

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Communication Effectiveness between Line Managers and Support Staff
at the College of AES, UKZN**

By

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Yaarav and Tarisha. May you always be successful in your endeavours and continue to be the shining stars that you are.

Mummy loves you both more than anything in this world!

Abstract

Communication is the transfer of information between two or more people, described as the sender and the receiver. Internal communication is the communication between all parties within an organization. Communication is a topic that is often taken for granted, especially since it is a part of what we do on a daily basis. There is therefore an expectation when communicating, that the receiver will understand the message the way the sender intended. This can lead to ineffective communication because the information communicated may not be specific and clear. The aim of this research is to examine the communication effectiveness between first line managers (referred to as “line managers” or “management” throughout the dissertation) and support staff (referred to as “subordinates” throughout the dissertation) within the five Schools of the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research was conducted using a quantitative research method to collect primary data via an electronic survey. The survey was created and distributed via the e-Survey creator website. The questionnaire gathered qualitative data from the target population. There was no sampling technique used since the target population consisted of the entire population of first line managers and support staff of the five Schools. Significant research results showed that line managers preferred using emails to communicate urgent matters, whereas subordinates preferred their line managers to use face-to-face communication; managers communicate within an appropriate time frame; however, some subordinates felt that line managers do not provide instructions timeously and do not allow for sufficient time to complete tasks; changes to policies and procedures are not effectively communicated to subordinates by their line manager. It is recommended from the study that line managers use face-to-face communication or a combination of face-to-face communication with other methods to communicate urgent matters to their subordinates, and that instructions should be provided to subordinates timeously. Furthermore, sufficient time should be given to subordinates to complete their tasks. Feedback from line managers to their subordinates on any changes to policies and processes need to improve.

Keywords: Internal communication, effectiveness, management, subordinates and face-to-face communication.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Communication is the exchange of information between two or more persons and can be face-to-face or via communication technology media such as emails, video conferencing or telephone. Communication in the workplace between employer and employees, employees and their colleagues or within the organization, is referred to as internal communication. Internal communication is important and has two main roles, to span provision of information and to create a sense of community within an organization. In order to develop a sense of community via internal communication, efforts involve creating and sustaining relationships within an organization, between managers and employees and others (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson and Lings, 2015).

This research study focuses on communication effectiveness between line managers and their subordinates within the five Schools of the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science (CAES) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The five Schools are the School of Engineering; the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science; the School of Life Sciences; the School of Chemistry and Physics, and the School of Agriculture, Earth and Environmental Sciences. These Schools are based across three of the five campuses of the University. The three campuses are Howard College, Westville and Pietermaritzburg campus. In the sections to follow, the history of UKZN and the present and future of UKZN will be discussed, followed by the motivation for the study. The focus of the study, the problem statement, objectives and research questions, as well as methodology, are included. This chapter concludes with a chapter outline and a summary.

1.2 UKZN: A brief history

On the 01 January 2004, UKZN was formed due to the merger of the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal. The merger was a result of a wide-ranging consultative process of the restructuring of the Higher Education Sector that was initiated in the early 1990s (UKZN, 2018a).

In the 1960s, the University of Durban-Westville had College status and was known as the University College for Indians situated in Durban Bay's, Salisbury Island. At the time, student admission numbers were low due to the Congress Alliance policy of ignoring apartheid structures. By the 1980s, a proposal of "education under protest" was created to change apartheid institutes into places of struggle. In 1970, the College was granted University status due to the rapid increase in student numbers. A year later the newly named University of Durban-Westville (UDW) moved to become a modern campus in Westville. The campus was a site of major anti-apartheid struggle over the years. By 1984, UDW was an independent institution which was open to students of all races (UKZN, 2018a).

The Natal University College (NUC) in Pietermaritzburg was created in the year 1910. It was a multi-campus institute since it extended to Durban after World War 1. NUC later became the University of Natal after being granted independent University status in 1949 as a result of increased student numbers, the variety of courses offered and its accomplishments in and opportunities for research (UKZN, 2018a).

1.3 The present and future of UKZN

UKZN exists to "shape a better future" for society by "Inspiring Greatness". The University strives to be "A Truly South African University that is academically excellent, innovative in research, entrepreneurial, and critically engaged with society". The institute anticipates to create a culture that is driven by values to enable it and 'its people' to reach the University's goals (UKZN, 2018b).

UKZN's culture is shaped by the "REACHT" principles of the University. The acronym R.E.A.C.H.T stands for, "Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client Orientation, Honesty and Trust". Everyone at the University is expected to behave in a manner that embraces the R.E.A.C.H.T principles which is explained as follows (UKZN, 2018b):

- **Respect:** UKZN undertakes to promote mutual respect, courtesy and inclusiveness.
- **Excellence:** UKZN undertakes to display quality, leadership and energy in all that it does.

- **Accountability:** UKZN promises to be responsible and accountable in the behaviour displayed towards all its stakeholders.
- **Client Orientation:** UKZN undertakes to satisfy the needs of all its clients, stakeholders and partners, on a consistent basis.
- **Honesty:** UKZN promises to deliver with integrity; to do so steadfastly and with adherence to good governance.
- **Trust^T:** The ‘T’ symbol after REACH^t refers to the principle of ‘trust’ that underpins all of the other institutional values. The implicit trust enjoyed by every member of UKZN and their well-defined actions that embrace the R.E.A.C.H.T values, are important ingredients of the moral fibre of the Institution (UKZN, 2018b).”

1.4 Motivation for the study

This study highlights the importance of effective internal communication and will benefit UKZN as well as other universities and organizations in the corporate world. Line managers and subordinates specifically will gain insight from this study since the target population of the study are first line managers and their subordinates (support staff). All other stakeholders such as students, parents, senior managers, lecturers and tutors will also benefit from this study. This is because communication is something that we all do on a daily basis no matter what job designation we hold. This study will benefit all stakeholders personally and professionally on communicating effectively as it can be applied to how we conduct ourselves *personally* when interacting with family and friends, as well as how we conduct ourselves *professionally* with our colleagues and other work acquaintances.

As human beings, we often think that people should understand what we are communicating without thinking of what, when, how, why and where information is communicated. This gap has led to this study. Ramirez (2012) highlights that managers and their staff should ensure that communication between them is constant, understandable, comprehensive and correct in order to be effective. The importance of communicating effectively within an organization should be taken more seriously; in doing so, any institution or organization will develop a culture whereby there is effective team work, successful communication, honesty, trust and higher levels of satisfaction. These are important ingredients for any organization

or institution to reach its goals successfully. Karanges et al. (2015) states that business studies have found that internal communication has a fundamental impact on employee engagement. Employee engagement benefits include greater productivity, lower levels of attrition, improved financial results as well as an improved company image and reputation.

1.5 Focus of the study

This study focuses on communication effectiveness between line managers and their subordinates at the School level within the College of AES, which is one of the five Colleges of UKZN. All aspects of internal communication effectiveness as outlined in Chapter Two have been focussed on in this study. These include the use of the most appropriate methods of communication, providing feedback, being approachable, building trust, and taking all necessary measures to ensure that there are open lines of communication amongst line managers and subordinates within the School. This study did not include other departments such as the Human Resources Department, Academic Counselling Department, College Student Academic Administrative Services Department, the Student Funding Department and the Public Relations Department. The other Colleges of UKZN were also excluded in this study. The reason for the exclusion is that the scope of the study would have been too wide and research too time-consuming.

1.6 Problem statement

Internal communication is communication between management and their employees. In order to be a successful manager, management must be able to communicate effectively with their employees (Ramirez, 2012). Research has found that communication lines become blurred as it filters through organizational structures. Often it is taken for granted that support staff are aware of management decisions which affect operational processes. The absence of effective communication between line management and their subordinates gives rise to numerous problems such as operational inefficiencies and incorrect dissemination of information to various stakeholders. Odine (2015) states that although a manager may be competent at communicating with employees, there is no manager that is error free when it comes to communication. Managers are humans and humans make mistakes. Odine (2015) also highlights the following common communication mistakes that managers may make, such as avoidance of difficult conversations, being unassertive and taking it for granted that

the message conveyed has been understood. There are other factors that give rise to communication problems, Kumbakonam (2016) mentions in a journal article that differences in an individual's attitude, values and discrimination are factors that may also hinder effective communication.

In order to be successful in the workplace, it is vital for both managers and their subordinates to possess competent communication skills, this is supported by authors Guffey and Loewy (2013:3): "Not surprisingly, many job listings explicitly ask for excellent oral and written communication skills. Employers consistently state that communication skills are critical to effective job placement, performance, career advancement, and organizational success (Guffey and Loewy, 2013)." Perreault and McCarthy (2005) highlight that good communication is critical. One cannot expect individuals to work as a team if these individuals are not aware of what is expected (Perreault and McCarthy, 2005). An institute is not an institute without people, therefore, when communication is effective within the organization, information is effectively transferred within the workplace. This creates an efficient working environment that leads to successfully reaching organizational goals.

1.7 Objectives and research questions

The objective of this study is to investigate the communicative effectiveness between line managers and subordinates within the Schools of CAES. This can be summarised as follows:

- To investigate the communication effectiveness from first line managers to subordinates.
- To investigate the communication effectiveness from subordinates to first line managers.

The above objectives will be met by answering the following research questions:

- What method of communication do first line managers use to communicate with support staff on operational matters?
- Do line managers encourage feedback from subordinates that may negatively or positively impact their jobs?
- Are line managers approachable, empathetic and active listeners?

- What are the preferred communication methods that subordinates prefer line managers to utilise when communicating information?
- Do subordinates keep their line manager updated on work related matters?
- Are subordinates willing to provide their line managers with feedback that may positively/negatively affect policies and processes?

1.8 Methodology

This study took a quantitative research approach using primary data to answer the research questions and meet the research objectives. The primary data was collected using an electronic structured questionnaire. The survey was structured in three parts. Part One collected information on the demographic profile of the target population; Part Two collected information on the preferred medium of communication for urgent matters, the frequency of interactions, the rating of written and verbal skills, the importance of the environment in face-to-face communication, the communication on feedback and input in decision-making. Part Three collected information on recommendations to improve on communication in the workplace.

The sample chosen for the research contains only one of the five Colleges of UKZN i.e. CAES, across the relevant campuses, as mentioned above. There was no sampling technique used as the entire target population was used for the research. The target population included all line managers and subordinates from each School office within the CAES (School of Life Sciences, School of Agriculture, Earth and Environmental Sciences, School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science and the School of Physics and Chemistry).

The electronic survey mentioned above was created and distributed via the e-Survey creator website. The collected data was presented using Microsoft Excel and SPSS for analysis. The results of the survey will be discussed, recommendations provided and conclusions made, based on the collected data.

1.9 Chapter outline

Chapter 1:

This chapter provides an overview of the research study. It includes an introduction, and a brief discussion about the chosen organization; the motivation for the research study; the focus of the study; the problem statement; the objectives of the study and the research methodology used and ends with summary.

Chapter 2:

This chapter looks at relevant literature on communication in the workplace and provides insight into the topic. The chapter includes an introduction; a definition of communication; the communication process in the workplace; communicating effectively; successful communication skills in the workplace; managing communication and communication change in the workplace; becoming a better communicator in the workplace; the impact of technology on workplace communication; barriers to communication; communication as an investment to any organization; the effect of communication, miscommunication, or the lack of communication between managers and employees in the workplace; satisfied employees make a positive impact on the organization and finally, a summary.

Chapter 3:

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used for this research study. It includes the following: an introduction; the aim of the study; the research approach and research paradigm; the research design and methods; the study design; the study setting for the research; the target population, sampling; the type of data and data collection method, data analysis; reliability and validity of the research; pre-test; biases of the research study; ethical considerations, and a summary.

Chapter 4:

This chapter discusses the presentation of the results that were obtained from the survey. It includes an introduction; the demographic profile of line managers and subordinates; communication medium, interaction frequency, timeliness of communication, importance of the environment in face-to-face communication and the rating of written and verbal communication skills; line managers' efforts to improve workplace communication and the

approachability of line managers and their subordinates; feedback between line managers and subordinates; communication actions by line managers that contribute to organizational culture and lastly, a summary.

Chapter 5:

This chapter covers the discussion, recommendations and conclusion on the research findings of the study. It includes an introduction; a discussion and conclusion on: the demographic profile of line managers and subordinates; medium of communication in communicating urgent matters in comparison with subordinates' preferences; frequency of interactions in communicating with subordinates on operational matters; subordinates' views on whether line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks; the importance of the environment in face-to-face communication; the rating of verbal and written skills by line managers and subordinates; line managers' effort to improve workplace communication; approachability between line managers and subordinates; feedback between line managers and subordinates; communication actions of line managers that enhance organizational culture; recommendations from line managers and subordinates to improve communication effectiveness within each School and finally, a summary of the chapter.

1.10 Summary

This chapter served as an introduction to the research study by providing an overview of the research. The introduction to the chapter included a brief discussion of the chosen organization, UKZN, as well as the motivation for the study; the focus of the study; the problem statement; objectives and the research question; the research methodology and the dissertation chapter outline. The next chapter will provide a review of literature on the topic of communication, which forms the basis of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW:

COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter One, the introduction to this study was discussed. In Chapter Two, a review of literature on communication in the workplace is presented. It is important for employers and employees of an organization to engage in communication processes that contribute to the success of the organization. An in-depth investigation on current organizational processes will reveal whether or not instructions and messages filter downwards to the operations or functional employees of the organization. Such an investigational initiative by employers will enable them to get a sense of how effectively their current communication processes, methods and approaches work. There are a variety of methods that can be used to measure communication effectiveness/ineffectiveness within the organization, as is evident in studies conducted on communication by various authors.

2.2 Communication defined

Before getting into the review of literature by the various authors, it is important to put the term ‘communication’ into context by defining communication. Communication takes place continuously within all aspects of our lives. We communicate with family and friends in our homes and co-workers, friends and other people such as customers, at the workplace. This is an interaction between two or more persons involving getting a message or information to one another. This study will be concentrating on communication within the workplace.

Keyton (2011) defines communication as the transmission of information with a common understanding from one person to the other. Mallett-Hamer (2005) describes communication as a process of sharing messages, ideas and/or information amongst one another in a specific time and place. Communication involves written and verbal communicating as well and non-verbal communicating, such as facial expressions, body language and gestures. It also includes visual communication using images or pictures, paintings, photographs, videos or movies and electronic communication such as satellite transmissions, telephone calls or emails (Mallett-Hamer, 2005). Asamu (2014) states that

communication is understood differently from one person to the next; it's a way of accessing the mind or thoughts of an individual. Communication reduces uncertainty and can be seen as a human activity that links people together. Thus, communication is the glue that binds individuals together within an organization (Asamu, 2014).

2.3 The communication process in the workplace

Communication can be explained elementally as the sender and receiver exchanging information (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Popescu (2012:322) offers various descriptions of communicating that are a part of the communication process. These include: “relationships, connecting through the meeting of the minds, interaction; transfer, transmission; channel; memory storage; context of the communicative act; symbols, speech, language; stimuli; intent and power (communication is a means of influence); receiving messages; common interests and/or divergent answers.” Popescu (2012:325) mentions that there are more elements that are every so often unnoticeable to the participants even if there is a strong effect on the communication process. It was stated that communication is an intricate process. It is easy to agree with these writers that the communication process becomes complex because of the many variables that are defined.

The communication process starts with the sender in the form of an individual, department, unit or organization initiating the communication process by using words and/or symbols. This is known as encoding and is intended to send information to the receiver/s. Encoding is done by selecting words, gestures or symbols to create a message for the recipient/s. Moniz (2010) states that messages are encoded unconsciously based on an individual's own unique experience, understanding and perspective. Once the information is sent to the receiver, the receiver then decodes the message received into meaningful information. Finally, feedback takes place when the receiver responds to the received message communicated; for example, that it has been received, is understood and that action if required will take place as per the message received (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014:209). Moniz (2010) states that communication is affected by noise. This can be metaphorical or actual in nature (Moniz, 2010).

Considering the communication process, it is possible that information may not be received and understood as it was intended to be understood. This results in a miscommunication of information between the sender and receiver, which may result in incorrect actions taking place and/or incorrect procedures or instructions being followed, depending on what information is being communicated within the workplace. Thus, effective communication is extremely important to ensure that there is productivity and efficiency within any working environment (Nebo, Nkwanko and Okonkwo, 2015).

2.4 Communicating effectively

Steinberg and George (2015) highlight the importance of communication. It is a science and it has to be understood in its entirety to reap the benefits of effective workplace communication. These authors correctly emphasize that communication can take many directions and that each organization must master which direction will work within their organization (Steinberg and George, 2015). Being a competent communicator involves attending to the elements of being 'effective' and 'appropriate'. To be effective at communicating, the communicator fulfils communicative functions and goals, while continuing with conversational as well as interactive norms, thus fulfilling the appropriate element (Mikkelson et al., 2015).

In Popescu's (2012:321) journal article, a study was conducted that analyzed aspects from various theorists on realistic situations. This author concluded that the psychology of communication in the spheres of managerial, organizational, mass, group, verbal, non-verbal contexts must be considered as this is a reality that people face in all areas of their lives. This author's conclusion on the reality of communication strengthens the motivation for this study, which focuses on managerial, organizational, verbal and non-verbal spheres of communication. Richards (2008) states that when communicating, there is a problem of words being seen as central to thought and behavior processing as well as decision-making. She states that "it is not what you say, but it's what people hear"; it is therefore very important to use language that displays clarity and reduces emotions. Making use of abstract language is not the solution (Richards, 2008).

Schwarz (2014) finds that a usual misconception is that the use of language primarily has to do with words and what they mean. He believes that this is not the case, and that it has primarily to do with people and what they mean. It is about what the speaker intends to say. Popescu (2012) specifically mentions that ‘interpersonal relations, are relations of influence’. ‘People influence others by personality, behavior, attitudes, skills and experiences, through persuasion or manipulation’, (Popescu, 2012:323). Some of these factors relate to the work of what theorists like Shannon Weaver and Hertzberg’s two-factor theories are based upon.

2.4.1 The importance of communicating effectively

An understanding of people and how they communicate with each other is vital for ‘communication’ itself to be successful. Management and supervisors engage in effective communication processes within organizations by encouraging employees to give feedback on workplace related matters for example. Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014:183) state that this is known as internal communication which involves management and employees communicating with each other, thus promoting transparency within the work environment.

Communication helps to build employee and employer relations, which in turn contributes to a harmonious workplace environment and builds trust between management and employees (Mishra et al., 2014). Effective communication is important between colleagues and peers in the workplace as this encourages diverse people to get along and work together. Team work is not possible without effective communication from team leaders and between members of the teams (Conrad, 2014).

Darijani, Soltani and Pourroostaei (2014) conducted a study to determine how job satisfaction via job motivation impacts successful organizational communication of the employees of a Telecommunications organization. One of the interesting findings of this study was that workplaces are vital for creating and sustaining social relations with others. It was also found that job satisfaction and productivity is improved irrespective of the need for collaboration. Teams that are built on the foundation of comparable capabilities also experience greater job satisfaction and an increase in productivity. It was mentioned that those individuals who place importance on teamwork favor occupations where there is

interaction with people (Darijani et al., 2014). Christensen (2014) believes that communication can be seen as a key instrument in obtaining organizational success and growth. Thus, a workforce that communicates well internally (employee to employee and employer to employee) as well as externally (employees to customers), will definitely create an environment that promotes a successful organization in achieving goals and targets.

Bakar and Mustaffa (2012) state that research has revealed relations between internal communication and many important outcomes, i.e. internal communication is positively associated with organizational obligation, job satisfaction and organizational climate satisfaction. Darijani et al. (2014) mention that communication is an essential component of managing employees and that proper and effective communication has constantly lead to management being successful (Darijani et al., 2014).

2.4.2 The benefits of effective communication in the workplace

Effective workplace communication has the following benefits, as mentioned by various authors:

- **Job satisfaction** is created especially in a working environment where management encourages openness and simple correspondence between seniors, subordinates and peers (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Hussain (2013) states that communicating effectively motivates employees and thus increases their job satisfaction causing them employees to put in greater effort towards completing tasks even though there may be some difficulties. Hussain also mentions that employees who are allowed to provide input in the decision-making processes have higher levels of job satisfaction and are more likely to have high levels of commitment to the organization. Parks (2004) makes a valid point that paradox lies in what is said but not what is perceived. This is because various individuals can communicate the same thing, but each can have entirely varied impressions. There are differences in the style of communication, varying information as well as body language and the absence of ethics which influence the impact of a message and how it is absorbed. If this paradox is understood well enough, it may change one's assumptions and actions. According to Parks (2004), managers should engage in dialogue rather than debate and remain focused, giving full attention to what is communicated. They

should also be mindful of both non-vocal and vocal elements, to ensure that employees are satisfied with their jobs and that they are well-motivated.

- **Fewer conflicts** occur when an organization embraces a culture of open communication. This results in fewer conflicts situations arising as communication is open and clear and there is a mutual understanding, building trust between management and all employees, so that, should there be any problems and/or conflict, management is readily available and open to discussions on solutions to the problems (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Hussain (2013) states that to avoid conflicts, managers must tackle employee queries via excellent communication. If this is done then employees at all levels understand what is being communicated, what needs to be done and how it would affect each employees' work; thus, there will be fewer conflicts in the workplace through misunderstanding of what is communicated and or a lack of proper communication from managers to employees.

Parks (2004) mentions that for informal dialogue to take place between management and staff, there should be an open-door policy, but cautions that this may not be ideal as it could be disruptive rather than productive. As much as employees should feel at ease with expressing when they unavailable because they are busy with an urgent matter and therefore should not be involved in certain kinds of conversations, this is easier said than done. Parks (2004) recommended that management and staff should agree on the best time for both parties to communicate and that there should be no multi-tasking in such a situation. It was advised that an implementation of a company procedure that employees may follow to succeed with communication will be beneficial. Parks (2004) highlighted that managers should be certain about, how they will communicate with employees, at which times their style of communication may change, and the reason for the change.

- **Increased productivity** also occurs when an organization has a set of clear goals and objectives that are effectively communicated to all employees (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). With a clear picture of what is expected and where the organization is headed, all employees will be productive and perform to the best of their abilities. As mentioned above, increased productivity is tied to job satisfaction and motivation of staff, which in turn increases productivity (Hussain, 2013). Parks (2004) states that managers should know their employees and should ensure that the

company vision is wisely written so that it is well understood by employees. If this does not happen, the implementation of such a vision becomes nearly impossible and employees may become unproductive as they would not know where the company is headed and what needs to be accomplished as a whole.

- **An establishment of relationships** occurs when there is open communication between all employees from bottom to the top and *vice versa*. Employees feel valued and appreciated and cared for, thus there is a strong personal and professional relationship that is built. With open communication in the workplace, staff will be dedicated to the organization and thus have longer tenures (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). According to Hussain (2013), trust is built when effective communication is practiced within an organization. With a high level of trust built between management and employees and all other stakeholders, there is an establishment of a positive relationship between all persons within the organization.
- A valid point made by Parks (2004) is on a manager taking the time to listen to an employee which is a serious commitment of a person's time. This indicates that the manager considers it worthwhile to listen in dealing with the matter upfront, as damage control takes more time. Time spent in careful listening will be more worthwhile than time spent in damage control. Parks (2004) further stated that when management is mindful of the way they communicate with their staff, an environment is created where staff trust their manager, feel satisfied in their jobs and want to function to the best of their abilities.
- **Effective utilization of resources** does occur with proper communication within any organization. When there is ineffective communication, incorrect messages are sent to staff or a miscommunication of information can lead to a waste of resources, time and productivity (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014).

2.5 Successful communication skills in the workplace

Florence (2014) states that successful communication skills in the workplace help to identify and improve ways in which a specific job can be done, similar to the purpose and objective of this study. A breakdown in communication has a negative effect, and fail on efficiency requirements and morale. The writer agrees with Florence (2014) on communication

breakdown leading to negativity, inefficiency and poor worker morale. Keyton, Caputo, Ford, Fu, Leibowitz, Liu, Polasik, Ghosh and Wu (2013) state that with the movement from blue collar to white collar employment, there is a greater emphasis on interpersonal skills and an ability to work well in a team. Therefore communication skills is on the list of things that an employer looks for when recruiting employees (Keyton et al., 2013).

Morgan (2014) stated that the key to one's professional success is achieved by successfully integrating, i.e. communicating with others. This view is strongly supported in that whether one is an aspiring leader or in a supportive role, the development of one's communication skills can affect one's success. Further, it can be agreed with Morgan (2014) and many other authors and writers that communication is complex as it is more than the words one uses: it is also about how and when one chooses to share the information. This point directly relates to one of the survey questions in this study that analyses how workplace information is shared between functional managers and their subordinates and how timeously this is done.

2.6 Managing communication and change in the workplace

Harp (2011) states that communication is central to the success of most, if not all organizations, and that effective implementation of communication is even more essential when there is change that is occurring in the organization. Christensen (2014) states that organizations are continually faced with the need for change; for example, downsizing, re-engineering, competition and restructuring all involve managing change. The introduction of new technology is another factor that involves change within the workplace. One approach to effectively manage the change process is through good communication and information strategies within any organization (Christensen, 2014:359). Christensen (2014) further states that resistance to change makes it difficult and in some instances impossible, to implement change processes. A lack of communication and information from managers leads to gossip and rumors which in turn lead to anxiety related to the change. With a similar view to Christensen, Hussain (2013) states that when there is poor change communication, employees become resistant to the change and rumors develop amongst employees. He states that for the change to be embraced in a smooth manner, effective communication is essential. Employees must be made aware of why there is a need for the change and what advantages the change will bring to the organization, what their roles are in the change

process and how the change will enhance their lives in their jobs. This will motivate staff to participate and execute the change plan (Hussain, 2013).

Osborne (2017) highlighted that 'many businesses commit many resources to internal communications because people always seem to say that workplace communication is a significant problem'. This contributes to why there are so many studies that can be sourced on communications as the current study does, because communication *is* complex. In support of Osborne's (2017) view, it can be agreed that such situations exist in the workplace because very often communication is taken for granted. Ergen (2010) stated that managers can combat the problem a lack of communication by changing the environment. This can be done by building trust between employers and employees, by putting a premium on integrity and by managers getting out of their offices and finding out what is going on in their organizations.

A study by the Great Place to Work Institute found that personnel enjoy working in an environment where there is a culture of trust that exists between the organization and their employees, and where everyone takes pride in what they do and enjoy the company of their colleagues (Mishra et al., 2014). Mishra et al. (2014) state that creating such a positive environment can only be done if there are open lines of communication within the organization.

An interesting perspective of Ergen (2010:1), was that when an organization grows, it is very easy to be entrapped in a complicated system of communicating. Ergen (2010:1) advised that in such a situation, managers should practise honesty and integrity, and reward employees and create trust among employees. With the above being performed between managers and employees, an environment will be created where no one fears communicating with each other and there will thus there will be no communication inefficiencies or a lack of communication within the organization.

The author of this dissertation agrees with these authors on their opinions, as personal experience of undergoing changes at the UKZN in 2010 and 2011 did require effective communication from upper levels to staff and students. During this time at UKZN,

employees were anxious and uncertain on how the restructuring would impact on departments, divisions, Schools and people who served the organization.

2.7 Becoming a better communicator in the workplace

Morgan (2014) emphasizes that body language, tone and quality of one's voice all play a role in how effective the communication is. Morgan (2014) also makes pertinent points on people building their reputation to gain respect and in doing so can then be viewed as reliable authorities, keen team members or enthusiastic employees. This writer highlights an important point, that the first impression is valuable and that power and intellect should not be flaunted in trying to be a compelling communicator. People should not be strong-armed into getting a person to pay attention and that self-assurance is important in communicating effectively (Morgan, 2014). Parks (2004) mentioned that timing should be considered, as there is place and time for everything. Appropriate timing is indicative that one has taken the person and occasion into consideration and knows when to share a message.

Lunenburg (2010) notes in his journal article on how school administrators can better communicate in their working environment, that communicating effectively requires a two-way process of skill and effort from both the sender and receiver. This author states that schools must be aware of the sender and receiver's responsibilities and strive for active listening skills.

2.8 The impact of technology on workplace communication

According to author Hill (2015), while technology can enhance communication within an organization by bringing in efficiency, productivity and improved performance from employees, it can also cause distractions through misinforming the senders and receivers of information. This may occur by misinterpreting an electronic message, failing to effectively communicate a message and/or taking a message in the wrong context.

Spanos, Prastacos and Polymenakou (2002) state that competing in today's ever advancing business environment requires firms to implement new strategies to address market needs such as innovation, as well as restructuring of the managerial layers, improving on flexibility and encouraging team work. All of these changes may impact the extent of adopting

information and communication technologies (ICT). It is no wonder that the relationship between adopting ICT and management practices is of mutual impact and influence (Spanos et al., 2002). Bloom, Garicano, Sadun and Van Reenen (2014) state that the impact of information and technology has at least two distinct constituents: firstly, information kept on databases is becoming cheaper to access as a result of cheap storage and processing of data; secondly, with a spread of cheap wired and wireless communication technology, workforces find it easier to communicate with one another via email and mobile devices, for example. Inexpensive communicative media facilitates specialism, this causes a decrease in the variation of duties undertaken by employees because management become more reliant on staff that perform specialized functions. While, being able to access inexpensive data has a more 'empowering' effect, enabling management to be able to resolve further difficulties that arise by not having to rely on others to provide the necessary information. This difference is important to note as it not only affects productivity and the organization as a whole, it also affects the labour market. This is because the ability to access information more cheaply and the ever-changing communication technology of today can impact wage distribution in opposite directions (Bloom et al., 2014).

Hill (2015) raises another interesting point that with modern technology, people are able to work away from work; they are able to work remotely from anywhere, for example, from the comfort of their own homes. Hill states that this gives rise to virtual workplaces. While it does have advantages such as being able to be with your family, Hill states that this situation impacts on face-to-face communication and affects teamwork. This occurs since the person working remotely may be working mostly independently, resulting in employees not knowing who they work with. Co-workers end up knowing each other according to the company staff name list and not professionally through daily face-to-face interactions (Hill, 2015).

It can be observed that these are the very technology-driven conditions that exist in the workplace, that have created situations where face-to-face communication has minimalized over time. Even socially, people are more likely to send greetings or stay in touch via technology-driven mechanisms and social websites such as twitter, WhatsApp, emails and so on. In contrast, computer-aided communication media such as emails, telephone and video conferencing technology impact the communicative process by adding flexibility,

well-versed-employees and contribute to more precise decisions from management. Ergen (2010) is correct in mentioning that technology changes the organizational structure. Such companies have done so to be able to compete in the rapidly changing technological environment.

2.9 Barriers to communication

Kumbakonam (2016) states in her journal article that a communication barrier is anything that stops people from receiving and/or understanding messages that is used to convey information, ideas and thoughts amongst each other. According to Kumbakonam (2016:74), there are five types of barriers to communicating effectively:

- “attitudinal barriers (people holding different attitudes, values and discrimination)
- behavioural barriers (behaviours such as bias, generalisations and stereotyping)
- cultural barriers (not being able to understand the culture of different people in terms of their values, beliefs and attitudes that each person may hold)
- language barriers (people do not speak the same language or do not have the same level of competence in a language)
- environment barriers (barriers to communication being caused due to a blocked message by the environment, for example, the physical setting or the setting in which communication takes place.”

Steinberg and George (2015) state that communication barriers can be internal and external. An example of an internal barrier is when someone blocks out listening because they may be frustrated or for some reason does not fully comprehend in the listening process and only pretends to hear what is being said. External barriers can occur due to high noise levels that drown out what the sender is trying to communicate to the recipient/s. Speaking via closed door or through a wall are examples of external barriers (Steinberg and George, 2015). Human personality may be a barrier to effective communication, this is because human interaction is intricate and fundamentally vague with communicated information having more than one meaning since a message is interpreted based on an individual’s character (Popescu, 2012: 332). Tourish and Robson (2006) state that particular attitudes from managers and employees are causes of organizational problems and that distance can be a

communication barrier. An example is given with reference to business that is conducted outside the domestic country where understanding common context is not so easy.

2.10 Communication: An investment in any organization

Ergen (2010) make some strong points i.e. communication is not be regarded as an expense to a company but rather an asset; it shouldn't be an option, and that having open communication lines is vital for organizational performance and improved employee morale. This reiterates how important communication is within any organization. Employee morale does affect employee attitudes. This is revealed in Kandlousi, Ali and Abdollahi (2010): if employees are satisfied with the communication in their organization, they adopt a positive attitude and feel more engaged, which increases productivity that benefits the organization as a whole.

Interestingly, Kandlousi et al. (2010) was of the opinion that it is the managers' responsibility to handle and administer the communication process. Another interesting view is by Nelson (2010), who asserted that the communication style of an organization is related to its business growth, and that if the style of communication was open and transparent, this would cultivate trust within the organization. Karanges, Johnston, Beatson and Lings (2015) state that internal communication between supervisors and employees results in employees being more engaged with their job. When employees are engaged, they are more positive and fulfilled with their jobs; this results in the increased productivity, decreased attrition, an improved company reputation and image as well as increased financial returns (Karanges et al., 2015). Within this context, it can be seen that communication is an investment to any organization.

2.11 The effect of communication, miscommunication or the lack of communication between managers and employees in the workplace

Voinea, Buşu, Opran and Vlăduţescu's (2015) journal article aimed at investigating embarrassments of managerial communication. This topic was never studied before. These authors used meta-analytic and observational procedures and methods to conduct their study. Voinea et al. (2015) confirm that communication is there to establish and maintain relations between personnel and to positively influence the communicative relations and

organizational environment. Communication is crucial in managing crisis situations, conflicts and tenseness. It is not possible for management functions to be operationalized without communication.

Odine (2015) states in her journal article that a manager should avoid the embarrassment of miscommunication by working diligently, checking, re-checking, reading and re-reading an email or letter to ensure that it is error free. By doing this, the manager saves him/herself from the embarrassment of displaying a lack of professionalism and competence on his/her part. More major forms of miscommunication may damage a manager's reputation, frustrate stake/shareholders of the company and at worst, may result in a lack of revenue (Odine, 2015). Asamu (2014) states that poor communication from management leads to lower employee commitment to the organization, whereas effective communication improves job satisfaction and in turn this improves productivity.

Proctor (2014) states in her thesis that a Conference Board Survey which was released in January 2010, reported that only a small percentage of employees surveyed were satisfied with their occupations. A major part of the problem was that managers mainly work towards improving output and job satisfaction by addressing problems negatively. Proctor goes on to state that if managers concentrate on what works within an organization instead of what's not, more lasting employee satisfaction will be experienced (Proctor, 2014). Conrad (2014) states for smooth functioning of the workplace to exist, co-workers must cooperate well and communicate effectively. Good leaders know that by promoting interpersonal relationships and open-ness within the workplace, a culture of trust and the capability to remove dysfunction and misunderstandings is created. This enables the true ability for everyone to communicate with each other at all levels of the organization. However, communication is never that simple: it is complex and multidimensional with misunderstandings and conflicts (Conrad, 2014). Conrad (2014) goes on to state that for an organization to function successfully, it must recruit employees who are able to process information quickly, clearly, effectively and accurately.

Vangen (2017) addresses culturally diverse collaboration and its impact on communication and shared understanding. He states that while diversity may bring about positive and

negative outcomes to shared work, research has shown that there are differences in ways of communicating and that there is a high possibility of friction and misunderstandings, as mentioned. This is so because similar cultures affect connectivity and common understanding between partners. However, as associations span across organizational, professional, national and global boundaries, cultural diversity may result in situations of conflict, misunderstanding and friction (Vangen, 2017). It is therefore the leaders' responsibility to ensure that there is communication flowing upward, downward and across the organization in order for the organization to be successful. The 'grapevine' does spread information stories across the organization; however, it is the leader who needs to assess the information to ensure that what is being spread is accurate and true (Conrad, 2014).

2.12 Satisfied employees make a positive impact on the organization

Osborne (2017) states that poor communication or a view of this from employees can result in higher operating costs and lower levels of efficiency from employees. This occurs because of lower productivity from employees due to decreased satisfaction as a result of a lack of communication from management, for example. Communication satisfaction (being happy with the level of communication in the workplace) is important for all parties within an organization so that the organization is successful in achieving its goals and objectives. Therefore it is imperative for managers and their staff not only to understand the importance of communicating effectively but also to develop strategies that give rise to quality communication which in turn affects the success of any organization (Ramirez, 2012). Ramirez (2012) further states that research shows that organizational communication practices impact job satisfaction only if they also create communication satisfaction amongst employees.

Indermun and Bayat (2013) state that content workforces become attached to the company and intrinsically take pride in organizational membership. Satisfied employees have confidence in the aspirations of the company and show better performance and output in the organization. These authors correctly state that with dissatisfied employees, there is a high possibility of decreased output, absence, and low turnover, and these behaviors negatively impact a company. Indermun and Bayat (2013) advise that it is crucial to conduct research to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance with regard to the communication practices between employees and managers and the

organization as a whole, which is what this study partly undertook to accomplish by investigating the key tool on how communication is used at CAES at UKZN.

2.13 Summary

Chapter Two has covered the work of many authors sourced from books, journal articles and web-based articles that were either directly or indirectly related to the topic of this study. The trajectory in this chapter clearly indicates the importance of communication in the workplace with studies conducted by various authors. The benefits are evident based in the role that communication plays within organizations between the sender and receiver of the messages.

Communication also plays a key role in relationships between employees and employers. The research undertaken on CAES at UKZN indicates, via the analysis and findings in Chapter Four, how effective or non-effective communication is at this College. However, prior to that, Chapter Three outlines the Research Methodology used in conducting this study. Chapter Four will present the findings of the current research.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how the research was conducted to obtain the information to meet the objective of this study. The following are discussed as part of how the research for the study was conducted: the research objective; the research approach and research paradigm; the research design and methods; the study design; the study setting for the research; the target population, sample and sampling strategy; data type and data collection method; data analysis; reliability and validity of the study; pre-test; biases of the research study; ethical considerations and a summary.

3.2 Aim of study

The aim of the study is to investigate the communicative culture within the five Schools of CAES at UKZN. The target population is the first line managers and their subordinates. The research study will aim at answering the following research questions via a structured questionnaire.

The research questions will aim at answering the following:

- What method of communication do first line managers use to communicate with support staff on operational matters?
- Do line managers encourage feedback from subordinates that may negatively or positively impact their jobs?
- Are line managers approachable, empathetic and active listeners?
- What are the preferred communication methods that subordinates prefer line managers to utilise when communicating information?
- Do subordinates keep their line manager updated on work related matters?
- Are subordinates willing to provide their line managers with feedback that may positively/negatively affect policies and processes?

This study will create an awareness of the vital role that communication plays within any organization between all stakeholders.

3.3 The research approach

There are two main research approaches that can be used when conducting research. The first approach is quantitative research and the second qualitative research. Quantitative research originates from the positivist philosophy of the research paradigm that holds that a single objective reality occurs which can be determined through scientific research. The quantitative positivist approach strives to be value-free and deductive to define associations (mostly causal) among variables and reports research results in a numerical and statistical format.

The second approach is qualitative, which stems from the philosophy that states that multiple realities exist which must be acknowledged by paying attention to group and individual constructions and views of reality. Thus, this research strives to understand occurrences via stimulation to encourage procedures, principles, perspectives and understanding in the development of meaning and concepts. The outcomes of research in this category are reported in narrative form (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1996).

The method chosen for this research is a quantitative research approach. The reason for this is that qualitative research generates data that is difficult to quantify as it is often expressed as personal opinions from which it is challenging to draw any collective deductions. It should be noted that there is a third approach that could be used which is a combination of a quantitative and qualitative approach.

3.4 The research design and methods

A research design is the planning, structuring and strategy of how the researcher of a specific study is going to obtain the answers to the research questions. This plan can be called the blueprint of how the researcher is going to obtain the required information necessary to conclude the research objective. A research design serves two main functions: first it serves to determine the logical flow of the procedure that will be used to collect the data required to complete the research and second, it emphasises the importance of quality in the chosen method to ensure that validity, accuracy and objectivity is maintained through the data

collection process (Kumar, 2011).

The type of research used for this study is basic, fundamental or pure research. This type of research is used in order to generate a body of knowledge by trying to understand how certain problems that occur in organizations can be solved (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013). This study focuses on communication effectiveness between line managers and their subordinates and *vice versa*. Any problems observed from the research results such as ineffective communication, for example, poses as a problem which needs to be solved. This will be done by providing recommendations at the end of the study.

3.5 The study design

A study design refers to the design of the study itself and forms one part of the research design (Kumar, 2011). There are various types of study designs that can be used. For the purposes of this study, a cross-sectional study design is used. The target population was taken from the CAES at UKZN, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa. Since using the entire population of staff at the UKZN would be too large to work with and would require a significant amount of time to collect the data, as there are many departments and divisions as well as many designations within the university; given limited time to conduct this research for the completion of this MBA degree, a smaller target group was chosen as the population.

This research thus only includes CAES and the five schools within that College, with the target being only the first line managers and their subordinates (support staff) as the population group across all the relevant campuses.

3.6 The study setting for the research

The study setting for the research is in the natural environment of the respondents. This is a much-preferred method as the respondents are in the working environment that is being researched and would be better able to answer the questions for the research which is associated with their work. UKZN is the setting for the study with the target population being the CAES line managers within the five Schools across the three campuses that the College operates.

3.7 The target population, sample and sampling strategy

The target population chosen included only support staff and first line managers from all Schools within the CAES across all relevant campuses where these Schools operate. The entire population of staff at UKZN proved to be complex in that there are too many departments, and staff fell into various designations that were over and above the focus and objective of this study. Thus, only the entire population of line managers and their subordinates within all the Schools of the College of AES were used as the target population. Since the entire population was used there was no need to extract a sample of the population and so sampling was not done as part of this research design.

3.8 Data type and data collection method

3.8.1 Data type

There are two data types that exist in research: one is secondary data and the other primary data. Secondary data is data that is already available; for example, the data can be sourced from a company's records or from research that has already been conducted. Primary data, in contrast, refers to first hand data. This data is collected specifically to address the research objective and is data that has not been collected previously. Primary data can be used in instances where secondary data may not be sufficient for the research objectives (Tustin et al., 2005). Since a quantitative research approach is being used for this research, primary data is the data type that was collected for the research objective of this study.

3.8.2 Data collection method

The method used to collect the required data was done through an electronic questionnaire created on the e-survey website. This method was the preferred method due to time constraints for this research. The electronic survey method was also the most convenient as it is less expensive to conduct and more effective since the research is being conducted across various campuses.

3.9 Structure, layout and distribution of questionnaire

3.9.1 Structure of questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of mainly multiple-choice questions, which means that it is a fairly structured survey; however, to overcome the problem of having to choose a response that is not available for selection, the respondents were given an option of 'other' and a space

to specify their answer. This was done to ensure that the most accurate answers will be provided and to avoid frustrating the respondent who may stop the survey and not complete it since there were only structured answer options.

The questionnaire was in three parts. The first section was specific to the line managers; the second was specific to their subordinates and the third section was applicable to both line managers and the subordinates. Data was also collected via one open-ended question on recommendations and suggestions to improve communication effectiveness in the workplace and to provide examples of ineffective communication that could have been prevented.

3.9.2 Questionnaire layout

The first part of the survey questionnaire was used to gather information on the demographic profile of all respondents. The demographic profile covers gender, race, age, campus and nationality of line managers and subordinates.

The second part of the survey questionnaire was used to gather specific information from respondents on:

- Preferred medium of communication.
- Interaction frequency between line managers and subordinates.
- Line managers and subordinates rating of their written and verbal skills.
- The importance of the environment in face-to-face communication.
- Giving and receiving feedback between line managers and subordinates.
- Including or considering subordinates views on operational matters in the workplace.

The third part of the survey questionnaire included one open-ended question. The open-ended question gathered information from respondents on their recommendations to improve interpersonal relationships between line managers and subordinates for the overall good of the organization. There were 23 respondents who answered this question. This open-ended question is not suitable for presentation in Chapter Four as it deals specifically with recommendations, some of which have been included in Chapter Six. Hence only general reference is made to it in Chapter Four.

3.9.3 Questionnaire distribution

The questionnaire was distributed to the target population (support staff and first line managers of the various Schools within CAES) using the e-survey website. A list of the email addresses of the target population was created and used to distribute the questionnaire via the website. The target population's contact information was gathered via the available information on the UKZN website pertaining to the relevant Schools within the CAES. The data collected was analysed to determine the demographic profile, and the communication culture that exists within the Schools of CAES.

3.10 Data analysis

After the survey was circulated for a period of time. The responses were collated via the e-survey website in an Excel format. This information was then downloaded and re-arranged into more meaningful data using the Microsoft Excel and Word software.

The gathered data was analysed to find out the communication culture at CAES on how effective or ineffective communication was within the Schools of CAES between line managers and their subordinates. The data was analysed and is presented in Chapter Four. By categorising and grouping the data, this helped the author to present a logical flow of the information gathered around the objective of this study, the communication culture that exists in the Schools of CAES, UKZN.

The gathered data were grouped and then input onto Excel spreadsheets to make the results more meaningful. The data from the Excel spreadsheets were then transferred onto Microsoft tables.

3.11 Reliability and validity of the study

Reliability of the study refers to the extent of consistency and stability that the research instrument measures the concept being researched when the entity being measured has not changed (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Reliability of the research instrument was done by ensuring that the questionnaire was structured in the least complex manner, so that it was easy to understand and less ambiguous. Respondents were also provided with contact details for the researcher; if there was any question that they needed clarity on then the researcher could be contacted for clarification.

Reliability was enhanced by distributing the questionnaire in a consistent fashion. Each respondent was sent the questionnaire in the same manner. Standardization was ensured when the questionnaire was distributed. Consistency was maintained as both the line managers and the subordinates were asked similar questions to measure the effectiveness of communication from line managers to subordinates and *vice versa*.

Validity refers to the extent in which the research instrument does in fact measure what it is supposed to measure (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). This research is conducted on humans and every human is an individual with different personalities. Some will be truthful in responding to a questionnaire while others may not be so. This occurs especially in instances when the respondent is aware that the survey is being conducted for research purposes and may want to answer in a socially desirable manner rather than a truthful manner. This situation in research is referred to as the “Hawthorne effect” (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013).

To minimize the impact of this within this study, the research was conducted in the participants real-life setting and own working environment rather than a laboratory setting or focus group setting, for example, where the respondents would not feel comfortable in responding honestly. The participants were not asked to include their name when responding to the questionnaire and were also advised that the research results would be presented in a manner that does not expose their identity in any way.

The target population used was also the entire population of support staff and their line managers rather than a sample. This therefore enhances the validity of the research as the target group is representative of the entire target population required for this research and not a sample of the target population from which generalisations are made. Validity was also ensured since the questionnaire was designed with a specific purpose to meet the research objective i.e. the survey included questions that related to the research questions of the study. This concept is known as “content validity” (Sekeran and Bougie, 2013).

3.12 Pre-test

The questionnaire was tested with a group of individuals outside the target population to ensure that it was error free in terms of grammar and spelling etc. It was also tested to ensure that the questions were easy to understand and related to the research objectives of the study. Conducting the pre-test aided in ensuring that the research instrument that is being used is

able to provide reliable and relevant information to this research project.

3.13 Limitation of the research study

The limitation of this study is that the study only concentrated on one of the five Colleges of UKZN. The study would have been more significant if it was done across all the Colleges. However, if the study was done with all five Colleges incorporated, it would take a much longer time to complete. Due to time constraints this could not be done.

3.14 Ethical considerations

The confidentiality of all respondents has been maintained by not mentioning the names of any of the respondents in the sample population throughout this study. All responses have been categorised in a general sense and no respondent has been linked to answering the questions on the questionnaire from a particular School of the CAES, UKZN.

An informed consent form was used when the survey was distributed and the ethical clearance certificate as well as the gatekeeper's letter was provided to all participants. These are annotated at the end of this dissertation.

3.15 Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology used to conduct this research. The research study type is quantitative research with a questionnaire designed to collect the required information to answer the research questions of this study. The questionnaire was distributed via an electronic survey website to the target population. The respondents were advised that their responses were strictly confidential and that their identity would not be revealed in this study. The responses were recorded and collated via the e-survey website. The research results were downloaded in Microsoft Excel format. The data was extracted and ordered into tables using Microsoft Word. Chapter 4 discusses the research findings by presenting the results in a meaningful manner that is simple to understand.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research results are presented. Representation of the data is shown on tables. All questions answered by the respondents are categorised and the data is presented in a meaningful way to ensure understanding of what is presented. The sample population has been separated into two categories to reflect line managers and subordinates. The total sample population of line managers is 8 (100%) and the total sample population of subordinates is 29 (100%), making it two sets of data used for the purposes of this study.

This chapter also includes the presentation of the data collected from a structured questionnaire that was completed by CAES School line managers and their subordinates. A total of 8 line managers and 29 subordinates consented to begin the survey. Not all 29 subordinates in the sample population proceeded to complete the survey questionnaire up until the end.

The data collected was rearranged and presented in parts to make it meaningful and simple to explain. The data presented in this chapter is done so in Sections One to Sections Six, to reflect each grouping of the data sets categorically. Each section presents the categories of data onto Microsoft tables or bar charts.

Part One

4.2 Section One - Demographic profile of line managers and subordinates

Section One presents the demographic profile of line managers and subordinates.

4.2.1 Demographic profile on gender

Figure 4.1 below presents the gender profile of line managers and subordinates that responded to the survey.

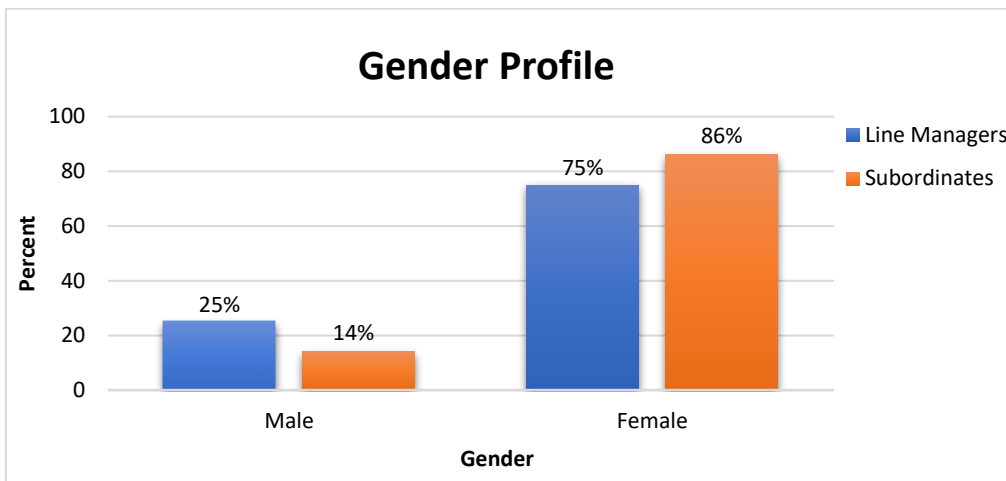


Figure 4.1: Gender profile of line managers and subordinates

The gender profile indicates that there are more female line managers at 75% versus male line managers at 25%. This same trend is evident with subordinates, where there are more female subordinates at 86% compared to male subordinates at 14%.

4.2.2 Demographic profile on race

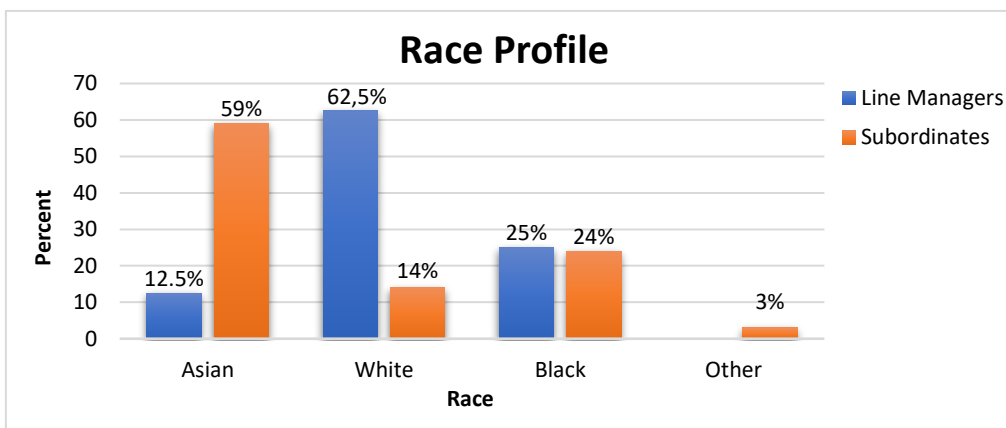


Figure 4.2: Race profile of line managers and subordinates

Figure 4.2 above presents the race profile of line managers and subordinates that responded to the survey. The trend on race profile indicates that the highest number of line managers are 62.5% white, with the lowest being Asian at 12.5%. There were no line managers in the other category. The highest number of subordinates of 59% are Asian, and the lowest in the other category is 3%.

4.2.3 Demographic profile on age group

Figure 4.3 below presents the age group profile of line managers and subordinates that responded to the survey.

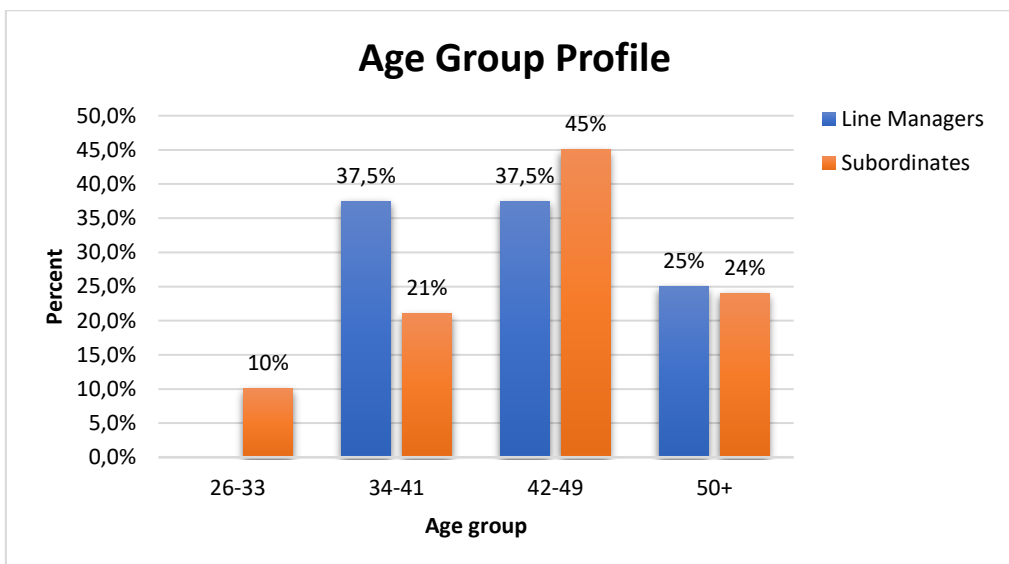


Figure 4.3: Age group profile of line managers and subordinates

The age group profile depicts that there are no line managers between the age group 26-33 years. The figure above also shows that the highest number, 37.5%, of line managers fall into the 34-41 and 42-49 years age group categories. A total of 25% of the line managers fell into the 50 year plus age category.

The highest number of subordinates of 45% fall into the 42-49 years age category, with 24% in the 50 years plus age category.

4.2.4 Demographic profile on campus location of line managers and subordinates

Figure 4.4 below presents the campus location of the line managers and subordinates that responded to the survey.

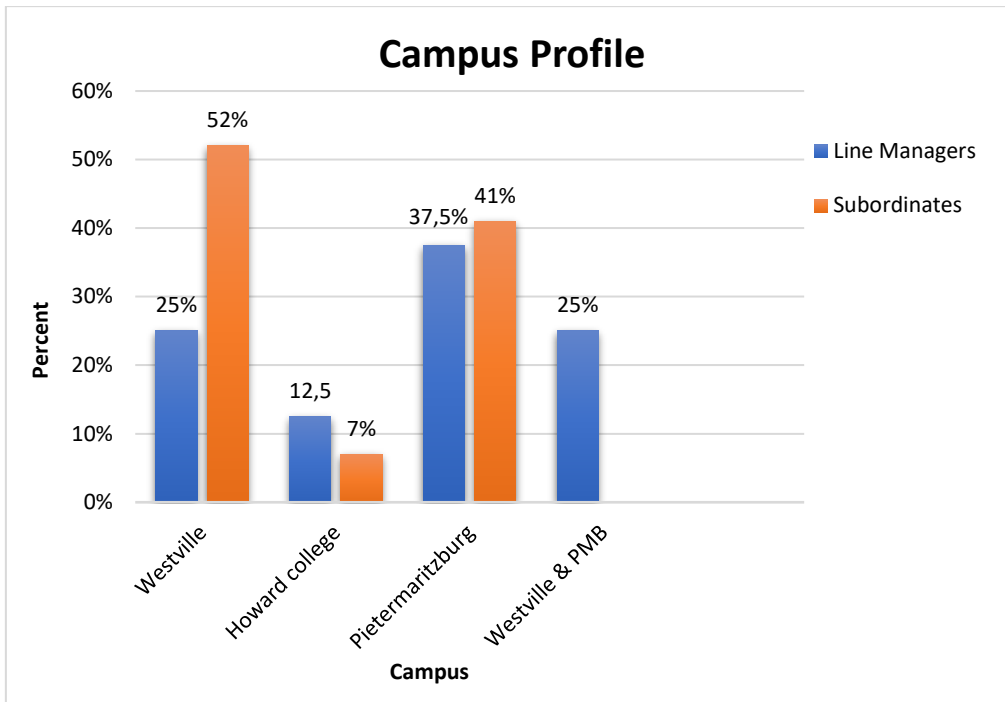


Figure 4.4: Campus location of line managers and subordinates

The figure above shows that 37.5% of the line managers work at the Pietermaritzburg campus and only 12.5% of line managers work at Howard College campus.

The highest number of subordinates of 52% work at the Westville campus and only 7% of the subordinates work at the Howard College campus. There are no subordinates that work between campuses.

4.2.5 Nationality of line managers and subordinates

Figure 4.5 below presents the nationality profile of line managers and subordinates.

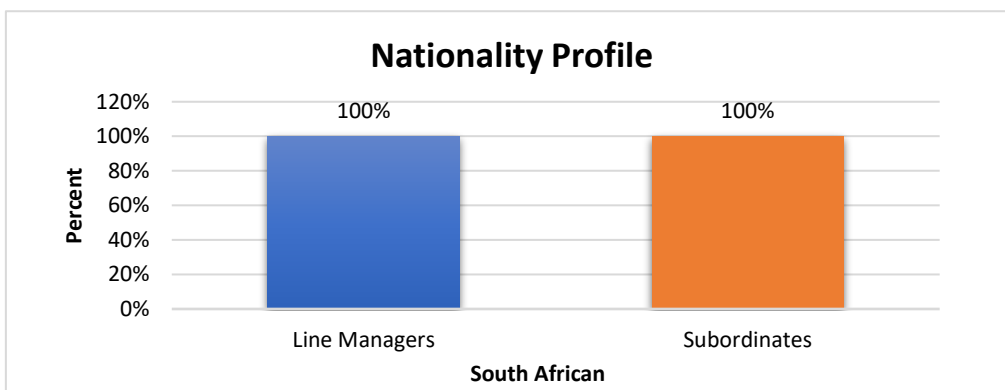


Figure 4.5: Nationality profile of line managers and subordinates

The nationality profile indicates that all 8 (100%) of line managers and all 29 (100%) subordinates that responded to the survey are South African nationals.

Section One dealt with the demographic profile of line managers and subordinates. Section Two presents line manager and subordinates' preferences on communication medium and how frequently line managers interact with their subordinates. Section Two also covers the timeliness in communicating with subordinates on operational matters, the importance of the environment in face-to-face communication and the rating of line managers and subordinates' written and verbal skills.

Part Two

4.3 Section Two – Communication effectiveness between line managers and subordinates

Section Two presents the communication effectiveness of line managers and subordinates' by presenting their responses to preferences on the communication medium when line managers communicate on urgent matters; how frequently line managers interact with their subordinates; whether line managers want to communicate more with subordinates, and the timeliness of communication between line managers and subordinates.

This section also covers the importance of the environment in face-to-face communication and the rating of line managers and subordinates' written and verbal skills.

4.3.1 Preferred method of communication when communicating urgent matters

Table 4.1 presents the preferences on medium of communication when communicating urgent matters.

Table 4.1: Preferences on medium of communication when communicating urgent matters

Responses	Email	Telephone	Face-to-face	Video conferencing	Various mediums	Total
Line managers prefer using	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (100%)
Subordinates prefer line managers to use	14 (48%)	5 (17%)	10 (35%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	29 (100%)
Total	17	6	10	1	3	37

Table 4.1 shows the highest number of line managers, that is, 37.5%, use email and the same percentage (37.5%) use various mediums of communication to communicate urgent matters to their subordinates. Surprisingly, no managers use face-to-face communication to communicate urgent matters to their subordinates, yet there are 35% of subordinates who prefer their line managers to engage in face-to-face communication with them when communicating urgent matters.

The highest number of 48% of subordinates prefer email communication from their line managers when communicating urgent matters, and no subordinates prefer video conferencing and various mediums of communication for the communication of urgent matters.

4.3.1.1 Chi square test of goodness of fit for the preferred method of communication when communicating urgent matters

Table 4.2 presents the Chi square test of fit output for the preferred method of communication when communicating urgent matters.

Table 4.2: Chi square test output – Preferred method of communication when communicating urgent matters

Line manager and subordinates' responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Email	17	7.4	9.6
Face-to-face meeting	10	7.4	2.6
Video conferencing	1	7.4	-6.4
Phone calls	6	7.4	-1.4
Various methods	3	7.4	-4.4
Total	37		
Chi square value (χ^2)	21.8 ^a		
p value	0.000221		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	4		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table.	9.488		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H_0 hypothesis: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution for the preferred method of communication when communicating on urgent matters.

H_1 : There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution for the preferred method of communication when communicating on urgent matters.

The Chi square value and p value shown in Table 4.2 and all other chi square test outputs tables to follow were calculated using SPSS. The output above shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 > \text{critical value}$). Thus, H_0 is rejected in favour of H_1 : $\chi^2(4, N = 37) = 21.8, p < .05, \chi^2 > \text{critical value}$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution for the preferred method of communication when communicating urgent matters. This means that there is insufficient evidence to support the claim that there is no

difference between the observed and expected frequency distribution for the preferred method of communication when communicating on urgent matters. Table 4.2 shows that email and face-to-face is the preferred method of communication when communicating urgent information. Table 4.1 shows that line managers prefer using email or various methods of communication when communicating urgent information; however, subordinates prefer their line managers to use face-to-face communication when communicating urgent information.

4.3.2 Frequency and timeliness of interactions in communicating with subordinates on operational matters

Figure 4.6 presents data on how frequently line managers communicate with their subordinates on operational matters.

Figure 4.7 presents data on whether or not line managers feel that there should be more regular communication with their subordinates. Table 4.3 presents data on whether line managers provide their subordinates with instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks.

4.3.2.1 Line managers' frequency of communication on operational matters

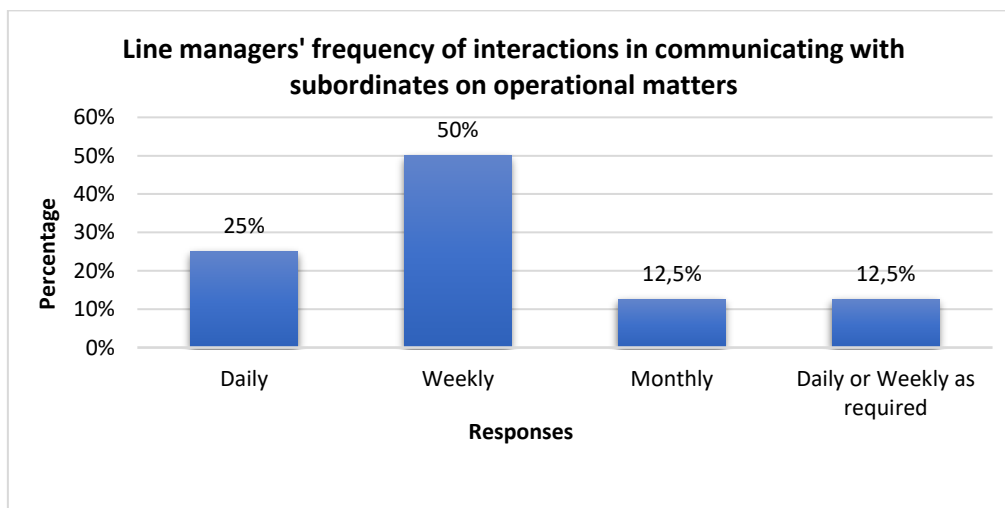


Figure 4.6: Line managers' frequency of communication on operational matters

Figure 4.6 presents the highest number of line managers, that is 50%, who communicate on a weekly basis with subordinates, followed by 25% of line managers who communicate on

a daily basis with their subordinates. 12.5% of line managers communicate with their subordinates on a monthly basis and 12.5% communicate on a daily or weekly basis as required with subordinates.

4.3.2.2 Line managers' views on frequency of communication with subordinates

Figure 4.7 presents whether or not line managers want to communicate more frequently with subordinates.

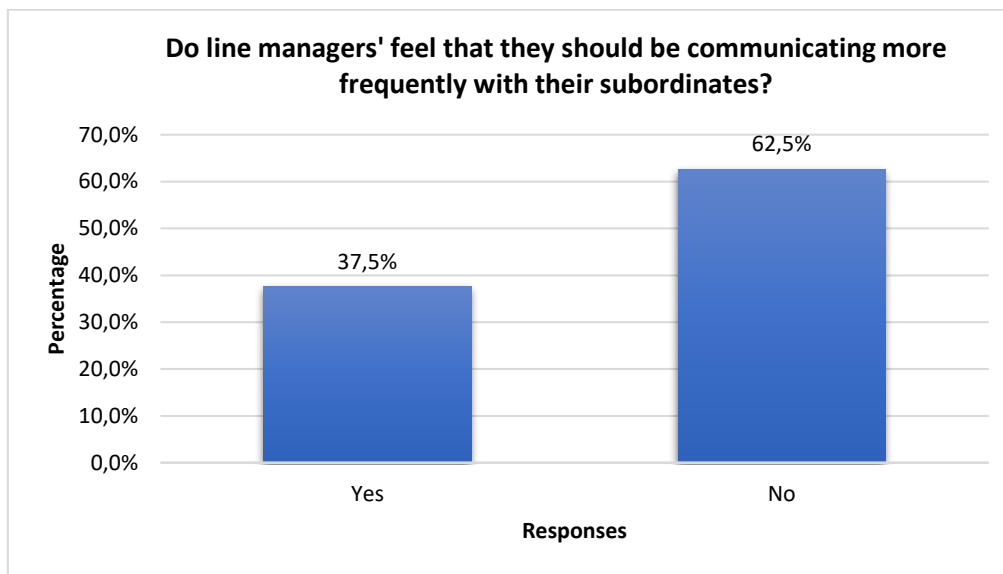


Figure 4.7: Line managers' views on frequency of communication

The above figure indicates that only 37.5% of line managers felt that they should communicate more regularly with their subordinates, while 62.5% of line managers felt that they do not need to have more frequent communication with their subordinates.

4.3.2.3 Subordinates' views on whether line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks

Table 4.3 shows the subordinates' view on whether line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks.

Table 4.3: Subordinates' views on whether line managers provide instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks

Subordinates' responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Frequency	6 (22%)	10 (37%)	4 (15%)	6 (22%)	1 (4%)	27 (100%)

The table above shows that the highest number of subordinates of 39.3% agree that their line manager provides instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks. The second highest number of subordinates of 21.4% strongly agree and disagreed respectively. 4% of subordinates strongly disagree with this, while a total number of 15% of subordinates remained neutral.

4.3.2.4 Chi square test of goodness of fit - subordinates' view on line managers providing instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks

Table 4.4 presents the Chi square test of goodness of fit output on whether line managers provide instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks.

Table 4.4: Chi square test output for line managers providing instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks

Subordinates' responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Strongly agree	6	5.4	0.6
Agree	10	5.4	4.6
Neither agree nor disagree	4	5.4	-1.4
Disagree	6	5.4	0.6
Strongly disagree	1	5.4	-4.4
Total	27		
Chi square value (χ^2)	8.000 ^a		
p value	0.092		

Alpha (α)	0.05
Degrees of freedom	4
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	9.488

- a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H_0 hypothesis: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the subordinates' views on whether their line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks.

H_1 : There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the subordinates' views on whether their line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks.

Table 4.4 presents the chi-square value is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 < \text{critical value}$). Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected: $\chi^2(4, N = 27) = 8, p > .05, \chi^2 < \text{critical value}$. It can therefore be concluded that there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that there are no significant differences in the frequencies on the subordinates' view whether the line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks. Table 4.4 also shows that most of the subordinates agreed that their line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks.

4.3.3 The environment in which face-to-face communication takes place is important

Table 4.5 presents line managers and subordinates view on whether the environment in which face-to-face communication takes place is important.

Table 4.5: The environment in which face-to-face communication takes place is important

Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total
Line managers	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (100%)
Subordinates	12 (46%)	14 (54%)	26 (100%)

A total of 62.5% of line managers strongly agree that the environment in which face-to-face communication takes place is important and 37.5% of line managers agree that the environment in face-to-face communication takes place is important. A total of 46% of subordinates strongly agree that the environment in face-to-face communication is important and 54% of subordinates agree on the importance of the environment of face-to-face communication. The results show that most of the line managers strongly agree that the environment in which face-to-face communication takes place is important and most of the subordinates agree that the environment in which face-to-face communication takes place is important.

4.3.4 Rating of verbal and written skills by line managers and subordinates

Tables 4.6 and 4.9 present the rating of verbal and written skills by line managers and subordinates as: excellent, good, average, poor or neutral. Table 4.7 and 4.8 represent the Chi square test for goodness of fit for the rating of the verbal and written skills.

Table 4.6: Line manager and subordinates' rating of their verbal skills

Response	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Total
Line managers' response on verbal skills	0 (0%)	7 (88%)	0 (0%)	1 (12%)	8 (100%)
Subordinates' response on verbal skills	13 (50%)	10 (38%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	26 (100%)
Total	13	17	2	2	34

4.3.4.1 Rating of verbal skills

There were 0% of line managers who rated themselves as excellent, while 88% rated themselves as good, 12% as poor and 0% as average on their verbal skills. No line managers remained neutral on this question.

There were 42% of subordinates who rated themselves as excellent, 31% as good, 3% as average and 3% as poor on their verbal skills. There were 21% of subordinates who remained neutral on rating their verbal skills.

4.3.4.2 Chi square test of goodness of fit for the rating of verbal skills of line managers and subordinates

Table 4.7 presents the Chi square test of goodness of fit output for the rating of verbal skills of line managers and subordinates.

Table 4.7: Chi square test output for the rating of verbal skills

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Excellent	13	8.5	4.5
Good	17	8.5	8.5
Average	2	8.5	-6.5
Poor	2	8.5	-6.5
Total	34		
Chi square value (χ^2)	20.824 ^a		
p value	0.000115		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	3		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	7.815		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H₀: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the line manager and subordinates' rating of their verbal skills.

H₁: There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the line manager and subordinates' rating of their verbal skills.

Table 4.7 shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 >$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the line manager and subordinates' rating of their verbal skills. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted: $\chi^2 (3, N = 34) = 20.824, p < .05, \chi^2 >$ critical value. There is insufficient evidence to support the claim that there are no differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution for the line manager and subordinates' rating of their verbal skills. Table 4.7 also shows that most of the respondents rated their verbal skills as excellent and good. Table 4.6 shows that a high number of line managers rated their verbal skills as good but none rated their verbal skills as excellent. Most of the subordinates rated their verbal skills as excellent and good.

4.3.4.3 Rating of written skills

Table 4.8 below present the responses from line managers and subordinates on the rating of their written skills.

Table 4.8: Line manager and subordinates' rating of their written skills

Rating of written skills	Excellent	Good	Average	Total
Line managers' response on written skills	4 (50%)	3 (38%)	1 (12%)	8 (100%)
Subordinates' response on written skills	14 (54%)	8 (31%)	4 (15%)	26 (100%)
Total	18	11	5	34

There were 50% of line managers who rated themselves as excellent, while 38% rated themselves as good, and 12% as average.

There were 45% of subordinates who rated themselves as excellent, 24% as good, 7% as average, and 3% as poor on their written skills. There were 21% of subordinates that remained neutral on this question.

4.3.4.4 Chi square test of goodness of fit for the rating of written skills of line managers and subordinates

Table 4.9 presents the Chi square test of goodness of fit for the rating of written skills of line managers and subordinates rating of their written skills.

Table 4.9: Chi square test output for the rating of written skills

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Excellent	18	11.3	6.7
Good	11	11.3	-0.3
Average	5	11.3	-6.3
Total	34		
Chi square value (χ^2)	7.471 ^a		
p value	0.024		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	2		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	5.991		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H₀: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the line manager and subordinates' rating of their written skills.

H₁: There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the line manager and subordinates' rating of their written skills.

Table 4.9 shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 >$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution of the line manager and subordinates' rating of their written skills. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted: $\chi^2 (2, N = 34) = 7.471, p < .05, \chi^2 >$ critical value. Table 4.9 also shows that most of the respondents rated their written skills as excellent and good. Table 4.8 shows that 50% and 38% of line managers rated their written skills as excellent and good respectively. A total of 54% and 31% of the subordinates rated their written skills as excellent and good respectively.

4.4 Section Three – Line managers' efforts to improve workplace communication and the approachability of line managers

Section Three presents effort by line managers to improve communications in the workplace between themselves and their subordinates, as well as the approachability of the line managers. Responses from both line manager and subordinates are presented on Tables 4.10 and 4.11 respectively.

4.4.1 Line managers' efforts to improve workplace communication

Table 4.10 shows line manager and subordinates' responses to questions on the line managers' efforts to improve workplace communication.

Table 4.10: Alerting subordinates on important information and taking the time to verbally explain important points of complex documents

Responses from line manager	Yes	No	Total
Line manager responses on: <u>alerting subordinates on important information</u> to aid operational processes. (Do line managers alert subordinates on important information that they may have first-hand knowledge of which may have already been publicised on the UKZN website, University email notice system, or on notice boards?)	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	8 (100%)
Line manager responses on: taking the time to <u>verbally explain to subordinates the important points</u> of electronically circulated, lengthy and complex documentation on workplace policies and procedures.	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	8 (100%)
Subordinate responses on: whether or not line managers take the time to <u>verbally explain the contents of</u> the most important points of electronically circulated complex documentation on workplace policies and procedures to them.	17 (59%)	12 (41%)	29 (100%)

4.4.1.1 Line managers’ responses on alerting subordinates to important information that has already been publicised

The highest number of line managers, 87.5%, confirmed that they do alert their subordinates to important information that they have first-hand knowledge of, even if such information has been placed on the UKZN website or University email or notice boards. Line managers alert subordinates to important information to aid operations and 12.5% of line managers do not do so.

4.4.1.2 Line managers’ responses on verbally explaining the contents of electronically circulated complex documentation to subordinates

A total of 50% of line managers confirmed that they make the time to verbally explain the contents of electronically circulated complex documentation to their subordinates to aid operational processes and a total of 50% of line managers confirmed that they do make the effort to verbally explain complex documentation to their subordinates.

4.4.1.3 Subordinates' responses on line managers verbally explaining the contents of complex electronically circulated documentation

A total of 59% of subordinates confirmed that their line managers do take time to verbally explain the most important points of complex documentation that was electronically circulated to them and 41% of subordinates stated that their line managers do not take the time to do so.

4.4.2 Willingness to approach the line manager on work related matters

The responses received from both the line managers and subordinates with regard to the subordinate's willingness to approach their line manager if there are any uncertainties on any work-related matter is shown in Table 4.11. Table 4.12 shows the Chi square test output for the responses on subordinates' willingness to approach their line manager.

Table 4.11: Responses on willingness to approach the line manager

Line manager and subordinates' responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Total
Line manager responses on: whether or not they are confident that subordinates will <u>approach them if there are uncertainties</u> on instructions given, or if clarity is required on any job-related matter and /or policy changes that may have arisen.	3 (37.5%)	3 (37.5%)	2 (25%)	8 (100%)
Subordinates' responses on: whether or not they are always <u>willing to communicate with their line managers</u> on work related matters if there are uncertainties on instructions given or if clarity is required on job related matters and or policy changes that may have been made.	12 (44%)	11 (41%)	4 (15%)	27 (100%)

4.4.2.1 Line managers' responses on subordinates' willingness to approach them to obtain clarity on workplace matters or on given instructions

An equal amount of line managers, 37.5% each strongly agree and agree respectively that they are confident that their subordinates will approach them to obtain clarity on workplace matters or on instructions given. A total of 25% of line managers remained neutral on this.

4.4.2.2 Subordinates' responses on their willingness to approach the line manager to obtain clarity on workplace matters or any given instructions

The highest number of subordinates of 44%, strongly agree that they are willing to communicate with their line managers to obtain clarity on workplace matters or any given instructions. A total of 41% of subordinates agreed and 15% remained neutral on whether they are willing to communicate to obtain clarity on workplace matters or given instructions.

4.4.2.3 Chi square test of goodness of fit on the willingness to approach the line manager

Table 4.12 presents the Chi square test of goodness of fit output on the willingness to approach the line manager to obtain clarity on workplace matters or any given instructions.

Table 4.12: Chi square test output on the willingness to approach the line manager

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Strongly agree	15	11.5	3.3
Agree	14	11.5	2.3
Neither agree nor disagree	6	11.5	-5.7
Total	35		
Chi square value (χ^2)	4.171 ^a		
p value	0.124		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	2		

Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	5.991
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- a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H₀: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on the willingness to approach the line manager.

H₁: There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on the willingness to approach the line manager.

Table 4.12 shows that the chi-square value is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 <$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether the subordinates are willing to approach their line manager on work related matters. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected: $\chi^2 (2, N = 35) = 4.171, p > .05, \chi^2 <$ critical value. This means that there is insufficient evidence for the null hypothesis to be rejected.

Table 4.12 also shows that most of the line managers and subordinates strongly agreed and agreed that the subordinates are willing to approach their line managers on any work-related matter.

4.5 Section Four - Feedback between line managers and subordinates

This section covers questions on feedback between line managers and subordinates. All line managers and all subordinates have responded to the feedback questions in this section.

4.5.1 Obtaining regular feedback from subordinates on their progress with tasks

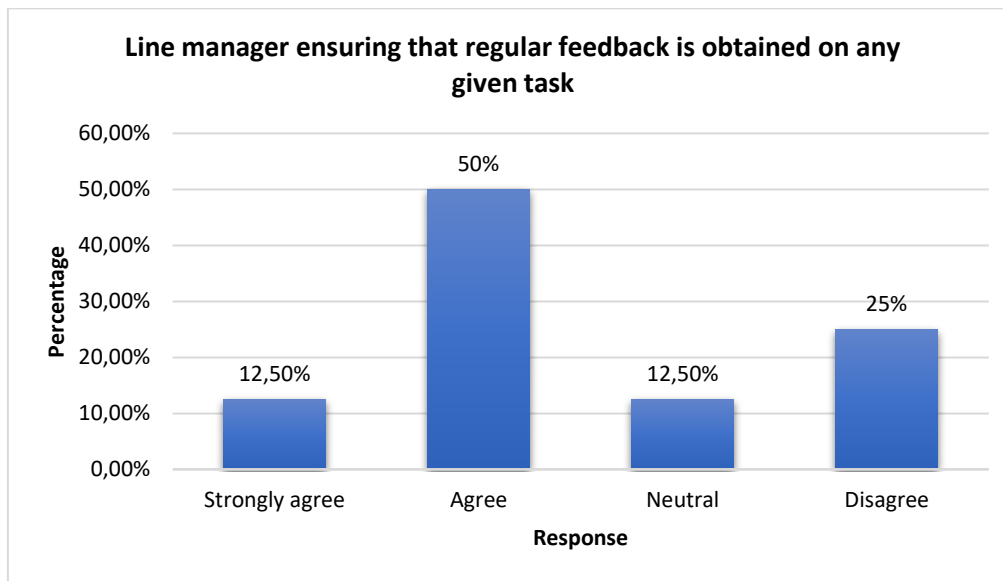


Figure 4.8: Line managers' responses on whether regular feedback on the progress any given task is obtained from subordinates

Figure 4.8 above shows a total of 12,5% line managers strongly agreed and 50% agreed that they obtain regular feedback from their subordinates on the progress of tasks given to subordinates, while 12.5% remained neutral and 25% disagreed on this.

4.5.2 Feedback from subordinates on operational matters that positively or negatively affect subordinates' jobs, processes and/or policies

Table 4.13 presents the responses received from line managers on whether their subordinates keep them updates on operational matters.

Table 4.13: Feedback from subordinates on operational matters that positively or negatively affect subordinates’ jobs, processes and/or policies

Line managers and subordinates’ responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Line managers’ response: <u>Subordinates keep me</u> as their line manager <u>updated on operational matters</u> that may positively/negatively affect their jobs	4 (50%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)
Subordinates’ response: I am <u>always willing to provide feedback to my line manager</u> whether positive or negative that affect processes and/or policies	13 (48%)	9 (33%)	3 (11%)	2 (8%)	27 (100%)
Total	17	12	4	2	35

Table 4.13 shows that a total of 50% of line managers strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed that their subordinates update them on operational matters that positively or negatively affect subordinates’ jobs.

There were 48% and 33% of subordinates who strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they are always willing to provide negative or positive feedback to their line managers on matters that affect workplace processes and policies. There were 11% of subordinates who remained neutral on this question and 8% that disagree on this question.

4.5.2.1 Chi square goodness of fit test on feedback from subordinates on operational matters that may positively or negatively affect their jobs

Table 4.14 below shows the chi square output for the combined responses on whether subordinates provide feedback to their line managers on operational matters that may positively or negatively affect their jobs.

Table 4.14: Chi square test output on feedback from subordinates on operational matters that may positively or negatively affect their jobs

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Strongly agree	17	8.8	8.3
Agree	12	8.8	3.3
Neither agree nor disagree	4	8.8	-4.8
Disagree	2	8.8	-6.8
Total	35		
Chi square value (χ^2)	16.771 ^a		
p value	0.001		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	3		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	7.815		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H_0 : There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on feedback from subordinates on operational matters that may positively or negatively impact their jobs.

H_1 : There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on feedback from subordinates on operational matters that may positively or negatively impact their jobs.

Table 4.14 shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 >$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on feedback from subordinates on operational matters that may positively or negatively impact their jobs. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected: $\chi^2(3, N = 35) = 16.771, p < .05, \chi^2 >$ critical value. This means that there is sufficient evidence for the null hypothesis to be rejected. Table 4.14 also shows that most of the line managers and subordinates strongly agreed and agreed that the subordinates provide feedback to their line managers that may positively or negatively affect their jobs.

4.5.3 Subordinates' view on line managers' efforts to improve on feedback in the workplace

Table 4.15 presents responses received from subordinates on the timeliness, approachability and confidentiality of feedback received from their line managers.

Table 4.15: Subordinates' responses on timeliness of feedback, approachability and confidentiality of feedback from their line managers

Subordinates' responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Subordinates' response: My <u>line manager provides timeous feedback</u> on changes to processes and other decisions that affect operational policies and processes made by senior management	6 (22%)	6 (22%)	7 (26%)	7 (26%)	1 (4%)	27 (100%)
My <u>line manager is approachable and encourages feedback</u> from subordinates within the School	7 (26%)	12 (44%)	6 (22%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	27 (100%)
My <u>line manager always discusses any positive/negative feedback regarding my behaviour or performance with me personally</u> prior to addressing all subordinates in general	8 (30%)	11 (40%)	4 (15%)	3 (11%)	1 (4%)	27 (100%)

4.5.3.1 Receiving timeous feedback from line managers on changes to processes and other decisions affecting operational policies and procedures made by senior management

A total of 22% and 22% of subordinates strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their line managers timeously provided them with feedback on changes to processes and other decisions affecting operational policies and procedures made by senior management. A total of 26% remained neutral on this question and 26% disagreed to this with 4% that strongly disagreed to this.

4.5.3.2 Are line managers approachable and do they encourage feedback from subordinates?

A total of 26% and 44% of subordinates strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that their line managers are approachable and that these line managers encourage feedback from subordinates. A total of 22% of subordinates remained neutral and 4% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that their line managers were approachable and encouraged feedback.

4.5.3.3 Line managers' approach in discussing positive or negative feedback regarding subordinates' behaviour or performance

A total of 30% and 40% of subordinates strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their line managers always discuss positive or negative feedback regarding the subordinates' behaviour or performance with them personally, prior to addressing all subordinates in general. A total of 15% remained neutral on this question and 11% of subordinates disagreed while 4% strongly disagreed on this.

4.6 Section Five – Communication actions by line managers that contribute to organizational culture

Section Five presents responses from line managers on listening empathetically and actively to subordinates; on taking an interest in subordinates' lives and showing caring towards subordinates without getting too personal and on including subordinates by considering subordinates' input in workplace decision-making that affects operational policies and procedures in the School.

Subordinates answered a similar set of questions presented in Section Five to line managers. All line managers answered the questions presented in Section Five and all subordinates answered a similar set of questions also presented in section five.

4.6.1 Are line managers empathetic and active listeners?

Table 4.16 below presents responses from both the line managers and subordinates on whether the line managers are empathetic and active listeners.

Table 4.16: Responses on whether the line manager is empathetic and an active listener

Responses by line managers and subordinates	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
As a line <u>manager</u> <i><u>I am an empathetic and active listener</u></i> when communicating with subordinates.	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)
My line manager <u>is</u> <i><u>and empathetic and active listener</u></i>	7 (26%)	11 (40%)	7 (26%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	27 (100%)

A total of 2 (25%) of line managers strongly agree that they are empathetic and active listeners when communicating with their subordinates, and 6 (75%) agree to doing so.

A total of 7 (26%) of subordinates strongly agree that their line managers are empathetic and active listeners and 11 (40%) agree while, 7 (26%) are neutral. One (4%) disagreed and 1 (4%) strongly disagreed on this.

4.6.1.1 Chi Square test of goodness of fit on whether line managers are empathetic and active listeners

Table 4.17 presents the Chi square test of goodness of fit output on line managers being empathetic and active listeners.

Table 4.17: Chi square output on whether line managers are empathetic and active listeners

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Strongly agree	9	7	2
Agree	17	7	10
Neither agree nor disagree	7	7	0
Disagree	1	7	-6
Strongly disagree	1	7	-6
Total	35		
Chi square value (χ^2)	25.143 ^a		
p value	0.000047		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	4		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	9.488		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H_0 : There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether the line managers are empathetic and active listeners.

H_1 : There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether the line managers are empathetic and active listeners.

Table 4.17 shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 >$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether line managers are empathetic and active listeners. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected: $\chi^2 (4, N = 35) = 0.000047, p < .05, \chi^2 >$ critical value. This means that there is sufficient evidence for the null hypothesis to be rejected. Table 4.17 also shows that most of the line managers and subordinates agreed that their line managers are empathetic and active listeners.

4.6.2 Do line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates without getting too personal?

Table 4.18 presents the responses received from line managers and their subordinates on the question whether the line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates.

Table 4.18: Responses on whether line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates without getting too personal

Responses by line managers and subordinates	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<u>I take an interest in the lives of my subordinates without getting too personal to show caring and appreciation</u> on their efforts to achieve organizational goals	2 (25%)	5 (62.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)
<u>My line manager takes an interest in subordinates' lives</u> without getting too personal.	6 (22%)	10 (37%)	9 (33%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	27 (100%)

A total of 2 (25%) of line managers strongly agree and 5 (62.5%) agree to taking an interest in the lives of their subordinates without getting too personal to show that they care and appreciate their subordinates' contribution towards achieving organizational goals. A total of 1 (12.5%) of line managers remained neutral on this question.

A total of 6 (22%) of subordinates strongly agree and 10 (37%) agree that line managers do take an interest in their lives. A total of 9 (33%) remained neutral and 1 (4%) and 1 (4%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that line managers took an interest in their personal lives or showed appreciation or caring towards them.

4.6.2.1 Chi square test of goodness of fit test on whether line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates

Table 4.19 presents the Chi square test of goodness of fit output on whether line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates.

Table 4.19: Chi square output on whether line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Strongly agree	8	7	1
Agree	15	7	8
Neither agree nor disagree	10	7	3
Disagree	1	7	-6
Strongly disagree	1	7	-6
Total	35		
Chi square value (χ^2)	20.857 ^a		
p value	0.000338		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	4		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	9.488		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H₀: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates.

H₁: There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates.

Table 4.19 shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 >$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether line managers are empathetic and active listeners. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected: $\chi^2 (4, N = 35) = 0.000338, p < .05, \chi^2 >$ critical value. This means that there is sufficient evidence for the null hypothesis to be rejected. Table 4.19 also shows that most of the line managers and subordinates strongly agreed and agreed that line managers take an interest in the lives of their subordinates.

4.6.3 Do subordinates trust their line managers to communicate with them personally or professionally?

Table 4.20 below presents the responses from subordinates to the question on whether their line manager can be trusted to communicate with them personally or professionally.

Table 4.20: Responses on whether the subordinates trust their line managers to communicate with them personally and professionally

Subordinates' Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I feel that <u><i>I can trust my line manager</i></u> enough to communicate with him/her about any problem that is personal or professional that impacts my job	5 (18%)	14 (51%)	4 (15%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	27 (100%)

A total of 5 (18%) of subordinates strongly agreed and 14 (51%) agreed that they can trust their line managers enough to communicate with them on any problem they may have either personal or professional, while 4 (15%) of subordinates remained neutral.

A total of 2 (8%) and another 2 (8%) of subordinates disagreed and strongly disagreed that they could trust their line managers.

4.6.3.1 Chi Square test of goodness of fit on whether line managers can be trusted by their subordinates to communicate with them professionally and personally

Table 4.21 presents the chi square test of goodness of fit output on whether line managers can be trusted by their subordinates to communication with them professionally and personally.

Table 4.21: Chi square output on whether subordinates trust their line managers to communicate with them personally and professionally

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Strongly agree	5	5.4	-4
Agree	14	5.4	8.6
Neither agree nor disagree	4	5.4	1.4
Disagree	2	5.4	3.4
Strongly disagree	2	5.4	3.4
Total	27		
Chi square value (χ^2)	18.370 ^a		
p value	0.001		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	4		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	9.488		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H₀: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether line managers can be trusted by their subordinates to communicate with them professionally and personally.

H₁: There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether line managers can be trusted by their subordinates to communicate with them professionally and personally.

Table 4.21 shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 >$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether line managers can be trusted by their subordinates to communicate with them professionally and personally. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected: $\chi^2 (4, N = 27) = 0.001, p < .05, \chi^2 >$ critical value. This means that there is sufficient evidence for the null hypothesis to be rejected. Table 4.21 also shows that most of the subordinates agreed that line managers can be trusted to communicate with them professionally and personally.

4.6.4 Do line managers give subordinates an opportunity to provide input in decision-making that affects operational policies and procedures?

Table 4.22 present responses from line managers and subordinates on the question whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes.

Table 4.22: Responses on whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes

Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Line managers <u>allow</u> <u>Subordinates an opportunity to provide input</u> in decision-making that affect operational policies and/or procedures in the School	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)

My <u>line manager</u> <u>always</u> <u>encourages</u> <u>subordinates to provide input</u> in decision-making processes	7 (26%)	10 (37%)	6 (22%)	0 (0%)	4 (15%)	27 (100%)
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A total of 2 (25%) of line managers strongly agreed and 4 (50%) agreed that they allow opportunities to their subordinates to provide their input in decision-making that affects operational policies and procedures within their Schools. There are 2 (25%) of line managers that neither agreed or disagreed with this and therefore remained neutral.

A total of 7 (26%) strongly agreed and 10 (37%) of subordinates agreed that they are encouraged by their line managers to provide input in decision-making processes in their Schools. A total of 6 (22%) remained neutral on this question, and a total of 4 (15%) strongly disagree that their line managers give them opportunities to provide input in decision-making processes in their Schools.

4.6.4.1 Chi square test of goodness of fit test on whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes

Table 4.23 presents the chi square test of goodness of fit output on whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes.

Table 4.23: Chi square output on whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes

Responses	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Residual (Observed - Expected)
Strongly agree	5	5.4	-4
Agree	14	5.4	8.6
Neither agree nor disagree	4	5.4	1.4

Disagree	2	5.4	3.4
Strongly disagree	2	5.4	3.4
Total	27		
Chi square value (χ^2)	18.370 ^a		
p value	0.001		
Alpha (α)	0.05		
Degrees of freedom	4		
Critical value of χ^2 using the chi square distribution table	9.488		

a. Zero cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. The frequency has been calculated using the combined responses from line managers and subordinates for each category.

H₀: There are no significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes.

H₁: There are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes.

Table 4.23 shows that the chi-square value is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and ($\chi^2 >$ critical value). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the observed and expected frequency distribution on whether subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected: $\chi^2(4, N = 27) = 0.001, p < .05, \chi^2 >$ critical value. This means that there is sufficient evidence for the null hypothesis to be rejected. Table 4.23 also shows that most of the subordinates agreed that they are allowed an opportunity to provide input in decision-making processes.

Part Three

4.7 Section Six - Recommendations from line managers and subordinates to improve communication effectiveness within each School

The following points are the recommendations received from the line managers and subordinates to improve communication effectiveness within the Schools:

- *“It is important that support staff have meetings with their supervisors. I feel that in the University, often the support staff do not get together often enough to discuss ideas or general meetings to air problems/solutions etc.” (Respondent One)*
- *“Colleagues should have a positive attitude towards work. Always obey the policies and processes of the place of work; line managers should be a little bit more empathetic towards staff members by not exploiting them” (Respondent Two)*
- *“A line manager that is on my campus - and not between 2 campuses. It's always a rush - as only one day a week is spent here.” (Respondent Three)*
- *“Training” (Respondent Four)*
- *“There needs to be more clarity and transparency when it comes to explaining School operational procedures by Senior Management to Line Managers. This in turn will translate into immediate Line Managers being better informed and providing staff that report to them with important information. Staff should not need to prompt Line Managers for information. Line Managers should engage in monthly meetings with Senior Management and staff reporting to them, so any pending issues do not escalate.” (Respondent Five)*
- *“There are two barriers to communication with staff in my experience: 1. Distance from staff: some staff are on other campuses and it is simply impossible to interact with them as effectively as I can with the staff on my own campus. Every attempt is made to do so but it is not possible to have enough face-to-face interaction; 2. Excessive workloads: When you are continuously in College/School meetings and/or have numerous deadlines, the first thing to fall off the table is timeous communication of information (often from these same meetings) to staff. This is not*

intentional but is difficult to avoid when there is information overload and no time in between to process and pass on the details.” (Respondent Six)

- *“To try and involve people that are at operational level in processes and eliminate top-down approach and enforce the common goal of the organization and how each employee contribute to those goals.” (Respondent Seven)*
- *“There are too many layers of management in our School which is unnecessary. Most times important messages do not filter down to admin staff. Important decisions concerning our work is made without consultation with admin staff. When we suggest, we always get negative feedback.” (Respondent Eight)*
- *“Communication from managers to subordinates to be done at all times. (Respondent Nine)*
- *“Foster an environment where communication at, and between, all operational levels is encouraged and valued.” (Respondent Ten)*
- *“Cut down on the levels of reporting. we have the Dean, then School Manager, then School Assistant manager, and School Administrator. Communicate directly with staff involved instead of going 3 layers. Respect admin staff portfolios. Complain but nothing much happens.” (Respondent Eleven)*
- *“Regular one-on-one meetings.” (Respondent Twelve)*
- *“If something is urgent and you have emailed, give a courtesy call to make sure the person read the email and is aware” (Respondent Thirteen)*
- *“More social interaction” (Respondent Fourteen)*
- *“More contact with each other (tea, meetings?)” (Respondent Fifteen)*

- *“Regular communication between line manager and subordinates. More informal admin meetings between managers and subordinates. Not only criticize the bad but praise the good.” (Respondent Sixteen)*
- *“Short face-to-face "catch up" meetings (maybe beginning of every week); More regular tea breaks (many issues can be raised when staff are in a more relaxed environment. Staff can then be encouraged to raise these issues at a higher level). No tea room for admin staff on the PMB campus” (Respondent Seventeen)*

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented the results of this research, in the form of bar charts and tables. The chapter showed the responses to the questionnaire from both the line managers and subordinates anonymously. The data was combined into categories to provide more meaningful information. The next chapter will offer a discussion of the research findings, followed by recommendations and a conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings from the research in conjunction with the information uncovered from the literature in Chapter Two.

The sections to follow will discuss each of the research findings, provide a recommendation and finally, reach a conclusion. This chapter discusses whether the research objectives of the study have been met and how.

5.1.1 Demographic profile of line managers and subordinates

In the gender category, the results are indicative that the majority of the respondents were females, at 75% for line managers and 86% for subordinates. In the age category, the data showed that from the total number of respondents, the highest percentage of 45% of subordinates and 37.5% of line managers fell in the 42-49 age group category. This is a very interesting statistic as it shows that majority of the employees within the Schools are older or mature people.

While older staff bring maturity, knowledge and experience to the workplace, it should be noted that the younger generation also bring in new, fresh ideas and are more advanced in using modern communication technology within the organization. This generation reduces costs for the organization in terms of training the older generation on how to use more modern communication technologies. Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) state that Millennials (those born between 1979-1994), favour open and frequent communication with their managers and are comfortable with communication technologies, while the older staff may be less communicative and willing to part with their knowledge because of fear of losing their jobs to their younger counterparts. Wagner, Hassanein and Head (2010) observe that older adults when compared to younger adults, have dissimilar needs and concerns when it comes to using computers (technology) and that this becomes more noticeable at around 45 years of age. Their needs and concerns stem from “the natural physical (declines in vision, hearing and psychomotor coordination) and cognitive changes (reduced attention span,

decline in memory, and changes in spatial abilities) that come with aging (Wagner et al., 2010:871).”

Guan (2009) investigated the intergenerational relationships in organizational settings using Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) to observe the influence of age, power and culture on young workers’ views on intergenerational communication. The findings of the research study showed that young workers did not perceive any significant differences in communication between elderly peers and young peers. Venter (2017) mention in a journal article that the key to effective communication between both younger and older employees is that both generations need to be open-minded. The younger generation should not consider the older generation as ignorant regarding the use of technology and the older generation should not regard the younger generation as a threat, but rather as presenting an opportunity to learn (Venter, 2017). Based on the above, it can be noted that in any workplace, everyone should respect each other and be able to work together irrespective of their age and competence. Communication lines should always be open amongst everyone.

Recommendation: It is suggested that having a sufficient balance of younger versus older staff within any organization can enhance communication within the workplace and be of benefit to any organization. This is because Millennials are more communicative; they do not hesitate to impart information and knowledge, as opposed to some of the older employers who are not willing to part with the knowledge that they may have gained from being in their position, due to fear of losing their jobs to their younger counterparts. The research studies cited on the age differences in the organization show that it is important for management to create a culture within the organization where everyone respects one another, no matter what age an employee is. This will generate a harmonious working environment and foster diversity in the workplace.

Conclusion: Several important points on the demographic profile emerge. One is that there is a significant difference in the age group category with the majority of the respondents falling into the 42-49 age group. This indicates that the employees within the School are of a mature age group. Although the older employees bring maturity and more experience into the workplace, from a communications perspective the younger generation are more open to modern communication technologies with which most companies are embracing. The

millennial generation are more open to changes in technology and adapt very easily to using digital types of communication, whereas the older generation may be resistant to change and the use of new communication technological methods of communication. However, they can help each other.

5.1.2 Medium of communication in communicating urgent matters in comparison with subordinates' preferences

From the present study, it was found that the highest number of line managers prefer using email to communicate urgent matters and no first line managers preferred using face-to-face communication when communicating on important urgent matters. However, 35% of the subordinates surveyed preferred their line managers to use face-to-face communication.

This is most probably because of the heavy reliance that modern society has placed on the use of communication technology. Bloom et al. (2014) reported that with the widespread use of inexpensive wired and wireless communications, people find it easier to communicate via email and mobile devices. It must be understood that with communication technology there is no definite way of knowing whether the chosen technological method of communication is the most effective method. This is because there is no guarantee of the sender knowing when the recipient will receive the message, especially if it is urgent. Ergen (2010) emphasizes that the key to effective internal communication is knowing which tool to use and which communication channel is correct for a certain situation. Galbreath (2010) infers that for urgent matters it is better to communicate face-to-face rather than through emails. Emails are often read with divided attention and sometimes even ignored for a while. This represents a time lag in the communication of an urgent matter, a factor which must be considered when deciding which method of communication to use. In order to obtain immediate attention on an urgent matter, the message should be delivered verbally and in person (Galbreath, 2010).

Another important point to note about email communication of urgent matters is that there is a lack of non-verbal cues (body language, facial expressions and gestures, for example). For Derks and Bakker (2010), this implies that not all information is transferred when emails are used to communicate an urgent matter. This can be a barrier to effective communication

by giving rise to miscommunication through the misinterpretation of information. Information can be misunderstood because it was taken in the wrong context via the electronic medium (Hill, 2015). Information on a technological media lack the context, tone and non-verbal indications that may aid an employee to interpret your urgent message more clearly (Galbreath, 2010). This consequently impacts on the decoding of others' emotions because non-verbal cues cannot be used in the interpretation of incoming message, whereas with face-to-face communication there is the benefit of non-verbal cues. These reduce the potential vagueness of information that is received. Verbal communication can depict various indications depending on the tone, emphasis and emotional expression used (Derks and Bakker, 2010).

Hill (2015) states that while technology such as email communication does have advantages, it also has disadvantages such as reducing face-to-face interactions in the workplace, which impacts on teamwork. Face-to-face communication is about what is communicated and how it is communicated, whereas email messages are restricted to only what is communicated and not how it is communicated (Derks and Bakker, 2010).

Recommendation: It is recommended that line managers use more face-to-face communication with their subordinates especially when communicating urgent work-related matters, to ensure that there is a smooth workflow and that there is consensus on any given instruction between both line manager and subordinate. As mentioned above, when there is heavy reliance on communication technologies as a medium of communication, this results in less frequent face-to-face interactions which impacts on team work and the culture of the organization.

Conclusion: The key finding in this section was that subordinates would like their line managers to use face-to-face communication when communicating on urgent matters, as opposed to their line managers who prefer using emails as a medium of communication when communicating urgent work-related matters. Using the face-to-face communication method or a combination of methods in communicating on urgent matters will foster a better working

relationship between line managers and their subordinates, and will ensure that the urgent important information is communicated effectively.

5.1.3 Frequency of interactions in communicating with subordinates on operational matters

The results from the survey showed that 50% of line managers communicated with their subordinates on a weekly basis on operational matters, while the other half of the line managers communicated daily (25%), monthly (12.5%) and daily or weekly as required (12.5%). This data indicates that the line managers communicate in an adequate time frame with their subordinates on operational matters. It is no wonder, then, that more than half of the line managers (62.5%) believe that there is a need to communicate more frequently.

Finch et al. (2010) state that a line manager and subordinates need to decide as a team how often to meet to communicate on operational matters. Galbreath (2010) is of a similar view and argues that a manager should create the culture for communication on operational matters, and that regular communication can be done via informal communication such as spending 15 minutes a day if possible, on non-transactional conversation. This is conversation that is informal with no specified purpose, such as a delegation of a task. Since communication is variable in nature, the frequency of meetings is also dependent on the situation. If the situation is volatile, then meeting for 5-10 minutes every day may be necessary, for example in the case of staff/student protests at the University. In less volatile situations, meetings may be held on a weekly or biweekly basis (Finch et al., 2010).

Osborne (2017) highlights that many companies either communicate too much or too little with staff. Managers need find the right balance by having a specific reason for each interaction and sticking to obligations instead of just an agenda. While it is vital to communicate regularly with staff to keep up to date on operational matters, holding formal meetings daily or weekly can become a tedious task. Johnson (2018) suggests that managers should meet regularly but not weekly to avoid the meetings getting too mundane. An option is to hold regular meetings on a one-on-one basis throughout the month. Similarly, Galbreath (2010) advises that regular communication can be done via one-on-one meetings

with subordinates. However, these should be at least bi-weekly since they serve as an excellent opportunity to check on work progress and identify work problems. They can also be used as a motivational tool. Group meetings at the start of a day is also another beneficial way for managers to communicate to converse about the goals, challenges and operating plan of the day (Galbreath, 2010). Osborne (2017) reported that managers should not keep important information that needs to be shared with employees for the end of the day or week, since employees are more than likely to be less focused.

Recommendation: As stated above, the frequency of communication is dependent on the situation, and volatile situations would require more frequent meetings, whereas if the communication is to catch up on operational activities from subordinates and to provide subordinates with information from management meetings, then a meeting with subordinates on a weekly basis is sufficient. Setting regular meetings with subordinates creates a better working relationship between line managers and their subordinates, with each party keeping the other updated on what is perceived and what is expected. Communicating regularly also increases productivity, encourages face-to-face communication and makes everyone feel a part of the team. It is, however, also important that managers realise that even though it is important to communicate regularly, too much or too little communication may lead to ineffective communication. Managers need to keep a good balance for the frequency of communication based on the situation, reason for the communication and its urgency.

Conclusion: Frequent communication from line managers to their subordinates and *vice versa*, is imperative for any working team to operate efficiently and to be successful in the organization's operations.

5.1.4 Subordinates view on whether line managers provide instructions timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks

Data from the responses on the survey showed that most of the subordinates strongly agreed and agreed (22% and 37% respectively) that their line managers provide instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks. There were 4% and 22% that strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively.

This question was asked to find out the communication style of line managers when providing instructions to subordinates and whether line managers show respect to their subordinates. Asamu (2014) states that by developing a leadership style that resonates with employees, the leader achieves increased productivity. On the other hand, a poor leadership style results in poor communication, which in turn negatively affects an employee's performance and productivity. This was tested in the current study by using the time factor. A line manager should trust his/her employees by allowing them to handle the task on their own and not micro-manage the process of completing the task (Reh, 2018). Leviticus (2018) highlights that an employee's ability to complete a task is dependent upon the skills of the line manager. Some of the reasons for this may be due to a failure in understanding the task, lack of time to complete the task or resentment at being micro-managed. Reh (2018) states that firstly, line managers should always deliver a context for the task to be accomplished: this is because employees work at their best when they know the importance of the task to the larger operation. Secondly, and most importantly, the line manager must be specific about when the task should be completed and if there is any quality standard attached to the task. DeMers (2018) reports that a timeline for a specific task should be constructed when providing tasks. The dates must be reasonable enough so that the completion of the task can be achieved, but it should also be aggressive enough to keep the task as a priority.

The current survey responses show that although just over half of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their line manager provides instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks, while a considerable number of respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed and remained neutral. This shows that managers do not always allow sufficient time to complete a task, which can be disrespectful towards an employee, as the manager is failing to recognise that the employee may have conflicting priorities and deadlines. Asamu (2014) states that employees perform better when a realistic level of expectations between employee and employer exist and when communication interactions are fair and equal. Leviticus (2018) advises that a manager must ensure that a time is set aside to discuss the task, and that during this time, expectations must be explained in detail, and the reason why the task is important should also be mentioned. A deadline for completion must be given; should the task be complex then the employee should be asked

how long he/she anticipates the task will take to complete and only then should a decision on a deadline be agreed upon (Leviticus, 2018).

Recommendation: Since it is evident that 4% and 22% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that their line manager provides instructions timeously, allowing for sufficient time to complete tasks, it is recommended that line managers provide instructions to subordinates in a timeous manner allowing them sufficient time to complete the task. The guidelines cited above serve as appropriate techniques that may be used to ensure that tasks are delegated efficiently and effectively ensuring the successful completion of tasks without disregarding the employee's other deadlines and urgent tasks that he/she may have.

Conclusion: Line managers and subordinates should set precedents at their regular meetings on what is expected from each other in terms of how they will be communicating on instructions and the time given to complete tasks. In other words, a strategy of how the team will function in terms of instructions being delegated must be planned and clearly set out. In doing so, the organization will be operating efficiently and effectively. The employees will be satisfied, engaged and more productive.

5.1.5 The importance of the environment in face-to-face communication

The results indicated that both line managers and subordinates strongly agreed and agreed that the environment in face-to-face communication is important. The percentages for line managers who strongly agreed and agreed were 62.5% and 37.5% respectively. For the subordinates, the percentages who strongly agreed and agreed were 46% and 54% respectively.

The environment in which face-to-face communication takes place is important as it sets the tone for what is being communicated. Dohen, Schwartz and Bailly (2010) highlights that face-to-face conversation is challenging in that the receiver must consider and assimilate messages from both the sender and the actual setting in which the communication takes place. Communication varies dependent on the physical location or where the interaction takes place. The setting can either negatively or positively affect communication. Factors such as the setting, climate, temperature and time of day etc. can affect communication and

present various barriers to effective communication (Ricker, 2018). Kumbakonam (2016) is of the same view that the setting in which communication takes place can be a barrier to effective communication.

The environment in which communication takes place, the “task” in which the speakers are involved in, their own roles and the environmental conditions of the communication, significantly impact how the communication exchange unfolds (Dohen et al., 2010). This is because the message may not be understood in the correct context if the environment is not correct. For example, consider a line manager informing a subordinate of something that needs to be done urgently at a year-end function. The communication made has definitely taken place in the wrong environment. This is because the seriousness of the matter may be taken lightly due to the environment in which the manager and subordinate find themselves. Parks (2004) states that timing should be considered; this is because there is a place and time for everything. Using appropriate timing indicates that one has taken person and occasion into consideration and knows when a message should be shared.

Recommendation: It is recommended that when communication is done between the line manager and subordinate, the environment in which it is done must always be considered.

Conclusion: It is extremely important for a line manager or subordinate to communicate in the correct environment to ensure that the message is understood in the correct context and that it is not miscommunicated. From a communications perspective, it is therefore of utmost importance that when communication does take place in the wrong environment, the person who has been affected by the miscommunication does raise the issue immediately or at some point in time with the offender so that it does not occur again and does not have an opportunity of becoming the norm.

5.1.6 Rating of verbal and written skills by line managers and subordinates

Most of the line managers that responded rated their verbal skills as good while most of the subordinates that responded rated their verbal skills as excellent. Surprisingly, none of the line managers felt that their verbal skills were excellent. Most of the line managers and subordinates rated their written skills as excellent and good. Florence (2014) highlights the

importance of having successful communication skills. This author states that it aids in identifying and improving on ways in which a specific job can be done. Keyton et al. (2013) stated that with the move from blue collar to white collar employment there is much greater emphasis on employee's interpersonal skills and the ability to work well within a team. It is for this reason that communication skills are what employers look for when recruiting employees. Conrad (2014) mentioned in an article that in order for an organization to be successful it should recruit employees that are capable of processing information quickly, clearly, effectively and accurately.

Recommendation: It is recommended that staff should be provided with an opportunity for training to improve on any communication inefficiency with regard to their verbal and written skills. In any organization this is mostly highlighted to staff by the line manager during the performance management and training and development processes.

Conclusion: It is concluded that management should evaluate staff on verbal and written skills. Based on the assessment results, the employees that require training on communicating effectively should be allowed the opportunity to gain this. This will benefit the organization and will also improve on the skills of the employee.

5.1.7 Line managers' efforts to improve workplace communication

Line managers were asked a question on whether they alert staff to information that they may have first-hand knowledge of, which may have been publicised on the UKZN website, email notice system, or notice boards. Most of the line managers (87.5%) responded that they do alert staff to this information. There are times when line managers attend meetings about changes to processes, for example, and this is sometimes automatically not filtered down to the front-line employees. This may occur because details about how, when and by whom the change will be executed, may not have been discussed before the end of the meeting. This results in miscommunication and negatively impacts on the organization. Kandlousi et al. (2010) are of the view that it is the responsibility of the line managers to handle and administer the communication process. Conrad (2014) has a similar view to Kandlousi (2010), that it is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that there is

communication flowing upward, downward and across the organization, for the organization to be responsible for how changes to policies and procedures are communicated.

The data from the survey on the question whether line managers take the time to verbally explain to their subordinates the important points of lengthy and complex documentation on workplace policies and procedures showed that only 50% of the line managers responded that they do take the time to do this. This is interesting to note as it does impact on operational efficiencies, ensuring that any changes to policies and procedures are understood by the employees. Most of the subordinates (59%) responded that their line managers do take the time to explain important points of lengthy and complex documentation on workplace policies and procedures.

Taking the time to explain the important points of lengthy documentation on policies and procedures will ensure that the employees understand what is expected of them. Important changes to processes and policies should also be brought to the subordinates' attention. Whether an organization has developed an employee guidebook, a policy manual or some other form of documentation that represents a company's policies, it is vital that the contents of the information are communicated to employees especially when updates are being made (Hesse, 2016). Hesse (2016) mentions that employees need to be informed of why the document was developed, what purpose it serves and how it will be utilized in the organization. This is especially important for front-line administrators that are dealing directly with students and the public to ensure that incorrect and/or outdated information is not given to the students and the public. Asamu (2014) mention that poor communication from management leads to lower employee commitment to the organization. On the contrary, effective communication improves job satisfaction and in turn, productivity (Asamu, 2014).

The importance of management verbally explaining the important points of complex, lengthy documentation to their subordinates is critical to ensuring that correct information on policies and procedures of the university is disseminated to students and the public at all times. This leads to effective communication from both line managers to their subordinates and from the subordinates to the students and the public. Osborne (2017) states that a manager should ensure that communication is "two-way" as soon as possible, and that employees should be given a chance for exchange of ideas, queries and clearing up of critical

matters. Verbally explaining key points of complex, lengthy documentation also affords subordinates an opportunity to seek clarification. Belonwu (2018) states that managers should allow room for feedback from employees so that they can ensure that information being communicated is clearly understood. Managers and employees at all levels should be able to share information and learn from each other, as this will enable a better understanding of company goals and processes. Each employee will have knowledge of where he/she fits in within a process and how it impacts on reaching the goals of the company as a whole (Bowden, 2018).

Recommendation: It is recommended that management alerts all of their subordinates to important information that they may have first-hand knowledge of and not rely on the subordinates to update themselves. Managers need to ensure that the important points of lengthy documents are highlighted and explained to employees, to ensure that there is an understanding of the document and a chance for employees to gain clarity if any points are misunderstood.

Conclusion: Line managers must always ensure that their subordinates are updated on important information which is already publicised and of which they may have first-hand knowledge. This will reduce operational inefficiencies and ensure that subordinates are kept up-to-date on information that would aid operational processes. Important points of lengthy documents should be verbally explained to employees to ensure that the information is understood, and to provide employees an opportunity to seek clarity on information that they may not understand.

5.1.8 Approachability between line managers and subordinates

Both line managers and the subordinates were asked the same question on whether subordinates will approach the line manager if there are any uncertainties on instructions given or if clarity is required on a job-related matter and/or policy changes that may have arisen. The responses from the line managers showed that an equal number (37.5%) of line managers strongly agreed and agreed that their subordinates will approach them for clarity.

The subordinates' responses showed that 44% and 41% of the subordinates strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they will approach their line manager for clarity.

In order to be approachable, line managers need to create a receptive environment (Belonwu, 2018), and be transparent and upfront about any type of information being communicated; this raises trust and understanding between employees and managers. In addition, managers need to be wary of their communication style, which includes every aspect such as making eye contact, facial expressions and body language (Johnson, 2018). These aspects indicate whether a line manager is seen as being approachable and willing to communicate. Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang (2014) mention in an article that when a culture of open communication is embraced, fewer conflict situations arise in the workplace. When communication is open and clear, there is a mutual understanding of trust that is built between the line managers and their subordinates (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). Hussain (2013) is of a similar view, that when effective communication is practised, line management builds trust with employees. Once a level of trust is established between managers and employees and all other stakeholders, a positive relationship is established between all persons within the organization (Hussain, 2013). Morgan (2014) mentions that one should build a reputation to gain trust. By doing this, they can be seen as trustworthy authorities, enthusiastic team members or reliable employees. Making a good first impression is important; power and intellect should not be flaunted in an effort to be a compelling communicator. What is most critical is that people should not be strong-armed in order to get someone to pay attention. Confidence is key when effectively communicating (Morgan, 2014).

Recommendation: It is recommended that managers should always have an open-door policy with their subordinates to encourage communication. In order to ensure that there is effective communication between line managers and subordinates, line managers need to always encourage a working culture of transparency, honesty and respect for each other. This then breaks down the barriers to communication and builds a strong working relationship between managers and their subordinates.

Conclusion: Feedback is vital for the smooth operation of the institution as well as for strategic planning. It opens the lines of communication between line manager and

subordinate if there is adequate two-way communication between both parties. Feedback from both parties is important because if there are decisions made by management that is not communicated to the subordinates, then the decisions made become futile and the changes will not be implemented. Likewise, no planning and/or corrective measures can be taken if subordinates do not provide feedback to their line managers on operational matters.

5.1.9 Feedback between line managers and subordinates

The line managers and subordinates were asked similar questions on providing feedback to one another. Mishra et al. (2014) state that this process is called internal communication, a process in which management and employees communicate with each other, thus promoting transparency within the workplace.

Most of line managers strongly agreed and agreed that they regularly obtain feedback from their subordinates on any given task. Feedback from subordinates on any task given is extremely important in any organization to facilitate two-way communication between the line manager and employees. Managers therefore need to find ways to obtain feedback without the employees feeling micro-managed. Mulholland (2017) suggests that managers could have a feedback time at general meetings where employees have an opportunity to provide feedback on the progress with their tasks. This means that help may be asked for before the employee even needs it, and employees may let the team know when they might need to reach out for advice. This has the advantage of the team being able to design their task lists more effectively and to support one another when help is needed. Feedback is important especially for long term tasks since it gives the manager awareness on progress with the task and the employee an opportunity to raise any questions and difficulties experienced in the process of completing the task (DeMers, 2018).

For the question on whether subordinates keep their line managers updated on operational matters that may positively or negatively affect their jobs, policies/or processes, the results showed that most of the line managers and subordinates strongly agreed and agreed to the question. When employees keep their line manager updated on operational matters, steps can be taken to manage any difficulties and positive feedback can be noted for future

reference. Karanges et al. (2015) note that if adequate internal communication exists between managers and employees, it results in employees being more engaged with their jobs, and this in turn results in increased productivity, decreased attrition, an increased company reputation and image as well increased financial returns. Ramirez (2012) states that being satisfied with the level of communication within an organization is important for all parties. This is because it impacts on whether an organization is successful or not in achieving its goals and objectives. It is therefore imperative for management and their staff not only to recognize the importance of communicating effectively, but to also develop strategies that give rise to quality communication (Ramirez, 2012).

For the question on whether the line manager provides subordinates with timeous feedback regarding changes to processes and other decisions that affect operational policies and processes made by senior management, the results were almost equally spread between strongly agree and disagree in the 20-26% range. This indicates that changes to policies and procedures are not effectively communicated to subordinates by their managers within the Schools. This question was asked to determine whether information about changes to policies or processes from management is filtered to front-line staff timeously. This is important because if there is a change made to policies and processes that is as a result of new legislation on company policies, which is not timeously communicated to employees, then employees will be functioning on outdated information and the company's performance may have legal implications. This is because of a time lag between the implementation of the change and the communication of the change to employees. Lotich (2015) states that an organization must ensure that structured communication processes are in place to disseminate information throughout the organization. According to Lotich (2015), the following questions need to be answered:

- Is communicating with employees a priority?
- What is the frequency of information sharing?
- What is the process for sharing new information with employees?

It is best to inform employees of the decision to make any changes to policies and procedures at the onset before documentation is done. This is to keep them informed of the process and to obtain their buy-in, interest and valuable input (Hesse, 2016). Every bit of information

about the change should be communicated as soon as the information is available and significant amounts of time should be allowed to employees for questions, to seek clarity and to provide input. Employees need to feel involved in the change process, as this will generate commitment to the change and is a development of great significance during a change process (Heathfield, 2018).

The question on whether the line manager is approachable and encourages feedback from subordinates showed the following results: most of the subordinates strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This question was asked to determine whether communication between the line manager and subordinate is effective.

For effective communication to exist, the line manager needs to be approachable and needs to encourage feedback from employees. Parks (2004) highlights that being approachable means that the line manager needs to be conscious of how his/her actions and words are portrayed by the employee when an employee wishes to communicate with their manager. If the manager comes across as being inattentive or is too busy to hear the employee, then that employee may portray the manager as being unapproachable (Parks, 2004). Mulholland (2017) states that every communication exchange between the line manager and employees is an opportunity to obtain useful feedback and to build a strong connection, or to push employees away. The best way to build a good connection is to be clear and encouraging of feedback from employees. Managers can encourage feedback via regular meetings, either one-on-one or as a team, or by having a suggestion box in the workplace where employees can leave suggestions, or to set up some other anonymous source to leave comments (Mulholland, 2017).

The last question on feedback asked whether the line manager always addresses any positive/negative feedback regarding employee behaviour or performance with the employee prior to addressing the staff in general, showed that most of the subordinates strongly agreed and agreed respectively. This question was asked to determine how effective was the managers' communication style rated.

Providing feedback to employees whether positive/negative on their performance or behaviour is of extreme importance as it allows the employee to know what they are doing right and what behaviour/performance needs to be improved on. Constructive criticism is not always easy to absorb by employees and it is even more difficult for managers to give (Hassell, 2018). It is therefore at such times that managers address an issue in general, for example, relating to a specific employee in a staff meeting with all staff, rather than with that particular employee in a one-on-one meeting, to avoid the daunting task. However, this may be an ineffective method as the employee in question may not be even aware that he/she is the reason an issue was raised at the meeting, and may be of the opinion that the manager is speaking about another employee. The managers who are uncomfortable with providing feedback especially if it is negative, either do not provide feedback or provide vague feedback that is difficult to understand (Blankenship, 2016).

Recommendation: Line managers should always obtain feedback from their subordinates on any given task, to ensure that there are no difficulties experienced by a subordinate in performing any given task. Likewise, the subordinates should always keep their line managers updated on operational matters since both parties need to have a good knowledge of how the School is operating and whether it is functioning in accordance with what is expected, to meet the goals of the School and institution as a whole.

With regard to timeously providing feedback on changes to policies and procedures, line managers must ensure that information of such a nature is passed on to their subordinates as soon as possible to ensure that up-to-date information is provided from the School to the students and the public. If this is not done timeously, inefficiencies and miscommunications may occur and this will result in frustrated students. The image of the institute may also be brought into disrepute.

When a line manager is approachable and encourages feedback, this results in an environment of open communication lines between line manager and subordinate. Encouraging feedback also aids in strategic planning as the line manager will be provided with vital information on the operations of the School and will be able to plan accordingly.

The last question was on how the line manager addresses any positive or negative feedback regarding the behaviour or performance of a subordinate. This should be done one-on-one with the subordinate first and then generally, so that the rest of the staff know what is expected. It is also important to affect a change in the subordinate's behaviour or performance if the issue with the specific subordinate is raised directly with the person. If it is addressed generally with all staff and not the particular subordinate that is concerned, then he/she will not know that they are at fault if it is negative feedback, for example, and will therefore not change their behaviour or performance.

Conclusion: Feedback is vital for the smooth operation of the institution as well as for strategic planning. It opens the lines of communication between line manager and subordinate if there is adequate two-way communication between both parties. Feedback from both parties is important because if there are decisions made by management and it is not communicated to the subordinates then the decisions made become futile and the changes will not be implemented. Likewise, no planning and or corrective measures can be taken if subordinates do not provide feedback to their line managers on operational matters.

5.1.10 Communication actions of line managers that enhance organizational culture

Lunenburg (2010) states that School administrators can be better communicators, and that effective communication requires a two-way process of skill and effort from both the person sending the message and the person receiving the message. The author goes on to mention that the Schools must be aware of the sender and receivers' responsibilities and must cultivate to active listening skills (Lunenburg, 2010). Parks (2004) stresses that time spent in careful listening is much more worthwhile than time spent in damage control.

A question was asked to line managers on whether they are empathetic and active listeners. The responses showed that most of the line managers and subordinates strongly agreed and agreed to this question.

Managers who display the ability to control, be conscious of, express their emotions and to handle interpersonal relationships wisely and empathetically, possess the skill of emotional intelligence. This skill displays a mark of professional maturity and may take years to grow

and develop, and a life-time to master (Lotich, 2015). If a line manager wishes to open the lines of communication and break down any barriers to communication, then he/she must also show subordinates that he/she cares about them and that the efforts of the subordinates towards reaching organizational goals are appreciated. This makes the subordinates feel satisfied in their jobs and a valuable asset to the organization. Johnson (2018) states that managers should closely listen to their employees. When time is set aside for employees, a manager should not be answering the telephone or looking through emails while the employee is speaking; the employee should be allowed to speak without any interruptions.

The better a line manager's reputation is at listening, the greater the chance of employees being comfortable enough to communicate with the manager. When this culture is created, the line manager and subordinates are bound to be a successful team. Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang (2014) state that when there is open communication from management to all employees and *vice versa*, a positive relationship is built. Employees feel valued, appreciated and cared for, and thus a strong personal and professional relationship is built. With a culture of open communication in the workplace, employees are also bound to be more loyal and therefore have longer tenures (Adu-Oppong and Agyin-Birikorang, 2014).

The next question asked line managers whether they take an interest in the lives of their subordinates without getting too personal. The results from the line managers showed the highest number of line managers, 62.5%, agreed to this question. The subordinates were asked the same question on whether their line manager takes an interest in employees' lives without getting too personal and the results showed that 22% of subordinates strongly agreed and 37% agreed.

When a line manager takes an interest in the lives of subordinates without getting too personal, it aids in building a relationship between the manager and subordinates. It also results in the elimination of the working environment being too hostile. Hall (2018) states that when employees feel valued and appreciated, they are more likely to go the extra mile for the organization. They will also be more satisfied in their roles. If managers do not

connect with their employees, then they run the risk of losing dedicated and long-term employees.

Some managers find it difficult to personally connect with employees and still hold a position of authority. In this situation, all a manager needs to do is show their employees that they care. This can be done by taking an interest in the personal life of an employee without getting too personal (Hall, 2018). For example, there may be instances where an employee may be experiencing some personal difficulties in their life that may be impacting on their work because of a change in behaviour due to anxiety, depression or concern etc. When a line manager steps into this situation by checking in on the particular employee via informal communication, it is beneficial to both the employee and the institution as the line manager may then decide to help the employee with their problem. This may be done by counselling the employee, for example, or getting another employee to assist with certain duties of the affected employee to ensure that operations still run smoothly and so that the employee feels less stressed until the problem is resolved. Ramirez (2012) states that this is referred to as supervisor communication, which is the degree to which a superior is viewed as a listener and a measure of how well they pay attention to employees.

A question was asked to the subordinates on whether they felt they could trust their line manager to communicate with him/her on any problem that is personal or professional, that impacts their job. The responses from the subordinates showed that 18% and 51% strongly agreed and agreed to this.

Line managers will be obtaining valuable information for decision-making on whether to change certain policies or procedures and seek to obtain information on which ones are not working well. Hindering communication lines in this area means that the line manager is actually blocking a valuable source of information that is required for the smooth operation of the School. Employees tend to keep quiet if there is the perception that the company culture and their manager discourages input, suggestions and the highlighting of problems being voiced by employees. A recent study showed that if employees of an organization are of the opinion that company policies are unfair, then no amount of employee input would generate a good employee-superior connection (Galbreath, 2010).

The final question in this section was asked to both line managers and subordinates on whether subordinates were allowed to provide input in decision-making that affects

operational policies and procedures within the School. The results showed that 25% and 50% of the line managers strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their subordinates were allowed to make input in decision-making that affects operational policies and procedures within the School. The subordinates' responses to this question showed that 26% and 37% strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that they were allowed to provide input in decision-making that affects operational policies and procedures within the School. Hussain (2013) states that employees who are allowed to provide input in decision-making processes have higher levels of job satisfaction and are more likely to have high levels of commitment to the organization. Proctor (2014) is of a similar view, reporting that involving staff in decision-making process promotes job satisfaction, develops employee behaviour and the overall performance of a company.

Recommendation: Being an empathetic and active listener when communicating is a skill that can be used by line managers to break down any barriers of communication that a subordinate may have when communicating with the line manager. It gives the subordinate more confidence in the line manager since the manager is displaying that he or she is actively listening to the subordinate. Line managers who do not actively listen and who are not empathetic give the subordinate an impression that the line manager is not approachable and not interested in what the subordinate may be communicating. It is therefore recommended that line managers always practise being empathetic and active listeners.

Line managers must build trust with their subordinates by always being transparent, honest and professional in handling information received from subordinates. Once this is done, subordinates will be willing to communicate with their line manager on any matter that they wish to communicate.

It is recommended that subordinates be allowed to provide input in decision-making that impacts on operational policies or procedures within the School. This is important since it is the School administrators that are interacting with the students operationally. They are the employees that have most of the information about whether a policy or procedure of the School is working well or not.

Conclusion: Being a line manager comes with substantial responsibility: it is not just about managing staff, and ensuring that everything runs smoothly. It is about effectively leading the team to create a culture within your department that fosters open lines of communications by being trustworthy, and displaying that as a line manager you are concerned about your subordinates, that you value them for their contribution towards reaching organizational goals and that you allow them to make input in decision-making that affects the operations and procedures of the School. Management should encourage subordinates to do and be the best at all times by acknowledging, rewarding and appreciating their subordinates through effective communication. In doing so, a culture is built that will definitely bring about the creation of a successful team.

5.2 Further research

This research was only conducted on one University due to time constraints. The study may be extended on a larger scale to include more than one university and the results from each university may be compared.

5.3 Further areas of study in the area of research

Research may be conducted on communication effectiveness between internal stakeholders and the public.

5.4 Summary

This chapter discussed the research findings from the collected data with recommendations and conclusions for each section. Communications is an integral part of any organization and is often taken for granted. From the above discussion, the importance of effective communication is reiterated. Both line managers and subordinates must work together as a team, planning should be done on when, how, where, what and why to communicate on certain situations and matters. This will ensure that there is harmony in the working environment and that both the line managers and subordinates are satisfied in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

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Appendices

Annexure 1: Questionnaire

Communication Effectiveness

Informed Consent and Declaration

Welcome to the research study!

Dear Participant,

My name is Trissica Mohan. I am a Master of Business Administration candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus. The title of my research is: “Communication Effectiveness between Line Managers and Support Staff at the College of AES, UKZN”.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate the communication effectiveness from first line managers to their subordinates.
- To investigate the communication effectiveness from subordinates to first line managers.

This study will create an awareness of the vital role that communication plays within any organization between all stakeholders.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.

- Your participation is voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research study.
- Your views in this research will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The results as well as other items associated with the survey will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisor. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed of by deleting and destroying any trace of the survey results.
- If you agree to participate please complete the declaration below.

I can be contacted at:

College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Oliver Tambo Building, Level 3, Room 03-015, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus, email: Mohant@ukzn.ac.za, telephone number: 031 260 3220.

My supervisor is Prof Muhammed Hoque who is located at the Graduate School of Business, Westville Campus, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, email: Hoque@ukzn.ac.za, telephone number: 031 260 8690.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Declaration:

I hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the informed consent information above and the nature of the research project. I also understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. *

- I consent, begin the study
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Gender: *

- Female
- Male

Age: *

- 18 -25 years
- 26 -33 years
- 34 - 41 years
- 42- 49 years
- 50 years and above

Race: *

- African
- Coloured
- Indian
- White
- Other, please specify

Nationality: *

- South African
- Non-South African, please specify

Please indicate the department that you are currently employed within? *

- School of Agriculture, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- School of Chemistry and Physics
- School of Engineering
- School of Life Sciences
- School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science

Which campus are you based at? (Please select other if you are based at more than one campus and type the names of the campuses in the textbox). *

- Howard College campus
- Pietermaritzburg campus
- Westville campus
- Other, please specify

Job designation: *

- Line Manager
- Administrative/Technical Support Staff

Which method of communication do you use most often to communicate urgent information or instructions to your subordinates? (If more than one option is used, please select other and indicate your choices in the text box). *

- Email
- Face-to-face meeting
- Video conferencing meeting
- Phone calls
- Other, please specify

Do you alert your subordinates of important information that you have first hand knowledge of that has been placed on the UKZN website, university email notice system, or staff notice boards that could aid operational processes? For example, information of changes in policies and/or processes that need to be adhered to. *

- Yes
- No

How often do you communicate with subordinates on operational matters? *

- Daily
- Weekly
- Every second week
- Monthly
- Other, please specify

Do you think that you should communicate more regularly with your subordinates? *

- Yes
- No

When circulating lengthy, complex workplace policies and procedures documentation electronically, do you make the time to explain important points verbally to subordinates? *

- Yes, to ensure clarity and understanding
- No, I expect subordinates to read and understand. They may approach me for clarity.

I ensure that as a line manager I regularly obtain feedback from my subordinates on their progress on any given tasks. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I am confident that subordinates will approach me as their line manager if there are uncertainties on instructions given, or if clarity is required on any job related matter and/or policy changes that may have been made. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I ensure that as a line manager I am an empathetic and active listener when communicating with subordinates. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Subordinates keep me as their line manager updated on operational matters that may positively/negatively affect their jobs. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Subordinates are allowed an opportunity to provide input with regard to decision making that affect operational policies and/or procedures within the School. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I take an interest in the lives of my subordinates without getting too personal to show that I care for them and appreciate their contribution towards achieving organisational goals. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Which method of communication do you, as a subordinate prefer your line manager to use when urgent important information or an important instruction is communicated to you? *

- Email
- Face-to-face meeting
- Video conferencing meeting
- Phone calls
- Other, please specify

Does your line manager take the time to verbally explain the contents or the most important points of electronically circulated complex documentation on workplace policies and processes? *

- Yes, verbal clarity is provided.
- No, I am expected to read, understand and comply on my own.

My line manager provides us with clear information and/or instructions with regard to operational policies and processes. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My line manager provides staff with instructions for undertaking tasks timeously allowing for sufficient time to complete the tasks. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My line manager timeously provides staff with feedback on changes to processes, and other decisions that affect operational policies and processes made by senior management. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I am always willing to provide feedback to my line manager whether positive or negative that affect processes and/or policies. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My line manager always encourages subordinates to provide input on decision-making processes. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My line manager is an empathetic and active listener when communicating with subordinates. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My line manager takes an interest in subordinates' lives to show concern without getting too personal. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I am always willing to communicate with my line manager on work related matters. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My line manager is approachable and encourages feedback from subordinates within the School. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

My line manager always discusses any positive/negative feedback regarding my behaviour or performance with me personally prior to addressing all subordinates in general. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I feel I can trust my line manager enough to communicate with him/her about any problem that I may have personally or professionally that impacts on my job. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The setting in which face-to-face communication takes place is important. *

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

How do you rate your verbal communication skills in the workplace? *

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Terrible

How do you rate your written communication skills in the workplace? *

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Terrible

What recommendations would you suggest to improve communication effectiveness within your School?

You have completed the survey. Thank you very much for your participation.

You can now close the window.

Annexure 2: Permission to Conduct Research



7 March 2017

Mrs Trissica Mohan (SN 204515688)
Graduate School of Business
College of Law & Management Studies
Westville Campus
UKZN
Email: Mohant@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Mrs Mohan

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Communication Effectiveness between Line Managers and Support Staff at the College of AES, UKZN"

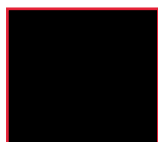
It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by contacting members of staff at the College of AES requesting their permission to send them a link to complete a questionnaire.

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire/attached to your notice:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



IR SS MOKOENA
REGISTRAR



Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: Registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Flamingo Campus Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Annexure 3: Ethical Clearance



30 March 2017

Mrs Trissica Mohan 204515688
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mrs Mohan

Protocol Reference Number: HSS/0237/017M

Project Title: Communication effectiveness between Line Managers and Support Staff at the College of AES, UKZN

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 14 March 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above-mentioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

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

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

Yours

Dr Shihuka Singh (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr M Hoque
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr E Mutambara
cc School Administrator: Mrs Zarina Bullyraj

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Fourie, Coker, Edgewood, Howard College, Medical School, Pietermaritzburg, Westville

Annexure 4: Turn-it-in Originality Report

Turnitin Originality Report

Processed on: 01-Nov-2018 1:57 PM CAT

ID: 1030926603

Word Count: 24994

Submitted: 1

MBA Dissertation By Trissica Mohan

Similarity by Source	
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<http://ergen.gr/files/InformalCommunicationKnowledgeTool.pdf>

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[Jiann-Sheng Wu, Tze-Chiang Lou. "Highway patrol officer scheduling using an optimization-based scheduling model", 2010 3rd International Conference on Advanced Computer Theory and Engineering\(ICACTE\), 2010](#)

< 1% match (publications)

[Henna Hasson, Susanne Tafvelin, Ulrica von Thiele Schwarz. "Comparing Employees and Managers' Perceptions of Organizational Learning, Health, and Work Performance", Advances in Developing Human Resources, 2013](#)

< 1% match (student papers from 17-Mar-2010)

[Submitted to Harper Adams University College on 2010-03-17](#)