclaimed bureaucracy as superior to any other form of organisation management in terms of precision, stability, stringency of discipline and reliability (Puth, 1996). Bureaucracy was characterised by an organisation structure in which communication was extremely formal and no flexibility was allowed. In this approach emphasis was placed on rules and regulations. Communication amongst peers were discouraged and interaction between people in the organisation was entirely focused on work-related or production aspects (Puth, 1996).

#### ***3.6.1.3. Fayol's Administrative Management Theory***

The administrative management theory focuses on the duties and responsibilities of managers in the organisation. Henri Fayol laid out the foundations of the administrative management theory. Like Weber, Fayol believed in a strong hierarchial structure. He believed that the responsibility of those at the lower end of the hierarchy was technical

expertise and nothing more. Management, on the other hand, was responsible for organisational and administrative duties (O'Hair et al., 1995).

#### **3.6.1.4 Communication Implications of the Classical Theory**

According to Puth (1996), there were major implications for management communication. Different theories of the classical approach have specific effects on the communication climate and communication patterns in the organisation.

- Communication was formal, mainly top-down in nature and determined by the organisational structure and hierarchy.
- The main purpose of communication was to provide instructions and guidelines with regard to formal work aspects.
- In instances where upward communication was allowed, it consisted mainly of progress reports and answers to specific requests and enquiries from management.
- Little attention was given to the possibility that employees needed to interact with each other on the job (Puth, 1996).
- No recognition was given to the social and supportive communication needs of the employees. This type of communication was seen as counter-productive and irrelevant to the organisation.
- The classical approach to management represented a limited view of communication in the organisation and reflected an ignorance of the complexity and richness of human communication in the workplace (Puth, 1996).

#### **3.6.2. Humanistic Theory**

The humanistic theory was concerned with the human elements. The theorists of the humanistic approach focused their work on human relations, interpersonal communication and informal communication systems (Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

### ***3.6.2.1. Human Relations Theory***

The human relations theory can be attributed to the Hawthorne studies conducted by Elton Mayo. The Hawthorne studies opened the way for the exploration of “human areas” of the organisation that had been neglected by the scientific management theory. This study focused on the influence of social, emotional, and other non-material factors in human motivation and the role of communication, group interaction, leadership, and similar processes in organisation effectiveness (Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

### ***3.6.2.2. Human Resource Approach***

Douglas McGregor, Herbert Simon and Rensis Likert moved beyond the basic premise of the human relations theory. The human resource approach stated that people were also interested in meaningful and challenging jobs and that the quality of life at the workplace was a major motivational force (Puth, 1996). McGregor proposed two theories of motivation, that is, theory X and theory Y. According to theory X, workers were unproductive and unmotivated, and must be coerced through constant supervision to perform their tasks. According to theory Y, workers were creative and motivated and did not require coercion and also had the ability to perform extremely well (O’Hair et al., 1995).

### ***3.6.2.3. Systems Theory***

The systems theory deals with the whole system made up of parts of the organisation, relationships between the parts and their relationships with the environment. All systems parts rely on one and other in the performance of organisational activities (Rensburg, 1996). **Opened and closed systems** are relative terms as applied to organisational systems. A system is relatively more or less opened or closed depending on the interaction permitted across its boundaries within its environment (Koehler, Anatol and Aapplbaum, 1981). Open systems allow for free flow of energy, information, ideas, data and people across organisational boundaries. Closed systems, on the other hand, deliberately shut themselves out from the outside environment (O’Hair et al., 1995).

#### **3.6.2.4. The Humanistic Approach to Organisational Communication**

- Human relations approach. The importance of personal interaction between employees was established and the **human relations approach** encouraged management to listen to employees' suggestions. Communication channels in such organisations were designed to include upward-directed and lateral (horizontal) message networks, with a greater reliance on oral as opposed to written messages (Rensburg, 1996).
- Human resource approach. McGregor's theory X regards communication as a process of passing commands from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy, where there is little communication between employees and management. In theory Y, he argues that workers do not require a coercive and threatening style of communication to control their activities because the majority of the hardworking and responsible people can be trusted to direct their activities to achieve organisational objectives (Rensburg, 1996).
- Systems theory. The open systems theory stresses the idea of open communication and healthy interaction with the external environment. Communication is considered an essential process which permits interdependence among the parts of the organisation (Puth, 1996).

### **3.7. Flow of Information in the Organisation**

The flow of information refers to the direction in which messages travel in an organisation. In an organisation, communication flows formally, that is, upward, downward, laterally, informally, that is, through the grapevine (Rensburg, 1996).

#### **3.7.1. Formal Communication Channels**

Organisational success demands that information flows up, down and across the organisation, from the boardroom to shop floor and from one department to the other. Organisational structures help to make the flow of information more effective and ensure that there are formal communication channels to be followed whenever information needs to be exchanged (Van Staden, Marx and Erasmus-Kritzinger, 2002).



### ***3.7.1.1. Downward Communication***

Downward communication channels take place between workers and management at different levels of the organisation. It includes downward communication in the form of instructions given to employees by management, information about the mission and goals of the organisation and feedback to subordinates on their performance (Van Staden et al., 2002). This type of communication is one of the important forms of communication. If a smooth flow of communication is maintained at all times, this will ensure a healthy work environment, free of conflict and frustration. Successful downward communication within an organisation will require an atmosphere of trust and openness (Van Staden et al., 2002).

### ***3.7.1.2. Upward Communication***

This type of communication is called subordinate/manager communication. It involves communication which flows from the lowest positions in the organisation to the highest positions (Fielding, 1997). The following types of messages are involved in upward communication:

- Reports about individual problems and performance.
- Reports on what needs to be done and how to do it.
- Memoranda about the practical results of company policies and practices.
- Messages in suggestion boxes about specific staff problems (Fielding, 1997).

Although there are such devices as suggestion boxes, forms to complete, group meetings, council meetings and quality circle sessions, none are effective without an atmosphere of trust. A climate of trust between management and subordinates is difficult to build. Developing trust takes time, effort and integrity (Sigband and Bell, 1994).

### ***3.7.1.3. Horizontal communication***

Horizontal communication takes place across departments, and between people who are on about the same level of authority. This include reports on the activities of a department to keep other departments informed, or information to managers on company



policies and progress so that they are able to make informed decisions (Van Staden et al., 2002). A smooth flow of horizontal communication between departments will ensure that there is a culture of co-operation and teamwork between departments. This will contribute to the general productivity and success of the organisation (Van Staden et al., 2002).

### **3.7.2. Informal Communication**

Informal communication is also known as the grapevine. It is informal, follows no set pattern or direction, moves in and out of all communication networks, and is part of the social organisation of employees (Sigband and Bell, 1995). Messages exchanged in the hallway, in the coffee room, at parties or in restaurants are examples of informal communication. This type of communication develops more rapidly in flat organisations that emphasise team building than in formal tall organisations (O'Hair et al., 1995).

Managers have strong and conflicting opinions about the grapevine. It can be viewed as a positive force that acts as a safety valve for employees to blow off steam. It fulfills a need to know on the part of some recipients, and in some cases, an ego need on the part of the message sender. Other managers perceive the grapevine as a problem: something that spreads rumours, upsets morale, undermines authority, initiates untruth and challenges authority (Sigband and Bell, 1994).

Although some people believe that informal communication must be controlled or minimised, Gerald Goldhaber as cited in O'Hair et al. (1995) has summarised much of the research in the area and reported the following results:

- The grapevine is fast.
- The grapevine is generally accurate.
- The grapevine carries much information
- The grapevine gives an indication of employee attitudes and sentiment.
- The grapevine is a common channel for rumours.
- The grapevine travels by clusters (Goldhaber as cited in O'Hair et al., 1995).

The trend today is to accept the grapevine as an inevitable fact of organisational life. Researchers maintain that by learning to use it to better effect, managers can build teamwork and company loyalty, increase motivation and job satisfaction and ultimately, improve performance (Andrews and Baird, 1992 as cited in Rensburg, 1996).

According to Moira Katz (1997), a research development specialist, the downward process of communication is a well established system resting mainly in the instructions and information from high levels to the rest of the organisation. Lateral and sideways communication is a vital area for organisational well being and growth, which is often neglected. The greatest problem, however, lies in upward communication, which flows from employees at all levels to senior management. It should provide feedback about the clarity, understanding and acceptance of downward communication, give warning of new and unanticipated problems and concerns and be a source of organisational information and integration. However, the reality is that it is often a disaster area, infrequent and poor in quality. Developing and implementing upward communication programmes require management to commit energy, time and resources to policy formulation, publication, training and reporting. These programmes can provide a competitive advantage as well as a more satisfying workplace (Katz, 1997).

According to Langstaff (1996), the merger of the Halifax and Leeds building societies in August 1995 posed many challenges, one of them being the question of building on the best ideas and working practices of both organisations. In this case, it was decided that honest and frequent communication to both sets would be crucial to the success of the merger. To meet this objective, several new internal communication channels were established, including a business television network and an in-house publication, both of which described progress on the merger. There was also an employee suggestion scheme. This had been set up primarily to find ways of cutting costs and improving customer service and profitability and also to integrate the two companies and encouraging a two-way flow of ideas between staff and management. The company originally anticipated an annual response rate of around 10 000 suggestions but they in fact received 34 000 suggestions and this became an accepted part of the new

organisation at all levels. The future of the scheme is looking rosy and they are planning to run special suggestion campaigns linked to future initiatives of projects. This will allow specific divisions to gain creative ideas at the outset of a project, whereas in the past no suggestion boxes have been available for this two-way communication (Langstaff, 1996).

According to Bush and Frohman (1991), today's companies need to be quick and effective in providing innovative products and services that accurately target customer requirements and desires. In order to meet the challenges of a more competitive market a variety of management techniques need to be adopted. These techniques depend on effective communication for their success. Effective communication, in this setting, involves more than the flow of information that moves up and down the hierarchy in traditional organisations. It also requires horizontal communication across departments and inter-organisational boundaries at the peer level, directed to achieve innovation through the concurrent involvement of functional specialist team members' knowledge and resources needed to achieve the team goal. To succeed in the global environment, individuals and managers will need to become integrators of information not only from the members of the team but from outside and inside the organisation. Communication is crucial. People want to know what is happening every step of the way. They need to be reminded of the overall direction and need to be informed that this effort is long term (Bush and Frohman, 1991).

### **3.8. Types of Communication**

There are two types of communication, namely, verbal and non-verbal communication.

#### **3.8.1. Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication allows for two-way interaction and immediate feedback as to how the message has been received. Such communication may take many forms and include one-on-one daily conversations, committee and staff meetings, speeches, lectures and telephone transmissions. The major disadvantages of verbal communication are two-

fold. Firstly, they do not serve to document important messages. Often, controversy arises at a future date as to what had been agreed upon earlier. In addition, the communication is instantaneous and does not allow for advanced planning (Singer, 1990).

Verbal communication can be in the form of oral (spoken) or written communication.

#### ***3.8.1.1. Oral Communication***

The advantage of oral communication is speed and feedback. If the receiver is unsure of the message, rapid feedback allows for early detection by the sender and, hence, allows for correction. However, the major disadvantage of oral communication is that the message can be distorted if it has to be passed through a number of people in the organisation (Robbins, 1997).

#### ***3.8.1.2. Written Communication***

Written communication includes letters, memos, electronic mail, fax transmissions, organisational periodicals, notices placed on bulletin boards, or any other device that is transmitted through written words and symbols (Robbins, 1997). The advantage of using written communication is that they are tangible and verifiable. The sender and receiver can have a record of the communication. The message can be stored for an indefinite period of time. If there are questions concerning the content of the message, it is physically available for later reference. Furthermore, the sender is usually more careful with the written word than the oral word. The sender is forced to think more thoroughly about what he or she wants to convey in a written message than in a spoken one. Thus, written communication is more likely to be well thought-out, logical and clear (Robbins, 1997).

The findings from research conducted by the Centre for Human Development indicate that communication skills were rated as one of the critical behavioural dimensions in

general management ability from chief executive level to frontline assistants. The skills assessed included:

- The ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively in writing, to ensure that it is well set out and in good grammatical form, geared to the level of the recipient.
- The ability to make a persuasive, clear, formal presentation of facts and ideas, that is, organising and planning one's writing.
- Effectiveness of expression in individual or group situations.
- Getting one's word across clearly, understandably and persuasively using a clear and simple style (Potgieter, 2000).

Potgieter (2000) states that reading and writing develop the capacity to think, to process ideas and to connect information. The result is improved creativity and better productivity. Conversely, a lack of comprehension leads to a decline in the quality of decision making and a strong sense of inadequacy.

Potgieter (2000) also states that business writing skills have a major impact on the writing skills of employees and managers. It is shocking that too many people depend solely on the grammar and spell checks on their computers and never read what they have written. Therefore, serious errors of logic pass undetected. People are now becoming more reliant on the electronic word than the printed word. This is as a result of an increasing number of companies outsourcing their work and the rapid rise in the establishment of the virtual workplace. A recent study conducted by the Centre for Human Development indicated that people are 25% slower on a computer screen than of print. This has contributed to an even greater deterioration in reading, writing and comprehension ability (Potgieter, 2000).

According to Lulama Chakela (2000), Executive of Fox Strategic Communication, a long term solution in improving business communication is for leading corporates to encourage universities and technikons to develop courses in business communication, focusing mainly on providing students with the business background and writing and design skills required to add real value in the commercial world. If companies want to communicate effectively with key stakeholder groups, it is in their interest to consider

funding for such a programme. Furthermore, there is only a pool of skilled communicators in the corporate world and there is an urgent need to grow more talent in this area. A strategy for black graduates in this business is account management. By serving clients, new entrants can build their interpersonal project management skills while acquiring competency in the stringent writing and design skills required for effective business communication (Chakela, 2000).

### **3.8.2. Non-verbal Communication**

Non-verbal communication refers to facial expressions, gestures and body language that occur during face-to-face communication.

#### **3.8.2.1. *Why non-verbal communication is important?***

- Non-verbal communication is important in conveying feelings and it is reliable. For example, most people can deceive others much more easily with words than they can with their bodies. Words are relatively easy to control, but body language, facial expressions and vocal characteristics are not.
- Reading other people's non-verbal messages correctly can enable one to interpret their underlying attitudes and intentions (Bovee and Thill, 1992).
- Non-verbal communication is important for another reason. It can be efficient from both the sender's and the receiver's standpoint. People can transmit a non-verbal message without even thinking about it and the audience can register the meaning unconsciously (Bovee and Thill, 1992).

Body language plays an important role in business communication than many business people realise. A person's tone, facial expressions, posture and appearance play a huge part. It is important for business people to improve their communication skills continuously. Success is not only determined by one's brain power and hard work. A person's body language and voice is a biggest asset in the workplace if used correctly (Van Staden et al., 2002).

### **3.8.2.2. Categories of Non-verbal Communication**

According to Bovee and Thill (1992), the following categories depict non-verbal communication:

- ***Facial expressions and eye behaviour***

A person's face and eyes are effective tools of communication. They can be used to indicate interest and attention, to influence others, to regulate interaction and to establish dominance.

- ***Gestures and postures***

Body movements can express both specific and general messages, some of which are voluntary and some of which are involuntary. Many gestures – a wave of the hand, for example, have a specific and intentional meaning, such as “hello” or “goodbye”. Gestures and postures reveal whether a person feels confident or nervous, friendly or hostile, assertive or passive, powerful or powerless.

- ***Vocal characteristics***

Like body language, a person's voice carries both intentional and unintentional messages. On a conscious level a person can use his or her voice to create various impressions. However, one's voice can reveal many things that he or she is unaware of. The tone and volume of a person's voice, his or her accent and speaking pace say a lot about the speaker, his or her relationship with the audience and the emotions underlying their words (Bovee and Thill, 1992).

- ***Personal appearance***

An individual's personal appearance helps to establish his or her social integrity. People respond to others on the basis of their physical appearance. An individual's grooming, clothing and accessories or “style” modify his or her appearance. In most businesses, a professional image is appropriate.

- ***Use of time and space***

Time and space can be used to assert authority. In many cultures, people demonstrate their importance by making other people wait. In North America, being on time is a mark of good manners; in other places, it is more polite to be somewhat late. People can assert their status by occupying the best space. In the United States, the chief executive officer usually has the corner office and the prettiest view. Besides serving

as a symbol of status, space determines how comfortable people feel when talking with each other. The comfort zone varies from culture to culture (Bovee and Thill, 1992).

Processes known to almost all business people, for example, interviewing, reporting and negotiating will be much more efficient if communication is not limited to verbal or written communication. Body language can enhance attempts to convey the image of responsiveness, sympathy and helpfulness. Business people who thus, reinforce their positive involvement with others can have a tremendous influence on the credibility and image of their enterprise (Van Staden, 2002).

According to Dr Brian Jude (1998), a professional speaker and trainer who addresses issues of attitude, communication, stress, customer service and conflict, body language is essential whether one is involved in sales, management, interviewing or when dealing with people at any level. A knowledge of body language will allow one to read others more effectively. It also allows people to present themselves more openly, credibly and honestly to others. Face-to-face communication is broken down into three components: words, gestures and tone of a person's voice. Each one of these come together to give a more accurate understanding to one's communication. Research indicates that only 7% of the message is received through the pure words while 55% comes from gestures and 38% from the tone of a person's voice (Jude, 1998).

Jude (1998) also states that certain gestures may have different meanings in different parts of the world. Communication with people from different backgrounds and cultures affect the handshake, eye contact and many of the basics of business communication. In South Africa this is particularly pertinent to black/white communication. For example, black people typically have much softer eye contact than white people. The end result of this misunderstanding is that black people often perceive strong eye contact from white people as arrogant and dominant as opposed to white people perceiving softer eye contact as being dishonest (Jude, 1998). It is for this reason and many others that people develop an understanding of cross-cultural communication (Jude, 1998).



### 3.9. Effective Listening

According to Draft (1991: 441), listening is regarded as “the skill of receiving messages to accurately grasp facts and feelings to interpret the genuine meaning”.

Listening is often explained by distinguishing it from hearing.

- Hearing is a passive process, whereas listening is a mental skill which can be developed. Hearing is the physical art of receiving sound.
- Listening occurs when the signals or sounds sent to the brain are understood and interpreted and then retained. Thus, listening is a deliberate and active process which requires effort and concentration (Steinberg, 1997).

A good listener finds areas of interest, is flexible, works hard at listening and uses thought and speed to mentally summarise, weigh, and anticipate what the speaker will say. Some companies like IBM and Delta, take listening very seriously. Managers know that they are required to listen to employees (Draft, 1991).

Listening is crucial to building trust. Listening on the job may be more difficult than listening in classes. Many classroom lectures are well organised, with signposts and repetition of key points to help hearers follow. In a classroom, one is listening primarily for information, whereas on the job, one is listening for feelings. These are feelings of being rejected or overworked. These are the feelings that one needs to be aware of, so that it can be dealt with (Locker, 2000).

Listening to people is an indication of whether people are taken seriously. A nod, smile or frown helps to carry the message that one is listening. Active listening may take up time and energy but it can reduce the conflict that results from miscommunication (Locker, 2000).

According to Gerring and Nompozolo (2001), managers that perform well note that good communication always involves more listening than talking and that leading must lead to action in order to remain credible. An example of good communication is in the mine industry in the Northern Province, which indicated that people were able to raise difficult

issues and that those issues were dealt with (Gering and Nompozolo, 2001). The mine manager initiated a 'What do you think campaign?'. This campaign is a two-way communication, giving people the opportunity to provide their input and acting on that input to show that it is taken seriously and valued and employees are being listened to. A good communication policy enables management to impart information, but also raises real issues (Gering and Nompozolo, 2001).

When managers are communicating to the workforce, they expect employees to listen to them. Research indicates that an ability to tell stories helps managers to bridge gaps and helps them to communicate with employees and colleagues that direct and inspire them (Dennehy, 1999). Stories are more likely to be remembered than impersonal memo. Stories also make information more relevant to the employee or fellow manager that an executive is trying to reach. Listeners will be able to apply some lessons of the story to themselves. A good story can spark the listeners imagination and enhance creativity that eventually permeates the culture of an organisation. It is clear that better communication can lead to better co-ordination and storytelling is a way to improve communication in an organisation (Dennehy, 1999).

### **3.10. Interpersonal Communication**

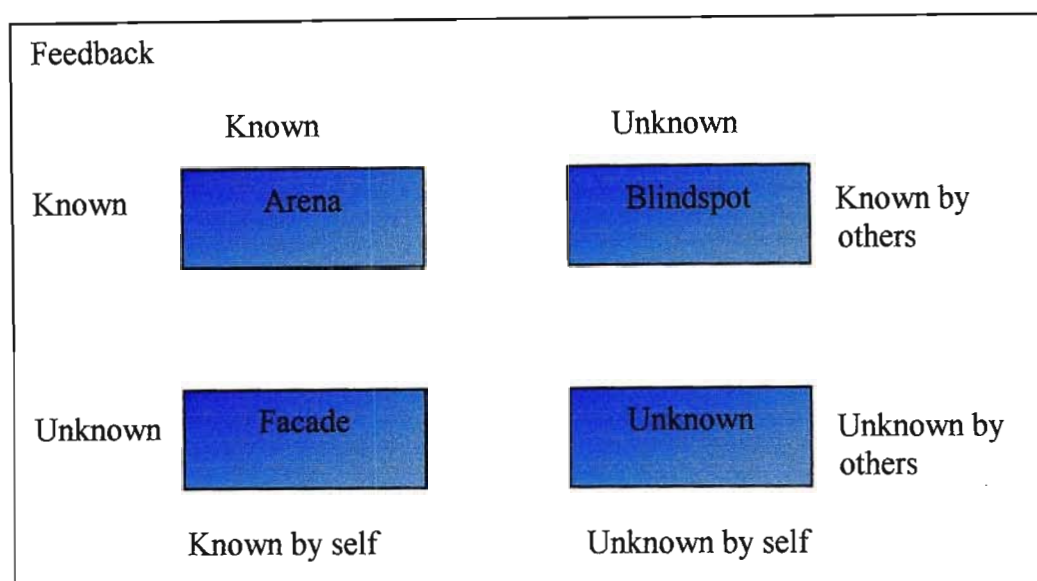
Effective interpersonal communication is vital in an organisation. Many people change their jobs because of poor interpersonal communication. It is therefore, important for people to understand what is involved in effective interpersonal communication. A great deal of interpersonal communication covers two people working together. These two people are equally responsible for:

- sending messages;
- receiving messages;
- giving feedback;
- interpreting non-verbal messages;
- and listening (Fielding, 1997).

### 3.10.1. The Johari window: Interpersonal styles and communication

According to Mersham and Skinner (2001), interpersonal styles refer to the way in which an individual chooses to relate to others. The fact that many relationships amongst people involve communication indicates the importance of interpersonal style. The Johari window (Figure 3.2) describes the arena, blindspot, facade and the unknown section as they relate to people.

**Figure 3.2: The Johari window**



Source: Mersham, G. and Skinner, C. 2001. Business and Organisational Communication. Cape town: Heineman Publishers (Pty) Ltd. p. 124.

- The **Arena** section (Figure 3.2) stresses that we know certain things about ourselves and are prepared to share them with others.
- The **blindspot** section (Figure 3.2) refers to the areas that a person does not know about himself or herself. However, others know about these areas.
- The **facade** section (Figure 3.2) are areas that individuals choose not to reveal to others.
- The **Unknown** section (Figure 3.2) refers to the information that the individual and others do not know (Fielding, 1997).

According to Mersham and Skinner (2001), an individual can improve interpersonal communication by utilising two strategies, namely exposure and feedback.

- **Exposure.** Increasing the Arena area by reducing the façade area requires individuals to be honest and open in sharing information with others. The process that the self uses to increase the information to others is termed exposure because it sometimes leaves the self in a vulnerable position.
- **Feedback.** When the self does not know or understand, more effective communication can be developed through feedback from those who do know. Thus, the blindspot can be reduced, with a corresponding increase in the Arena. Whether the use of feedback is possible depends on the individual's willingness to 'hear' it and the willingness of others to give it.

### **3.10.2. Management styles and interpersonal styles**

The day-to-day activities of managers places a high value on effective interpersonal communication. Managers provide information which must be understood; they give commands and instructions which must be obeyed and learned and they make efforts to influence and persuade which must be accepted and acted on. Thus, the way in which managers communicate, both as senders and receivers is crucial for obtaining feedback. Theoretically, managers who desire to communicate effectively can use both exposure and feedback to enlarge the area of common understanding, the Arena. In practice, this is often not the case. Managers differ in their ability to use exposure and feedback (Mersham and Skinner, 2001).

Mersham and Skinner (2001), identified four different managerial styles:-

- **Type A.** Managers who use neither exposure nor feedback are said to have a Type A style. The unknown region predominates in this style because such managers are unwilling to enlarge the area of their own knowledge or the knowledge of others. If an organisation has a large number of such managers in key positions, then a poor and ineffective interpersonal communication and a loss of individual creativity is expected.

- **Type B.** Some managers desire some degree of satisfying relationship with their subordinates but because of their personalities and attitudes these managers are unable to open up and express their feelings. Consequently, they cannot use exposure and must rely on feedback.
- **Type C.** Managers who value their own ideas and opinions, but not the ideas and opinions of others, use exposure at the expense of feedback. Subordinates realise that such managers are not particularly interested in communicating, only in telling.
- **Type D.** The most effective interpersonal communication style is one that balances exposure and feedback. A manager that practices Type D behaviour successfully, will result in the enlargement of the Arena region and effective communication.

### 3.11. Barriers to Effective Communication

Whether messages are being transmitted along formal or informal lines, communication barriers can prevent understanding (Smit and Cronje, 1997). These barriers can be erected by either the sender, the receiver or both. Identifying and understanding how these various barriers affect the process is the initial step to improving communication (Singer, 1990).

The barriers to effective communication are as follows:

- **Perceptual Impacts**

People's reality is based on their individual, unique interpretation and perception of real events. Therefore, what one person views as being beneficial may be seen as detrimental by another. For example, one individual may perceive communication as favourable, while another may view it as being undesirable (Singer, 1990).

The differences in perception could be due to the differences in backgrounds, values and experience. Furthermore, people seek out favourable messages and ignore unpleasant ones. In other words, they reject or inaccurately perceive information that is inconsistent with their expectations. This phenomenon is known as selective

perception and may also be a barrier to effective communication (Smit and Cronje, 1997).

- **Gender**

Gender also affects the way in which people encode and decode communication. Gender differences in conversations usually reflect power differences between men and women. Men are more concerned with status and try to achieve the upper hand in a conversation, whereas women try to achieve intimacy in conversations. In addition, men are more likely to interrupt others who are talking and women are more often interrupted than men (Kolb, Rubin and Osland, 1995).

- **Language**

Words mean different things to different people. Age, education and cultural backgrounds are the three most obvious variables that influence the language a person uses and the definitions given to words. Employees from different cultural backgrounds and countries use phrases and terms that are unique to them. This may bring about differences in meaning with regard to words used in communication (Robbins, 1997).

- **Emotional Impacts**

A major source of communication breakdown is due to the impact that emotions have on both senders and receivers. Feelings, particularly stressful ones, affect thought patterns and the way in which communications are sent and received (Singer, 1990). For example, the message received when a person is angry or distraught is often interpreted differently than when he or she is happy (Robbins, 1997).

- **Filtering**

Filtering refers to a sender purposely manipulating information so it will be seen more favourably by the receiver. For example, when a manager tells his or her boss what he or she feels his or her boss wants to hear (Robbins, 1997).

- **Noise**

Noise is defined as the interference with the intended message. There are three types of noise that prevent effective listening: (1) environmental (hot rooms, lawnmowers); (2) physiological (headaches or hunger pangs); and emotional (worry, fear, anxiety) (Kolb et al., 1995).

- **Time Pressures**

Most managers and supervisors operate under time constraints. This affects communication because time constraints may not allow sufficient opportunity for proper encoding or decoding of messages by senders and receivers. This may result in the confounding of otherwise simple messages (Singer, 1990).

- **Status Differences**

A person's status in an organisation depends largely on the prestige associated with the position he or she occupies. A person's status influences the direction and frequency of communication (Smit and Cronje, 1997). Firstly, people generally prefer to communicate with individuals of higher status. Secondly, people of higher status generally communicate more with one another than they do with people of lower status. Thirdly, in conversations, people with higher status generally dominate (Smit and Cronje, 1997).

- **Serial Transmission effect**

The changes that messages undergo as they are successfully communicated from layer to layer are known as the serial transmission effect. The greater the number of management layers a message passes through, the longer it will take to reach its destination and the less likely it is to be accurate. The layers of management act as communication filters that distort the transmission of information (Smit and Cronje, 1997).

- **The Absence of Feedback**

Feedback serves to verify that the message the sender encoded and the one the receiver decoded were the same. Without this final step, the sender cannot be certain that the message was received and understood (Singer, 1990). The omission of feedback causes at least two major problems. Firstly, the sender may have more information in detail, depending upon the receivers response to the initial message. Without feedback, the source does not know whether to proceed or reissue the first message. Secondly, without verification, receivers may act upon misunderstood messages (Singer, 1990).



### 3.11.1. Ways to overcome barriers to effective communication

According to Singer (1990), the following must be adhered to in order to overcome barriers to effective communication:-

- **Use feedback**

Feedback is the single most effective method for improving the communication process. Face-to-face communication provides the greatest opportunity to gather feedback. However, in organisations face-to-face communication may not be possible. This is especially true in downward communication where memoranda concerning important policies may have been distributed, but there is no guarantee that they would be read or understood (Singer, 1990). In this situation, the communication process can be improved, if the source actively seeks verification of the message. Upward communication methods, group meetings, suggestion boxes and open forums are examples of programmes that organisations use in attempts to improve the feedback process (Singer, 1990).

- **Be empathetic**

Being empathetic requires that the sender becomes receiver oriented, that is, putting oneself in the receiver's shoes. Prior to sending the message, particularly those which are emotional or controversial, the sender will be well advised to analyse how the receiver is likely to interpret the message. The sender should modify or change the symbols used to encode the message, as well as the medium used for its transmission. This may alleviate misinterpretations of the message content by the receiver.

- **Time messages carefully**

Proper timing of messages can foster effective communication, while poor timing promotes misinterpretations. Early in the morning may be the most appropriate time to send important messages because later in the day, receivers may not have enough time available to properly decode all the information they receive (Singer, 1990).

- **Use simple vocabulary**

Supervisors and managers must make a concerted effort to ascertain their workers' vocabulary levels before issuing messages. People are reluctant to inform others that they do not understand their vocabulary, which results in them guessing the meaning



of words, which often leads to a misinterpreted message. Senders should use simple, direct language rather than using sophisticated vocabulary to impress others.

- **Use several media for reiteration**

Repetition is a key in both learning and verifying of information. The reiteration of messages to the receiver through different mediums enhances the probability of the message being decoded correctly.

- **Learn to listen**

Most people listen poorly. Listening skills are one of the weakest points demonstrated by managers involved in verbal communication. Listening is one the keys to effective communication. Therefore, individuals need to develop their listening skills. Listening requires a conscious effort and a willingness on the part of the individual to actively engage in this activity. In addition, good listening requires that messages be heard fully, analysed carefully and interpreted by the receiver (Singer, 1990).

Research conducted by Thomas (2001) indicated that the following are barriers to effective communication:

- **Assumption without clarification.**

Sometimes team members act as if they understand instructions and expectations but later leaders find out this is not the case. The leader assumes that there is mutual understanding and fails to seek feedback and clarification from his or her team members. This results in mistakes and projects being redirected in order to get things back on track.

- **Fear of reporting status.**

Managers need to know when a project is behind schedule, is over budget, lacks resources, or is otherwise in trouble. If people are behind schedules, there is a chance of them not giving a true status report. They reveal what the project manager wants to hear.

- **Technical jargon.**

Human resource managers, accountants and marketing professionals speak their own professional codes which may not be understood by others. This communication can

be overcome if managers establish or clarify a common language or define technical terms up front.

- **Cultural differences.**

Cultural barriers are applicable in joint ventures or international projects. They include differences in language, gender, ethnic traditions and corporate protocol.

- **Poor team chemistry.**

Another barrier experienced in organisations is when one emphasises differences in rank or status and “talks down” to team members. However, if one fosters a culture of openness and trust, there would be only a slight chance of any barriers occurring (Thomas, 2001).

Thomas (2001) further indicates that one of the most effective ways to overcome barriers is to design a formal communication plan before the start of any project. This will enable managers to anticipate and diffuse potential problems before they erupt into crises that could push an organisation’s project over schedule and over budget. The project manager and team members should collaborate on the plan, with input from top management and customers. Thus, by identifying potential barriers to effective communication and by designing a formal plan to deal with those barriers managers can gain greater control over a project’s outcome.

Another research conducted in the finance industry has shown the importance of effective communication. Strong communication skills are the key to avoiding obstacles that stand in the way of a good working relationship. While corporate treasures and bankers realise the benefits of good communication as crucial to financial success, they believe that barriers still exist to prevent the effective exchange of information and ideas with their partners (Allgaier and Walsh, 2001). The biggest obstacle blocking successful two-way communication is the lack of time to focus on the essential skill. Whether one is a treasurer of a company or an accountant executive at a bank, changing technology and new economic demands can result in unexpected fires that need extinguishing, calls to return, faxes to retrieve and endless amounts of e-mail that require immediate attention. There will always be barriers that affect good relationship management, especially as the

financial world expands globally and diversity in corporate needs and workplace organisation increases. Effective communication goes beyond speaking and hearing words that convey the expectations and actions that must be taken to achieve mutual goals. Building effective relationships that takes collaboration and co-operation and a full disclosure of information is critical to success (Allgaier and Walsh, 2001).

According to (Rogers and Roethlisberger, 1991), the greatest barrier to effective communication is the tendency to evaluate what another person is saying which leads to misunderstanding. In today's more complex business environment such communication breakdowns are more likely to happen. Greater workforce diversity, for example, can complicate communication, as a common language of shared assumptions and experiences becomes difficult to establish. Greater diversity also makes listening very important because the potential for misunderstanding is very likely to occur. Managers should encourage employees to speak without fear. This allows employees to boost their confidence because they can then see the values of their input. This also gives managers vital information that they may require. Active listening can increase one's understanding. For example, a salesperson applying active listening, reacts non-judgementally to what a prospect is saying. This process minimises the likelihood that the salesperson is laying his biases on the customer's needs. Second, the prospect feels listened to and understood. The pressure of time is another barrier that managers are up against. Listening carefully takes time and managers have a little of that to spare. In today's business culture, especially with an emphasis on speed such as, overnight mail, faster computers, managers can now focus more energy on one-on-one communication. Another barrier in this era of mergers, acquisitions and delayering, is insecurity and fear. This is when people have a good reason not to communicate openly because they believe that their true beliefs or feelings may get them fired (Rogers and Roethlisberger, 1991).

Further research has indicated that there are number of other reasons for misunderstandings (Rutter, 1996). In South Africa cross-cultural communication is the most difficult form of communication. Gestures, mannerisms and western body language, such as, eye contact are not accepted across every culture. This is seen as a

barrier. The other barrier to consider, will be when people speak or write too much. The receiver has to sift through masses of flowery words to get to the essential meaning. One way to overcome this type of barrier is to use a dictaphone to record meetings or conversations. Another way is to ask for feedback. Immediate feedback on written communication is not possible but gestures and facial expressions in face-to-face communication will reveal immediate reactions to what the sender is saying (Rutter, 1996).

### **3.12. Communicating Across Cultures**

Intercultural communication has been around since the beginning of history. Today, as the world constantly brings diverse cultures together, the need for effective intercultural communication is much greater (Sigband and Bell, 1994). Intercultural communication is the basis of human communication and a vehicle to reconcile people and to lay foundations for future sharing of information, insights, needs and beliefs (Casmir, Van Aswegen and Groenewald, 1990 as cited in Rensburg, 1996).

Culture refers to the sum total of all attributes, material as well as spiritual attributes, of a given people. It involves all aspects of one's daily life and interaction with other people (Mersham and Skinner, 2001).

Communication involves people and their culture. Thus, culture is a critical factor in communication. People of different backgrounds and culture have a tremendous influence on communication. Both culture and communication is a dynamic process. In South Africa, where there is daily contact between African, Western and Eastern cultures, it is evident that although this diversity may lead to misunderstanding between the cultural groups, it allows for interesting and stimulating community life (Rensburg, 1996).

Communicating across cultures is much more complex. When communicating with one's own culture a person automatically draws on a shared system of meaning. In South

African organisations there is always a cultural factor in communication, where a person's consciousness is inevitably shaped by the meaning of his or her cultural collective. Additional difficulties are caused by the non-verbal dimension of intercultural communication. The main point is that if one accepts the existence of the cultural variable and works with this in an open, honest way, it can enhance relationships and bring empowerment of the consciousness (Mersham and Skinner, 2001).

Language is probably the most complex problem in cross-cultural interaction. Where culture meets, different languages causes problems. An individual's language is a precious possession and society is not easily persuaded to give it up. People tend to have an ethnocentric attitude towards their own language. They expect that, what works for their culture or subculture should work for another culture. However, this is not true. For example, Ernest Mchunu, a prominent black marketing manager and management consultant who used to market Coca Cola in South Africa, has pointed out the popular advertising slogan 'Things go better with Coca Cola' was a thoughtless slogan when applied to blacks in South Africa at a time when things were not going better for blacks (Adey and Andrew, 1990). Even with one language there may be differences of interpretations from one society to another. For example, in South Africa a napkin means what Americans call a diaper, whereas in the United States a napkin is called a serviette. People certainly have to watch their language when communicating across cultures (Adey and Andrew, 1990).

### **3.12.1. Non-verbal Communication in Culture**

Non-verbal communication takes place all the time. Smiles, frowns, who sits where at meetings all communicate pleasure or anger, friendliness or distance, power or status. Non-verbal signals can be misinterpreted by different cultures (Locker, 2000).

- **Body language** - The Japanese value the ability to sit quietly. They may see the United States tendency to fidget and shift as an indication of lack of spiritual or mental balance (Locker, 2000).
- **Eye contact** - North American whites see eye contact as a sign of honesty. But in many cultures, dropped eyes are a sign of appropriate deference to a superior. These

differences can lead to miscommunication in a multicultural workplace. Superiors may feel that subordinates are being disrespectful when the subordinate is being fully respectful according to the norms of his or her culture.

- **Gestures** - Americans sometimes assume that they can depend on gestures to communicate if language fails. Gestures that mean approval in the United States may have different meanings in other countries. The 'thumbs up' sign, which means 'good work' or 'go ahead' in the United States is seen as a vulgar insult in Greece .
- **Space** - Personal space is the distance someone wants between himself or herself. North Americans, North Europeans and Asians want a bigger personal space than do Latin Americans, French, Italians and Arabs. People who prefer lots of space are often forced to accept close contact on a crowded elevator or subway (Locker, 2000).

In cross-cultural communication, one has to be particularly careful not to behave in ways that cause cross-cultural miscommunication. Behaviour that is critical, accusatory or proud does not promote good communication. People should be able to interact with others by being sensitive to cultural differences. Instead of being critical, accusatory, proud or patronising, we should be relaxed and attentive in the presence of a person of another culture. Managers need to use simple language when dealing with different cultures and they must respect and accept the cultures of others (Adey and Andrew, 1990).

According to Solomon (1999), when managing a geographically diverse workforce, a strategic communication programme can strengthen the organisation and support its success. Human resource and communication experts must be aware of the role that culture plays in communication. One must ensure that the messages that employees receive are interpreted as intended. Careful planning and effective cross-cultural awareness are crucial to the bottom line. Today's global organisation demands the ability to communicate with stakeholders who have multiple businesses and cultural perspectives. As companies become more competitive, it becomes obvious that effective communication is an advantage in a wide variety of areas, ranging from loyalty to building credibility with the changing workforce. Lee Hornick, the president of New



York city-based business communications worldwide and programme director of corporate communications conference planning, believes that by being strategic in communication is actually guaranteeing companies to gain some results. Companies need to use communication as an alignment tool with the overall business plan of the organisation. The International Association of Business Communication conducted a study with more than 900 organisations that represent a variety of industries and found that:

- 51% of high performing organisations say that they have a well defined communication strategy.
- 52% of senior managers support the importance of corporate communications to achieve business success.
- 71% of senior managers actively integrate communication into the overall business strategy.
- 68% create a communication strategy to explain new programmes (Solomon, 1999).

Global organisations have to work hard to develop a strategy that will establish the right message to other regions of the world. If one does not know how to communicate with a diverse work group of employees, they would not understand what is being said (Solomon, 1999).

Further research indicates that companies that try to institute diversity programmes without understanding the cultural assumptions upon which these programmes are based, and thus, find it difficult to enact meaningful diversity policies (Milburne, 1997). For example, companies often encourage their members to share their cultural experience. These companies believe that by sharing they can promote diverse cultural values. However, the way in which companies define sharing may hinder its diversity initiatives since some cultures have specific rules about sharing. These rules are enacted in everyday communication practices. Every communication is based on certain cultural rules and if a company does not consider these rules, it will not be able to learn from the diversity of its members (Milburne, 1997).

Communication also becomes problematic when organisations adopt a narrow perspective of communication that focuses on a single normative standard. Some African-American employees, for example, may be discouraged from speaking a dialect defined as “Black-English” and may be mandated to adopt proper business grammar. When companies deem their standard as the only acceptable one, they will not be able to appreciate different ways of interacting (Milburne, 1997). In some companies the Human Resource departments have constructed codes of conduct that are often the basis of performance reviews. These codes are usually very specific about how an organisation defines communication. One company’s performance review are as follows: “Avoid the tendency to interrupt others when they are talking.” Listen by “maintaining eye contact”. These phrases are meant to demonstrate good communication. However, these statements may discourage diverse cultural practices. Some may agree that “avoiding interrupting others” seems like good communication, while this is not a preferred practice in many cultural groups (Milburne, 1997).

By attending to the meanings and the ways in which people communicate, we begin to recognise a kind of diversity that values how people are able to create and re-create a sense of who they are. A more encompassing definition of cultural communication entices one to become more curious about how people create a meaningful sense of identity through their communicative practices (Milburne, 1997).

According to Dutton (1998), as populations become more diverse, companies are grappling with language issues among employees and customers. Some companies have implemented English-only rules at work. However, these rules are often misinterpreted or overly restrictive, preventing clear communication among employees or between employees or customers. Many companies base promotions or hiring decisions on an applicants fluency in English which can expose an organisation to charges of language discrimination. At Longo Toyota in California, fluency is a key job requirement for a salesperson. At this company about 20 languages are spoken among the salespersons. However, each salesperson must be able to communicate to customers in English. To do that they need a reasonable level of communication skills.



Many companies may need to make extra efforts to improve their workers' English language skills and thereby, their communications with co-workers, management and customers. A company's ability to improve employees' fluency depends upon the needs of the workforce and how much effort they want to put forth in ensuring that everyone can somehow understand instructions, notices and memos. Kayem Foods Inc, a meat processing company in the United States is a company that goes the extra mile to break down language barriers in the workplace. Approximately 60% to 70% of Kayem's workers speak English as a second language and signs are posted in English, Spanish and Polish. It also offers classes for English as a second language for its employees. It believes that this issue is so important that it dedicates about 20 % of its approximately \$100 000 training budget to English as a second language classes (Dutton, 1998).

Diane Paravazion, the director of the language center at Pace University in New York, believes that improving communication in the workplace is a two-way street. Managers should also make an effort to speak in the employees' native languages. The ability to say at least "hello" and "thank you" may help a company to make better products, simply because employees feel their employers care enough to try to communicate in their languages (Dutton, 1998).

According to Walker (1999), English may be the most widely spoken language in the world but not all cultures understand or speak this language. Millions of dollars are spent each year by United State companies to provide training in foreign languages and cultural sensitivity. This type of training involves a conscientious effort to ensure that verbal, written and other visual communication are clearly and easily understood. Russell walker, the Human Resource manager for a multi-national organisation offers the following tips to enhance effectiveness when communicating across the language barrier with international associates:

- When communicating with other cultures cut out the technical jargon, buzzwords and acronyms because other cultures may not understand it.
- Speaking a foreign language takes courage. Be sensitive and supportive and helpful when someone is trying to speak a foreign language.

- Don't judge intelligence on English fluency. A global counterpart may not speak perfect English but this does not mean that they are not highly qualified, capable or intelligent (Walker, 1999).
- Make the effort to learn a foreign language. A simple greeting will set the tone for a much more productive relationship.
- Do not repeat phrases unnecessarily, but rephrase important concepts when appropriate and do some checking to see if the information is being received correctly.
- When learning a foreign language people focus on the written materials. International associates will appreciate brief handouts or slides with key words and summary statements. This will enable them to understand unfamiliar terminology (Walker, 1999).

### **3.13. Conclusion**

This chapter described several points about communicating in an organisation. It is clear that, in an organisation, communication occurs formally and informally and it also takes place verbally and non-verbally. The barriers to effective communication were also described and these barriers can be overcome with elements such as, active listening, the use of feedback, or simple vocabulary. Cross-cultural communication was also explored; due to today's diverse workforce cross-cultural communication is vitally important

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This research measures the effectiveness of communication in the protection services department studied. This chapter highlights the research methodology used in this study. This relates to sampling techniques, the data collection method used, the psychometric properties of the questionnaire, that is, validity and reliability. It also focuses on the descriptive and inferential statistics utilised. A knowledge of research methodology will assist in understanding the analysis and interpretation of data.

#### **4.2. Focus of the Study**

This study focuses on supervisor's effectiveness of communication and the two main dimensions, which are: the defensive scores dimension (namely, evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) and the supportive scores dimension (namely, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description).

#### **4.3. Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to determine the extent to which supervisors display defensive or supportive behaviour types.

#### **4.4. Hypothesis**

"Hypothesis are statements of circumstances in the population that the statistical process will examine and decide their likely truth and validity" (McCall, 1994: 193).

In this study, the hypotheses were as follows:

##### **Hypothesis 1**

There exists significant inter-relationships amongst all the sub-dimensions that influence defensive behaviour (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty).

### **Hypothesis 2**

There exists significant inter-relationships between all the sub-dimensions that influence the supportive behaviour of supervisors (provisionalism, spontaneity, problem orientation, equality and description).

### **Hypothesis 3**

There is a significance difference in the perception of employees differing in biographical data (age, marital status, tenure and education) regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality, and description) respectively.

### **Hypothesis 4**

There is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in gender regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

### **Hypothesis 5**

The variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) significantly account for the variance in determining the defensive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.

### **Hypothesis 6**

The variables of the study (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and empathy) significantly account for the variance in determining the supportive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.

## **4.5. Sampling technique and description of the sample**

By analysing the responses of a relatively small group of respondents from the population, one will be able to draw conclusions and predict the effectiveness of communication in this study.

#### **4.5.1. Definition of a Population**

A population may be defined as the total collection of individuals who are potentially available for observation and who have the attributes in common with the research hypothesis (Huysamen, 1998).

Gay and Diehl (1992) define population as the group of interest to the researcher, in which he or she would like to generalise the results of the study.

In this study, the population comprised of all the staff employed at the protection services department studied at the Marianhill branch.

#### **4.5.2. Definition of Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population to be used in the study. By studying the sample and understanding the properties or the characteristics of the sample subjects, the researcher will be able to generalise the properties or characteristics to the population elements (Sekaran, 1992).

The estimated sample size of 50 subjects will be used in this study. A sample size of 50 subjects is sufficient to get a feel for the data and to test preformulated statements or hypothesis.

#### **4.5.3. Sampling technique and composition of the sample**

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) distinguishes between probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Probability sampling occurs when the probability of including each element of the population can be determined. Non-probability sampling occurs when the chances of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown, that is, it is impossible to determine the likelihood of the inclusion of all representative elements of the population into the sample.

In this study cluster sampling will be used. Cluster sampling is a technique included in probability sampling. According to Melville and Goddard (1996), in cluster sampling one divides the population into sub-groups called clusters. One then randomly selects a sample of clusters, and then randomly selects members of the cluster sample to serve as the population sample. In this study, individuals were assembled in clusters and from these clusters the questionnaires were administered. The composition of the sample is reflected in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Composition of Sample**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	36	72
Female	14	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Age</b>		
20 – 29 years	12	24
30 – 39 years	28	56
40 – 49 years	9	18
50 – 59 years	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	11	22
Married	35	70
Divorced	3	6
Other	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Tenure</b>		
0 – 5 years	9	18
6 – 10 years	14	28
11 – 15 years	11	22
16 – 20 years	10	20
20 +	6	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Education</b>		
Standard 7 – 9	6	12
Matriculation	33	66
Diploma	11	22
Degree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The composition of the sample will be described using pie diagrams and bar graphs.



**Figure 4.1. Sample Composition by Gender**

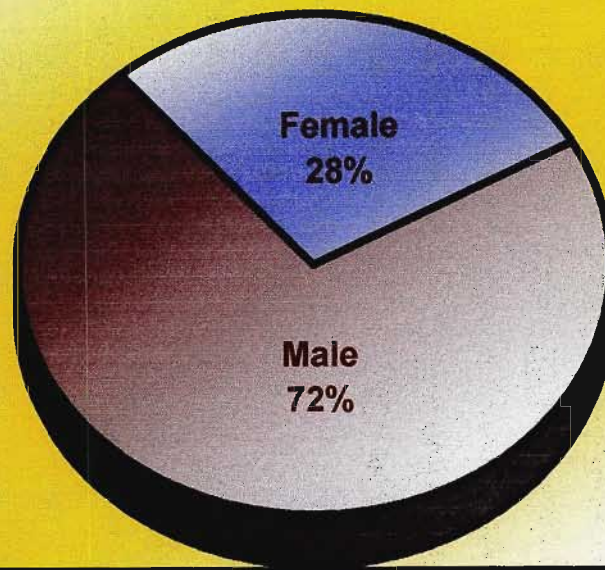


Figure 4.1 illustrates the composition of the sample in terms of gender. It is evident that 72% of the respondents are male and 28% are female. There is an imbalance in gender because the sample population composed predominantly of males.

**Figure 4.2. Sample Composition by Age**

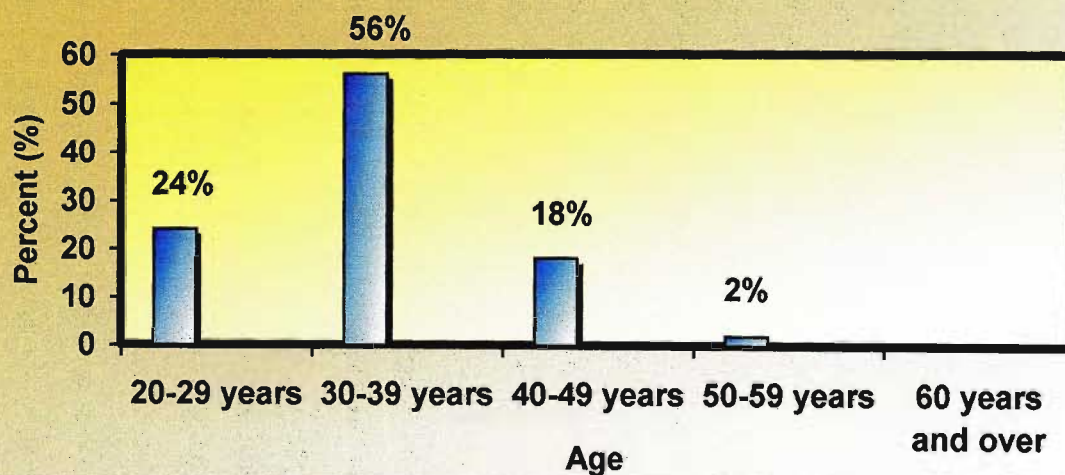




Figure 4.2 illustrates the composition of the sample in terms of age. The highest percentage of respondents (56%) were from the 30 – 39 years bracket, followed by the 20 – 29 years bracket (24%), followed by the 40 – 49 years bracket (18%) and then by the 50 – 59 years brackets (2%) respectively. It is clear that the majority of employees are between the ages of 20 – 39 years, thereby representing a younger composition of staff.

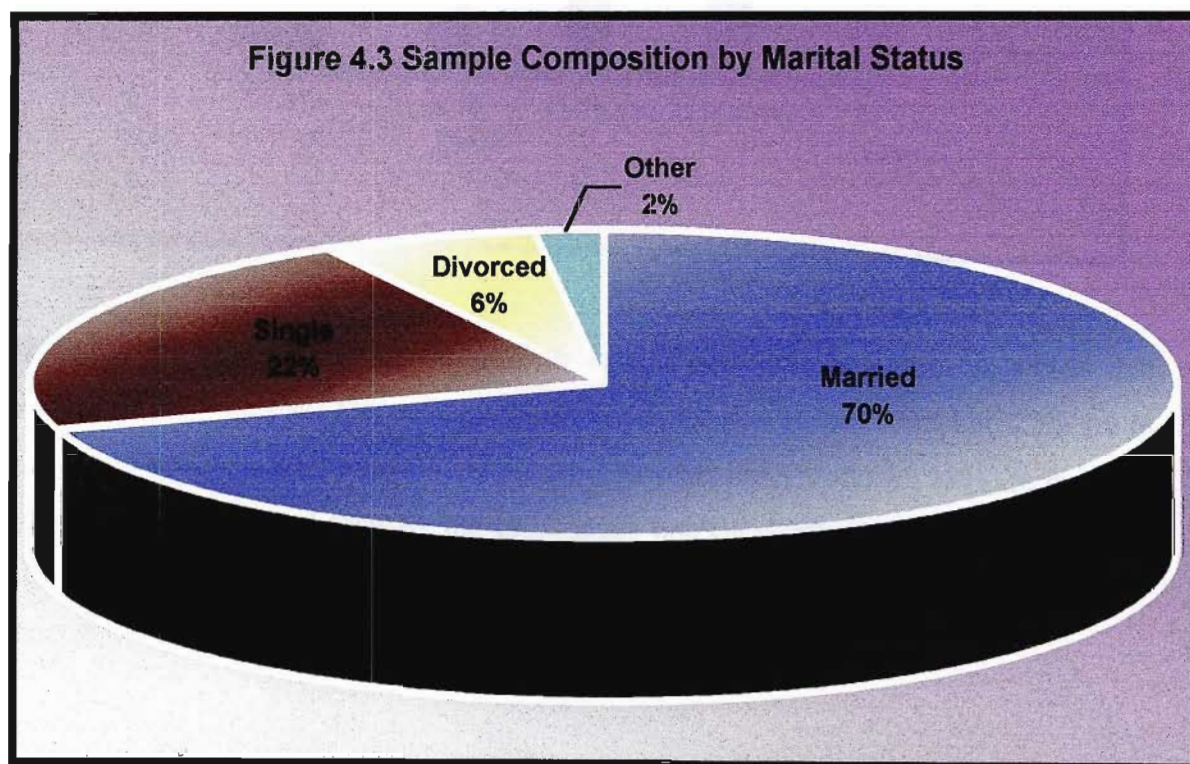


Figure 4.3 illustrates the composition of the sample according to marital status. It is evident that 70% of the respondents are married, 22% are single, 6% are divorced, followed by the other bracket (2%) which includes a widow.

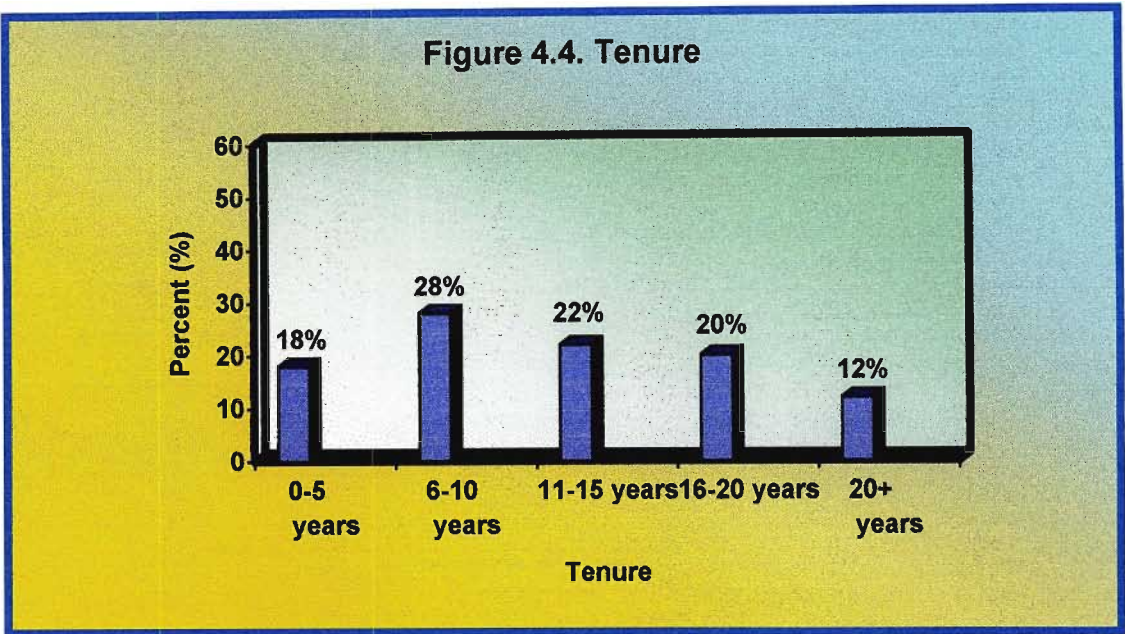


Figure 4.4 illustrates the composition of the sample according to tenure. It is clear that the highest percentage of respondents (28%) are in the 6 – 10 years bracket, 22% are in the 11 – 15 years bracket, followed by the 16 – 20 years bracket (20%), 18% are from the 0 – 5 years bracket and then by the 20 + years bracket (12%). It is evident that the majority of the respondents have more than 6 years of service, indicating that many of the respondents have a number of years of experience in the workplace.



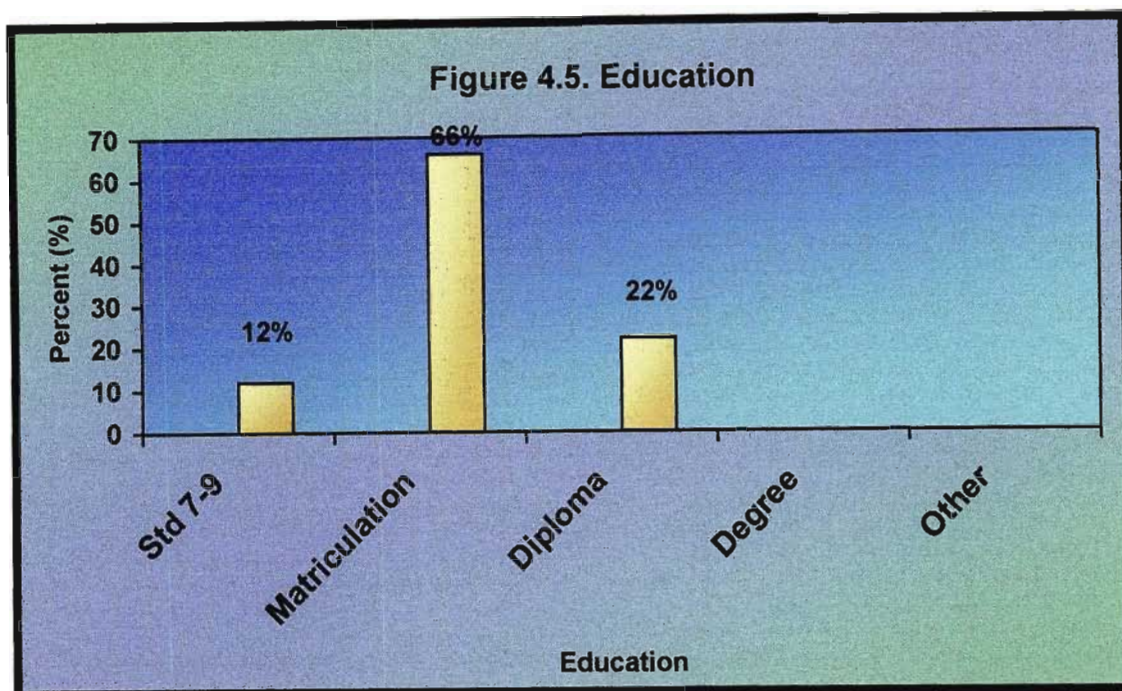


Figure 4.5 illustrates the composition of the sample according to education. It is indicated that 66% of the respondents are matriculants, 22 % of the respondents have diplomas and 12% are in the standard 7 – 9 bracket.

#### **4.6. Data Collection**

The data was collected by means of a questionnaire. According to Sekaran (1992: 200), “a questionnaire is a formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives.” The advantages of using a questionnaire are, firstly, that it is the least expensive means of gathering data. Secondly, with the questionnaire there is less pressure for immediate response on the subject. The third advantage is that it gives respondents a greater feeling of anonymity and therefore, encourages them to respond openly to sensitive questions (Judd, Smith and Kidder, 1991). However, there also disadvantages when using the questionnaire method. Firstly, organisations often are not able or willing to take up company time to complete questionnaires (Sekaran, 1992). Secondly, the accuracy and completeness of responses to questions are difficult to obtain. Here the key issue is the motivation of the respondent, and there are difficulties in creating and maintaining motivation with a questionnaire.

Thirdly, the least educated respondents will be unable to respond to questionnaires because of difficulties in reading and writing. Lastly, questionnaires do not allow the researcher to correct misunderstandings or answer questions that the respondents may have (Judd, Smith and Kidder, 1991).

#### **4.6.1. Questionnaire Construction**

The questionnaire (Annexure 1) was adapted from Pfieffer and Goldstein (1984).

The purpose of the questionnaire was to give the respondents the opportunity to respond to statements regarding communication between their supervisor and themselves. The following aspects were taken into consideration:

- Evaluation
- Neutrality
- Control
- Superiority
- Strategy
- Certainty

These aforementioned six sub-dimensions make up the defensive scores dimension.

- Provisionalism
- Spontaneity
- Empathy
- Problem orientation
- Equality
- Description

These above six sub-dimensions make up the supportive scores dimension.

The Likert scale used in the questionnaire utilises the anchor of strongly agree (1), agree (2), uncertain (3), disagree (4) and strongly disagree (5). The respondents indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree to a variety of statements by ringing the appropriate answer. The questionnaire is divided into biographical data and the

communication climate inventory. The biographical data requested includes personal information, such as, gender, age, marital status, tenure and level of education. The biographical data provides one with the minimum information required to discuss results for different groups of individuals. The communication climate inventory consisted of a series of closed-ended questions on various aspects of communication that asked respondents to make choices amongst a set of alternatives. According to Gay and Diehl (1992), closed-ended questions facilitate data analysis, and scoring is very objective and efficient.

Quantitative information obtained from the responses was used to describe the quality of effective communication in the organisation.

#### **4.6.2. Administration of Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was distributed personally to individuals. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter describing the nature and objective of the study and assuring respondents the utmost confidentiality. According to Sekaran (1992), administering questionnaires personally to individuals helps to establish rapport with the respondents. It also enables the researcher to introduce the questionnaire, provide clarification sought by respondents on the spot and allows for immediate collection of the questionnaire. However, administering questionnaires personally is expensive, if the sample is geographically dispersed (Sekaran, 1992). In this study, cluster sampling was used. The participants were assembled in clusters and questionnaires were distributed within these clusters.

Completed questionnaires were then statistically analysed.

### **4.6.3. Pilot testing and In-house pretesting**

Pilot testing is a trial or practice experiment in which a relatively few subjects are observed to assess the feasibility of the research procedures (McCall, 1994). In this study, pilot testing was carried out using 10 subjects. The advantages of using pilot testing is to help detect possible flaws in the measurement procedures, to identify unclear or ambiguously formulated items and the process allows researchers to notice non-verbal behaviour in respondents, that is, discomfort or embarrassment about the content or wording of questions (Welman and Kruger, 1999). In-house pretesting is used to test the effects of a treatment on subjects (Sekaran, 1992). In pretesting the researcher measures the dependent variable before the intervention (Welman and Kruger, 1999). In this study, the questionnaire was pretested by asking the study supervisors and colleagues to comment on the appropriateness of the questionnaire in terms of relevance and construction. The feedback from the in-house pretesting led to the inclusion of a cover page.

### **4.6.4. Psychometric Properties of the Questionnaire**

The psychometric properties of the questionnaire is determined by measuring the validity and reliability. According to Melville and Goddard (1996), validity means that the measurements are correct, that is, an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, and that it measures this correctly. Reliability, on the other hand, means that the measurements made are consistent. This means that, if the same experiment is carried out under the same conditions, the same measurements will be obtained (Melville and Goddard, 1996).

#### **4.6.4.1. Validity**

In this study factor analysis was used to determine the validity of the questionnaire. Factor analysis is a “general description for several specific computational techniques. All have the objective of reducing many variables to a more manageable number that belongs together and have overlapping measurement characteristics” (Cooper and Emory, 1999: 538). According to Sekaran (1992), the results of the factor analysis will confirm

whether or not the theorised dimensions emerge. It would reveal whether the theorised dimensions are indeed tapped by the items in the measure.

#### **4.6.4.2. Reliability**

In this study reliability was determined using the Cronbach's Co-efficient Alpha. According to Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991), the Cronbach's Co-efficient Alpha measure is derived from the correlations of one item with each other item. This measure ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 meaning complete unreliability and 1 meaning perfect reliability.

### **4.7. Analysis of Results**

Data will be captured using Microsoft Excel and processed using Symstat.

Data analysis also known as statistics, is a set of procedures for describing, synthesising, analysing and interpreting quantitative data (Gay and Diehl, 1992). The analysis of results will incorporate the use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

#### **4.7.1. Descriptive Statistics**

According to McCall (1994: 4), descriptive statistics refers to "procedures for organizing, summarizing and describing quantitative information, which is called data". In this study descriptive statistics was done for each of the following sub-dimensions:-

- Evaluation
- Neutrality
- Control
- Superiority
- Strategy
- Certainty
- Provisionalism
- Spontaneity
- Empathy
- Problem orientation

- Equality
- Description

Descriptive statistics was also done for the defensive scores (namely, evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty) and the supportive scores dimension (namely, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality, description).

#### **4.7.1.1. Measures of central tendency and dispersion**

Central tendency is a single score value which is taken to represent the values of all scores in a distribution. Such a measure may also be regarded as a score which represents the location of a distribution on the underlying scale of score values (Huysamen, 1998). The measures of dispersion refer to how spread out the data is, that is, one would like to know whether the values are close together around the central tendency or whether they are relatively spread out (Judd, Smith and Kidder, 1991). According to Huysamen (1998), the measures of central tendency and dispersion enable one to describe and compare distributions more concisely and objectively. The data was analysed using the following measures of central tendency and dispersion:-

- **Mean**  
The mean is the average value of the variable, computed across all cases (Judd, Smith and Kidder, 1991).
- **Median**  
The median refers to the score which has one half of the scores on either side of it when the scores have been arranged in ascending and descending order (Huysamen, 1998).
- **Mode**  
The mode is the score value which has the highest frequency of occurrence (Hysamen, 1998).
- **Variance**  
The variance is defined as the sum of the squared deviations from the mean (Huysamen, 1998).



- **Standard deviation**

“The standard deviation is defined to be the positive square root of the variance” (McCall, 1994: 64).

#### **4.7.2. Inferential Statistics**

Inferential statistics are the methods used to make inferences about a larger group of individuals on the basis of data collected from a smaller group (McCall, 1994). In this study the following methods were used:-

- **Correlation**

When carrying out research one would often like to know how one variable is related to another; one would like to see the nature, direction, significance and relationship between two variables. A Pearson Correlation Matrix will provide this information, that is, indicating the direction, strength and significance of the bivariate relationships among the variables in the study (Sekaran, 1992). In this study, inter-correlations were done for each of the variables that make up the defensive scores dimension (namely, evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty) and the supportive scores dimension (namely, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality, description).

- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

ANOVA is a statistical test used for studies involving two or more groups. It is used to determine whether there is a significant mean difference between two or more groups (Gay and Diehl, 1992). According to McCall (1994: 432), “ANOVA is a statistical procedure that assess the likelihood that the means of groups are equal to a common population mean by comparing an estimate of the population variance determined between groups with an estimate of the same population variance determined within groups”. In this study, ANOVA was used to determine whether employees varying in each of the biographical variables (age, marital status, tenure and education) differ in their perceptions of evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description respectively.

- **t-Test**

The t-Test is used to see if there are any significant differences in the means for two groups in the variable of interest (Sekaran, 1992). In this study, the t-Test was used to determine whether there is significant difference between gender and each of the twelve dimensions (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

- **Multiple Regression**

Multiple regression is an analysis in which more than one predictor are jointly regressed against the criterion variable. Multiple regression analysis helps one to understand how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by a set of predictors (Sekaran, 1992). In this study, multiple regression was used to determine whether the variables that make up the defensive scores (namely, evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty) and supportive scores (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) significantly account for the variance in effective communication.

## **4.8. Conclusion**

This chapter explored the research methodology and statistical methods used to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire. A statistical analysis of the data will assist one in drawing conclusions about the study. The results of data analysis will identify areas of improvement and open up new research opportunities.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Presentation of Results**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with the presentation of results and provides an analysis of the findings. In this study, inferential and descriptive statistics were carried out. Inferential statistics were analysed at the 5% level of significance.

#### **5.2. Analysis of Results**

The results of the study will be presented by means of tables, graphs and reports.

##### **5.2.1. Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics provide a description and summarisation of the data collected from a group of individuals (Huysamen, 1998). The data obtained, using a Likert scale, was analysed using means, standard deviations and range (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 Descriptive Statistics: Key variables of the study**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Critical Range</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	7.00	3.104	3	15	6.12 to 7.88
<b>Neutrality</b>	8.40	2.703	3	15	7.63 to 9.17
<b>Control</b>	8.3400	3.56634	3	15	7.3265 to 9.3535
<b>Superiority</b>	8.80	3.344	3	15	7.85 to 9.75
<b>Strategy</b>	9.08	3.713	3	15	8.02 to 10.14
<b>Certainty</b>	9.14	4.126	3	15	7.97 to 10.31
<b>Provisionalism</b>	7.26	3.016	3	14	6.40 to 8.12
<b>Spontaneity</b>	6.74	3.421	2	15	5.77 to 7.71
<b>Empathy</b>	6.68	3.285	3	15	5.75 to 7.61
<b>Problem orientation</b>	7.50	3.066	3	15	6.63 to 8.37
<b>Equality</b>	6.74	2.694	3	12	5.97 to 7.51
<b>Description</b>	7.24	2.246	3	14	6.60 to 7.88

From Table 5.1 it is evident that all mean values of the twelve variables fall within the 95% critical range. Respondents were required to respond on a 1 – 5 point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5), to indicate their level of satisfaction with evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description as it takes place within the organisation. Hence, the lower the mean, the greater is the level of satisfaction with the sub-dimension being measured. The lowest means indicate that most employees are satisfied with their supervisors' spontaneity (mean = 6.74), equality (mean = 6.74) and empathy (mean = 6.68). Evaluation (mean = 7.00), description (mean = 7.24), provisionalism (mean = 7.26) and problem orientation (mean = 7.50) is about average. The highest means indicate that most employees are not satisfied with their supervisors' behaviour in terms of neutrality (mean = 8.40), control (mean = 8.3400), superiority (mean = 8.80), strategy (mean = 9.08) and certainty (mean = 9.14). It is evident that employees feel negatively about their supervisors in terms of neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty.

Whilst spontaneity, equality and empathy enjoy low mean scores, it is evident that, when compared to the maximum attainable score of 15, there is room for improvement in these areas.

When looking at the frequencies, it is indicated that the majority of employees agree with questions pertaining to their supervisors' spontaneity, equality and empathy. Therefore, spontaneity, equality and empathy indicate low mean values. The frequency scores also indicate that the majority of employees agree with questions regarding their supervisors in terms of evaluation, description, provisionalism and problem orientation. Therefore, evaluation, description, provisionalism and problem orientation have average mean values. It is evident that the majority of the employees disagree with questions pertaining to their supervisors' in terms of neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty. Therefore, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty enjoy indicate high mean values.

Mean analyses were also computed for composite measures of the defensive and supportive behaviour patterns.

**Table 5.2 Descriptive Statistics for the Defensive and Supportive Scores Dimension**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Critical Range</b>
<b>Defensive Scores</b>	50.76	16.740	19	87	46.00 to 55.52
<b>Supportive Scores</b>	42.16	14.427	18	72	38.06 to 46.26

It is evident from Table 5.2 that the two main dimensions fall within the 95% critical range. The defensive scores dimension (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) obtained a high mean value of 50.76, indicating that employees are dissatisfied with their supervisors' defensive behaviour pattern. The supportive scores dimension (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) achieved a low mean value of 42.16 indicating that employees are satisfied with their supervisors' supportive behaviour.

The means are depicted graphically in Figure 5.1.

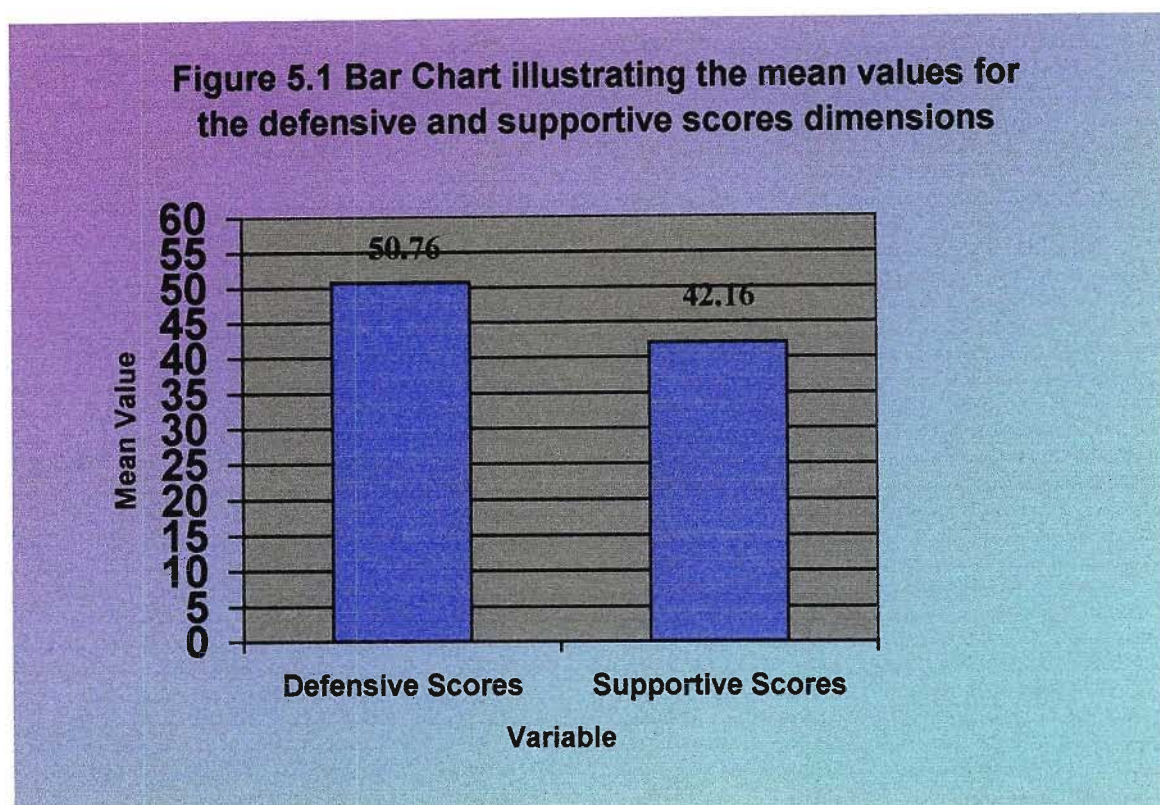


Figure 5.1 illustrates a pictorial representation of the two main dimensions. Figure 5.1 clearly depicts the employees' dissatisfaction with their supervisors' defensive behaviour patterns (mean = 50.76) and satisfaction with their supervisors' supportive behaviour patterns (mean = 42.16).

### 5.2.2. Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics is used to make inferences about population indices on the basis of the corresponding indices obtained from the sample population (Welman and Kruger, 1999).

#### Hypothesis 1

There exists significant inter-relationships amongst all the sub-dimensions that influence defensive behaviour (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty).

**Table 5.3 Inter-correlations that make up the defensive scores dimension (n = 50)**

Variable	Evaluation	Neutrality	Control	Superiority	Strategy	Certainty
<b>Evaluation</b> p	1					
<b>Neutrality</b> p	0.331 0.019*	1				
<b>Control</b> p	0.590 0.000*	0.417 0.003*	1			
<b>Superiority</b> p	0.533 0.000*	0.562 0.000*	0.716 0.000*	1		
<b>Strategy</b> p	0.637 0.000*	0.527 0.000*	0.719 0.000*	0.708 0.000*	1	
<b>Certainty</b> p	0.441 0.001*	0.392 0.005*	0.624 0.000*	0.793 0.000*	0.699 0.000*	1

\*p < 0.05

From Table 5.3 it is evident that there are significant inter-correlations amongst all the sub-dimensions that impact on the defensive behaviour of supervisors (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

## **Hypothesis 2**

There exists significant inter-relationships between all the sub-dimensions that influence the supportive behaviour of supervisors (provisionalism, spontaneity, problem orientation, equality and description).



**Table 5.4 Inter-correlations that make up the supportive scores dimension (n = 50)**

Variable	Provisionalism	Spontaneity	Empathy	Problem orientation	Equality	Description
<b>Provisionalism</b> p	1					
<b>Spontaneity</b> p	0.679 0.000*	1				
<b>Empathy</b> p	0.645 0.000*	0.762 0.000*	1			
<b>Problem orientation</b> p	0.608 0.000*	0.692 0.000*	0.539 0.000*	1		
<b>Equality</b> p	0.576 0.000*	0.641 0.000*	0.742 0.000*	0.456 0.001*	1	
<b>Description</b> p	0.412 0.003*	0.460 0.001*	0.367 0.009*	0.708 0.000*	0.382 0.006*	1

\*p < 0.05

It is evident from Table 5.4 that there are significant inter-correlations amongst all the sub-dimensions that impact on the supportive behaviour of supervisors (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

### **Hypothesis 3**

There is a significance difference in the perception of employees differing in biographical data (age, marital status, tenure and education) regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality, and description) respectively.

**Table 5.5 ANOVA: Age**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Evaluation	0.101	0.959
Neutrality	1.037	0.385
Control	0.565	0.641
Superiority	0.155	0.926
Strategy	1.017	0.394
Certainty	0.918	0.440
Provisionalism	0.965	0.417
Spontaneity	1.871	0.148
Empathy	1.326	0.277
Problem orientation	0.875	0.461
Equality	1.150	0.339
Description	0.482	0.697

Table 5.5 indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in age regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

**Table 5.6 ANOVA: Marital status**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	1.910	0.141
<b>Neutrality</b>	1.338	0.274
<b>Control</b>	1.082	0.366
<b>Superiority</b>	0.515	0.674
<b>Strategy</b>	1.533	0.219
<b>Certainty</b>	0.287	0.835
<b>Provisionalism</b>	1.902	0.143
<b>Spontaneity</b>	1.197	0.322
<b>Empathy</b>	1.022	0.392
<b>Problem orientation</b>	1.183	0.327
<b>Equality</b>	0.878	0.460
<b>Description</b>	1.067	0.372

Table 5.6 indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in marital status regarding the sub-dimensions of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

**Table 5.7. ANOVA: Tenure**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	1.741	0.158
<b>Neutrality</b>	1.281	0.291
<b>Control</b>	2.870	0.034*
<b>Superiority</b>	1.379	0.256
<b>Strategy</b>	2.561	0.051
<b>Certainty</b>	3.291	0.019*
<b>Provisionalism</b>	1.950	0.119
<b>Spontaneity</b>	2.299	0.073
<b>Empathy</b>	2.748	0.040*
<b>Problem orientation</b>	1.192	0.327
<b>Equality</b>	3.470	0.015*
<b>Description</b>	1.678	0.172

\*p < 0.05

Table 5.7 indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in tenure regarding evaluation, neutrality, superiority, strategy, provisionalism, spontaneity, problem orientation and description respectively. However, there is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in tenure regarding control, certainty, empathy and equality at the 5% level of significance respectively. The difference is reflected in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8 Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard. Deviation</b>
<b>Control</b>	0 - 5 years	9	10.3333	3.24037
	6 – 10 years	14	6.4286	3.17961
	11 - 15 years	11	7.4545	2.84125
	16 - 20 years	10	10.1000	4.12176
	20+	6	8.5000	3.08221
	Total	50	8.3400	3.56634
<b>Certainty</b>	0 - 5 years	9	10.33	3.937
	6 – 10 years	14	6.79	4.173
	11 - 15 years	11	8.09	3.590
	16 - 20 years	10	10.50	3.894
	20+	6	12.50	2.429
	Total	50	9.14	4.126
<b>Empathy</b>	0 - 5 years	9	6.33	3.162
	6 – 10 years	14	6.07	3.668
	11 - 15 years	11	5.18	2.316
	16 - 20 years	10	7.50	3.171
	20+	6	10.00	2.280
	Total	50	6.68	3.285
<b>Equality</b>	0 - 5 years	9	7.22	2.333
	6 – 10 years	14	5.71	2.894
	11 - 15 years	11	5.82	2.316
	16 - 20 years	10	6.90	2.514
	20+	6	9.83	1.329
	Total	50	6.74	2.694

It is evident from Table 5.8 that employees employed in the organisation between 0 – 5 years (mean = 10.333), followed by those between 16 – 20 years (mean = 10.1000), and

then those between 20 + years (mean = 8.500) are dissatisfied with their supervisors in terms of control. Those employed between 11 – 15 years (mean = 7.4545) and those between 6 – 10 years (mean = 6.4286) are satisfied with their supervisors in terms of control.

It is evident from Table 5.8 that employees employed in the organisation for more than 20 years (mean = 12.50), followed by those between 16 – 20 years (mean = 10.50), and then those between 0 – 5 years ( mean = 10.33) and lastly, those between 11 – 15 years (mean = 8.09) are dissatisfied with their supervisors certainty. Those employed in the organisation between 6 – 10 years are more satisfied with their supervisor's certainty.

Table 5.8 depicts that those employed in the organisation for more than 20 years (mean = 10.00) are dissatisfied with their supervisors regarding empathy. Those employed between 16 – 20 years (mean = 7.50), followed by those between 0 – 5 years (mean = 6.33), and those between 6 – 10 years (mean = 6.07) and then those between 11 – 15 years (mean = 5.18) are satisfied with their supervisors in terms of empathy.

Table 5.8 depicts that those employed in the organisation for more than 20 years (mean = 9.83) are dissatisfied with their supervisors regarding equality. Those employed between 0 – 5 years (mean = 7.22), between 16 – 20 years (mean = 6.90), between 11 – 15 years (mean = 5.82) and between 6 – 10 years (mean = 5.71) are satisfied with their supervisors regarding equality.

It is thus clear from Table 5.8 that there is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in tenure regarding control, certainty, empathy and equality respectively.

**Table 5.9 ANOVA: Education**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	1.937	0.155
<b>Neutrality</b>	0.833	0.441
<b>Control</b>	1.434	0.249
<b>Superiority</b>	0.611	0.547
<b>Strategy</b>	1.625	0.208
<b>Certainty</b>	1.029	0.365
<b>Provisionalism</b>	0.209	0.812
<b>Spontaneity</b>	0.525	0.595
<b>Empathy</b>	1.852	0.168
<b>Problem orientation</b>	0.014	0.986
<b>Equality</b>	1.540	0.225
<b>Description</b>	0.545	0.583

Table 5.9 indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of employees differing in education regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

There is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in gender regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

**Table 5.10 T-Test: Gender**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	1.119	0.269
<b>Neutrality</b>	-0.509	0.613
<b>Control</b>	1.593	0.118
<b>Superiority</b>	0.960	0.342
<b>Strategy</b>	1.469	0.148
<b>Certainty</b>	1.225	0.227
<b>Provisionalism</b>	0.690	0.494
<b>Spontaneity</b>	1.236	0.222
<b>Empathy</b>	1.107	0.274
<b>Problem orientation</b>	0.305	0.761
<b>Equality</b>	1.586	0.119
<b>Description</b>	1.470	0.148

It is evident from Table 5.10 that there is no significant difference in the perception of males and females regarding each of the variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy, certainty, provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) respectively.

### **Hypothesis 5**

The variables of the study (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) significantly account for the variance in determining the defensive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.



**Table 5.11 Multiple Regression for the defensive scores dimension**

<b>Multiple R</b>		0.992	
<b>Multiple R Square</b>		0.984	
<b>Adjusted R Square</b>		0.982	
<b>Sig. of R</b>		0.000	
<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardised</b>	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>Standardised Coefficients</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>St. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>
(Constant)	1.555E-15	0.000	
Superiority	1.000	0.000	0.200
Strategy	1.000	0.000	0.222
Control	1.000	0.000	0.213
Evaluation	1.000	0.000	0.185
Certainty	1.000	0.000	0.246
Neutrality	1.000	0.000	0.161

It is evident from Table 5.11 that the variables of the study account for 98.4 of the variance in determining the defensive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.

It is evident from Table 5.11 that certainty has the highest impact in determining the defensive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors because it has a beta value of 0.246, followed by strategy (0.222), followed by control (0.213), followed by superiority (0.200), followed by evaluation (0.185) and then by neutrality (0.161) which has the lowest impact.

**Hypothesis 6**

The variables of the study (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and empathy) significantly account for the variance in determining the supportive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.

**Table 5.12 Multiple Regression for the supportive scores dimension**

<b>Multiple R</b>		0.993	
<b>Multiple R Square</b>		0.986	
<b>Adjusted R Square</b>		0.985	
<b>Sig. of R</b>		0.000	
<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardised</b>	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>StandardisedCoefficients</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>
(Constant)	-1.071E-14	0.000	
Spontaneity	1.000	0.000	0.237
Provisionalism	1.000	0.000	0.209
Description	1.000	0.000	0.156
Empathy	1.000	0.000	0.228
Equality	1.000	0.000	0.187
Problem orientation	1.000	0.000	0.212

It is evident from Table 5.12 that the variables of the study significantly account for 98.6% of the variance in determining the supportive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors.

From Table 5.12 it is indicated that spontaneity has the highest impact in determining the supportive behaviour patterns in the communication of supervisors because it has a beta value of 0.237, followed by empathy (0.228), followed by problem orientation (0.212), followed by equality (0.187) and then by description (0.156) which has the lowest impact.

### **5.3. Psychometric Properties of the Questionnaire**

The psychometric properties of the questionnaire will be determined by measuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

#### **5.3.1. Factor Analysis**

In this study factor analysis was used to measure validity.

**Table 5.13 Factor Analysis**

<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>
Q 17	<b>0.778</b>	0.240
Q 5	<b>0.747</b>	0.071
Q 9	<b>0.743</b>	0.272
Q 25	<b>0.736</b>	0.151
Q 1	<b>0.731</b>	0.094
Q 11	<b>0.731</b>	-0.005
Q 35	<b>0.718</b>	0.303
Q 13	<b>0.714</b>	0.298
Q 27	<b>0.694</b>	0.371
Q 21	<b>0.648</b>	0.052
Q 15	<b>0.637</b>	0.425
Q 33	<b>0.615</b>	0.468
Q 23	<b>0.591</b>	0.045
Q 31	<b>0.578</b>	0.408
Q 7	<b>0.570</b>	0.222
Q 29	<b>0.528</b>	0.159
Q 18	<b>0.522</b>	0.395
Q 3	0.439	-0.122
Q 34	-0.347	0.134
Q 19	-0.151	0.000
Q 22	0.154	<b>0.793</b>
Q 28	0.174	<b>0.791</b>
Q 24	0.231	<b>0.722</b>
Q 36	0.253	<b>0.719</b>
Q 2	0.028	<b>0.716</b>
Q 4	0.118	<b>0.715</b>
Q 30	-0.090	<b>0.706</b>
Q 20	0.031	<b>0.705</b>
Q 12	0.394	<b>0.664</b>
Q 6	0.372	<b>0.651</b>
Q 10	0.402	<b>0.648</b>
Q 26	-0.211	<b>0.646</b>
Q 8	0.327	<b>0.600</b>
Q 16	0.228	<b>0.599</b>
Q 14	0.209	<b>0.564</b>
Q 32	-0.105	<b>0.531</b>

It is evident from Table 5.13 that 17 items load significantly on Factor 1. These items relate to strategy, evaluation, control, superiority, certainty, neutrality and equality. There are 6 defensive sub-dimensions and 1 supportive sub-dimension. Hence, Factor 1 may be labelled as defensive scores.

From Table 5.13 it is evident that 16 items load significantly on Factor 2. These items relate to spontaneity, problem orientation, description, provisionalism, empathy and equality. These are the 6 supportive sub-dimensions. Hence, Factor 2 may be labelled likewise.

### 5.3.2. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha is used to measure reliability in this study.

**Table 5.14 Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha**

<b>Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha</b>	0.9400
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It is evident from Table 5.13 that the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha is 0.9400. Since this reliability estimate is close to unity, it is clear that the measuring instrument has a high degree of reliability. Furthermore, the items show a high level of internal consistency and stability.

## 5.4. Conclusion

This chapter objectively presented the results of the study using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive and inferential statistics provided a description and interpretation of results using a number of methods. A clear presentation of results enables one to identify significant relationships and differences between the variables in the study and also points out the areas where improvement is required.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion of Results**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter entails the discussion of results obtained from the study. It will present and explain the findings of the research which will be compared to the findings of previous studies.

#### **6.2. Discussion of Results on the Key Variables**

The key variables will be compared and contrasted with results of previous studies to achieve a more meaningful analysis. In this study, the defensive scores dimension (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) and the supportive scores dimension (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) will be compared and contrasted to previous studies.

##### **6.2.1. The defensive scores dimension**

Defensive behaviour is defined as that behaviour which occurs when an individual perceives threat or anticipates threat in the group (Gibb, 1961).

The defensive scores dimension (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) obtained a higher mean value of 50.76 than the supportive scores dimension. This indicates that employees do not agree with or favour their supervisors defensive behaviour type. Therefore, the majority of employees are dissatisfied with the way in which their supervisors communicate.

According to an analysis conducted by Gibb (1961), increases in defensive behaviour correlated positively with losses in efficiency in communication.

Defensive behaviour can be reduced if supervisors are able to develop a more supportive climate. Conrad and Poole (1998) states that a supervisor can create feelings of personal

worth and comfort if he or she communicates in ways that are descriptive and objective rather than evaluative, focuses on working together to solve important problems, is spontaneous, open and honest about their true feelings, affirms the subordinates competence, and encourages them to question and provide input into decisions. Supportive communication increases the level of trust between a supervisor and subordinate and creates the perception that the supervisor is considerate and employee-centered (Conrad and Poole, 1998).

#### **6.2.1.1. Evaluation**

Evaluation occurs when an individual uses evaluative language or content to criticize another person (Keyton, 2002).

In this study, the dimensions of evaluation obtained an average mean value of 7.00 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents reflect only an average level of satisfaction with how they are evaluated by their supervisors. Whilst the mean reflects an above average degree of satisfaction (53.4%) regarding evaluation, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is substantial room for improvement (46.6%).

A deeper analysis into the lack of optimum satisfaction of employees regarding evaluation is undertaken using frequency analyses. The results reflect that, 74% of the respondents disapprove of their supervisors' criticism in front of others. According to Rue and Byars (1986), criticism should not be voiced out in front of others but should be communicated in private. Criticism can negatively affect an employees motivation if not used properly. Supervisors tend to focus on the negative. The goal is for the employee to know at all times where he or she stands (Rue and Byars,1986).

Furthermore, 40% of the respondents agree that their supervisor judges his/her or subordinates' actions while the other 60% of the respondents disagree. Moravec (1996) states that people do not learn well in an atmosphere permeated by judgement. In some



organisations formal evaluations are prepared and fed back anonymously to each person (Moravec, 1996). Verderber (1999) highlights the importance of constructive criticism. The skill of constructive criticism is not based on judgement but rather on empathy. When one offers another constructive criticism, they begin to empathise with the person and try to forecast what his or her reaction to feedback is likely to be. According to Tracy, Dusen and Robinson (1987), feedback that is not empathetically grounded or is poorly understood is likely to hurt relationships and lead to defensive reactions.

The results also indicate that there are significant intercorrelations between evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty. Hence, more evaluation can lead to increased neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty respectively. According to Gibb (1961) evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty arouses defensiveness in people.

#### **6.2.1.2. Neutrality**

Neutrality is expressed when people react in a detached or unemotional way (Keyton, 2002).

In this study, the dimensions of neutrality obtained a mean value of 8.40 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This shows that the majority of the respondents expressed a significant degree of dissatisfaction with their supervisors' neutrality (56%). The mean reflects a high degree of dissatisfaction and hence, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is further room for development (56%).

A deeper analysis into the lack of optimum satisfaction of employees regarding neutrality is undertaken using the frequency analysis. The results indicate that 54% of the respondents agree that their supervisors rarely offer moral support during a personal crisis. Thus, indicating the supervisors' neutrality towards subordinates. According to Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum (1981), a person's neutrality towards other people usually results in defensive behaviour. Research indicates that employees are most satisfied with



supervisors that are employee-centered, supportive, understanding, tolerant of disagreement and willing to listen to their subordinates (Conrad, 1985 as cited in Jablin, Putnam, Roberts and Porter, 1987).

Results from the frequency analysis also indicate that 40% of the respondents agree that their supervisors seldom become involved in employee conflict while the other 60% disagree. According to Rue and Byars (1986), whenever two or more employees engage in a conflict situation, the supervisor should assist in resolving the situation. This does not mean that the supervisor should personally solve the conflict but the supervisor should see that the conflict is resolved between the involved parties.

Results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty. Hence, the more neutrality displayed by supervisors can lead to greater control, superiority, strategy and certainty.

#### **6.2.1.3. Control**

Control occurs when one attempts to change the behavior or attributes of others (Gibb, 1961 as cited in Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981)

In this study, control obtained a mean value of 8.3400 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that majority of the respondents express a higher level of dissatisfaction with the amount of control that the supervisor has over them. Whilst the mean reflects a small degree of satisfaction (44.4%) regarding control, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is substantial room for development (55.6%).

The frequency analysis reveals that 46% of the respondents agree that their supervisors control how he or she does their work. According to Buckingham (1999), if a manager tries to force people to do things, they will either become resentful or dependent. Davidson (2002) suggests that one should use the hyper-hierarchy method. The hyper-

hierarchy will depend on the ability to exert influence rather than control. It involves the less visible, more informal lines of communication and authority. A system led through influence will allow the leader to move swiftly across boundaries to directly influence morale and motivation in the organisation. Buckingham (1999) also states that all that managers can do is influence, motivate, berate or cajole people in the hope that most of them will do what they are asked.

The result also indicates that there are significant inter-correlations between control, superiority, strategy and certainty. These significant inter-correlations emphasise that control impacts on, and is integrated with, superiority, strategy and certainty. Hence, more control can lead to greater superiority, can effectively support a supervisors' strategy and lead to increased certainty. Furthermore, the ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in tenure regarding control. It can therefore, be concluded that employees differing in tenure experience control differently and therefore, vary in their perceptions of their supervisors in terms of control.

#### **6.2.1.4. Superiority**

Superiority occurs when an individual communicates that he or she is superior in position and arouses feeling of inadequacy in others (Gibb, 1961 as cited Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

In this study, superiority achieved a high mean value of 8.80 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that majority of the respondents are dissatisfied with their supervisors in terms of superiority. Whilst the mean reflects a small degree of satisfaction (41.4%) regarding superiority, as compared to other dimensions, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates there is a lot room for improvement (58.6%). According to Karathanos and Hillis (2002), when the sender of communication feels superior, that feeling is communicated to the receiver. This leads to defensiveness, which results in the

receiver not hearing the message, forgetting the message, competing with the sender, or being jealous.

Although the majority of the respondents are dissatisfied with their supervisors' superior behaviour, there are 56% of the respondents that disapprove that their supervisors makes it clear that he or she is in charge. According to Gibb (1961), defenses are reduced when one perceives the sender as being willing to enter into participative planning with mutual trust and respect. Organisational performance can be increased if supervisors are willing to allow their subordinates to participate, to listen, to respond to their ideas, and to encourage them to contribute and if subordinates are given substantial control over how they complete their tasks (Conrad and Poole, 1998).

The results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between superiority, strategy and certainty. It can therefore, be concluded that greater superiority impacts tremendously on a supervisors' strategy and allows for more certainty.

#### **6.2.1.5. Strategy**

Strategy occurs when an individual has hidden agendas and wants others to unknowingly help him or her achieve it. It also denotes manipulation (Keyton, 2002).

Strategy achieved a high mean value of 9.02 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that majority of the respondents are extremely dissatisfied with their supervisors' strategy. Whilst the mean reflect a small level of satisfaction (39.5%) regarding strategy, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is a substantial amount of room for improvement needed (60.5%). In this situation, it is important for supervisors to be more open and honest in their communication. According to Jablin, Putnam, Roberts and Porter (1989), a subordinate's perception of openness are positively related to job satisfaction with supervision.

Frequency analysis reveals that 42% of the respondents agree that they seldom say what is on their mind because it might be twisted or distorted by their supervisor. According to Smit and Cronje (1997), distrust between a superior and subordinate can serve only to increase defensiveness and decrease the frequency of open expression and the likelihood of effective communication.

The result also indicates that there are significant inter-correlations between strategy and certainty. This implies that a supervisor's strategy can lead to more certainty.

#### **6.2.1.6. Certainty**

Certainty relates to an individual who is dogmatic, one who seems to know the answers and someone who is wanting to win an argument rather than solve a problem (Gibb, 1961 as cited in Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

In this study, certainty obtained a high mean value of 9.14 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are extremely dissatisfied with their supervisors regarding certainty. Since the mean reflects a high level of dissatisfaction (60.9%) regarding certainty, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is tremendous room for development (60.9%).

The frequency analysis indicates that 50% of the respondents admit that their supervisor is dogmatic and it is useless for them to voice an opposing point of view. According to Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum (1981), when someone acts as a "know it all" this attitude of certainty and dogmatism is less pleasant than when the person is willing to have an open mind and act with a degree of provisionalism. According to Karathanos and Hillis (2002), there should be equal opportunities for both parties to speak in the communication. Supportive communicators are willing to hear the other side, listen to new ideas and consider additional attitudes.

The results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between certainty and strategy. Hence, the more certainty can lead to an effective strategy. Furthermore, the ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in tenure regarding certainty. It can therefore, be concluded that employees varying in tenure experience different degrees of certainty from their supervisors and therefore, vary in their perceptions of certainty.

### **6.2.2. The Supportive scores dimension**

Supportive responses are comforting statements used to soothe, console, reassure or reduce tension. Research indicates that people who use comforting strategies in their communication are perceived as being more sensitive, concerned and involved (Verderber, 1999). A supportive climate encourages people to communicate by praising their worthwhile efforts (Verderber, 1999).

The supportive scores dimension (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) achieved a lower mean value of 42.16 than the defensive scores dimension (50.76%). This indicates that employees are in favour of their supervisors' supportive behaviour patterns and therefore, experience greater job satisfaction. However, it is clearly indicated that supervisors can play a more supportive role. It can therefore, be concluded that employees prefer their supervisors supportive behaviour patterns as opposed to their defensive behaviour patterns. According to study conducted by New York based families and Work Institute (FWI), a supportive workplace has a greater positive impact on job performance than pay and benefits. It was also deduced in this study that the workplace support factor accounted for 37% of the variability in job satisfaction. As support increases, so does employee satisfaction (Hickins, 1998).

When supportive communication is used, the relationship between people is strengthened, at the same time the message is accurate, understood clearly, and all parties know where they stand. A supportive communication culture encourages openness in supervisors as well as staff and customers. This ability to communicate supportively

fosters positive feelings and promotes the desire to please, to improve, to hear and to be able to deal with workplace challenges (Karathanos and Hillis, 2002).

#### **6.2.2.1. Provisionalism**

Provisionalism refers to flexibility and commitment to solving a problem. Provisionalism encourages experimentation and the exploration of ideas (Keyton, 2002).

In this study, provisionalism obtained an average mean value of 7.26 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents experience only an average level of satisfaction in terms of provisionalism. Whilst the mean reflects below an average degree of satisfaction (48.4%) regarding provisionalism, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is a high degree of improvement still needed (51.6%).

The frequency analysis reveals that 62% of the respondents agree that their supervisors' allows them as much creativity as possible in their job. According to Rue and Byars (1986), the supervisor must demonstrate that he or she values creativity. If he or she encourages creativity, the employee will sense this and act accordingly. Supervisors providing satisfying and challenging work and involving people to a greater degree in product and process will help companies to retain qualified employees and improve employee creativity (Travers, 1988).

The frequency analysis also indicates that 62% of the respondents agree that their supervisors are willing to try new ideas and accept others' point of view. When one is provisional, an open minded, tentative attitude is displayed. In other words, one is willing to listen to opposing points of view and also change his or own if it is warranted. Thus, people enter into a transaction with the willingness to hear and support the other person's perspective (Harris, 1993).

Results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description. Hence, more provisionalism will result in increased spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description.

#### **6.2.2.2. Spontaneity**

An individual who acts spontaneously is open and honest with other people. This individual is known for his or her immediacy in the group and willingness to deal with issues as they come up (Keyton, 2002).

Spontaneity obtained a low mean value of 6.74 (maximum = 15) and fell with the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with their supervisors' spontaneity. Whilst the mean reflects a greater degree of satisfaction (55.1%) regarding spontaneity, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is room for improvement (44.9%). According to Gibb (1961), behaviour that appears to be spontaneous and free of deception is defense reductive. If one is seen as having uncomplicated motivations, as being straightforward and honest and as being spontaneously in response to the situation, he or she is likely to arouse minimal defensiveness.

The frequency analysis reveals that 48% of the respondents agree that their supervisors do not have hidden motives in dealing with them. Karathanos and Hillis (2002) states that a communicator that has no hidden motives, who is straightforward and has no preplanned agenda helps create a supportive climate. An open and supportive climate is essentially important when subordinates have complex and ambiguous jobs. In this situation, subordinates need task related information and advice that only their supervisors can provide (Conrad and Poole, 1998).

The results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description. This implies that the more



spontaneity displayed by supervisors leads to greater empathy, problem orientation, equality and description.

#### **6.2.2.3. Empathy**

Empathy occurs when an individual shows respect to other people and is able to identify with their problems and share their feelings (Gibb, 1961 as cited in Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

In this study, empathy obtained a low mean value of 6.68 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with their supervisors in terms of empathy. Whilst the mean reflects a high degree of satisfaction (55.5%) with empathy displayed by the supervisor, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is room for improvement (44.5%). According to Pollock (1997), one's ability to relate to others includes such qualities as empathy and lack of authoritarianism. These are the qualities that helps one to sense the other person's point of view and also to assist in getting the message across to subordinates.

The frequency analysis indicates that 60% of the respondents agree that their supervisor understands the problems they encounter on the job. When one responds empathetically to give comfort, it not only shows that he or she understands a person's meaning, but he or she also affirms the person's right to his or her feelings (Verderber, 1999). Harris (1993) states that by "putting yourself in the other person's shoes", one will be able to better understand and communicate with others.

The results also show that there are significant inter-correlations between empathy, problem orientation, equality and description. This implies that the more empathy a supervisor displays, the more effective will be his or her response to a problem and also result in increased equality and description. The ANOVA results show that there is a significant difference in employees varying in tenure regarding empathy. It can



therefore, be concluded that employees varying in tenure experience or perceive different degrees of empathy from their supervisors.

#### **6.2.2.4. Problem orientation**

Problem orientation occurs when an individual practicing problem orientation strives for answers and solutions that will benefit and satisfy other group members (Keyton, 2002).

In this study, problem orientation achieved an average mean value of 7.50 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the respondents reflect only an average level of satisfaction regarding their supervisors' response to problems. Whilst the mean reflects an above average degree of satisfaction (50%) in terms of problem orientation, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is room for development (50%). According to Travers (1988), the ability to deal with problems is one of the characteristics of an effective supervisor. Such supervisors understand how problems occur and recognise the importance of quickly dealing with them and they develop systematic techniques for effectively solving them.

The frequency analysis reveals that 60% of the respondents admit that their supervisors defines problems and makes his or her subordinates aware of them. Involving others in problem solving will enable them to contribute to the understanding of the problem and its solution (Travers, 1988). Managers who focus on the problem and express a desire to collaborate in problem resolution create the same desire in the listener. A climate is also created in which the receiver is able to participate in the resolution without feeling that he or she is in danger of being harmed in some way (Karathanos and Hillis, 2002).

The results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between problem orientation, equality and description. This implies that the more effective the response to a problem situation, the more equality is achieved and the better the description.

#### **6.2.2.5. Equality**

Equality refers to the willingness to enter into participative planning with mutual trust and respect. Equality can be seen when an individual attaches little importance to difference in ability, worth and status (Gibb, 1961 as cited in Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum, 1981).

In this study, equality obtained a low mean value of 6.74 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with their supervisors in terms of equality. Whilst the mean reflects a high degree of satisfaction (55.1%) regarding equality, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is room for improvement (44.9%).

The frequency analysis indicates that 70% of the respondents agree that their supervisors treats them with respect. According to Verderber (1999), relationships grow in climates where the people treat each other as equals rather than in climates where one person is perceived as being superior to another. Mutual respect and equality create a solid foundation for enduring relationships.

The frequency analysis also indicate that 66% of the respondents agree that their supervisor does not try to make them feel inferior. It is important for supervisors to create an atmosphere in which people are able to feel equal. Offering employees recognition and praise can have a positive impact on the organisation and also build confidence in subordinates (Karathanos and Hillis, 2002).

Results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between equality and description. Hence, the more equality displayed by the supervisor will result in a clear and fair description. Furthermore, ANOVA results also show that there is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in tenure regarding equality. This indicates that employees differing in tenure, feel differently about the degree of equality displayed by their supervisors.

#### **6.2.2.6. Description**

Description occurs when an individual describes an item in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. Description is most preferable to evaluation because people benefit when they know when an idea is rejected (Keyton, 2002).

Description obtained an average mean value of 7.24 (maximum = 15) and fell within the 95% confidence level. This indicates that the majority of the respondents experience only an average level of satisfaction in terms of description. Whilst the mean reflects a below average degree of satisfaction (48.2%) regarding description, as compared to other dimensions being measured, the difference between the mean value and the maximum attainable score of 15 therefore, indicates that there is substantial room for development (51.8%)

One should use description rather than evaluation to assess others (Keyton, 2002). A supportive climate is fostered when people describe rather than evaluate (Harris, 1993). According to Karathanos and Hillis (2002), speech or action that indicate an evaluation of an individual create a barrier to supportive communication. When a person describes others objectively and unjudgingly without becoming evaluative, circumstances appear more supportive and people are not likely to become defensive.

The results also indicate that there are significant inter-correlations between description and equality. This implies that more effective description can result in increased equality.

#### **6.2.3. The Supportive Scores Dimension and the Defensive Scores Dimension**

A comparison of the supportive scores dimension and the defensive scores dimension indicate that on average the subjects rate their supervisors higher on their supportive traits (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) than on their defensive traits (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and

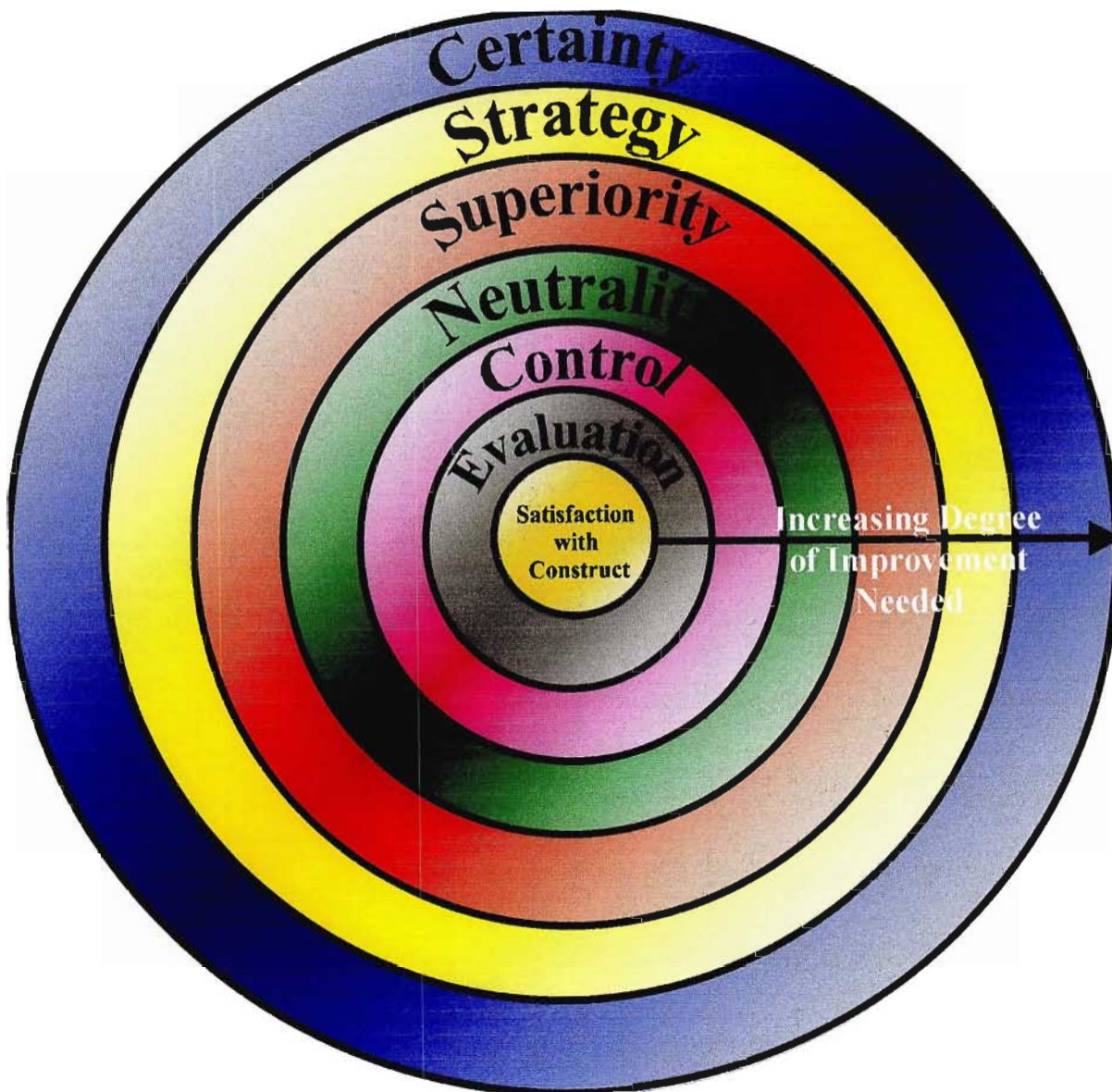
certainty). Whilst this may portray the supervisors in a positive light, it must be noted that a tremendous amount of development is implied in the mean analysis (53.2%).

#### **6.2.3.1. Level of Satisfaction and Degree of Improvement in Constructs measuring Defensive and Supportive Behaviour**

In this study, the level of satisfaction and degree of improvement regarding the variables of defensive behaviour (evaluation, neutrality, control, superiority, strategy and certainty) and supportive behaviour (provisionalism, spontaneity, empathy, problem orientation, equality and description) are represented in Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2.



**Figure 6.1 Level of Satisfaction and Degree of Improvement in Constructs measuring Defensive Behaviour**



It is evident from Figure 6.1 that employees experience the greatest, although far from optimum, level of satisfaction in terms of evaluation (7 on a 15 point scale). The level of satisfaction decreases as one moves outwards. It is also depicted in Figure 6.1 that as the gap widens, the greater the degree of improvement needed.

**Figure 6.2 Level of Satisfaction and Degree of Improvement in Constructs measuring Supportive Behaviour**

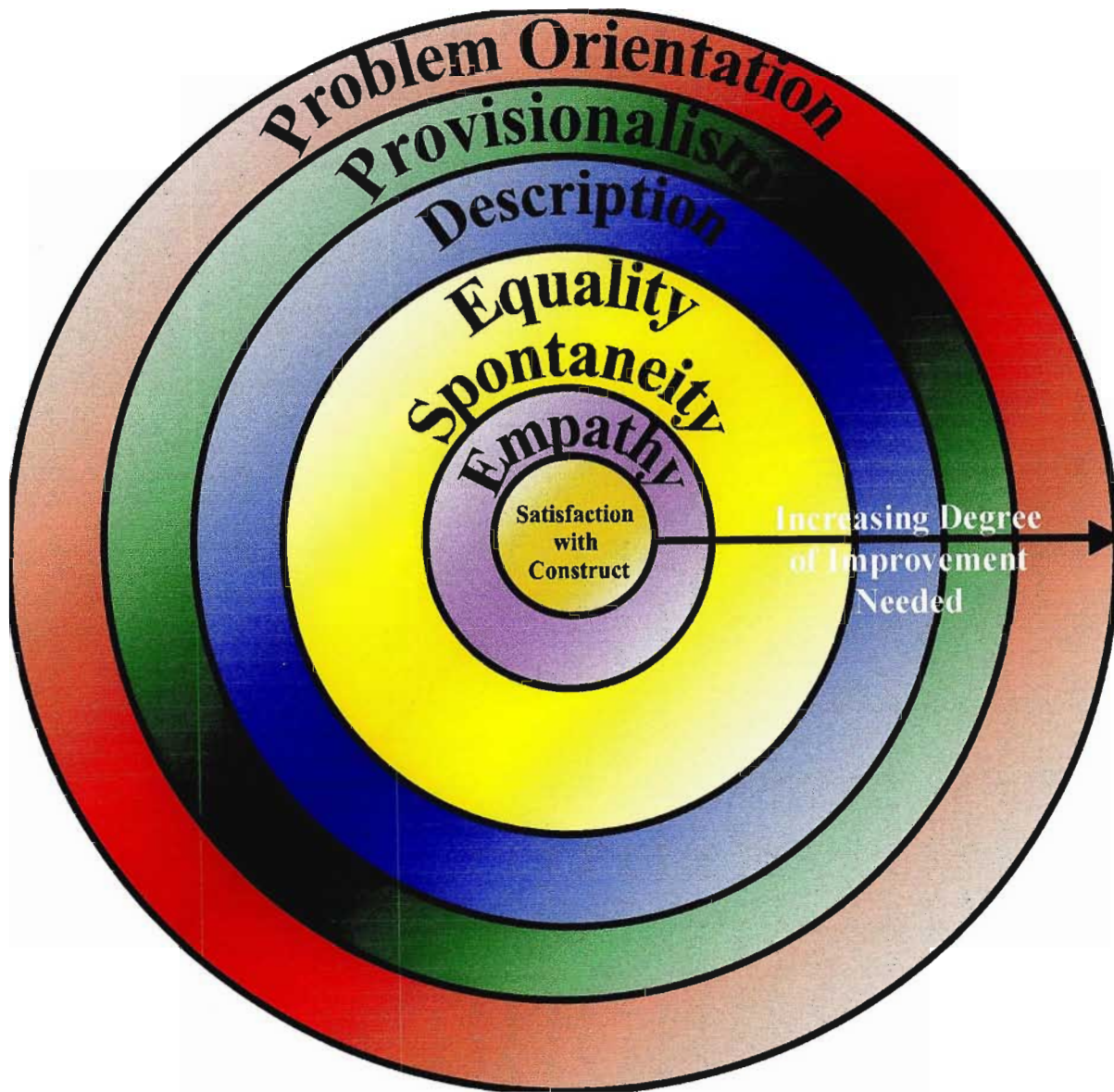


Figure 6.2 depicts that employees experience the greatest, although far from optimum, level of satisfaction in terms of empathy (6.68 on a 15 point scale). The level of satisfaction decreases as one moves outwards. It is evident from Figure 6.2 that as the gap widens, the greater the degree of improvement required.

### **6.3. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the results of the study, which was then compared and contrasted to previous research. The results of the study indicated that there is substantial room for development regarding the supervisors' ability to communicate with subordinates as well as relating to numerous supportive traits. It is therefore, necessary to consider appropriate methods in order to improve satisfaction with supervision.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

#### **7.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with the necessary suggestions that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of communication in the organisation.

#### **7.2. Recommendations**

Recommendations based on research design and findings will be presented to enable individuals, supervisors, managers and the organisation to improve the effectiveness of communication.

##### **7.2.1. Recommendations based on Research Design**

- **Sample – Geographical Region**

In this study, respondents were selected from only the Marianhill branch in Durban. It will be beneficial to extend the study to other branches in Kwa-Zulu Natal in order to assess the perceptions of these respondents in further studies. The opinions of employees in other branches will enable the researcher to compare and contrast the results between branches.

- **Sample Size**

In this research study, a sample size of only 50 was used. It would be appropriate to use a larger sample size in future studies. This will enable the researcher to assess the perceptions of other respondents in the organisation and also incorporate other branches in the study, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results.

- **Sampling Technique**

In this study, cluster sampling was used. It would be advisable to use the stratified random sampling technique. This will allow the researcher to compare results across provinces. This sampling technique, which is the most efficient probability design, is a good choice when differentiated information is needed regarding various strata (provinces) within the population known to differ in their parameters. It also ensures



homogeneity within each stratum, that is, there will be very few differences on the variable of interest within each stratum.

### **7.2.2. Recommendations based on Findings**

Recommendations with regards to the sub-dimensions that make up the defensive scores dimension are as follows:

#### ▪ **Certainty**

According to the results, the majority of the respondents experience high levels of dissatisfaction regarding certainty. This therefore, indicates that there is tremendous room for development. It would be advisable for supervisors to get rid of the “know it all attitude” and consider the views and opinions of their subordinates when engaging in communication. Allowing subordinates to participate in communication can facilitate problem solving and decision-making. A subordinate can be a valuable contributor to an organisation as he or she can provide ideas and inputs that can benefit others and the organisation. An organisation that encourages participation can help foster growth and development in employees that could lead to greater satisfaction levels. The following can be done to encourage participation:-

- Employees and supervisors spending 5 to 10 minutes together everyday before work activities begin can encourage participation amongst employees. These so-called ‘green areas’ mean that all staff meet at a set place to simply interact be, it to share a joke or some work information.
- The organisation should establish a two-way communication philosophy. This will give employees the opportunity to interact effectively with their supervisors.
- The provision of suggestion boxes for employees to slot in their ideas can be beneficial. Employees know more about the job they perform and can therefore, offer appropriate suggestions to bring about meaningful improvement in their jobs.

#### ▪ **Strategy**

The majority of the respondents also experienced high levels of dissatisfaction with their supervisors’ strategies. This indicates that there is substantial room for improvement. In this organisation, employees felt manipulated by their supervisors. This situation could

be solved if supervisors establish an open and honest relationship with their subordinates. This type of relationship could result in a supportive communication climate in which subordinates will learn to trust and respect their supervisors. Supervisors should send clear and accurate messages based on facts. A climate of trust can lead to employee satisfaction and create a sense of security in subordinates. This can be attained by appointing a representative for each task team to interact directly with the supervisor. When communicating with the workforce, it is important for supervisors to keep messages simple, clear and concise so that all employees can understand it. An open door policy should be established in which employees would feel free to approach their supervisors to discuss certain issues. This policy can go a long way towards reducing stress and improving trust.

▪ **Superiority**

It is clear from this study that there was a huge number of employees that disapproved of their supervisors' superiority. It is important for supervisors to display behaviours of equality rather than superiority. It should be considered that creating feelings of inadequacy in subordinates could result in poor work performance and extreme job dissatisfaction. Supervisors should motivate employees to participate in activities. A supervisor that encourages involvement can create an equal and supportive communication climate that allows all subordinates an opportunity to provide input. Quarterly feedback sessions should be held with staff to discuss problems and exchange relevant information. An employee feedback system provides feedback from the frontline and generates useful information. Employee feedback systems can be in the form of employee opinion and attitude surveys. An exit interview is also essential for those employees leaving the organisation, as they can provide honest feedback and offer relevant steps for supervisors to value the efforts of remaining staff. In addition, employees that provide valuable ideas and inputs should be recognised by publicly praising them in departmental meetings or being given a personal invitation to a special annual dinner with top management.

- **Neutrality**

Employees expressed significant dissatisfaction with their supervisors' neutrality. An important finding in this study was that the majority of the respondents felt that their supervisors rarely offered moral support during a personal crisis. Empathetic communication is vital when employees experience personal problems and conflict. Supervisors should express warmth and concern towards their employees. A supervisor should take into consideration that an employee's personal problem and conflict could impact tremendously on an employee's performance and should therefore, assist him or her in solving the problem. In this situation, active listening could be beneficial. Active listening shows employees that the supervisor is interested and cares about what he or she has to say. Listening could lead to reduced stress and conflict resolution. Employees can be sent for stress management and conflict resolution workshops to assist them in handling conflict and coping with stress. Furthermore, employee assistance programmes and counselling will allow employees to feel free to speak about their problems and stress experienced. Supervisor should also be given training in listening, handling conflict and negotiating skills.

- **Control**

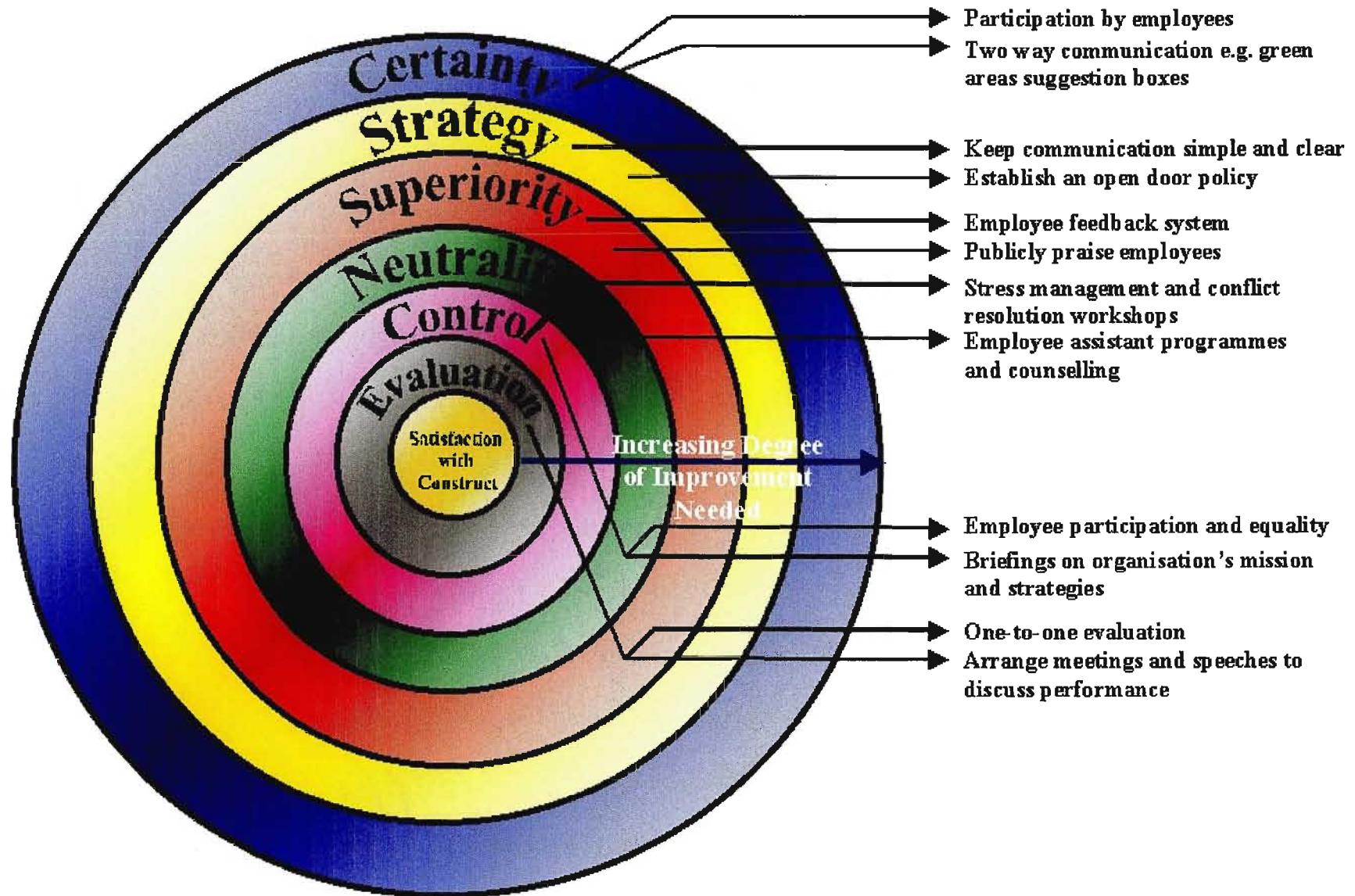
It was indicated that the majority of employees are unhappy with the amount of control that their supervisor has over them. Supervisors should avoid asserting control and dominance over their subordinates. They need to demonstrate the spirit of employee participation and equality. This will result in increased cooperation amongst subordinates. Furthermore, supervisors should not attempt to change the behaviour and attitudes of others because what works best for them may not work for others. Supervisors need to clarify goals that are aligned with the vision and mission of the company. They should therefore, be provided with briefings on the organisation's mission and strategies, explanations and procedures which can be in the form of newsletters, meetings, memos and company wide forums. This will ensure that the message makes it down to each employee and also makes employees aware at all time of where the company is headed.

#### ▪ **Evaluation**

Supervisors need to improve their evaluation methods, since only an above average degree of satisfaction was obtained. In this organisation, there were several respondents that disapproved of their supervisors criticising them in front of others. It is essential for supervisors to avoid criticism in front of others, as this could lead to defensive behaviour or negative feelings in subordinates. Supervisors should not judge their subordinates but should rather describe situations to help the subordinate to understand what needs to improve and provide solutions that will result in positive outcomes. If feedback is communicated in an appropriate manner whether positive or negative, supervisor-subordinate relationship is likely to improve and subordinates will learn to respect and accept their supervisors' opinion. A supervisor should provide evaluation on a one-to-one basis by meeting privately with subordinates to discuss their performance. Evaluation reports can be directly routed to subordinates through e-mail. Meetings and speeches should also be arranged to discuss the performance standards of employees without criticising anyone.

Figure 7.1 illustrates a model/framework for effective communication with regards to the defensive scores dimension.

**Figure 7.1 Model/Framework for effective communication with regards to the defensive scores dimension**



Recommendations with regards to the sub-dimensions that make up the supportive scores dimension are as follows:

- **Problem orientation**

Problem orientation reflected an above average degree of satisfaction. This indicates that there is room for improvement. It is clear from this study that subordinates agree that their supervisors make them aware of problems. It would be advisable for supervisors to continue in this manner. They should encourage collaboration during problem solving because collaboration can result in high quality alternatives and solutions. In addition, supervisors should exhibit a friendly and approachable behaviour so that employees will feel comfortable about speaking about his or her problems. Thus, resulting in a much more supportive climate. In addition, task forces should be appointed in which management and non-management personnel are assigned to a specific problem or issue. Employees should also be allowed to engage in brainstorming sessions when solving problems. Organisations develop a programme in which employees can send anonymous letters and e-mails to their supervisors where he or she responds by adding comments and providing solutions to problems. Another beneficial method would be to provide employees with a toll free hotline number where they can record problems and issues, which is then directed to management.

- **Provisionalism**

Provisionalism reflected a below average level of satisfaction, thus indicating a high degree of improvement. Supervisors should consider the ideas given by others. He or she should allow as much creativity and flexibility on the job. An increased degree of provisionalism builds an employee's self confidence and increases competency which leads to greater productivity. Supervisors can improve provisionalism by avoiding neutrality and allowing equal opportunities for subordinates to perform in task related activities and problem solving. Provisionalism can be improved if employees are provided with challenging tasks and activities that will demonstrate their creativity. Opportunities need to be given for employees' personal development and growth. A mentorship programme should be introduced in the organisation. A selection process must be established to identify employees that have the potential and capabilities to be



future leaders. This programme will positively influence an employee's motivation and organisational success.

▪ **Description**

There is substantial room for development regarding description because the majority of the subordinates experience only a below average degree of satisfaction. Subordinates prefer their supervisors to communicate in ways that are descriptive and objective rather than evaluative. Supervisors should describe situations and events clearly to indicate areas in which the subordinates went wrong and should avoid criticizing and humiliating the subordinate. Describing an idea or event will also stimulate interest in others, who could also assist in improving an idea or solving a problem. By clearly and fairly describing an event and situation, supervisors are able to maintain a stable and satisfactory relationship with their subordinates. When describing events and situations, communication should be kept brief and supervisors must be polite and friendly when communicating with subordinates. An appraisal feedback system should be created that provides both the appraiser and appraisees with the opportunity to discuss and work out expectations in their work relationships. They need to focus on future growth rather than past problems.

▪ **Spontaneity**

Although respondents may be highly satisfied with their supervisors' spontaneity, there still may be room for development. Supervisors should create and maintain an open and supportive communication climate. This will result in a relationship in which both the supervisor and the subordinate will learn to trust one another. Employees that are trusted provide supervisors with valuable and correct information that benefit themselves and the organisation. This will lead to supervisors having a great deal of trust and respect for their subordinates. A supervisor should act spontaneously at all times, as this will reveal that one is being honest and is not withholding information from others. Spontaneity will result in solving job related problems and successful completion of tasks. Supervisors need to be sent for interpersonal communication training. This allows supervisors to interact and communicate effectively with employees. Thus, contributing to a culture of

openness and cooperation. Informal social gatherings could be an ideal method to get to know employees on a personal basis, which will assist in establishing a relationship of trust. Supervisors should join subordinates during lunch time or during social gatherings, as this will provide him or her with information about a subordinate's feelings and needs.

▪ **Equality**

It appears that respondents are also satisfied with the equality displayed by their supervisors. However, there is always room for development. In this situation, it is appropriate for supervisors to demonstrate their equality more clearly and on a continuous basis. The way in which a supervisor communicates to his or her subordinates can sometimes make them feel inferior. It is therefore, important for supervisors to choose their words appropriately and be aware of the tone of voice used when communicating to subordinates. Equality is demonstrated by respect and value. If a supervisor values the input given by subordinates then he or she would not give the impression of being superior. In order to improve equality, leaders need to develop empowerment programmes that will encourage employees to participate in decisions that affect their work. Furthermore, the organisation should develop a communication policy that will enable management and supervisors to share information and raise real issues. This will make employees feel that they are being heard.

▪ **Empathy**

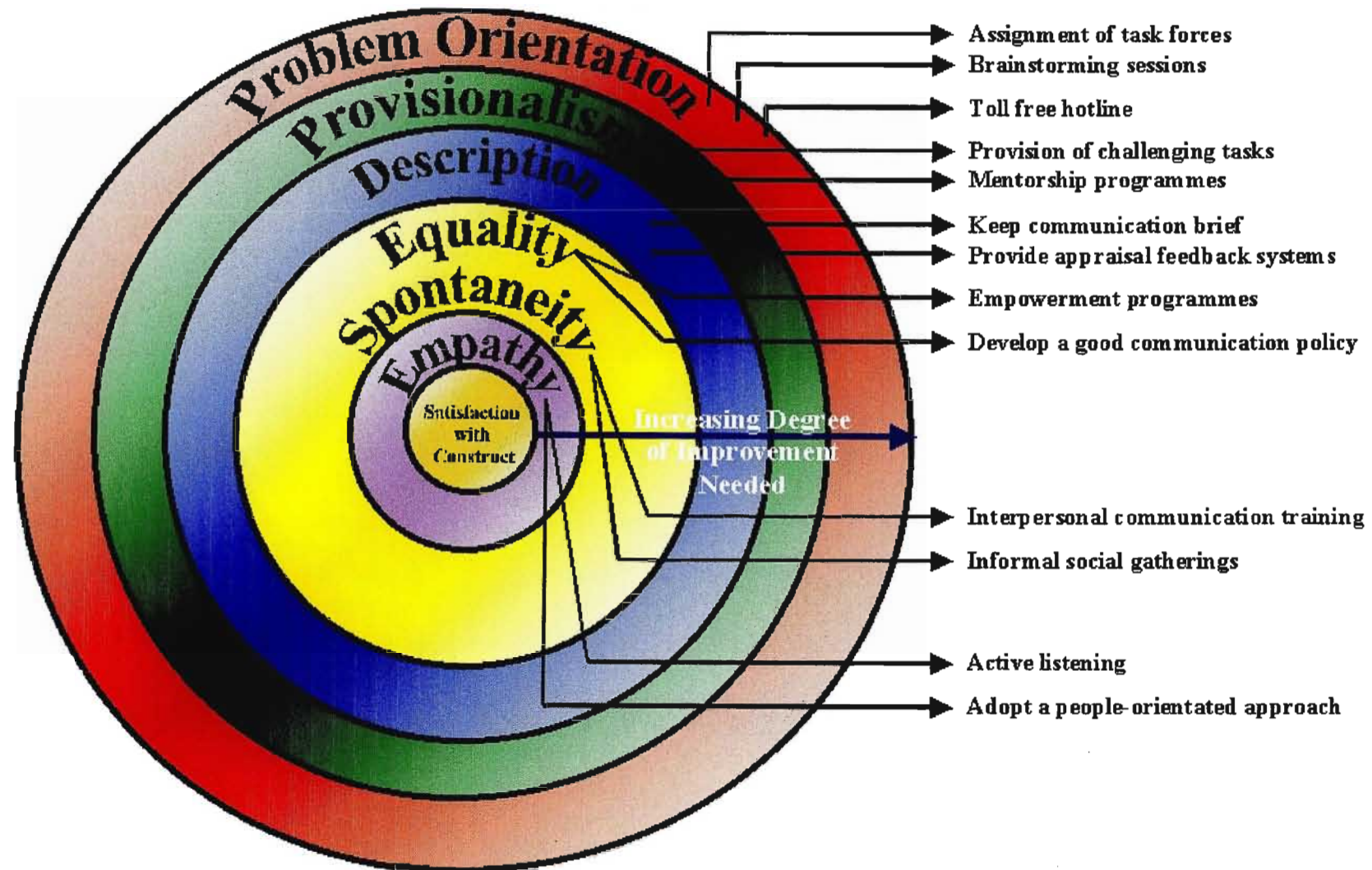
In this study, empathy obtained the highest level of satisfaction, thus indicating little room for improvement. Supervisors should continue responding empathetically towards their subordinates. Expressing more concern and compassion for their subordinates can allow for this. Communication that conveys empathy and understanding results in a great degree of supportiveness. An empathetic person gives the impression that he or she identifies with the feelings and thoughts of others. Empathetic communication requires active listening. Active listening ensures understanding and improves the way in which supervisors relate to subordinates. Supervisors should be trained to become better listeners and be more receptive to new ideas. Furthermore, the lines of communication should be opened through one-on-one interviews to look at people's real thoughts and



experience. Supervisors need to adopt a more people-oriented approach. This approach allows the supervisor to listen to employee's thoughts and feelings which can assist in understanding and resolving an individual's problem.

Figure 7.2 illustrates a model/framework for effective communication with regards to the supportive scores dimension.

**Figure 7.2 Model/Framework for effective communication with regards to the supportive scores dimension**



### **7.3. Conclusion**

It is clear that effective communication is crucial for the functioning of any organisation. Communication forms an integral part of all management functions such as planning, organising, leading, controlling, decision-making and problem solving. It is the vehicle for driving change. It enables interaction across different cultures and also motivates employees towards goal achievement. Communication is the key influence in maintaining a healthy and positive communication climate. It is responsible for employee productivity and satisfaction.

The survival and success of the protection services department studied is dependent on their leaders' ability to effectively communicate with its workforce. Effective communication should be an ongoing process in this organisation. Employees in this organisation should be provided with information and feedback that will positively influence and improve job performance. Furthermore, this organisation's effectiveness depends highly on a supportive communication climate. Supportive communication strengthens the relationship between supervisors and subordinates and gives the impression that the supervisor has a great concern and interest for its employees. This could lead to greater job satisfaction and productivity, which results in increased organisational performance and success.

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## *Annexure 1*



Dear Participant

This questionnaire is designed to assess the quality of communication in the workplace. The information you provide will enable us to better understand the relationship between you and your supervisor. It will help you to realise whether effective communication exists or whether there is a lack of communication in your organisation.

I request you to answer as honestly as possible. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. In order to ensure the utmost privacy, no names will be requested during this study.

Your time and co-operation is highly appreciated.

Thank you.

---

L. Samuel

## **Biographical Data**

### **Gender**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

### **Age**

20 – 29 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
30 – 39 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
40 – 49 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
50 – 59 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
60 years and over	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

### **Marital Status**

Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	4

### **Tenure**

0 – 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
6 – 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
11 – 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
16 – 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
20 +	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

**Education**

Std 7 to 9

Matriculation

Diploma

Degree

Other


1

2

3

4

5

Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## Communication Climate Inventory

The following statements relate to how your supervisor and you communicate on the job. There are no right or wrong answers. Respond to the statement, using the following scale:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 - Strongly Agree					
2 - Agree					
3 - Uncertain					
4 - Disagree					
5 - Strongly Disagree					

---

1. My supervisor criticises my work without allowing me to explain.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My supervisor allows me as much creativity as possible in my job.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My supervisor always judges the actions of his or her subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My supervisor allows flexibility on the job.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My supervisor criticises my work in the presence of others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My supervisor is willing to try new ideas and to accept others point of view.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My supervisor believes that he or she must control how I do my work.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My supervisor understands the problems that I encounter in my job.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My supervisor is always trying to change other people's attitudes and behaviours to suit his or her own.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My supervisor respects my feelings and values.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. My supervisor always needs to be in charge of the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My supervisor listens to my problems with interest.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My supervisor tries to manipulate subordinates to get what he or she wants or to make himself or herself look good.	1	2	3	4	5
14. My supervisor does not try to make me feel inferior.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I have to be careful when talking to my supervisor so that I will not be misinterpreted.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My supervisor participates in meetings with employees without projecting his or her higher status or power.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I seldom say what really is on my mind, because it might be twisted and distorted by my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My supervisor treats me with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
19. My supervisor seldom becomes involved in employee conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My supervisor does not have hidden motives in dealing with me.	1	2	3	4	5
21. My supervisor is not interested in employee problems.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel that I can be honest and straightforward with my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
23. My supervisor rarely offers moral support during a personal crisis.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I feel that I can express my opinions and ideas honestly to my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
25. My supervisor tries to make me feel inadequate.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26. My supervisor defines problems so that they can be understood but does not insist that his or her subordinates agree.	1	2	3	4	5
27. My supervisor makes it clear that he or she is in charge.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I feel free to talk to my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
29. My supervisor believes that if a job is to be done right, he or she must oversee it or do it.	1	2	3	4	5
30. My supervisor defines problems and makes his or her subordinates aware of them.	1	2	3	4	5
31. My supervisor cannot admit that he or she makes mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
32. My supervisor tries to describe situations fairly without labelling them as good or bad.	1	2	3	4	5
33. My supervisor is dogmatic; it is useless for me to voice an opposing point of view.	1	2	3	4	5
34. My supervisor presents his or her feelings and perceptions without implying that a similar response is expected from me.	1	2	3	4	5
35. My supervisor thinks that he or she is always right.	1	2	3	4	5
36. My supervisor attempts to explain situations clearly and without personal bias.	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you for your time and co-operation!**