Public Relations Practitioners' Internal Communication Practices in Moha Soft Drinks Industry S.C

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Abstract:

To examine internal communication practices in Moha Soft Drinks Industry, 106 *staff members participated, and data was collected through the survey questionnaire and an in-depth interview using a simple random sampling technique. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. According to the study, the staff had a limited culture of communication with the management group. The direction of the communication was top-down, and there was informal and upward communication. Adequate tools were not available for the bottom-up communication. Among the communication channels used in the organization, memorandum, telephone, and newsletters were the predominant ones; while email, blogs, and face-to-face communication were often underutilized channels. Researchers recommend that the use of appropriate channels to ensure the quality of information and the use of new media such as blogs, email, Facebook, and encouragement of upward communication: to increase the relationship between employees and managers need to be reconsidered.*

Keywords: Communication, Internal communication, Internal Public, Practice, Public relation practice, and Public Relation.

1. INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background of the Study

Communication is the glue that binds together the various components of the organization. It does this by enabling its agents, its customers, and the broader public; in addition, the degree to which internal public relations has a strategic role in following wider trends in marketing as an organizational function. Therefore, communication, the lifeblood of every organization is a process that links individuals, groups, and organizations/institutions, (Shibeshi, 2014). Other scholars also defined it differently at different times. For example, James Gruing, Berlo, and Van Ruler (2018) are among the scholars who have defined the term communication. According to Grunig, & Repper, (1992) communication is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas, and feelings but also create and share meaning. Likewise, Robbins and Coulter (2012) defined as communication is a two-way street that means both the person communicating and the person being communicated have to have participated equally; it is an interactive process or communication.

Among the basic types of communication in business organizations internal and external communication are the major types. Internal and external communications are very important resources of organizational communication. Internal communication is the exchange of information and ideas within an organization, while external communication is bringing information from outside into and out of the organization.

Internal communication plays a central role within organizations, becoming the "engine" of all activities by it, the staff can better understand what happens within the organization can become more informed and motivated can identify the objectives of the organization, all these contributing to better results (Smith and Mounter, 2008). At an operational level, internal communication is defined as intrapersonal and interpersonal communication, and as group communication, mass communication, or public communication, and it must be strategic for becoming efficient in the workplace environment.

The direction of communication: high, low, diagonal, lateral, and vine. Channels of communications include newsletters, circulation materials, surveys, meetings, in-house television, face-to-face interactions, email, hotlines, suggestion boxes, intranet, telephone calls, video conferences, memos, letters, notice boards, formal presentations, reports, open forums, and blogs (Argenti, 1998; Goodman& Truss, 2004; Hunt &Ebeling, 1983).

The concept of internal communication works for organizations, institutions, and companies that demand human employees to help function properly. The long history associated with organizational scholarship includes an extended and unresolved discussion of the ideal relationship that ought to exist between management and employees. That dialog has largely (although not exclusively) centered on the role of management, the role of employees, and how those two very different groups might most effectively combine in ways that further organizational goals and objectives. More directly, it is fair to say that internal public relations

are grounded in and bounded by this relationship (Hazleton & Kennan, 2000). For these scholars, from employees' point of view, and the perspective of public relations, the most important public is management, whereas from management's perspective the most important public is employees. Building and explaining a productive relationship among the external publics is central as attracting investors, customers, and new employees are why we need public relations practitioners.

The internal communication field began growing in the 1990s in the USA, and spread to Europe, in the new millennium it was growing faster and stronger. Factors such as globalization, and economic crises brought with them permanent restructuring, downsizing, outsourcing, mergers, and acquisitions, which resulted in decreased trust among employees (Vercica &Vercicb, 2012). To keep employees in the loop about changes and other relevant business information, internal communication has played a critical role for organizations.

According to Zerfass, Tench, Verhoeven, Vercic, & Moreno (2010), internal communication is an area of study that is relevant to the contemporary practice of public relations. It has been consistently identified as a key area of communication practice, growing faster. Studies indicate that organizations are pointing to effective internal communication as an influential factor in business success (Cees, Berens, & Dijkastra, 2005; Holtz, 2004; Quirke, 2000).

Likewise, according to Welch (2012), internal communication supports organizational effectiveness because it contributes to positive internal relationships by allowing communication between senior managers and employees. When successful, internal communication provides employees understanding about opportunities and threats, and develops employees' awareness of their organization's changing priorities. These aspects may influence whether the individual is engaged or not.

1.2 Statement of the Study

Researchers have identified communication as the heart and soul of organizations and businesses. The study conducted by Watson Wyatt Worldwide in (2003) and again in (2005) found that companies with effective internal communication have a higher market premium, higher shareholder returns over a few years, higher levels of employee engagement, and lower employee turnover than companies with ineffective at communication (Yates, 2006)

Furthermore, other researchers have also expressed that a key driver of employee engagement is internal communication, and organizations that effectively communicate with employees experience higher levels of engagement (Baumruk & Gorman, 2006; DeBussy; Ewing, & Pitt, 2003; Yates, 2006). However, employee engagement literature has limited information on the specific communication skills required by managers and how internal communication can provide more support in helping managers engage and communicate with their employees.

In a recent text on public relations, Yeomans (2006, p. 332) placed that "very little attention was paid to internal communication by public relations scholars, yet it was viewed as part of an organization's strategic communication function."

Particularly, when it comes to Ethiopian organizations, the issue of internal communication and the value of public relations function have highly been underestimated. Except for the following few researchers, we couldn't find adequate in terms of number and quality research in the area of internal communication. In his unpublished MA paper Abu Chalie (2019), conducted a study entitled, "Internal Communication for Organizational Performance: The Case of Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency". His objective was to describe the internal communication system, and, investigate how far internal communication could improve organizational performance, and identify the roles of appropriate communication channels on organizational performance. The findings he forwarded were Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency had a problem effectively communicating with its internal public. There seems to be a lack of clarity regarding the policy of internal communication. The communication pattern tends to be highly hierarchal, while less attention is given to informal communication channels. Despite the change of management and the attempts to bring about change with the communication among the management and staff of Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency, the traditional internal communication process seems to have its impact on employees as well as organizational performance.

The other researcher we could find with this regard is Yirgalem Kassahun. Yirgalem (2016) in his unpublished MA thesis studied the nature of internal communication at Mettu University. His title was, "Investigating the Nature of Internal Communication Strategies: The Case of Mettu University Public and External Relations Directorate". His study aimed to identify the internal communication strategies used by Mettu University Public and External Relations Directorate (PERD). It was confined to study the nature (type, standards, and effectiveness) of internal communication strategies used with permanent employees of the university in type. The finding of Yirgalem's study showed that PERD used memos, broachers, pamphlets, notice boards, and banners, pieces of training, meetings, and audio recordings as internal communication strategies with both permanent academic & administrative staff. The finding also revealed that the PERD did not use telephone, personal issue letters, fax, Facebook, email, magazine, newspapers, intranet, printed newsletters, blogs, and posters as internal communication strategies with both permanent academic and administrative staff.

In her unpublished MA thesis, Hannan Miftah (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between Jimma University's internal communications strategies and graduate students' perceived image of the University. The finding indicates that JU has no documented and planned internal communication strategies and channels with its source from the overall vision of the University.

The last two authorities we might cite here are Salilew *et* al. (2017) and Bereket, (2015). Salilew *et* al. (2017) investigated roles and functions of PRs in eight first-generation public universities, and the finding indicates that public universities are weak in internal communications, lack of doing research or survey about the opinion and attitude of the public

and the stakeholders about the intuitions public affairs issues, lobbying, and fundraising matters. Accordingly, Bereket, (2015) conducted a study on the assessment of PRs in Tigray, and his finding indicates, the PRs office was not structured and well organized professionally which emanates from belittling its role especially from the top leaders. And the PRs practitioners remain to stage the debate rather than mediate the debate.

The gap this study tried to bridge was to see the internal communication from the practitioners' perspective; only Yirgalem's research touched the two specific objectives: nature and tools, but different in the study cited. In this study, we focused on what are PR practitioners doing to create effective internal communication, which none of these cited researchers addressed. The Researchers' practical teaching experience revealed not only a lack of researches in the area but also there is no intention both from the professors' side and the government's side to encourage researchers to touch what is happening and how much it impacts organizations' success. This became an energizer to conduct this study by taking MOHA as a model company.

1.3 Objectives

The general objective of the study was to assess public relation practitioners' internal PR communication practices in MOHA soft drinks industry s.c.

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To identify the internal communication tools (PR tools) the industry is currently using to execute internal communication tasks;
2. To unlock the internal communication climate inside the MOHA soft drinks industry

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Communication

Webster's New World Dictionary of Media and Communications (1996) defines communication as the transmission or exchange of information, signals, messages, or data by any means such as talking, writing, or via telephone, telegraph, radio, or channels within a group as directed to specific individuals or groups. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. Many of the problems that occur in an organization are either the direct result of people failing to communicate and/or processes that lead to confusion and can cause good plans to fail (Miller, 2015).

However, effective interactive communication depends on the positive relationship between employees of an organization and its public relations practitioners. Being active and proactive, having the ability in professional communication strategies and public relations practices play a great role in the organization's or institution's internal public relations activities. Thus, public relations practitioners must develop a mutual understanding with the internal public of the organization or institution. However, the communication barriers reduce the internal public communication strategies and public relations practices.

Therefore, from the above perspective, communication can be seen as an integral part of all management functions. To successfully plan, organize, lead or control, management has to communicate with the company's employees. Furthermore, decision making relies heavily on the communication skills of both managers and employees especially in times of change (Skinner, Essen, Mersham, & Motau, 2007)

Organizational Internal Communication

Communication Scholars have defined communication as the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver where the message flows from one point to another, with the potential for feedback, and the communicators are linked together by channels (Kalla, 2005; Krone, Jablin & Putnam, 1987). From this perspective, internal communication can be conceptualized as the exchange of information within an organization.

Internal communication can be seen from different perspectives. Cheney & Christensen (2001, p. 231) defined it as "employee relations, statements of mission and organizational development". Using their definition, they suggested three levels of internal communication: day-to-day management (employee relations), strategic (mission), and project management (organizational development).

Likewise, Kalla (2005, p.304) highlighted the multi-disciplinary interest in internal communication and defined "integrated internal communications" as "all formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels of an organization". As to this scholar, internal communication takes place across the organizations and could be formal or informal. Concerning this Chrisman, et al (2012) argued that the use of appropriate channels of communication and communication content is determined by both public relations professionals and the budget that is allocated for them to run the process and/or to perform the activities required from them. However, giving apparent and immediate answers sometimes pays wages and deeds on the efforts of public relations practitioners and their practical knowledge and skills. Since the role of internal public communication is to improve the Organization's value by communicating effectively with its employees, it becomes an important asset to build the organization's internal images as well as instill a sense of belongingness. To achieve all this using effective communication strategies is deemed vital.

Therefore, internal communication, especially in a business context, is the dialogic process between employees and employer and employees and employees. According to Hopkins (2006), internal communication can also be described as a subset of effective business communication which is built around this simple foundation: communication as a dialogue, not a monologue, stating that communication is a dual listening process. The terms internal communication and internal public relations are used throughout this study because they are preferred by corporate communication theorists (Van Riel, 1995; Forman &Argenti, 2005).

Measurement of Internal Communications

The term measure or measurement takes on a variety of meanings within the communication discipline. Shaw (2004) identifies four different uses for the term measurement within organizational communication: (1) measuring employees with regards to their needs and preferences, (2) measuring the communication department and its outputs with the desired outcome to justify the expense of maintaining a communication function, (3) tracking the communication channels and their use and usability and (4) looking at the content and whether it has been received, understood and prompted action.

Bovee & Thill (2000) suggest that effective internal communication only takes place when there is a shared understanding that prompts others to take action and encourages alternative thinking. This view is shared by Spence, who considers communication to be effective only when a message has been received and understood and can then produce action (Spence, 1994).

On the other hand, a lack of effective communication can contribute to a range of problems including "at one end of the continuum, job dissatisfaction and stress through to damaging strikes, operating losses, bankruptcies, production line injuries, shipwrecks, plane crashes and at the other extreme, mass slaughter in the field of battle" (Hargie, 2004, p. 5).

In addition to, or as an alternative to, a comprehensive audit, employee satisfaction surveys are also utilized by organizations; however, the surveys usually focus on perceptions and attitudes and not levels of knowledge or understanding so are "not a direct measure of internal communication department performance and therefore are a poor indication of the function's value to the organization" (Likely, 2004, p.14). According to this author, a recent upgrade from the satisfaction survey is the employee engagement survey which measures not only staff satisfaction but also how committed employees are to the organization, the brand, and their values.

Internal Communication Channels and Internal Communication Theory

As Fletcher and Major (2006) suggest, four basic channels are used in workplace communication: (1) face-to-face meetings, (2) audio or telephone exchanges, (3) video-mediated conferences and (4) computer-mediated text transfers. In addition to these, Charles (2005) notes organizational publications, such as the company newsletter, are also a channel for information.

Recent literature on communication channels almost exclusively focuses on the media richness theory (Kahai & Cooper, 2003; Salmon & Joiner, 2005; Sheer & Chen, 2004). This media richness theory is a "prescriptive model in which achieving a match between information processing requirements (e.g., uncertainty and equivocality reduction) and communication channels (e.g., face-to-face interactions and written memos) was posited as essential for organizational effectiveness" (Markus, 1994, p.503).

Hence, the focus of the media richness theory is on the choices made by the managers, not necessarily the employees. According to this perspective, four factors influence media richness: "the ability of the medium to transmit multiple cues (e.g., vocal inflection, gestures), the immediacy of feedback, language variety, and the personal focus of the medium" (Dennis & Kinney, 1998, p.258).

Face-to-face communication is considered the richest channel primarily due to its ability to give immediate feedback as well as the amount of information shared during the interaction in the form of verbal cues (tone of voice, pitch, volume, etc.) as well as non-verbal cues (Kahai & Cooper, 2003).

According to the media richness theory, the telephone is the second richest channel after face-to-face communication yet Salmon & Joiner (2005, p. 57) state that recent research suggests the telephone "as a mode of transmitting and receiving management information, has been superseded by the use of email, because of the superior functionality and usability features of email".

Shaw (2004, p. 22) states that organizational intranets, team briefings, e-mails, and newsletters are the "bread and butter of modern communication". O'Kane, Hargie & Tourish (2004) argue that traditional communication channels such as memos, letters, and phone calls have been replaced by emails, the most preferred communication channel in the business world.

In addition, research suggests that emails reduce interruptions caused by face-to-face meetings and telephone conversations thereby improving managerial efficiency (Markus, 1994). E-mails have now become the dominant force in written communication and have made email processes, such as deleting and not responding to messages, an acceptable communication process in the 21st century (O'Kane, 2004).

The weakest channel of communication, as defined by the media richness theory, is the use of written documents. The company newsletter, memo, or magazine require little interaction and exchange with employees and usually involve operational information about the company and not about critical decisions under review; therefore, employees can attend to them at their convenience (Byrne & LeMay, 2006).

Alternatively, the intranet may also be considered a richer channel than emails due to the amount of information it is possible to store and share. Lehumskallio (2006, p. 291) defines intranets as "networks, built and maintained within the company firewalls, offering Internet technology and various contents for the exclusive use of the company staff" and suggests that intranets are not

only for information storage and retrieval but also for enhancing communication within the organization and information flow.

Nowadays, in summary, access to information is easy. As previously stated, internal communication channels should be used actively to provide enough information for employees. However, organizations need to be critical regarding what to publish and tell to avoid information overload or interrupting their employees' working processes by taking up too much of their time. Logic is needed when deciding upon the publishing of messages and the use of internal communication channels.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The authors preferred the Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM) framework for their study of the internal communication practices at the MOHA Soft Drinks Company S.C. Using the theoretical framework; it was easy to conceptualize the company's internal communication practices.

An internal communication model: the Strategic Employee Communication Model

Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Vercic, & Sriramesh (2007, p. 3), defined strategic communication as the "purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission".

They described strategic communication as "an immature science that evolved from professions practiced as crafts" but noted that strategic communication differs from integrated communication because it focuses on how an organization communicates across organizational endeavors.

In addition, White, Vanc & Stafford (2009), state that the competitive advantage of strategic internal communication comes not only from the obvious benefits of employee satisfaction and productivity but also from the positive contributions that well-informed employees can make to a company's external public relations efforts. Effective internal communication can enhance corporate reputation and credibility because employees are viewed as particularly credible sources by external stakeholders (Dawkins, 2005; Hannegan, 2004).

Put simply, employees are the face of an organization and have a powerful influence on organizational success. This study was conducted within the framework of the Strategic Employee Communication Model based on that of (Barrett, 2002). This model can help management understand the strategic role that communication plays in the day-to-day success of any organization.

According to Barrett (2002), the model is also effective in explaining communication during major change. The purpose of the model is to capture all the major components of employee communication linking them to each other and the company's strategy and operations. The

strategic employee communication model and change communication approach are designed to accomplish these goals.

The model consists of the following components: (1) strategic objectives; (2) supportive management; (3) targeted messages; (4) effective media/forums; (5) well-positioned staff; (6) on-going assessment and (7) integrated processes (adapted from Barrett, 2002, p. 219)
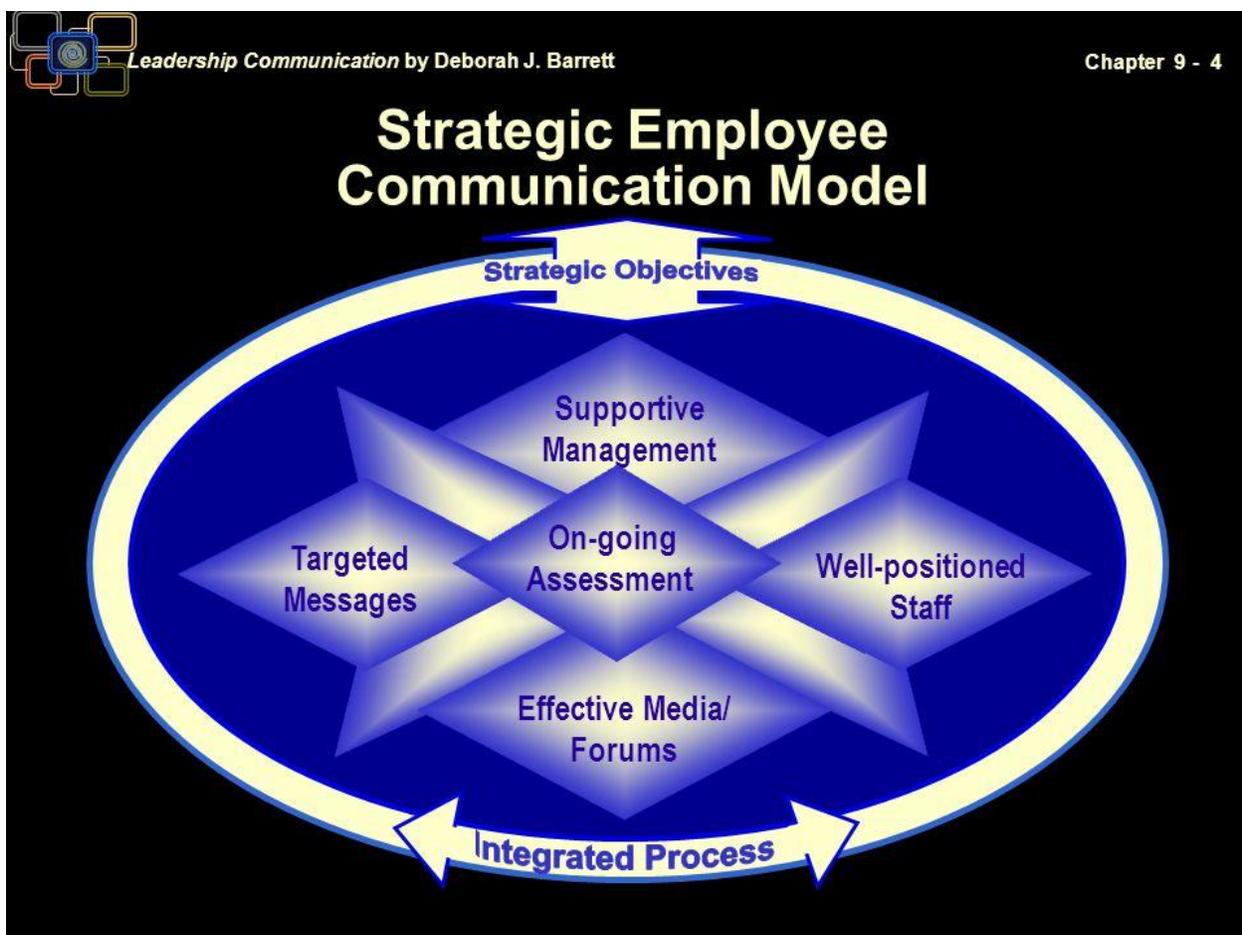

Figure 2.1. The Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM)

The Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM) helps management understand the strategic role communication plays in the day-to-day success of any company as well as during major change and can help overcome the "everything" and the "publication-limited" perceptions on communication (Barrett,2002, p.220).

The model grew out of research involving high-performing companies and others to find out what works when it comes to employee communication. From these examples, Barrett (2002) created a best practice composite definition of what successful companies are doing. While no company exemplifies every best practice exactly as presented, high-performing companies demonstrate many of the best practice definitions.

According to Barrett (2002, p. 221), the model captures all of the major components of employee communications linking them to each other and the company's strategy and operations. Thus, it works analytically to break employee communication down into manageable, recognizable parts while, at the same time, showing how intertwined and interdependent each part is when employee communication is positioned strategically to facilitate change.

Traditional communication components, such as messages and media, are at the heart of the model but the direct link to the company's strategic objectives, the business planning process and the overlay of supportive management with an ongoing assessment of individual and company communication move the model from the tactical to the strategic level.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The main aim of this study was to assess internal public relations practices in MOHA soft drinks industry s.c. In this case, the study employed a descriptive survey research design. In the descriptive survey method, data can be collected from different populations regarding their beliefs, attitude, practices, opinions, etc. In line with this, Kumar (2006) states that descriptive surveys also serve as direct sources of valuable knowledge concerning human behavior. Thus, a descriptive survey method was used to reveal target respondents' actual practices. to do so, a questionnaire was used to collect data.

The population of the Study

The total population at MOHA soft drinks industry S.C. is one hundred forty-five (145) permanent employees (MOHA, Employee Hand Book). For this study, out of the total number of employees adequate sample was taken to capture the real data from the representatives.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

MOHA soft drinks industry S.C. was chosen as the focus for this study and the decision was made based on the purposive sampling strategy due to the researchers' interest to work in business sectors and also, according to, Du Plooy (2002) due to constraints such as time, cost and personnel we may not always have access to the actual population to which we want to generalize findings. Therefore, out of the total number of 145 employees' one hundred six (106) workers of the organization were selected as a sample. This means almost 73% of employees of

the organization participated in the survey. The researchers used a simple random sampling technique to select the study informants using the lottery method in such a way that 0 and 1 digits were distributed to the randomly selected samples of employees in the organization those who picked 1 were selected. Similarly, Yamane (1967) provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{145}{1+(145)0.5^2} = 106$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision (Glenn D., 1992).

Therefore, the researchers used purposive sampling to select the interviewees on the criteria that have responsibility for or extensive knowledge of the internal public relations within the organization.

Data Collection Instruments

Interview

To collect data the principal tool applied was a semi-structured interview. The key advantage of using a semi-structured interview approach is that the researchers can clarify questions that the participant may not understand (unlike questionnaires); also, there is the opportunity for greater depth of response as well as the ability to encourage full participation by establishing a rapport (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Therefore, the researchers believed that semi-structured interview satisfies the advantages mentioned by the scholars and can answer why these researchers use this type of data collection instrument.

Questionnaire

In this study, the questionnaire was used as a data-gathering tool. To gain a broader perspective regarding communication channels and the nature of communications questionnaire was distributed to employees in the organization. In its very nature, the questionnaire has both open-ended and close-ended items so that some of the close-ended items assist to collect factual data from the options given in 'Likert Scales' whereas the open-ended items help to find the respondent's opinions.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed according to four key themes; the role of the public relations department, the nature of internal communication, tools of internal communication, and the measurement of internal communication for effectiveness.

These themes were developed based on the literature in the area which highlighted their importance to the body of internal communication research.

In addition, other variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and, frequencies to examine internal communication practices.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The scoring patterns of the respondents per variable per section were presented here. Levels of disagreement (negative statements) were collapsed to show a single category of "Disagree" and a similar procedure was followed for the levels of agreement (positive statements).

1. **Tools of internal communication**

This section deals with the summarized scoring patterns of tools of internal communication.
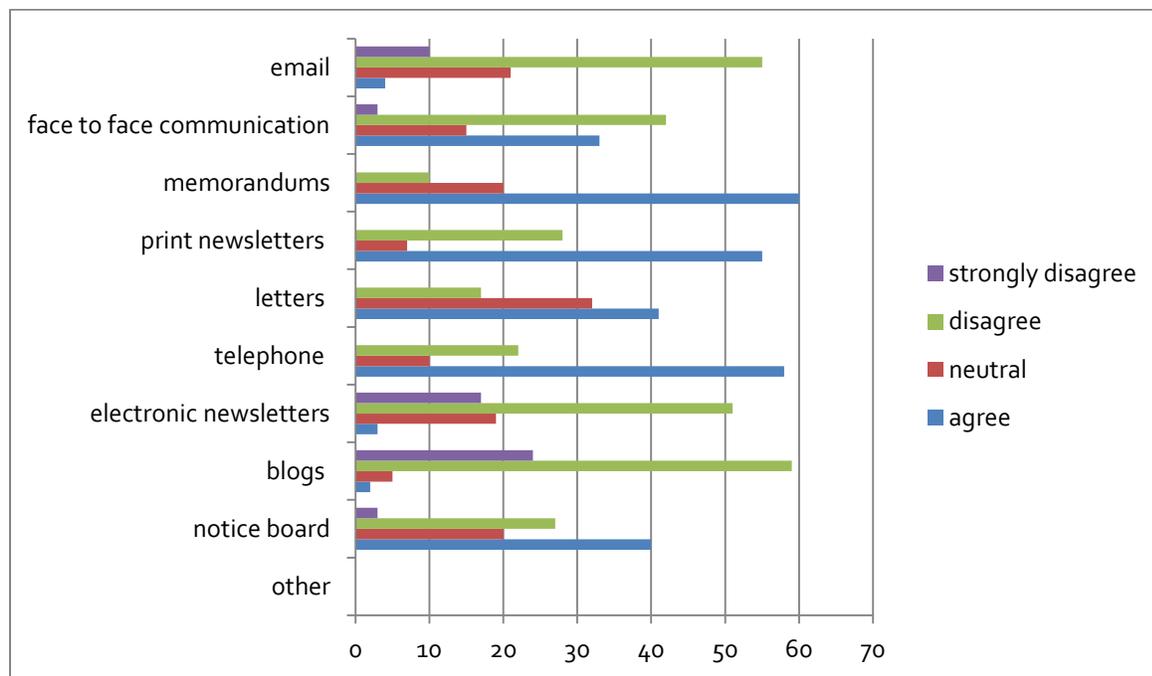

Figure-1: Scoring patterns of Tools of internal communication

As it is presented on the above figure, when questioned regarding the internal communication tools a large percentage (66.6%) of respondents agreed with the statement that staff at the organization communicated via memorandum has the highest mean score of (3.555) followed by (64.4%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that staff at the organization timely communicate via telephone by the mean score of (3.4), 61.1% of respondents agreed with the

statement that staff at the organization timely communicate via print newsletters with the mean value of (3.3).

Conversely, 2.2% of respondents disagreed with the statement that staff at the organization timely communicate via blogs with the least mean value by (1.8333) on the other hand 4.4% of respondents disagreed with the statement that staff at the organization timely communication via email has the mean score of (2.2111) followed by 3.3% of respondents disagreed with the statement that staff at the organization timely communicate via electronic newsletters with the least mean value of (2.0888). These show, the three most used channels are memorandum (3.5555), telephone (3.4), and print newsletters (3.3). The least used channels are email (2.2111), electronic newsletters (2.0888), and blogs (1.8333),

Despite the buzz and focus on traditional media, four traditional channels are still the most effective, with memorandum at the top, followed by print newsletters, telephone, and letters. As, Shaw (2004, p. 22), states that organizational intranets, team briefings, e-mail, and newsletters are the "bread and butter of modern communication" In fact, O'Kane, Hargie & Tourish (2004) argue that traditional communication channels such as memos, letters, and phone calls have been replaced by emails, the most preferred communication channel in the business world.
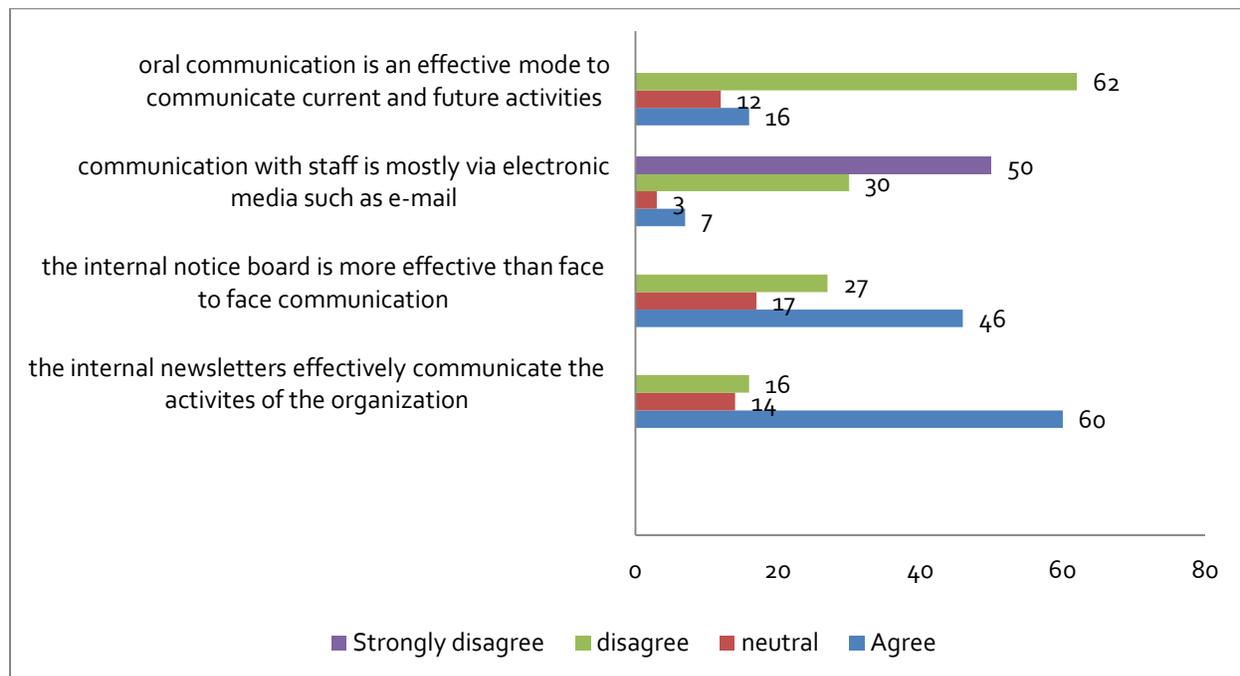

Figure-2: Scoring patterns of Tools of internal communication

The majority (67%) of the sample population stated that an internal newsletter is an effective communication medium that documented the activities of the organization has the highest mean

value of (3.4888). The internal notice board was considered an effective mode to communicate from 51% of respondents followed by a mean score of (3.1888).

According to, Kahai & Cooper, (2003) states that face-to-face communication is considered the richest channel primarily due to the ability to give immediate feedback as well as the amount of information shared during the interaction in the form of verbal cues (tone of voice, pitch, volume…) as well as nonverbal cues. On the other hand, email provides a persistent record of its messages but does not convey non-verbal signals.

As represented in the above figure 4.5, only 18% of respondents agreed that oral communication is an effective mode to communicate current and future activities have a mean score of (2.4888). This show there is no formal conversation between manager and employees over a management speech to an event. Therefore, the feeling of involvement is generally lower with this type of communication because there is no possibility for feedback due to the two-way traffic.

On the other hand, 55.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that internal communication with the staff was mostly via electronic mail has the least mean value of (1.6333).
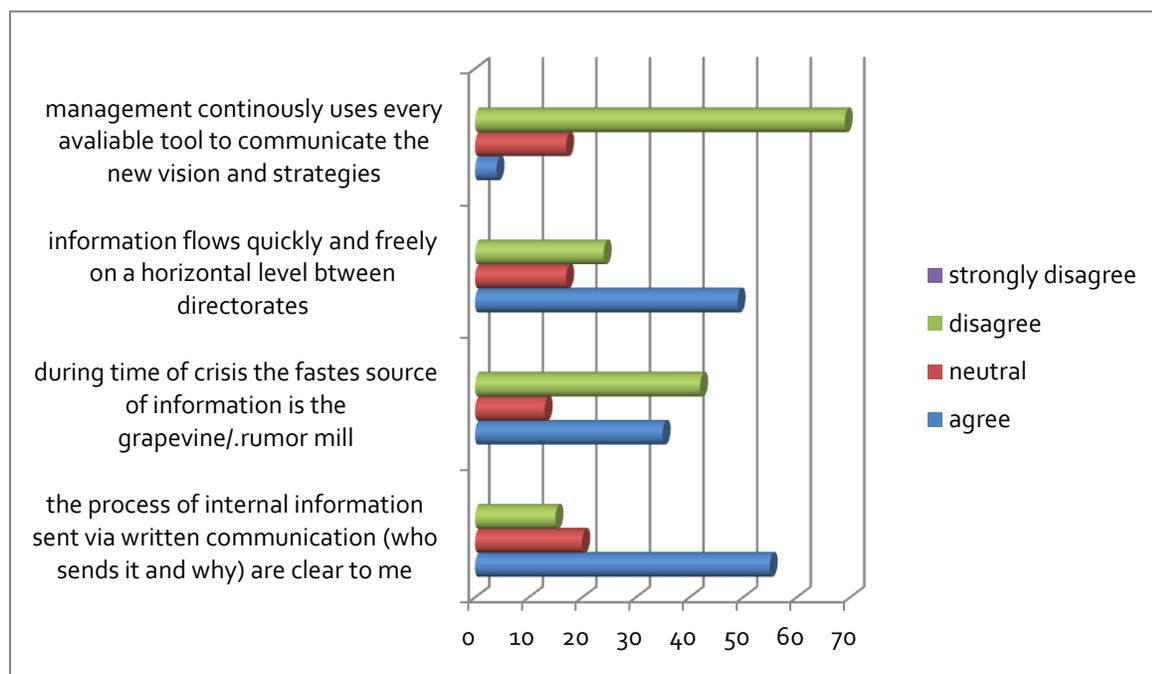

Figure 3: Scoring patterns of Tools of internal communication

As it is presented in the above figure 3, the majority of the participants (61%) agreed with the statement that written communication is an effective mode to dispatch internal information with the mean score of (3.4444). On the other hand, (54.4%) of respondents indicated that information

flows quickly and freely on a horizontal level between directorates followed by a mean score of (3.2777)

As, Richmond et al.,(2005), state that horizontal communication often focuses on employee satisfaction and employee morale. At this level employees usually can talk openly and freely about their feelings about the system and can discuss their problems with others who can identify with them. In addition, this is also the channel at which most social interaction takes place within the formal organization. It is through the horizontal channels that an employee is likely to increase one's knowledge, communication skills, and socialization skills.

In the MOHA soft drinks industry, horizontal communication happens daily. Therefore, to coordinate tasks and activities that are necessary for the successful operation of the organization the various departments need to communicate effectively with each other. (39%) of respondents indicated that during times of crisis (staff protest action) the fastest source of information was the grapevine/rumor mill has a mean score of (2.9222)

According to, Singh & Sharma, (2013) the grapevine is the informal and unofficial information network within every organization. The network helps employees make sense of the world around them and consequently provides a release from emotional stress and all informal information is undocumented. The grapevine is inherent in the culture of any organization. In the MOHA soft drinks industry, S.C.'s informal type of communication is existent, i.e. the grapevine. Therefore, the grapevine shaped employee sentiments about the organization and specific people. From this one can conclude that it would be irresponsible to ignore these social facts.

As shown in the above figure 4.6, the majority of respondents (77%) disagreed with the statement that management continuously uses every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy has the least mean value of (2.2777).
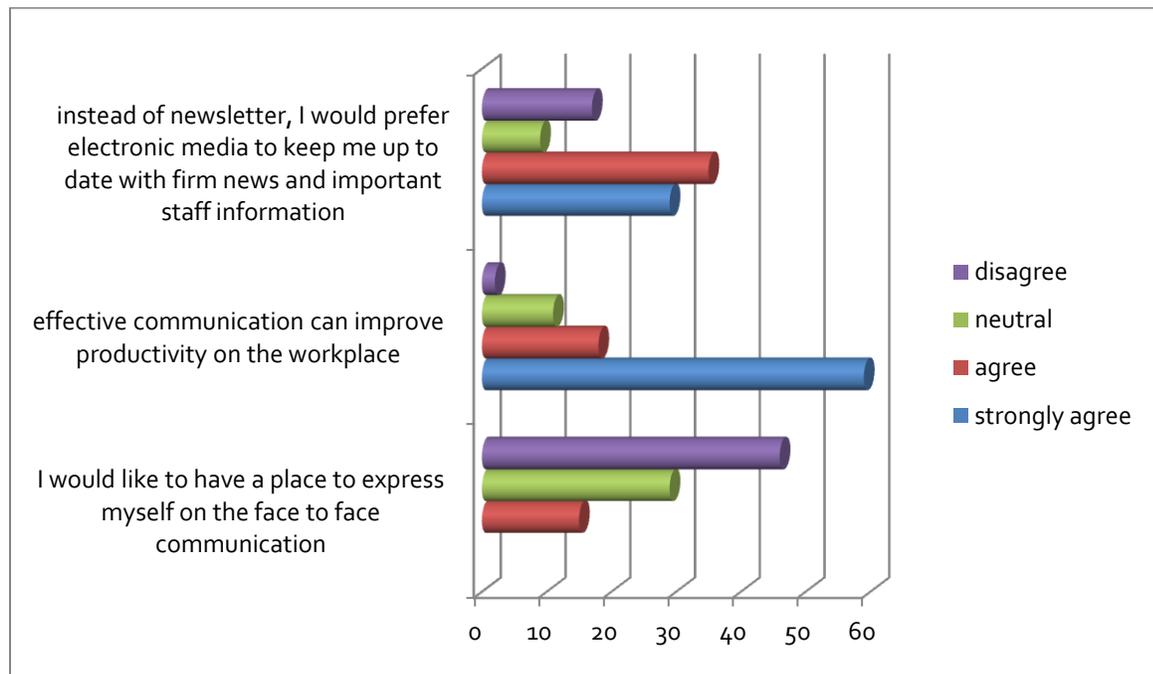
Figure 4: Scoring patterns of tools of internal communication

As shown in the above figure, the highest level (65.5%) of respondents strongly agreed that effective communication can improve productivity in the workplace has the highest mean score of (4.4888). This shows respondents strongly agreed that better internal communication systems can improve productivity in the workplace.

32.2% of respondents preferred electronic media instead of newsletter with the mean value of (3.8444). An E-mail has now become the dominant force in written communication and has made email processes such as deleting and not responding to messages, an acceptable communication process in the 21st century (O'Kane, 2004).

The majority of respondents 51.1% disagreed with the statement that there is a place to express their ideas or feeling on face-to-face communication has the lowest mean score of (2.6555). Face-to-face communication is considered the richest channel primarily due to the ability to give immediate feedback as well as the amount of information shared during the interaction in the form of verbal cues (tone of voice, pitch, volume…) as well as nonverbal cues (Kahai & Cooper, 2003).

Theme 2: internal communication climate
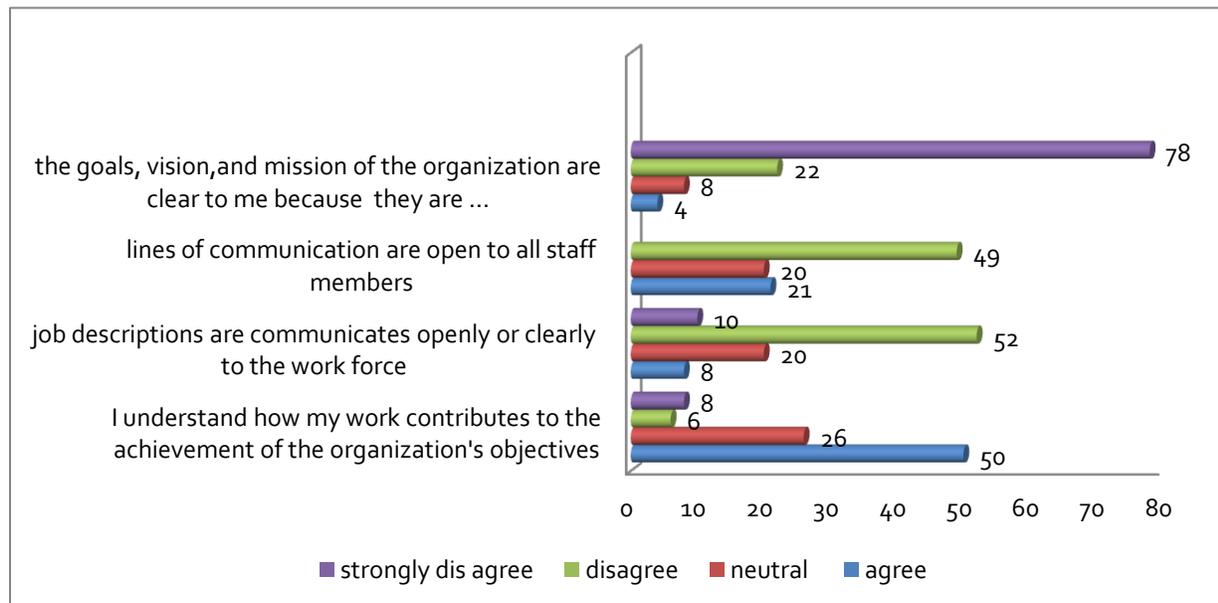This section deals with the summarized scoring patterns of internal communication climate.

Figure 5: Scoring patterns of internal communication climate

The majority of the respondents 55.5% agreed with the statement that employees who have understood how their work contributes to the achievement of the organization's objectives have the highest mean value of (3.3111). When questioned regarding job descriptions only 9% indicated that job descriptions are communicated clearly to the workforce with a mean score of (2.2888). Respondents indicated that line managers failed to provide adequate direction due to the uncertainty associated with mergers.

Only 23% of the respondents indicated that lines of communication are open to all staff members followed by the mean value of (2.6888). Staff felt that their line manager is not able to communicate openly and freely with them. This could perhaps be because line managers themselves were uninformed from their superiors in management and hence felt incapable to provide feedback to their staff. A large percentage (86%) of the respondents indicated that strongly disagreed with the statement that the goals, vision, and mission of the organization are clear with the lowest mean score of (1.7777)

The literature reviewed by, Neves and Eisenberger (2012) indicated that employees who had open lines of communication with managers were more likely to build effective work relationships with those managers. Also, employees who had open lines of communication had enhanced performance and saw an increase in productivity. Further literature Gopinath & Becker, (2000) indicated that employees who reported positive and open communication with managers were better able to manage major organizational changes, such as layoffs and mergers.
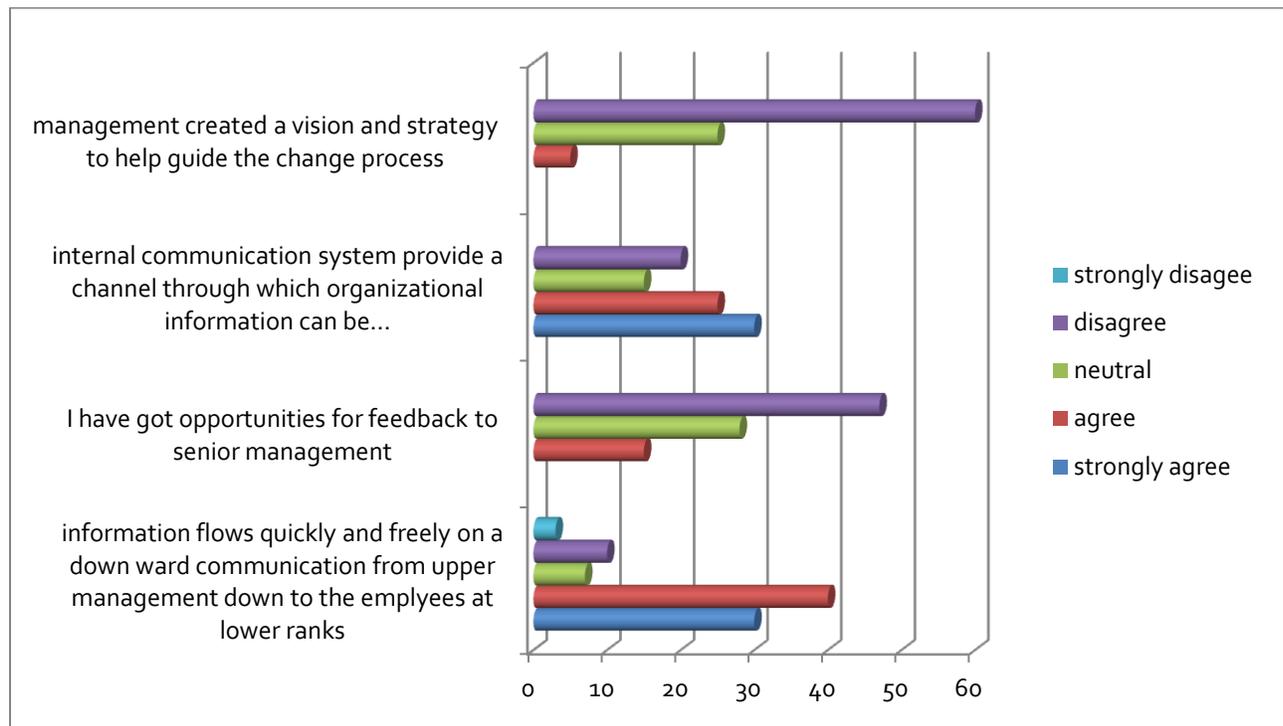
Figure 6: Scoring patterns of internal communication climate

When questioned regarding downward communication a large percentage (52.2%) agreed that information flows quickly and freely on a downward communication from upper management to the employees at lower rank has the highest mean value of (3.9333).

According to, Rho, (2009) indicated that downward communication means the flow of information from superiors to subordinates and it is a dominant channel following formal communication networks. Downward communication generally, is effective when upper levels of management are highly motivated to make it work.

As shown in the above figure 4.9, the majority of participants 33.3% strongly agreed that internal communication provides a channel through which organizational information can be shared between management and employees with the highest mean score of (3.7222). This percentage was disconcerting to the researcher because it displayed evidence of apathy from the sample population.

As presented in the above figure, the majority of the respondents 52.2% indicated that do not have opportunities for feedback to senior management followed by the mean value of (2.6444). When questioned whether management created a vision and strategy to help guide the change process only 5.5% agreed followed by the lowest mean score of (2.3888).
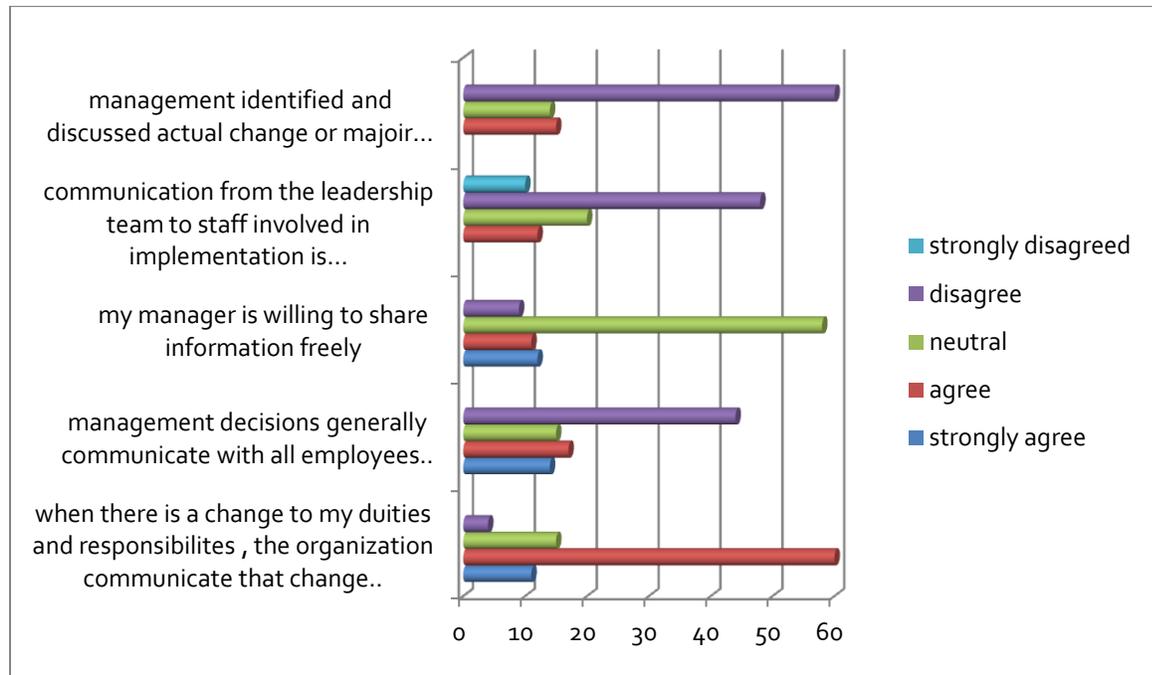
Figure7: scoring patterns of internal communication climate

As presented in the above figure 4.9, the majority of the respondents (66.6% agreed with the statement that when there is a change to their duties and responsibilities, the organization communicates that change effectively with the highest mean value by (3.8666).

When questioned regarding the manager is willing to share information freely has a mean score of (3.2888). 49% of the respondent disagreed with the statement that management decisions generally communicate with all employees effectively has a mean score of (3.0111).

Only (16.6%) of respondents agreed that management had identified and discussed actual changes or major opportunities with a mean score of (2.4666).

When questioned regarding communication from the leadership team to staff involved in implementation is effective only 13.3% agreed with the lowest mean value of (2.3777). This does not reflect well on the managerial skills of line managers.

In the view of, Gilley *et al, (*2009) organizational leadership behaviors have a direct influence on actions in the work environment that enable change. Leaders may function as change agents by creating a vision, identifying the need for change, and implementing the change itself. Organizations remain competitive when they support and implement continuous and transformational change.

On the other hand, Guo and Sanchez's (2005) report on environmental barriers bears reference that managerial philosophy can promote or inhibit effective communication. Managers who are not interested in promoting intraorganizational communication upward or disseminating information downward will establish procedural and organizational blockages

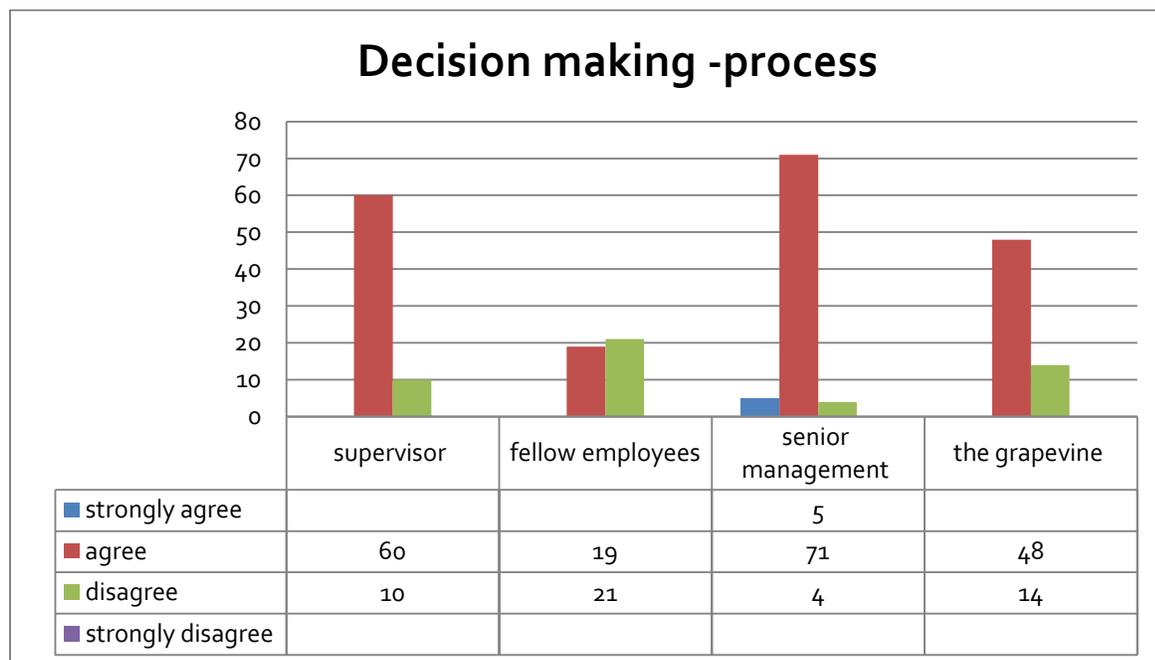**Q. Decisions or changes generally communicated effectively by:**

Figure: Decision making -process

	supervisor	fellow employees	senior management	the grapevine
strongly agree			5	
agree	60	19	71	48
disagree	10	21	4	14
strongly disagree				

Figure8: Decision-making process

As represented in the above figure, the majority of the respondents 79% agreed with the statement that any decisions or changes generally communicated by senior management has the highest mean score of (3.8555). Only 11.1% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that decisions or changes generally communicated effectively by supervisor has a mean score of (3.555). On the other hand, 53.3% of the respondents agreed with the statements that decisions or changes are generally communicated effectively by the grapevine with the mean value of (2.1333).

Questioned regarding the decision-making process only 21.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the decisions or changes generally communicated effectively by fellow employees has the mean value of (2.9777). This shows, senior management, supervisors, and the grapevine were slightly agreed upon to be effective sources of change communication.

According to, Fernandez and Rainey's, (2006) change management plan has a component of building internal support for change. This component that focuses on participation by all in the

change process might allow for increased effectiveness in regards to the unit to unit, the grapevine, supervisors, intranet, and fellow employees.

This increased participation could lead to a higher level of knowledge (i.e. component for individual level of assessment for effectiveness) for employees to utilize when communicating about the change by the water cooler (i.e. the grapevine), when discussing the change at a meeting (i.e. fellow employees), posting questions and comments on the forum about the change online (i.e. the intranet), and when a supervisor is letting his or her team know about an update on the situation.
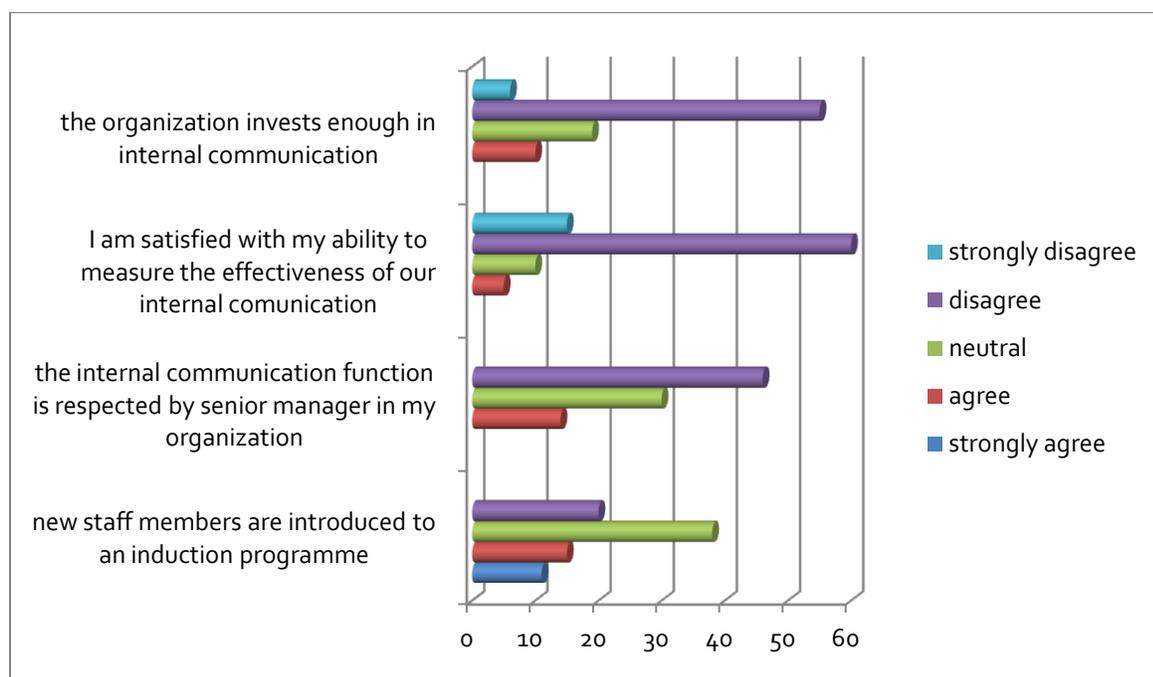

Figure -9: Scoring Patterns of Internal Communication Climate

As presented in the above figure, new staff members are introduced to an introduction program with the highest mean score of (2.9888). When questioned regarding internal communication function only 15.5% of the respondents agreed with the statement that internal communication is respected by the senior manager has the lowest mean score of (2.6444).

Only 7% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the organization invests enough in internal communication with the lowest mean value of (2.3666).

From the above figure, 66.6% of the respondents are not satisfied with their ability to measure the effectiveness of their internal communication and have the least mean score of (2.0555). This dissatisfaction reflects increased expectations in the business and portrays that not having metrics just is not good enough. Organizations expect mature functions like HR, Marketing, PR, and now internal communications, to be able to demonstrate and measure their return on investment.

In addition, with the recognition and increasing maturity of this function comes a level of expectation from the rest of the business that you can prove what internal communication is doing and prove its value. The function needs to demonstrate that investments made in the intranet, training collaboration, and social are all producing some sort of return (Quirke, 2008).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to describe the current practices of internal communication at MOHA soft drinks industry S.C. The following section presents the conclusions to the study based on the objectives set out in chapter one.

To identify the internal communication tools the organization utilized to execute the internal communication tasks.

In the MOHA soft drinks industry currently, the staff communicates mainly through traditional media, so the organization may consider communication application would be a better and more up to date e-communication tool as well as social media such as email, Face book, electronic newsletters, and blogs to communicate with staff. However, the results of the analysis reflected that staff preferred to communicate via an electronic medium, and the majority of staff believed they were kept up to date via email communication concerning the day-to-day activities. The most used channels are memorandum, followed by telephone, internal newsletters, and letters. The least channels used are email, followed by electronic newsletters, and blogs. Memorandum is the most effective channel to execute the internal communication tasks in the organization. The management did not use every available tool to communicate the new vision and strategy.

To describe the nature of the internal communication (contents, directions, mode, and style)

The Literature review provided an understanding of organizational communication and the tools used in communication. It was found that during the day-to-day activities the organization does not have a communication policy.

Hence, staff members perceived the internal notice board as the most effective mode to communicate. However, the majority of respondents preferred face-to-face communication. It was also found that during times of crisis the grapevine/rumor mill was the fastest communication tool. On the other hand, the majority of responses on a downward communication agreed that information flows quickly and freely on a downward communication from upper management down to the employees at lower ranks.

The majority of participants agreed with the statement that written communication is an effective mode to dispatch internal information. That means the communication is more formal in the organization. The results of the analysis reflected that staff preferred to communicate via

electronic medium; however, respondents indicated that memorandum is the most popular internal communication tool followed by telephone, print newsletter, and letters.

To identify the main roles of the public relations department inside the MOHA soft drinks industry.

The theoretical approach of Barrett's Strategic Employee Communication Model well-positioned staff relies on a communication staff member being part of a senior management team was utilized. The Literature review provided an in-depth interview on the main roles of the public relations department inside the organization. The results of the analysis reflected that the public relations department played a crucial role in maintaining the organization's image and communicating necessary information to internal stakeholders about the organization's programs, research, and activities of the organization that can be shared between management and staff. Hence, the department also has a mechanism to make the good relationship among staff members in place so internal communication is effective.

To examine the effectiveness of the internal communications

The results of the analysis reflected that the interviewee revealed a myriad of findings related to channels used for internal communication within the organization, specifically the roles of the public relations department inside the organization, what channels were utilized, and what measurement was undertaken for effectiveness.

Consequently, the results suggest that the interviewee relied on informal forms of measurement such as anecdotal feedback to gauge effectiveness. The interviewee added that the measurement of internal communication has not been a focus; however, it is being considered for the future.

Therefore, the study found out that lack of internal communication measurement channels within the MOHA soft drinks industry, which leads to the generalized conclusion that the organization does not currently test the effectiveness of their internal communication, as a result, the study showed that staff members at the organization are not satisfied with their ability to measure the effectiveness of their internal communication

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:

☐ the study revealed that during the day-to-day activities there was a need for open lines of communication between management and staff to ensure that there was effective sharing of information through different tools. To this end, organizations should work hard to modernize and upgrade the status of their employees concerning the use of timely tools of internal communication as the one they are using now is getting traditional.

☐ The study revealed that during the day to day activities although it was not logistically feasible to continuously hold internal notices board in the organization, it was determined that staff especially the older generation preferred notice board communication rather than face to face

communication, so the organization may consider improving the level of internal communication tools in the organization in a way that considers the interest and feedback of employees.

 Establish two-way communication channels that facilitate employees' input into decisions in the organization by encouraging more face-to-face communication, such as team meetings, and opportunities for staff to work together in the organization.

 Finally, the study found out that lack of internal communication measurement channels in the organization to test for the effectiveness of their internal communication, therefore the organization may consider when selecting internal communication tools, authorities concerned should take into account what type of information we would like to communicate, to which target group and how; hence one of the ways to determine the success of management communication in the organization is the measurement of tools, so the organization may consider formal or regular internal communication measurement channels.

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