

**ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES:  
THE CASE OF BANK OF ABYSSINIA IN JIMMA TOWN**



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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Rabia Jemal, entitled Assessing organizational communication practices: the case of Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Degree of Master of Art in public relations and corporate communication complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned declare that this research is my original work and has neither been presented in any other university nor was published before and that all source of material used for the research have been acknowledged.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aimed at describing organizational communication practices on Bank of Abyssinia in jimma town. The study involved both quantitative and qualitative methods using close -ended questionnaire and in-depth interview as data collection tools. Questionnaire as a method of survey was employed to obtain data from 93 selected samples. Also, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 8 sampled top level managers to understand their ideas and views. The key informants were selected using purposive sampling technique and for the survey questionnaires, the researcher used comprehensive sampling technique. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data and thematic analyses were employed for the qualitative data. The findings show that Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town has not adopted proper communication strategies in terms of openness, inclusiveness, two-way (bilateral) communication. The study also found that there was a gap in the organizational flow of information in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town. The managers did not practice feedback oriented communication and employees were not involved in decision-making processes on the day today activities of the Bank. The study recommended that information flow inspire employees to participate in developing policies for the organization and ultimately enables the acceptance of the same. Therefore, managers at Bank of Abyssinia should strive to have means of receiving information concerning the organization from the lowest level and disseminating the same downwards.*

**Keywords:** Communication strategies; communication tools; information flow; organizational communication

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA-Bank of Abyssinia

E-mail- Electronic mail

OC- Organizational Communication

SD-Standard Deviation

SPSS-Statistical packaging for social science

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Only when effective organizational communication is present can an organization be successful (Phull et al., 2022). Organizational communication is a social process that facilitates interaction and information sharing between an organization's departments and units as well as the environment in which the organization operates to achieve its goals. By delivering important and timely information, organizational communication ensures that everyone is aware of what is expected of them. It's one of the prerequisites for creating a successful business (Ince & Gül, 2011).

According To (Harris & Nelson, 2018) Organizational communication is the act of sending and receiving messages within an organization to achieve both individual and group objectives. That is one of the essential conditions for starting a successful business. Today, organizational communication is universally acknowledged as the cornerstone of organizational effectiveness and efficiency, along with the most crucial business operations. On the other hand, according to Jaradat & Sy, (2012), Organizational communication is the Members go through a process of gathering important information about their institution and the changes taking place inside it. Organizational Communication helps organization members by enabling them to discuss critical organizational experiences and develop relevant information that simplifies complex organizational activities and change. From the above definition, the researcher understands that organizational communication is a social process of exchanging information, ideas, and beliefs within an organization by its employees through the purposeful use of different channels. That means ideas and information are important to accomplish the organization's goals and objectives.

Because of the dynamic nature of the environment, organizations today face several difficulties that must be overcome to succeed and stay in the race for market share. The organization must meet the demands of its employees by offering positive communication opportunities and creating conducive working environments in order to promote efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, and job dedication (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

The success of a company depends on effective organizational communication. Due to the growing prevalence of the global market, the majority of firms are forced to hire communication

specialists, which results in good communication. Organizations should therefore remove obstacles to communication and provide participatory, effective, and open channels of communication. New technologies that are always evolving make it necessary for enterprises to have open and accurate communication (Ince & Gül, 2011). In order to accomplish the targeted business goal, organizational communication plays a part in business organizations. Harris and Nelson, 2005 (as cited in (Rajhans, 2012) pointed out that organizational communication is one of the most dominant and important activities in business organizations. The functioning and longevity of commercial organizations are essentially dependent on effective employee communication. According to Jones et al, 2000 (quoted in (Rajhans, 2012), "organizational capacities are produced and implemented through extremely social and communicative processes. To accomplish tasks, both individuals and groups need communication, This implies that in a business organization, effective communication is essential to achieving desired results. Consequently, the importance of efficient and effective organizational communication techniques has increased across all commercial enterprises. (Rajhans, 2012) This study, therefore, aims to assess organizational communication practices at Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma Town.

### **1.1.1 Background of the organization**

By the 1960 Ethiopian commercial code and the Licensing and Supervision of Banking Business Proclamation No. 84/1994, the Bank of Abyssinia was founded on February 15, 1996 90 years to the day after the first private bank now defunct was established in 1906 during the reign of Emperor Menelik II. With only 131 owners and 32 employees, BOA began operations with approved and paid-up capital of Birr 50 million and Birr 17.8 million, respectively. Bank of Abyssinia has had tremendous growth in both its paid-up capital and total assets during the past twenty years since its founding. It also attracted large numbers of customers from every aspect of life, successful shareholders, and a considerable number of seasoned personnel. The public's confidence in the Bank's dependability and contentment with its services is demonstrated by the Bank's success. Currently, the Bank of Abyssinia has 10 Districts, 790 branches, and 6 million active customers and it offers its valued and recognized customer's excellent domestic, international, and specialized banking services. This study was investigating the practices of organizational communication in Abyssinia Bank Jimma town. In Jimma town Abyssinia Bank has eight branches with a total of 98 active employees from that, the researcher used all 98 of these employees as a sample size by using the comprehensive sampling technique.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

In today's businesses, organizational communication has substantially increased in complexity, variety, and importance for total organizational effectiveness. The company's communication with its workforce has an impact on employee motivation, morale, and performance (Rajhans, 2009). Building stronger working relationships, exchanging information, encouraging trust and teamwork, understanding and coordinating the work, improving the learning environment, and ultimately increasing workplace satisfaction all depend on effective organizational communication (Ali & Haider, 2012)

Organizations can be run successfully, only if effective organizational communication takes place. Without communication and the required data, a decision cannot be made, whether it be strategic or operational (Sadia et al., 2016). Different problems occur in organizations related directly or indirectly to communication (Kumar, 2008). Communication flow inspires employees to participate in developing policies for the organization and ultimately enables the acceptance of the same. An open-door policy where employees feel free in expressing honest feedback to their colleagues and management should be highly encouraged (Abugre, 2010).

In banks, effective organizational communication enables both staff and customers to comprehend various strategic decisions that have been or will be made, banking regulations and processes, identify numerous banking-related challenges, and comprehend future prospects for prosperity ((Parajuli et al., 2020). On the other hand Conrad, (2014) believed that business could not be practiced without effectiveness organizational communication because it ensures that the personnel understand organizational goals and implement practices needed to achieve them. At the same time, communication can be used by managers as a tool of persuasion to ensure employees follow orders and work in the context of the manager's perspective and work according to the provided plan.

Nowadays, the major focuses of most business organizations are on performance and productivity due to market share competition (Mutunga, 2009). Organizations have pushed employees to perform without much consideration of their interests (Mukanzi, 2013) this in turn has led to voluntary turn over, which in turn affects the organization's performance and productivity. Any organization's ability to engage in effective and efficient communication will always have an impact on how successful it is. With the dynamic nature of the banking

environment, any change raises suspicions in customer and staff perceptions, so, there is a need for special attention to the organizational communication process considered in terms of internal and external perspectives. Internal stakeholders and management of the organization communicate with one another through organizational communication (Welch & Jackson, 2007).

Most private banks in Ethiopia have recently started pushing staff members to perform without taking into account their interests or getting feedback or response from them. They think that a higher salary is enough to satisfy employees' needs, so many private banks do not give much space to organizational communication. The researcher is a longtime customer of Abyssinia Bank and observed that there is an overload of work in overtime due to over-competition with other private banks; they push employees with overwork without receiving any response or feedback, which leads to employee voluntary turnover. Recently, Bank of Abyssinia has been a victim of this cycle. In recent times, many employees have voluntarily turned over from the Bank of Abyssinia to other private banks like Amhara Bank, Awash Bank, and Nib International Bank because of the above-mentioned problems. Furthermore, organizational communication studies in Ethiopia have been studied at various times, and most previous studies have shown that the understanding of organizational communication in Ethiopian organizations is low.

A study by Kassanew, (2021) on the practice of organizational communication in enhancing work effectiveness on employees and a study by Tilahun, (2020) on the effectiveness of organizational communication on employee motivation) showed that the practice of organizational communication, communication channels, and employees' work effectiveness through communication are not practiced effectively. In this regard, the message, directives, and information that come from top management are not consistent. It showed that organizational communication was not practiced effectively and efficiently. In the above studies, the researchers focused on organizational communication with work effectiveness and employee motivation.

Fikru (2014) studied organizational communication satisfaction in Oromia government communication office and concluded that employees of younger ages were more dissatisfied with their job than those of other ages. It implies the larger number of employees was dissatisfied with their job in that organization. In this study, the researcher simply tried to compare the general satisfaction level of employees based on their age and sex. He didn't show any communication elements in his conclusion. And another study by Gurmu (2021) on the impacts

of organizational communication on organizational performance concluded that organizational performance of Lege Tafo Lege Dadi town public sectors offices found that very low level. And also organizational communication of the sectors office was ineffective.so; this study showed that, the understanding and practices of organizational communication is still very low level. In this study, the researcher focused on how ineffective organizational communication affects organizational performance.

After seeing various empirical studies, the researcher was able to realize that the understanding of organizational communication in Ethiopia is very low level. And most previous researchers have focused on organizational communication with motivation, performance, and satisfaction in government organizations; no study has been done on the organizational communication practice in Ethiopian private banks, particularly on bank of Abyssinia. So, the researcher was interested to conduct this research for the purpose of showing the general practice of organizational communication on the selected study area.

### **1.3 Research Question**

- 1) What are the organizational communication strategies that used in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town?
- 2) How is the information flow like in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town?
- 3) What are the tools that are used for organizational communication in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town?
- 4) What are the communication barriers that affect organizational communication in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town?

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

#### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the organizational communication practices on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

- ❖ To identify the organizational communication strategies that used in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.
- ❖ To see the information flow in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.

- ❖ To identify the tools used for organizational communication in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.
- ❖ To explore the organizational communication barriers in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study is hoped to help to understand the importance of organizational communication practices. To Bank of Abyssinia, the findings and results of this study will offer a more reliable and in-depth comprehension of the practices of organizational communication and the important role it plays organizational success. This will aid in shaping future communication policy formulation. To researchers, the findings of the study will serve as literature to shed more light on the practices of organizational communication. Besides, the study is significance for Bank of Abyssinia to know how to create effective organizational communication. Moreover, the study is expected to add knowledge to the existing literature on the practices of organizational communication. Finally, the findings and results of the study will initiate other researchers to conduct in-depth studies and come up with a better understanding of the issue.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

The intension of this study was to investigate the organizational communication practices in eight branches of Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. The scope of the study was restricted geographically to branches of bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. The geographical zone is chosen from among other branches the researcher observed that employee turnover from that area so, the researcher chose this area thinking that it might be a communication problem and the area is close to the researcher and for the purpose of gathering reliable data simply. And thematically, the study was limited to the organizational communication practices. Therefore the focus area of this study was limited to only branches of Abyssinia Bank in Jimma town. And this study deals with only the organizational communication practices on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

This study has faced many challenges. One of the main challenges is during data gathering process; some respondents were not able to return questionnaires in due time and it was a difficult task to wait until all returned as expected and getting the consent of some respondents to be interviewed and voice recorded to provide necessary data was big a problem during interview. The other big challenge for this study was finding related literature in the field of organizational communications. Banks don't provide any internal data, so I didn't do a document review, which limited my data gathering instruments. The resource constraints are a potential limit for the result of this study

### **1.8 Organizations of the study**

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents a general background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance, scope and limitations of the study. The second chapter has discussed the theoretical framework of the study by dealing with organizational communication, theoretical framework, and theories of organizational communication. The third chapter dedicated to the methodological aspects, methods, procedures, and techniques that are used in this study. This presents the rationale behind selecting the qualitative and quantitative study and method of data collection. The next chapter, chapter four, has concentrated on presentation and analysis of findings and the last chapter has presented summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Definition of organizational communication**

Organizational communication can be defined in different ways. According to (Shockley-Zalabak, 2014) Organizational communication is the set of activities that organizations carry out and which emphasizes the process beyond any result and makes important contributions to achieving organizational goals, points to the process of sharing information between managers and employees, who are actors of organizational communication and making sense of this information. According to (Rageb et al., 2014) organizational communication is an interconnected system that consists of both internal and external communication. The purpose of organizational communication is often to exchange messages between people, and groups, and it is vital to create and maintain relationships as well as it has the ability to influence employee attitudes to be involved and committed to the organization (Kolcun et al., 2014).

Another definition of organizational communication is given by Getinet (2017), who says that organizational communication is the sending and receiving of communications between linked people in a certain location or place to accomplish personal and shared goals. It is not a singular phenomenon and is highly contextual and cultural. Organizational members communicate through spoken, written, and mediated methods. Building relationships with internal organizational members and engaging with interested external audiences is a major focus of organizational communication. The more we learn about communication, the more we understand that all behaviors are potentially communicative. In the communication process, each individual is both an actor and a reactor to the communication events. We introduce our own interpretation of events. We apply our own perceptual and interpretative lens to others' communication behaviors. Because we simultaneously produce and respond to behaviors, the possible implications are truly astonishing (Harris & Nelson, 2018).

According to the statement of Gizir and Şimşek (2005) cited in Tilahun (2020), further stated that organizational communication is essential to the organization's survival and essential to the accomplishment of the organization's purposes, goals, and ambitions. Organizational communication has a central position in the survival of an organization and plays an important role in all organizational processes (Gizir and Şimşek, 2005 cited in Tilahun 2020). It is impossible to achieve any organizational action or management process without organizational

communication. Organizational communication is an integral part of every organization and plays an important role in building a successful business. Communication and people's behavior within an organization affect the operation of the entire organization, and communication in an organization is vital.

According to the definition given above, organizational communication is the process of exchanging messages and information within an organization to achieve organizational objectives and goals. The researcher also understands that organizational communication encompasses all aspects of the organization's systems and that it reflects the fundamental values, traits, and culture of the organization.

## **2.2. Historical overview of organizational communication**

It can be difficult to comprehend the history of organizational communication. In acquiring complexity understanding of the history of organizational communication, there are certain complications, which the individuals need to go through. Since the past period, individuals have understood that it is vital for they can spread knowledge about the various components of organizational communication.

The industrial revolution and the birth of the modern company marked the beginning of the history of organizational communication. The concept of organizational communication was taken into consideration in the 1950s and 1960s. During the 1980s, with the work of Linda Putman, the research in terms of organizational has become more diversified to acquire meaning and significance in terms of both informative and critical perspectives. Organizational communication became a more formally recognized discipline in the 1960s. However, it has changed quite a bit over time. Informative and critical turns that have taken place in the early 1980s and the turn that took place at the beginning of the 21st century contributed significantly in leading to transformations in the concept of organizational communication ( Conrad & Sollitto, 2017).

Organizational communication clearly began in the service of business or as it was often called through the middle of the 20th century, industry. This was true in two ways. First, organizational communication asked basic questions about the flow of information, channels of communication, and the available media, chiefly in private sector organizations. Second, access to organizations, mainly large corporations, was primarily through top-level managers. These pursuits were quite

understandable. Redding, (1979) identified a strong managerial bias. Even during the period up to the watershed Alta Conference in 1981 (the intellectual and motivational equivalent There was a significant humanism with regard to work topic (similar to rhetoric's "Wingspread" conferences a decade before). that was consistent with some of the better impulses of the Human Relations Movement (roughly from 1930 to 1970). That is to say, many organizational communication scholars adopted a perspective on work that was broader than a mere focus on productivity (Tompkins, 1984). We've given you a quick chronology starting in the 1750s, when the Industrial Revolution began in the United Kingdom, rather than a lengthy, drawn-out history of the field of organizational communication as we know it today. The invention of steam-powered machinery radically altered how businesses conducted themselves and eventually gave rise to the modern corporation.

### **2.3 Functions of Organizational Communication**

In this study, the researcher wants to see the general organizational communication practices on Abyssinia Bank Jimma town in related with different theoretical models and concepts that exist regarding the roles and functions of organizational communication.

Any organization must have effective organizational communication. It is due to its several benefits such as increasing engagement and reducing confusion that it has gained great importance now. Poor communication is the most frequently identified cause of interpersonal conflict, according to research. It's not that unexpected. We participate in conversations of some kind for roughly 70% of our waking hours. We participate in the transfer and interpretation of meaning between people whether we are writing, reading, speaking, or listening. People who are effective communicators are positioning themselves for success. Organizations that encourage effective communication within their walls and with external parties their customers and the community set themselves up for success as well (Thomas.k.etal, 2020).

Organizational communication makes significant benefits to organizations in a variety of areas, including managing employee behavior, boosting motivation, fostering connections in the workplace, adapting, and managing conflicts, and building negotiating and bargaining skills. Information sharing, influence, persuasion, delivering commands, and combining with education and training are some of the most crucial roles of organizational communication within an organization (Spaho, 2012). On the other hand, according to(Jaradat & Sy, 2012a)

Organizational communication practices in a company will motivate the employees to respond positively to the direction and perform their tasks in a way that is most beneficial not only to themselves but to the organization and its various stakeholders. Effective and positive organizational communication is an indispensable requirement for the good health and success of any organization. Quality Communication is directly related to employees' mental peace as well as mental pressure, job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. It is common knowledge that communication issues play a significant role in success or failure and contribute to these outcomes (Verma, 2013).

When people interact with one another within an organization, organizational communication becomes crucial and fundamental. To ensure that everyone in the business has a shared understanding of the information delivered to them, communication becomes crucial. People who communicate well often feel satisfied. A person's capacity to communicate properly with others, from their work, from what they desire, and from what they believe, determines their level of corporate, social, and personal pleasure (Winarso, 2018). And Robbins and Judge (2013), say that poor communication is often the cause of interpersonal conflict, with about 70 percent of human activities involving communication such as writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Therefore, effective organizational communication could be essential to build long-term communications between management and employees to achieve organizational profitability in the years to come (Bhatia and Balani, 2015).

According to Thomas.K.et al (2020) functions of organizational communications are as follows;

### **2.3.1. Control**

To maintain order and equity within the system, organizations have procedures and standards that employees must adhere to. For instance, the company might mandate that if a person has a complaint about her job responsibility, the complaint must first be addressed with a supervisor. The next stage in the procedure can be to file a complaint that is examined by a committee if it remains unresolved. This is an illustration of how a company uses its communication procedures to maintain order and guarantee that complaints are treated fairly. Within an organization, control can also be exercised informally. To please the boss, a department employee could work overtime and produce more than the other team members. The other team members could belittle that eager person, tease him, and very subtly direct his behavior. Thomas.K.et al (2020).

### **2.3.2. Information**

In order for employees to do their duties correctly and effectively, organizations must keep them informed on their objectives, industry information, preferred procedures, new advancements and technology, etc. Employees may receive this information formally through meetings with managers, news and messaging delivered through a centralized system (like an intranet site), or informally through suggestions made by team members on the assembly line. A quicker way to approach a task and gets his coworkers to adopt the method (Thomas.K.et al 2020).

### **2.3.3. Emotional Expression**

Employees express themselves, voice their complaints, and interact socially through communication. Many employees use their jobs as their main means of social engagement. The communication that takes place between them is a crucial component of a company and frequently shapes its culture. No one aspect of organizational communication is more crucial than the others, and the organization needs to have all four of the functions operating well (Thomas.K.et al (2020).

From the above definition, the researcher understands that organizational communication is the most crucial component for organizational success. Without effective organizational communication, the fate of organizations to fail.so, the researcher believes that this research will give good awareness about the need of organizational communication for business organizations.

## **2.4. Organizational information flow**

Information flow refers to the transfer of information inside an organization between individuals, systems, and processes. When you have employees working across different locations, devices and departments, it can be difficult to keep everyone on the same page. Strong information flows enable problems to be overcome, allowing staff to continue working. Aligned on business goals, make more informed decisions, and work smarter, not harder (Team At Slak, 2022). And according to (Petrauskas, 2006) Organization's information flows are the mirror of the activities in an organization. Information flows to support the material flows (or the activities that directly build the main products/services of the organization) and are the connector between material flows and decision-makers. Modeling organization activities helps to build an effective organization. Ways how to use information flows in organization process modeling are analyzed in the latter works. Strong environments that promote and support open communication are necessary for organizations. In turn, this will lead the employees to accomplish their tasks

effectively (Gardon, 2022). When the nature of the work necessitates cooperation between several employees, effective communication flow is especially crucial. It is also used when information flow needs to be fastened, when a better understanding of an announcement needs to be achieved, and when common efforts need to be coordinated (Stacho, 2019).

#### **2.4.1. Downward communication**

Information is transferred from the upper to lower levels of an organization through downward communication. It is characterized by the ability to give commands, broaden thinking, and communicate effectively. It takes a lot of time, but its main issue is the denial or loss of information regarding the chain of command; frequently, there is a misinterpretation of the instructions, therefore a backward connection has to be established to confirm the transmission of correct and full information ((Fosic & Turkalj, 2011). The ability and motivation of employees to perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently is increased by downward communication, which reflects the recognition of subordinate's updates and informs the subordinate of necessary changes that may affect his role and work as well as a medium for involving employees in decisions ((Nwata et al., 2016).

Welch (2011) shows that there are numerous goals for downward communication in a company. The first and most important duty is to notify subordinates. This is stated to be the main goal of downward communication. Senior management mostly employs it to inform staff members about the organization's aims, strategies, and objectives. When a company is excessively bureaucratic, it might be difficult for subordinates to give candid feedback for top-level management communications that can reveal whether or not the information was understood. Communication from top-level management may be misread or misinterpreted if there are perception gaps between them and Communication from top-level management may be misread or misinterpreted if there are perception gaps between them and their subordinates. Likewise, difficulties can arise in a structure where there are numerous tiers of command. When the message is distorted as it travels down the hierarchy (Brønn & Brønn, 2015). The ability and motivation of employees to perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently is increased by downward communication, which reflects the recognition of subordinates updates and informs the subordinate of necessary changes that may affect his role and work as well as a medium for involving employees in decisions (Nwata et al., 2016).

### **2.4.2. Upward communication**

The transmission of signals from lower levels to higher levels is known as upward communication. An example of this would be a conversation started by a subordinate with their superior. Types of messages sent through this type of communication could be, for example, about performance on the job, about job-related problems, about fellow employees and their problems, about subordinates' perceptions of organization policies and practices, tasks and procedures (Mumby, 2013). Upward communication, which reflects the timely and regular flow of information and knowledge about events and occurrences from the subordinate level to the managerial level, supports the maintenance of vertical structural cooperation and understanding and thereby makes it possible to create a more harmonious work environment, which is crucial for achieving employee effectiveness and efficiency (Nwata et al., 2016).

Upward communication is used as a beneficial method of work management (Kalla, 2015). A company's staff involvement and productive working relationships with management are encouraged when upward communication is improved. The judgments that were made with employee involvement are also more agreeable to both sides. In an organization, a number of obstacles prevent upward communication. Easy access to communication tools is the first factor. The employees' access to communication tools can make internal communication difficult. Upward communication, which is defined as the timely and regular flow of knowledge about events and occurrences from the managerial level to the subordinate level, supports the maintenance of vertical structural cooperation and understanding and thereby fosters a more harmonious work environment, which is crucial for achieving employee effectiveness and efficiency (Nwata et al., 2016).

### **2.4.3. Horizontal communication**

Horizontal communication is peer-to-peer communication is an important communication to boost interpersonal relations and teamwork among organizational employees. Horizontal communication takes place between employees of the same level in organizations 'subdivisions (Cameron & Wilcox, 2011). Horizontal communication between subordinates, departments or divisions makes it possible for teams and employees to share information collaborate and solve problems (Kalla, 2015). This is commonly a more open communicate as there are no differences in power structures between the communicators which normally hinder effective communication.

Horizontal communication enables teamwork and hence increases the efficacy with which tasks in the organization are accomplished (Dolphin, 2015). To make a coordinated, cross-functional effort in achieving corporate goals, horizontal communication is necessary. As the organization grows larger, more complex, and more vulnerable to flattening and networking of hierarchies, the need for horizontality becomes more evident. (Jaradat & Sy, 2012a) The primary requirement to function aptly in the organization environment is to have excellent horizontal communication (Dolphin, 2015). Horizontal communication conveys information within the organization for industry purposes (Kalla, 2015). It is principally a management discipline that permits and reassures strategic communication amongst employees of the same level.

## **2.5. Organizational communication strategies**

The idea of a communication strategy is that it is a functional strategy that gives the communication function direction and concentration. Professional acting in the capacity of a communication manager at the functional organizational level facilitates it. It is the result of strategic decision-making by senior communication professionals and top managers about the administration of and interaction with strategic stakeholders (Kube, 2014).

In the business world, communication strategies are frequently used in business plans to describe how to communicate with diverse groups of individuals. A single company may have several strategies for several types of individuals, including customers, investors, rivals, or staff. For communication within the company itself, some businesses even have internal communication strategies. These methods are employed to choose the information to provide with clients or investors and the format in which that information should be presented (Kube, 2014).

Richards (2021) recommends that organizations should adopt the following communication strategies to achieve intended results among target audiences:

**Openness** An essential tactic for enabling participation in the problems the organization is facing all of its employees is to foster an open communication environment. Employees who feel comfortable sharing feedback, ideas, and even criticism at any level are more open. To foster a culture of trust that may serve as the basis for success, managers must be committed to open communication (Richards, 2021).

**Inclusivity** In order to involve employees in decisions that have an impact on their everyday activities, inclusion is crucial. Employee participation in decision-making processes is a critical factor that affects employee satisfaction and success. Organizations that do not ensure inclusivity, i.e. with a secretive communication environment, deprive employees and stakeholders of effective communication, which stifles their participation and causes ideas and opportunities to be lost (Richards, 2021).

**Two-way Communication** an organization's communication may not be top-down, bottom-up, or one-way. Effective communication should be two-way (bilateral), as modern communication tactics have demonstrated. The fundamental tenet of two-way communication is that there must be space for dialogue between the participants. An organization's communication cannot be top-down, bottom-up, or one-way. The fundamental tenet of two-way communication is that employees of businesses should be able to address issues. Companies that encourage employee dialogue about their projects, thoughts, and opinions regarding goods, services, clients, and the business environment create an inclusive culture that produces results (Richards, 2021).

**Results-driven Organizational communication** Organizational communication needs to be focused strategically on attaining quantifiable results and be results-oriented. Because of this, businesses should be creative enough to plan and consider what their staff members need to know and comprehend in order to do their duties, engage with clients, and effectively represent the company. Effective communication goes beyond simply doing something because it's nice to do it (Richards, 2021).

**Multi-channeled** the fundamental idea behind multichannel communication is that different messages or pieces of information must be delivered to diverse audiences in order to have the desired impact. Employee communications require varied techniques because different messages have different requirements and interests and because of the chaos of the workplace. The business should be able to create a standard protocol so that every employee is aware of the best channels for communicating different types of information. It is essential to use a variety of communication methods, including email, phone calls, messaging, and social media, and to link all of these in a central spot that all staff members can access. However, when they are mobile-friendly, communication tools are very effective (Richards, 2021).

Kearney (2020) further stated that you should be aware of the audience you are speaking to, the tone and language used, the clarity of the messages direct and focused, free from ambiguity the content, which must be easy and concise to read and beneficial to employees and avoid the habit of repeatedly delivering the same message.

## **2.6. Channels and tools of organizational communication**

In order for the organization to accomplish its business goals, mutually beneficial understanding between the units must be formed and maintained through the use of communication tools (Gerson et al., 2007). (Lee, 2005) stated that the main goal of communication in a company is to inspire and motivate staff to carry out the company's strategic intent. A clear message between two parties is a sign of effective communication, and the recipient must be able to communicate effectively in the present era in order for the information to be successfully passed to them (Blundel & Ippolito, 2008).

Organizational communication tools Scholars mainly classify the various organizational means of communication into traditional means of communication and electronic-based means of communication. Zvingowanisei (2018) indicated that all forms of written communication (manuals, brochures, and posters), face-to-face communication (meetings, conferences, seminars and ceremonies) and telephone calls are the traditional means of communication within the organization as well as to external audiences (mainly stakeholders). On the other hand, **Robbins** and Judge (2013) describe that electronic means of communication are another means of communication within organizations. According to Krishan (2011), electronic-based communication tools such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, blog sites, and many others are the predominant communication platforms for organizations as they are cheap, efficient, and easily accessible.

According to Miller (2012), a variety of communication channels can facilitate communication flow. Information can be transmitted or received in a variety of ways, including verbally, in writing, or through various mediums like the telephone or computer, to mention a few. A more complex approach of describing the communication channels segmented in organizations newsletters, circulation materials, surveys, meetings, in-house television, face-to-face interactions, email, hotlines, suggestion boxes, internet, telephone calls, videoconferences, memos, letters, notice boards, formal presentations, reports, open forums, blogs, and wikis are

used to communicate with publics of various departments and with those in its various branches (Yates, 2006).

**Face-to-face communication** the term "face-to-face communication" emphasizes characteristics in interactions where the communicators are physically present. Since communication is unmediated and direct in physical presence and temporal simultaneity, this sort of communication is also more commonly referred to as "interaction." Sender-message-receiver theories of communication have been particularly challenged by the fact that contact is instantaneously responsive and that communicators orient their actions to this reality. This entry highlights research that views "face-to-face communication (Meyer, 2016). The efficacy of negotiations for agreements or business agreements is considered by attendees and meeting planners to be most influenced by face-to-face communication, followed by learning new skills and receiving training on important areas of their jobs. The meeting's organizers also believed that it was useful for finding the best applicant through interviews (The Right Solution et al., 2015).

In-person communication Meetings, conferences, or negotiations between department employees are just a few examples of the many various ways face-to-face communication can occur. Personal communication allows for the direct delivery of information, the opportunity to hear and discuss alternative viewpoints, and the consideration of employees' sentiments, emotions, and body language. Employees are free to ask questions that are essential to them, and managers can explain everything in detail and clear up any confusion (Quirke, 2008).

**Notice Board** A notice board is a vital device for gathering information in our daily lives. In the course of our daily lives, notice boards can be found in a variety of locations, including offices, bus stops, train stations, and retail malls. Therefore, we may say that notice boards are the locations to post public information, such as event advertisements, event announcements, public awareness campaigns, etc. Nowadays, it takes a different individual to post the information on the notice board. Both time and manpower will be wasted as a result. Paper is the primary medium for information exchange on traditional analogy notice boards (Penmetcha et al., 2021). On the other hand, according to (Smith & Mounter, 2005), One of the most archaic methods of formal internal communication is the use of notice boards. This is a helpful channel for exchanging information that must be seen on a computer screen for a longer period than e-mail

but does not necessarily necessitate face-to-face interaction. The information on notice boards should be fresh, updated, and active.

The suggested system focuses on the creation of an efficient and effective notice board that addresses the drawbacks of the current notification system. It receives the message, records it, shows it on the LED screen, and emits speech announcements as well. Because, to its eco-friendly design, less labor is required to display critical information, it provides rapid data sharing and is less expensive to implement and maintain. This project offers a useful technique for wirelessly displaying messages on notice boards. Additionally, it provides customer assurance to stay clear of any intended framework abuse (Penmetcha et al., 2021).

**E-mail** is also quicker, less formal, and more useful. Emails used for business correspondence shouldn't be too casual or come out as rude. Emails have the advantage of sending messages quickly and securely, making them one of the most popular internal communication channels at the moment (Farrant, 2003). The term "e-mail," which stands for "Electronic Mail," refers to messages that are sent and received online. While there are many various email services that you may use to set up an email account, send and receive emails, and send and receive attachments, we have decided to concentrate on the services offered by Gmail in this class because it is free and one of the most well-known email services accessible. (You & Learn, n.d.) Since roughly fifteen years ago, surveys and data collection from online users have been conducted using electronic mail (e-mail). However, some claim that email is becoming less and less useful (Sheehan, 2001).

**The meeting** is one of the most significant means of communication inside an organization is through meetings. A successful meeting requires careful planning and management. A meeting's purpose must be determined, the number of attendees must be taken into account, the best method of communication must be determined, and a primary and auxiliary action plan must be prepared. Employees frequently dislike attending meetings. Because of the repeated actions that are routinely needless and provide no use, it is typically considered a waste of time. Meetings should only be held when necessary. Meetings come in both formal and casual formats (Veber, 2009). The success of any meeting depends on how it is conducted. Research shows that the role of the chairperson is central. It is an administrative role to ensure that the meeting achieves the objectives for which it was convened. The facilitator should allow a free flow of ideas (Bagire et al., 2015).

**Telephone** Organizations' use of mobile information technologies affects how work is done. Equally, organizational structures and methods of work influence particular technical configurations. While peer-to-peer voice and message communication is emphasized in a lot of mobile communication research, organizations have used mobile communications for much longer and with more complex mobile technology configurations. The organizational experiences, therefore, come before the broad consumer use of a variety of smartphone and tablet apps (Sørensen, 2020). It's crucial to keep the message's succinctness and clarity in mind when you're on the phone. Since the communicator and the receiver cannot support the message through nonverbal cues, communication over the phone is more difficult to understand than in person. Modern wireless and mobile phones have the benefit of removing physical boundaries (Vymětal, 2008).

## **2.7. Communication barriers in an organization**

Organizational Communication is known to be the key factor for the success of any organization, within any kind of Individuals must collaborate, hold meetings, and discuss a variety of topics about their roles and activities in an organizational structure; however, if they develop strained relationships and hard terms among themselves, they will be unable to work effectively and harm the organization's profitability, productivity, and goodwill. Every organization faces some communication-related barriers. People often think that communication is a very simple and straightforward process, which is true. However, barriers are what make communication complicated, challenging, and time-consuming. The presence of obstacles makes communication challenging (Zaineb, 2010). Many factors can prevent communication both within the organization and between society and the person. Internal communication problems can harm the structure of the company and make it difficult to carry on with business as usual. These obstacles can arise from many different factors, from individual to organizational reasons, and they cause conflicts and failures in organizations by causing a lack of communication (Karaçor & Şahin, 2004).

Communication barriers exist in all organizations and these barriers may be particular or environmental or noise and cultural differences, biases within the organization. Communication barriers are being increased or emerging in education as technologies are getting better or expansion in their capacities and scope throughout the world (Donaldson, 2011). Eren (2016) lists various factors that impede organizational communication as individual factors, linguistic

difficulties, inability to listen, lack of clarity of expression, and insufficient feedback. According to Tutar, (2009), organizational communication barriers consist of factors arising from the characteristics of the employees within the organization, organizational communication tools and channels, physical environment and distance, status, and hierarchy differences. It seems reasonable to conclude that one of the most inhibiting forces to organizational effectiveness is a lack of effective communication (Lunenborg, 2010). When people cannot understand each other's languages, communication becomes difficult. The inability to communicate through language is referred to as a language barrier.

### **2.7.1. Language barrier**

Language barrier is the most common barrier that hinders communication and its effectiveness whereby it causes misinterpretations and misunderstandings (Agarwal & Garg, 2012). Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. However, barriers can also occur when people are speaking the same language. Sometimes barriers occur when we use inappropriate levels of language or we use jargon or slang which is not understood by one or more of the people communicating (Pipaş & Jaradat, 2011). Language barriers often go hand in hand with cultural differences, bringing up additional problems and misunderstandings in the workplace (Fandrejewska, & Wasilik, 2018). Thus, language barriers can easily give an adverse impact on work performance because messages can easily be misconstrued (Ramlan et al., 2018). According to Luring (2008), Language differences are the main cause of misunderstandings and poor communication among employees. This language difference has also been viewed as counterproductive, especially in communication. Even when two people are conversant in the same language, miscommunication may still occur since everyone has a unique communication style. Despite speaking the same language, people from different places may have different accents and word choices (Agarwal, 2012).

### **2.7.2. Culture barrier`**

A cultural barrier is defined as a system of shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that influences individual perceptions, preferences, and behaviors, and is one of the factors influencing employees' working performance in an organization (Ramlan et al., 2018). In an organization, a broader culture difference will need stronger control by managers of the organization. If managers are somewhat unable to understand the crucially of culture, it may lead to chaos within

the organization. Embarrassment, the end of relationships, and other consequences for business performance are the results of not understanding cultural differences in organizations (Ghemawat & Reiche, 2011). Communication with people of different cultures and backgrounds means becoming aware of the differences in values, beliefs and attitudes that people hold. Empathy is important for overcoming barriers to communication based on culture. Empathy means sensing the feelings and attitudes of others as if we had experienced them personally (Pipaş & Jaradat, 2011). When two people communicate with each other and there may be variations in their cultural backgrounds, communication also occurs between those who belong to different nationalities, religions, castes, creeds, races, ethnicities, etc. It is crucial to go beyond any obstacles that may come up during a conversation. Making those with whom one is talking aware of one's own culture is essential (Kapur, 2018). The cultural values of employees will give an impact on their working style by utilizing body language, communication style, problem-solving skills, and time management. This is very crucial for management to handle because work value that differs due to culture may affect an individual's performance and thus influences job satisfaction at the workplace (zaman et al., 2011).

### **2.7.3. Organizational Environment barrier**

Environment is one of the characteristics of an organization and environmental setting can cause hindrance to the process of communication. It consists of managerial philosophy, multiple levels of hierarchy, and power or status relationships between senders and receivers (Guo & Sanchez, 2005). In accordance with Ivancevich et al. (2011), the term „company“ or „organizational structure“ brings means to the official pattern of relationship set between various divisions of a company, normally known as an organizational chart. When it is required that every communication corresponds to the protocols or levels of influence, it results in a lack of attention and concern toward employees which indicates a managerial philosophy that restricts communication flows. Not all barriers to communication are caused by people. There are many environmental factors affecting the effective communication process. Messages can be blocked by environmental factors, such as the physical setting or the situation where communication takes place (Pipaş & Jaradat, 2011).

Speaking of effective communication in an organization, it commonly relates to the system designed in within the organization. The problems with the system design are referred to its structures or systems. Agarwal (2012) elaborated that it has an unclear organizational structure,

which makes it confusing to recognize the person they should communicate with. Other examples include a lack of guidance or directions, ineffective or inappropriate information systems, and a lack of clarity in responsibilities, making it hard for employees to know what is expected from them (Agarwal, 2012).

According to Sabuncuoğlu and Gümüş (2012), organizational communication barriers are classified as technical, psycho-social, and organizational barriers and disorders. It will be helpful to explain the main organizational communication barriers as follows.

**Barriers arising from employee characteristics:** Based on the fact that employees are the main actors of organizational communication, it is possible to assume that these communication activities between employees will be influenced by many different emotional, intellectual, and behavioral variables specific to them and these variables will be shaped according to their qualities. Employee personality features, upbringing, degrees of knowledge and perception, preferences and tendencies, attitudes, and actions will shape and direct all communication activities in which they play a channel or receiver role (Tutar, 2009).

**Barriers arising from the tools and channels of organizational communication:** It is very important to choose the appropriate channel and tool to ensure that the messages are conveyed completely and correctly in the communication process. Problems such as insufficient communication channels, carrying loads over difficult capacities, rapid developments in communication technologies, and the inability of organizations to Effective communication is hindered by variables such as the inability to quickly adjust to current technology (Sabuncuoğlu & Gümüş, 2012).

**A barrier arising from physical environment and distance:** another factor that hinders effective communication in organizations is the physical distance between employees and management. Particularly in large companies where the working environments for management and employees are separated places, face-to-face communication leaves its place to communication technologies such as telephone or mail. However, face-to-face communication still outperforms these communication technologies in terms of effectiveness (Sabuncuoğlu & Gümüş, 2012). If the physical environments of organizations are set up in a way to isolate employees socially from this will restrict their ability to interact with each other, leave them alone, or find each other easily. Organizational communication and cause the employees to be negatively affected and their performance to decrease (Tutar, 2009).

**Barriers arising from differences in status and hierarchy:** All employees in the organization have different levels of status. These differences in employees' standing within the framework of superior-subordinate relationships in the organizational structure may occasionally restrict the flow of information, ideas, suggestions, and problems and cause problems such as filtering messages, changing or restricting their meaning (Sabuncuoğlu & Gümüş, 2012).

## **2.8. Theoretical Review**

### **2.8.1. General Systems Theory**

The biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy first proposed this theory in 1937, and since then, scholars like Talcott Parsons and Erwin Laszlo have developed it. Ludwig developed the theory to explain the interactions in the environment and to adopt a global perspective. Because it considers the organization to be a system made up of numerous subsystems, each of who's interdependent and interlocking components is held together by communication," this theory offers communication scholars the most natural avenue for examining organizational functions and relationships'' (Ferguson, 2007). Wholeness, hierarchy, and feedback are three key elements of the systems theory that have been identified in organizational communication research as influencing how successful communication affects employee productivity. According to systems theory, the nature and purposes of the parts are determined by the whole. The interconnection of the numerous components that make up the system is referred to as wholeness. This implies that various system components work together to support the organization as a whole (Weckowicz, 2002).

Systems theory aims to clarify the interrelationships and dynamic linkages between system components as well as the interactions between organizations and their environments. A system is created based on the organization and patterns of the connections that result from component interactions. As a result of these emergent patterns and relationships, each system is different from another. In other words, unlike biological systems, components of social organizations have their wills and intended purposes (Lai & Huili Lin, 2017). The theory comes to organizational communication from the Systems School. It is essential for organizational communication because it not only emphasizes the significance of feedback in all communication plans but also because it can persuade researchers to look in addition to the entity's boundaries in order to better understand communication exchanges within the organization Ferguson, 2007).

According to system theory, each organizational subsystem is responsible for its tasks. They are interconnected and dependent on one another, however, as a result of their shared organizational objective. Changes to one subsystem affect the others. The contributions of the other subsystems are necessary for one sub-system to succeed. But a crucial question is what link binds these subsystems together. The solution is fairly obvious. These sub-systems of the system are connected for a common goal through communication. We use the phrase "an organization cannot exist without communication" for this reason. An organization's people and groups interact with one another through communication. The organization is the entry system that is created when communication holds all subsystems together for a common aim and objective. Additionally, external communication links the organization to its surroundings (Thomas Harris 2002).

### **2.8.2. Human Relations Theory**

Human relation theory was introduced by three scholars; Mayo, Roathlisberger, and Dickons in 1933 to replace classical theory with new theory. The founders of this theory conducted the study known as 'The Hawthorne Studies'. This study passed through four steps called illumination studies, the relay assembly test room studies, the interview program and the bank wring room studies. The outcome of the studies changes the concept of prominence on output and work design to the interaction of individuals. Classical theory more focuses on how to increase productivity and efficiency. But the human relation approach primarily focuses on how to satisfy more needs of individuals and increase employees' participation and opportunity to be both sender and receiver in organizational communication (Otoo Florence, 2015 pp.34).

According to this theory controlling and motivating employees of the organization is very important to reach organizational goals and objectives, because people are passive and resistant to achieving an organizational goal, without the intervention and direction of the organization's management.

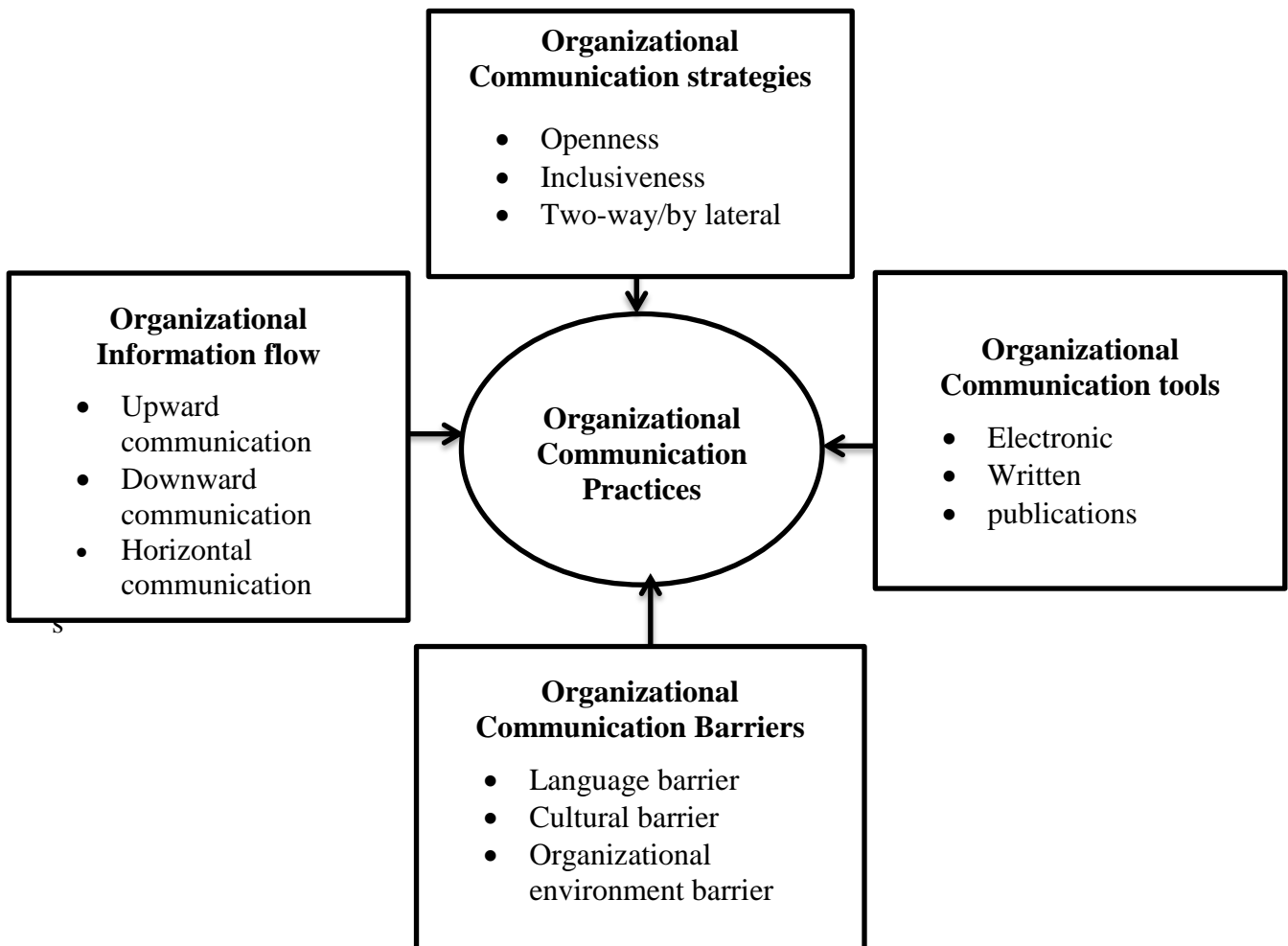
People in organizations need to interact with each other and the surrounding environment. Employees of the organization need to cooperate share experiences and develop team working to accomplish their tasks and reach organizational goals. The success and failure of the organization is determined by the relationship between the people of the organization. And it is impossible to maintain relations without communication. Because of that communication has a core role in the human relation approach (Shockley Zalabak 2015 pp.82).

The relevance of this approach to the audit is that it emphasizes the role of employees in the organizational communication effectiveness of an organization. In addition, seeing the organizational communication from this perspective helps the leadership to make an informed decision within the organization. According to Lunenburg & Ornstein, (2012) attitudes, relationships, feelings of belonging, interpersonal skills, participative decision-making, and effective communication play a key role in the performance and effectiveness of an organization. Manjo, (2016) also noted that leadership style and communication play a pivotal role in workers' satisfaction and productivity. Hence, Human relation theory gives an insight in the communication behavior of an organization.

Moreover, the human relations approach focuses on the importance of personal communication and underlined the need for both upward and horizontal communication. In this regard, the consulted human relations theory is relevant since it highlights the role of communication channels, information flow, employees and leadership in the effectiveness of organizational communication practices. Hence, it is the most appropriate theoretical foundation for the current study.

## 2.9. Conceptual Framework

In this section, the overall concepts of the research topic discussed above are summarized below. The study is centered on core concepts such as organizational communication practices. Different organizational communication activities take place in an organization including information flows, organizational communication strategies, use of communication tools and the like. The core concepts are discussed in detail in other sections of the literature.



Source: researcher own survey 2023

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Description of the study area**

The study was conducted in 8(eight) branches on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. Jimma is the largest city in southwestern Oromia Region, Ethiopia. It has a latitude and longitude of 7°40'N and 36°50'E respectively. The 2007 census, Jimma was reorganized administratively as a special zone. Jimma town is the capital and administrative center of the zone and is located at a distance of 350 km away from the capital city of Ethiopia Addis Ababa.

### **3.2 Research design**

The study was conducted in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town .The study used descriptive research design to investigate the research problem. This is due to the reason that descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. According to (Kothari, 2004)descriptive research design is concerned with describing, recording, analyzing and reporting conditions that exist or existed.

### **3.3 Research approach**

Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used to conduct this study. The reason for selecting quantitative approach is to gather information from wide sources and the qualitative approach is selected for gathering in-depth data from direct communication with the samples. (Creswell, 2009) advised that, social science researchers try to address problems that are complex in nature and so, the use of either quantitative or qualitative approaches on their own is inadequate. Matveev (2002) highly recommends using both methods of inquiry to ensure high reliability of data, understanding of the contextual aspects of the research, flexibility, and openness of the data collection, and a more holistic interpretation of the research problem. Creswell (2011) further explains that when using descriptive design, the researcher collects and analyses thoroughly and convincingly both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **3.4 Research Population and Sampling Design**

#### **3.4.1 Total population**

The total population of this study was 98 employees spread across the eight branches of Abyssinia Bank in Jimma town. According to (Asiamah et al., 2017) a proper definition or specification of the population is critical because it guides others in appraising the credibility of the sample, sampling technique (s), and outcomes of the research.so, the target population of the

study was 98 employees who work in the eight (8) branches of Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. Those were Jimma branch 14, Hermata branch 13, Halal branch 12; Boche bore branch 12, Awetu branch 11, Abba-Jiffar branch 12, Abba-Buna branch 13, and Seka branch 11. From that, the researcher used all eight (8) branches for this study. And the total populations of this study were 98 employees.

### **3.4.2 Sample size**

The study investigated the organizational communication practices on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. Jimma town Bank of Abyssinia has eight (8) branches and totally 98 employees spread across those eight branches. From that, the researcher used as participants of the study 8 accountants, 8 cashiers, 49 senior customer service officers, and 33 junior customers service officers. All population participated in this study because; the numbers of employees were manageable and small in number.

### **3.4.3 Sampling technique**

The researcher used non-probability sampling method to determine the sample size. From the non-probability sampling method, the researcher used comprehensive sampling technique to determine the sample size and to gather relevant information from those samples and the researcher used comprehensive sampling technique because, the number of employees were manageable and small in number. The top managers who were involved in the study were selected purposively especially those who involved in providing information about the overall practice were considered as key informants. So for the qualitative data, the researcher used purposive sampling technique.

## **3.5 Method of data collection Tools**

Two instruments were used to collect data for this study. A questionnaire was used to do the survey for quantitative data collection and an interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from top managers who led branches in the organization.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

In quantitative research, variables and relationships are the central ideas (Bernard & Bernard, 2013). Quantitative research is useful in providing detailed planning before data collection and analysis because it provides tools for measuring concepts, planning design stages, and dealing with population and sampling issues. The questionnaire contains closed-ended questions which were organized in the form and distribute to the respondents. The questionnaire contained

partially adopted items from (Syallow et al., 2017). It was modified and pilot tested before its use at this bank as an instrument. Questions presented relating to the concepts of assessing the organizational communication practices on bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale with the following ratings. Strongly agree (1), agree (2), fairly agree (3), disagree (4), and strongly disagree (5). The researcher prepared twenty five (25) closed-ended questionnaires and the questionnaires were administered to the selected employees in eight branches on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.

### **3.5.2 In-depth Interview**

Since the aim of this study was to investigate the organizational communication practice, interviewing the top managers in their offices was one way to achieve the desired objective. The reason for choosing to use an in-depth interview is to make sure that the researcher reveals perceptions at an individual level on a particular issue. Moreover, in-depth interviews are an excellent way of obtaining in-depth knowledge on sensitive matters and complexities related to individuals' beliefs, perceptions, and practices that can be explored (Duplooy, 1995). The in-depth interview was conducted to collect data from key informants (top managers of the Bank). Top managers of the office were also purposively selected to obtain detailed information on organizational communication practices. The key informant interview involves selecting and interviewing managers who are presumed to be knowledgeable on the field under investigation. These people are called key informants because they are assumed to have more knowledge on the subject than other members of the study population. The interviews provide interaction with the top managers and these interviews were audio-recorded. The interview guide for in-depth interviews consisted of five (5) interview questions in open-ended form and the researcher prepared it for 8 top managers who provided clarifications on the organizational communication practices on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town.

### **3.6 Method of data analysis**

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviations (SD) were calculated. These were computed using SPSS version 26.0 for Windows to obtain summary descriptive statistics. Mean scores were determined for Likert items. And the researcher used thematic data analysis for qualitative data. The data collected using an in-depth interview was coded and thematically analyzed.

### 3.7 Reliability and Validity

#### 3.7.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability refers the degree to which a test is consistent and stable in measuring what is intended to measure. It refers to whether the data collection and analysis processes would yield reliable and consistent findings or outcomes if repeated or recreated by another researcher. (Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, A. G, 2003). In order to ensure the reliability of the information, the researcher used the Cronbach test. The reliability summaries for all the variables for which Cronbach's Alpha is used are shown in the table below. Cronbach's Alpha, according to (George, D., & Mallery, P., 2003), is a measure of the internal consistency of scales. The coefficient indicates the degree of consistency, with  $> 0.9$  being excellent,  $> 0.8$  good,  $> 0.7$  acceptable,  $> 0.6$  questionable,  $> 0.5$  poor, and  $< 0.5$  unacceptable. As a consequence, the reliability test revealed, as indicated in the table below, that the items in the questionnaire demonstrated Cronbach's Alpha rate more than enough to be deemed consistent or acceptable. This result is explained in table 1 below.

**Table 1 : Cronbach's alpha result**

Variables	No.of Items	Cronbach's	Internal Consistency
organizational communication strategies	4	0.736	Acceptable
Organizational information flow	6	0.726	Acceptable
Organizational communication tools	10	0.752	Acceptable
Organizational communication barriers	5	0.715	Acceptable
Total	25	0.846	Good

#### 3.7.2 Validity of the test

Validity refers to the appropriateness, significance, and utility of a researcher's inferences, as well as the extent to which a test measures and what it claims to measure Creswell (2020). The study's validity, on the other hand, determines which either the research findings are accurate and whether the study actually measures what it is intended to measure, or more specifically, whether the research instrument allows you to achieve your research goal and the extent to which results from an appropriately administered test provide evidence for conclusions about variations in the

trait that the test is designed to measure Nahids and Cizek, (2015). To keep the instruments' validity, most of the surveys are adopted of earlier research from (Syallow et al., 2017).

### **3.8 Ethical consideration**

In conducting research, it is valuable to consider ethical side of it. The researcher kept the confidentiality measures mentioned earlier for data collections, both qualitative and quantitative. The researcher was creating good relationships with all the respondents because the selection of potential and appropriate people plays an important role for the reliability and validity of the data that is produced. The privacy of the data sources is kept safe. The participants were not forced to complete the questionnaire under any circumstances. All the information given by the interviewees was used for research purpose only.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.0 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to investigate organizational communication practices on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. So four main research questions were pointed out and both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Survey-questionnaire and in-depth interviews were employed under both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics tables, percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviations (SD). These were computed using SPSS version 26.0 for Windows to obtain summary descriptive statistics. While the data collected using in-depth interviews was coded and thematically analysed. The discussions and interpretations of the findings are presented in an integrated and coherent manner.

### 4.1 Response rate

Response rate is formally defined as the number of completed questionnaires divided by the number of eligible sample members (Frohlich, 2001). Response rates are generally considered to be the most widely compared statistic for judging the quality of surveys (Johnson and Owens, 2008). There is no specific response rate that guarantees an unbiased representation of the population. A total of 98 questioners were administered to Bank of Abyssinia selected work division and 93 returned representing a response rate of 94.9%, so it is sufficient to conduct the research. On the other hand, 8 top-level managers were interviewed for this study. Here quantitative data is presented and analyzed first, then qualitative data is followed.

**Table 2 : the responses rate of distributed questionnaire**

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Respond	93	94.9%
Non- respond	5	5.1%
Total	98	100%

Source: survey of the study, 2023

## 4.2 Result

### 4.2.1 Result from Questionnaire

This section involves the use of descriptive statistics to analyze and present quantitative data collected regarding study variables.

#### 4.2.1.1 Demographic Data

This part of the questionnaire of the demographic analysis wished for a limited amount of information related to the personal and demographic status of respondents. The purpose of demographic analysis in this research is to describe the characteristics of the sample such as the proportion of males and females in the sample, age group of respondents, educational level of respondents, work experience of respondents, and the job category of the respondents. Therefore, the following variables are summarized and described in the tables shown below.

**Table 3 : sex of respondents**

No	Sex	Frequency	Valid percent
1	Male	63	67.7
2	Female	30	32.3
Total		93	100

Source: Own survey data, 2023

The researcher found out that the majority of the respondents were males 63 (67.7%), while female respondents accounted for 30 (32.3%) which was almost half of the male respondents.

**Table 4 : age of the selected respondents**

No	Age	Frequency	Valid percentage
1	20-29	32	34.4
2	30-39	50	53.8
3	40-49	8	8.6
4	>50	3	3.2
Total		93	100

Source: Own field survey, 2023

Figure 3, deals with the age of respondents. In this regard 32 (34.4%) of the respondents were in the age category of 20-29 years, 50 (53.8%) of the respondents were in the age category of 30-39 years, 8 (8.6%) of the respondents were in the age category of 40-49 years and the remaining 3

(3.2%) of respondents were above 50 years. From the above information, the majority of the respondents were in the age category of 30-39 years. This shows that the majority of the respondents were in the prime age category.

**Table 5 : educational level of the respondents**

No	Educational level	Frequency	Valid percent
1	Diploma	0	0
2	Degree	72	77.4
3	Masters	21	22.6
4	PhD	0	0
5	Others	0	0
Total		93	100.0

Source: own survey, 2023

Regarding the educational background majority of the respondents, 72(77.4%) were B.A Degree holders while 21(22.6%) were M.A degree holders so, all respondents can understand and respond well.

**Table 6 : Working experience of the respondents**

No	Working experience	Frequency	Valid percentage
1	less than 1 year	15	16.1
2	2-5 years	52	55.9
3	5-10 years	19	20.4
4	>10	7	7.5
Total		93	100

Source: own field survey, 2023

The above table has shown how long have they worked in the Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town. In this regard, 15(16.1) of the respondents were less than 1 year of service followed by 52(55.9) of the respondents were 2-5 years of service, 19(20.4) of respondents were 5-10 years of service and 7(7.5%) which is above 10 years. Thus, based on the above information majority of the respondents have worked less than 1 years in the Bank of Abyssinia.

**Table 7 : Position of selected respondents**

No	Position	Frequency	Valid percent
1	Teller	78	83.9
2	Cashier	7	7.5
3	Accountant	8	8.6
Total		93	100

Source: own field survey, 2023

As the above table indicated, most of the respondents were tellers (customer service officers) with 78(83.9%), and 8(8.6%) were accountants, 7(7.5%) were cashiers. Therefore, for this study, most of the respondents were tellers (customer service officers).

#### **4.2.2. 1 organizational communication strategies used in the Bank of Abyssinia**

The first objective of the study was to identify the organizational communication strategies used in Bank of Abyssinia to achieve this, some questions were asked about the communication strategies of the Bank and were analyzed based on the following points: Dissemination of organizational communication activities through multiple channels referred to as 'multichannel', employee participation, which is 'openness' and in terms of issues to be Addressed, involvement of employees in decision-making processes, i.e. 'inclusivity'.

**Table 8 : response to organizational communication strategies**

No	Description of the item	Frequencies of response						
		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
1	Your organization involves the employees in the decision-making processes regarding their day-to-day activities.	-	16	7	56	14	3.73	0.9224
		-	17.2%	7.5%	60.2%	15.1%		
2	In your organization, there is an open communication environment to make employees feel free to share feedback, ideas, and even criticism at every level.	-	15	7	56	15	3.76	0.9136
		-	16.1%	7.5%	60.2%	16.1%		
3	Your organization delivers information/ messages in multiple ways email, phone calls, messaging, and social media) to have the desired impact on the receivers.	16	52	5	20	-	2.31	0.9997
		17.2%	55.9%	5.4%	21.5%	-		
4	Bank of Abyssinia involves employees in discussing their work, their ideas, and their perspectives on services, customers, and the business environment in which they are.	-	16	12	49	16	3.69	0.953
		-	17.2	12.9	52.7%	17.2%		
<b>Total average mean</b>							3.37	

Source: own survey result 2023

Table 5 illustrates responses to the items of organizational communication strategies which shows that respondents agreement on the organization involves the employees in the decision-making processes regarding their day-to-day activities, In your organization there is an open communication environment to make employees feel free to share feedback, ideas, and even criticism at every level, Your organization delivers information/ messages in multiple ways email, phone calls, messaging, and social media) to have the desired impact on the receivers and

Bank of Abyssinia involves employees in discussing their work, their ideas, and their perspectives on services, customers, and the business environment in which they are. These items have mean and standard deviation scores of (M 3.73, SD 0.922), (M 3.796, SD 0.913), (M 2.31, 0.999) and (M3.69, SD 0.953) respectively.

As shown in the table, the majority of the respondents (60.2%, mean score 3.73) with openness in terms of free participation of employees in the issues to be discussed stated that they were not involved in the decision-making process regarding their day-to-day activities. A larger proportion of respondents also replied that there is no open communication environment to make employees feel free to share feedback, ideas, and even criticism at every level (60.2%, mean score 3.76) and also (52.7%, mean score 3.69) of respondents replied that employees in Bank of Abyssinia did not involve in discussing their work, their ideas, and their perspectives on services, customers, and the business environment in which they are. From the analysis, it can be concluded that the bank has not adopted communication strategies such as inclusiveness, openness and two-way (bilateral communication strategies).

Regarding multichannel communication strategies the findings indicated that the majority of the respondents agreed that the organization delivers information/ messages in multiple ways (email, phone calls, messaging, and social media) to have the desired impact on the receivers (55.9%, mean score 2.31). The overall mean score of these items defining the Organizational communication strategies was 3.37. From the above data, the researcher concludes that there is a multi-channelled communication environment to deliver information in multiple ways.

#### **4.2.2.2 Organizational information flow in Bank of Abyssinia**

The second objective of this study was to see the organizational information flow in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town. This was founded on the premise that in order to assess organizational communication practices, it was necessary to first understand the general flow of information in the organization which includes; downward, horizontal and upward plus any steps taken to improve this. To achieve this, the survey respondents were asked a set of questions.

**Table 9 : response to organizational information flow**

No	Organizational information flow	Frequencies of response						
		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
1	when a major change is happening in your organization, you receive information from top managers	16	60	8	9	-	2.10	0.800
		17.2%	64.5%	8.6%	9.7%	-		
2	You receive information from managements on how the organization is performing.	21	47	10	15	-	2.20	0.973
		22.6%	50.5%	10.8%	16.1%	-		
3	The top managers welcome your feedback to express your thoughts and give ideas on how an organization is performing.	-	12	9	58	14	3.79	0.854
		-	12.9%	9.7%	62.4%	15.1		
4	Meetings with supervisor are well structured and organized.	12	64	6	11	-	2.17	0.802
		12.9%	68.8%	6.5%	11.8%	-		
5	you communicate freely with your colleagues as well as coordinate your daily duties in the organization	15	52	10	16	-	2.29	0.939
		16.1%	55.9%	10.8%	17.2%	-		
6	You communicate more with your peers than your supervisor in case of a problem	23	51	6	13	-	2.09	0.933
		24.7%	54.8	6.5%	14.0%	-		
<b>Total average mean</b>							2.44	

Source: Own survey 2023

As it is shown in the table, the majority of the respondents (64.5%, mean score 2.10) agreed with the statement that they receive information from top managers when a major change is happening in the organization. And also (50.5% mean 2.20) of the respondents agreed with the statement they receive information from managements on how the organization is performing.

The analysis indicated that the employees' of Abyssinia Bank Jimma town receives information from top managers when there is a change happening in the organization and on how the organization is performing. This is an element of downward communication that forms a part of organizational flow of information. Downward flow of communication concerns a great number of matters in an organization which include daily instructions to workers, directives, and information regarding processes policies and procedures to give directions for implementing goals, strategies and objectives (Verma, et al 2013). On the other hand majority of respondents (62.2%, mean score of 3.79) also replied that the top managers did not welcome their feedback to express their thoughts and give ideas on how an organization is performing. And (68.8%, mean score of 2.17) agreed with the statement that meetings with supervisor are well structured and organized. This is an element of upward communication which is key in inspiring employees to take part in forming policies for the organization hence helping them feel as part of the organization (Giri and Kumar 2009). So, the analysis indicated that upward communication is not active and the managers were not available for feedback, which is a negative indicator as it denies management a chance to receive information concerning the organization from the lowest level.

Regarding horizontal communication, the findings indicated a larger proportion of the respondents replied that they communicate more with peers than their supervisor in case of a problem (55.9%, mean score 2.29). In addition to these, the majority of the respondents also replied that they communicate freely with their colleagues as well as coordinate daily duties in the organization (54.8%, mean score 2.09) this indicates that informal communication is active and accurate in this organization. The overall mean score of these items defining the organizational information flow was 2.43.

#### **4.2.2.3 Organizational communication tools in Bank of Abyssinia.**

The third objective of the study was to identify the tools that are used for organizational communication in the Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town. To achieve this, some questions were asked to help evaluate which organizational communications are preferable in the bank of Abyssinia. And the responses were tallied and recorded as follows.

**Table 10 : response to organizational communication tools**

No	Frequencies of response							
	Electronic communication tools	SA	A	N	D	S D	Mean	Sd
1	Your organization uses telephone calls to inform issues within the organization.	26	56	4	7	-	2.35	0.789
		28%	60.2%	4.3%	7.5%	-		
2	Your organization uses e-mail to inform issues within the organization.	18	51	8	11	5	2.29	1.079
		19.4%	54.8%	8.6%	11.8%	5.4%		
3	Your organization uses Telegram and Twitter to inform issues within the organization.	16	43	7	27	-	2.48	1.086
		17.2%	46.1%	7.5%	29%	-		
4	Your organization uses video conferences to inform issues within the organization.	2	9	15	59	8	3.66	0.851
		2.2%	9.7%	16.1%	63.4%	8.6%		
<b>Total average mean</b>							2.58	
<b>written communication tools</b>								
1	Your organization uses reports to inform issues within an organization.	20	47	9	13	4	2.29	1.089
		21.5%	50.5%	9.7%	14%	4.3%		
2	Your organization uses memos to inform issues within an organization.	11	39	16	27	-	2.63	1.029
		11.8%	41.9%	17.2%	29%	-		
3	Your organization uses bulletin boards to inform issues within an organization.	16	45	13	19	-	2.37	0.999
		17.2%	48.4%	14%	20.4%	-		
<b>Total average mean</b>							2.43	
<b>Publications</b>								

<b>1</b>	Your organization uses newspapers and magazines to inform issues within an organization.	-	18	6	59	10	3.65	0.9 14
		-	19.4%	6.5%	63.4 %	10.8 %		
<b>2</b>	Your organization uses newsletters to inform issues within an organization.	-	15	12	50	16	3.72	0.9 36
		-	16.1%	12.9%	53.8 %	17.2 %		
<b>3</b>	Your organization uses bulletins, and pamphlets to inform issues within an organization.	-	12	21	53	7	3.59	0.8 10
		-	12.9%	22.6%	57% %	7.5 %		
<b>Total average mean</b>							3.65	

Source: own survey 2023

As shown in table 7 from the use of organizational communication tools respondents response on the issue of Your organization uses telephone calls to inform issues within the organization, Your organization uses e-mail to inform issues within the organization, Your organization uses Telegram and Twitter to inform issues within the organization, Your organization uses video conferences to inform issues within the organization, Your organization uses reports to inform issues within an organization, Your organization uses memos to inform issues within an organization, Your organization uses bulletin boards to inform issues within an organization, Your organization uses newspapers and magazines to inform issues within an organization, Your organization uses newsletters to inform issues within an organization and Your organization uses bulletins, and pamphlets to inform issues within an organization. The average mean and standard deviation of these items are successively (M 2.35, SD 0.789), (M 2.29, SD 0.079), (M 2.48, SD 1.086), (M 3.66, SD 0.851), (M 2.29, SD 1.089), (M 2.63, SD 1.029), (M 2.37, SD 0.999), (M 3.65, SD 0.914), (M 3.72, SD 0.936) and (M 3.59, 0.810)

Table 7, presents the results of the kinds of organizational communication tools being utilized in the study area. The first one is about electronic communication tools As shown in the table, the majority of the respondents (60.2%, mean score of 2.35) stated that they use telephone calls to inform issues within the organization, (54.8%, mean score of 2.29) stated that they use e-mail to inform issues within the organization, (46.1%, mean score of 2.48) stated that they use Telegram

and Twitter to inform issues within the organization and (63.4%, mean score of 3.66) shows that they didn't use video conferences to inform issues in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town. The overall mean of the above items that describe the use of electronic communication tools in the study area was 2.58. Regarding the items in the use of written communication tools in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town majority of the respondents (50.5%, mean score of 2.29) stated that they use reports to inform issues within an organization, (41.9%, mean score of 2.63) stated that they use memos to inform issues within an organization and (48.4%, mean score of 2.37) show that they use bulletin boards to inform issues within an organization. The overall mean of the above items that describe the use of written communication tools in the study area was 2.43. On the other hand regarding the items the use of publication communication tools in Bank of Abyssinia Bank Jimma town (63.4% mean score of 3.65) states that they didn't often use newspapers and magazines to inform issues within an organization, (53.8%, mean score of 3.72) stated that they didn't mostly use newsletters to inform issues within an organization and (57%, mean score of 3.59) shows that they didn't use bulletins, and pamphlets to inform issues within an organization. The overall mean of the above items that describe the use of published communication tools in the study area was 3.65. The analysis of the above data indicated that, the dimensions of electronic and written communication tools are still widely used in Bank of Abyssinia as the majority of the respondents rated their agreement as "agree" and "strongly agree" while publications are not widely used in the study area.

#### 4.2.2.4 Organizational communication barriers in Bank of Abyssinia.

The fourth objective of this study was to find out the organizational communication barriers in Abyssinia Bank Jimma town. This was founded on the premise that to assess organizational communication practices, it was necessary to first understand the communication barriers that hinder the communication process. which include; language, culture, physical, attitudinal and environment plus any steps taken to improve this. To achieve this, the survey respondents were asked a set of questions

**Table 11 : Response to organizational communication barriers**

No	Organizational communication barriers	Frequencies of response						
		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD

<b>1</b>	There are language barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.	13	34	14	23	9	2.79	1.238
		14%	36.6%	15.1%	24.7%	9.7%		
<b>2</b>	There are organizational environment barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.	-	14	18	48	13	3.64	0.904
		-	15.1%	19.4%	51.6%	14.0%		
<b>3</b>	There are cultural barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.	-	13	7	58	15	3.80	0.875
		-	14.0%	7.5%	62.4%	16.1%		
<b>4</b>	There are attitudinal barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.	-	28	22	33	10	3.26	1.012
		-	30.1%	23.7%	35.5%	10.8%		
<b>5</b>	There are physical barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization	-	8	20	47	18	3.80	0.850
		-	8.6%	21.5%	50.5%	19.4%		
<b>Overall mean</b>							<b>3.46</b>	

Source: own survey 2023

The other objective is organizational communication barriers. The data in table 8 above shows the mean and standard deviation response of (M 2.79, SD 1.23), (3.64, SD 0.904), (3.80, SD 0.875), (M3.26, SD 1.01), and (M 3.80, SD 0.85 to the items ‘There are language barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization, There are organizational environment barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization, There are cultural barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization, There are attitudinal barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization and There are physical barriers that hinder the flow of

information in your organization respectively. According to the findings of a descriptive study, in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town there is language barriers based on respondents' contradictory responses to the issue-related items.

Table 8, presents the results of organizational communication barriers that hinder the flow of information in the study area. Regarding the items related to the organizational communication barriers the majority of the respondents replied that there are language barriers that hinder the flow of information in the organization (36.6%, mean score 2.79). on the other hand (51.6%, mean score of 3.64) of the respondents stated that there were not organizational environment barriers that hinder the flow of information in their organization, (62.4%, mean score of 3.80) disagreed with the statement that there are cultural barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization, (35.5%, mean score of 3.26) disagreed with the statement that there are attitudinal barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization and (50.5%, mean score of 3.80) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that there are physical barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization. The overall mean of the above items that describe organizational communication barriers in the study area was 3.46. The analysis of the above data indicated that, there are language barriers that hinder the flow of information in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town. On the other hand there are not organizational environment barriers, cultural barriers, attitudinal barriers and physical barriers that hinder the flow of information in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town.

### **4.2.3 Result from Interview**

The quantitative data results were further supported by the findings from qualitative interviews conducted with the top managers in the organization.

The interview questions of this study were also arranged in the themes which are related with the respondents' agreement with the organizational communication practices in the organization. The answers of the respondents were simply coded in order to categorize the information in accordance with themes that were developed during the interview and themes that were predetermined and incorporated in the interviews.

#### **The general practice of organizational communication in Bank of Abyssinia**

As the in-depth interview reveals, the informants described the general practices of organizational communication in Bank of Abyssinia. One of the key informants explained the practice as follows:

‘As far as I know, the overall organizational communication practices in Bank of Abyssinia is efficient and very cool. When there are orders of various responsibilities, which are then sent to the staff at the proper moment. Furthermore, when there are important issues, managers hold meetings every week and at important times to make decisions, responsibilities, and orders to be delivered to employees at the appropriate time.’(K5)

The above-mentioned view is trying to demonstrate that the general organizational communication practices in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town are effective and good. When there are important issues happening in this bank the top managers hold urgent meetings and they discuss the issue and they make proper decisions. This indicates that in this organization the experience of solving problems by using effective organizational communication is common. Also when there are new orders and responsibilities those orders and responsibilities are addressed in proper time.

In opposing to the above respondents statements, another key informant expresses his idea on organizational communication practices;

“Here in Abyssinia Bank, there is good organizational communication. But I worked as a manager in another office three years ago. It has been two years since I was employed in this bank. And I don't believe that Abyssinia Bank's communication system

is enough. They consistently place a high priority on earnings and profitability. The value given to communication is not that much enough (''K2).

The above statement shows that the general organizational communication practice of Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town is good. But, one respondent stated his idea that the general organizational communication practices of Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town is not that much enough. All employees give much priority on profit and profitability. So it shows that employees of this organization give more priorities on profitability. They didn't give enough space to organizational communication practices. So the general practice of organizational communication in Bank of Abyssinia Bank Jimma town is not enough.

''As a large business organization, we use various communication processes to maintain its reputation. When there are various new ideas and issues in the organization, after they are reported in the district, decisions and new ideas will be delivered to each branch. Additionally, when there are various changes, all branches work together through communication.''(K6)

The above statement shows that employees of Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town use various communication processes to keep the Banks safety and reputation. When there are challenges all branches work tougher in order to solve the problem by discussing around the table.

### **Communication tools used in Bank of Abyssinia**

According to the participants, almost all of the respondents say that in Abyssinia Bank Jimma town most of the time employees use electronic and written communication tools.

''We use various organizational communication tools to share information, ideas, and responsibilities with employees in this bank. Among them, e-mail, Telegram, Facebook, phone cell and other electronic communication tools are commonly used. In addition to this, there is an internal organizational communication tool called Outlook, which is an internal communication tool that only the bank's employees know and use. Furthermore, employees express their thoughts on their daily tasks through face-to-face communication.''(K8)

The above statement shows that the most effective organizational communication tools for their organization are electronic communication tools like (e-mail, telegram, Facebook, phone

cell.....) also there is common internal communication tool that is outlook. So in this organization the use of electronic organizational communication tools are common.

“ As a large business organization, we use various internal and external communication tools to communicate our daily activities with the bank employees. They are external e-mail, telegram, telephone, Facebook, etc., and the internal communication tools are Outlook, Oracle, etc., which are the internal communication tools for each employee's work instructions, manuals, policies, and so on.”(K1)

the above statement shows that the most effective organizational communication tools for their organization are electronic communication tools like (e-mail, telegram, Facebook, phone cell...) and written communication tools like (instructions, reports, manuals, policies...), so it shows that Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town commonly used electronic and written communication tools.

“Our bank uses a variety of organizational communication tools to give orders and responsibilities and keep track of the daily activities of bank employees. The three common forms of communication tools are face-to-face, written, and electronic. However, as it related to the bank's operational system the experience of using publications is not that much enough.”(K6)

The analysis of qualitative data indicated that, the dimensions of electronic, and written communication tools are still widely used in Bank of Abyssinia as the majority of the while publications are not widely used in the study area.

### **Organizational communication types used in Bank of Abyssinia**

“ For the aim of facilitating information flow, we use a variety of organizational communication methods, including upward, downward, and horizontal communication within the organization. However, Top-down organizational communication is frequently used. Orders, decisions, and responsibilities are frequently distributed from top to bottom. This shows that top-down communication is the most typical method utilized in this organization.”(K1)

The above statement shows that in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town, employees commonly used downward and horizontal organizational communication methods. The use of an upward

organizational communication method is not common. That means in this organization the practice of feedback-oriented communication is not enough.

“In our Bank When there are various new ideas, issues, and challenges, as a manager we organize an urgent meeting for discussing the issue. After the meeting, we pass new decisions that are subsequently sent to each branch in the form of instructions/orders. ”  
(K3)

The above idea shows that the practice of feedback oriented communication is not enough. Employees mostly focused on profit and profitability. Most of the time higher managers make their decisions without hearing the employee’s idea.

“In this bank, the practices of receiving the employee's feedback are not well organized. As I know the bank has mostly focused on profit and profitability Most of the time commands and responsibilities are transmitted from upper management to employees without hearing the employee’s response. So, the practices of welcoming employee's feedback are not that much enough.”(K7)

The above statement shows that all decisions, orders and responsibilities are sent from top down type of organizational communication is common in Bank of Abyssinia jimma town.

“I am a branch manager in Bank of Abyssinia and I have been working as a manager for 5 consecutive years. The bank's communication practices are good. The information to be transferred will be given at the right time and place. As a large Business organization, employees of Abyssinia Bank used various methods of organizational communication but, top-down and horizontal communications are common. Most of the time employees are free to communicate with their peers rather than the top managers. as I was working many years in Bank of Abyssinia and I am observing that most of the employees are afraid to express their ideas because they are afraid of evaluation and sometimes they are thinking about demotion from their status.”(K5)

All most all of the above interviews responses show that in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town employees commonly used downward and horizontal type of organizational communication. The use of upward type of organizational communication is not common. That means in this organization the practice of feedback oriented communication is not that much enough.

## **Communication barriers that hinder organizational communications in Bank of Abyssinia**

“I've worked in a responsible position at Bank of Abyssinia for a long time, and I've never noticed any such obvious communication barriers. There may occasionally be a system outage in the bank if it is viewed as a communication barrier.”(K8)

The above statement shows that in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town there is not significant communication barriers. All most all interviewees agreed that in Bank of Abyssinia there are not obvious communication barriers. So the above idea noticed that there aren't communication barriers.

“There aren't any significant communication obstacles at our bank, but sometimes we run into problems with understanding. It has been noticed that messages written in English are difficult to interpret. Furthermore, when a meeting is held in English, it is seen that there is an understanding issue.”(K2)

One of the respondents explained his idea that in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town there is not common communication barriers. But sometimes it has been noticed that there is language barriers.

## **Information flow in Bank of Abyssinia**

“As Bank of Abyssinia is a large business institution, it has its mission and goals, and to achieve that goal, there should be a good flow of information. So in Bank of Abyssinia there is a good information flow. when there are complaints and ideas, employees express their ideas to managers, most of the time, various ideas, information, decisions, etc. are made to reach employees from senior managers. Also, employees share their daily routines with their coworkers daily.”(K7)

The above statement shows that there is good information flow from higher to lower and horizontally but, as the interviewee reflects all responsibilities and decisions are at the hands of senior managers. Also the bank employees freely share their views.

“ In this bank, the practices of welcoming the employee's feedback are not well organized. As I know the bank has mostly focused on profit and profitability and

evaluation mechanisms about criticizing employee's performance twice a year rather than receiving employee's feedback.'"(K5)

The above idea shows that in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town the experience of receiving employee's responses is not that much enough. They always give higher priority to profitability rather than communication activities.

"As a bank, there is a seamless flow of information at Bank of Abyssinia; Delivery The desired information will be delivered at the appropriate time. Therefore, it can be said that there is a cool flow of information in Bank of Abyssinia.'"(K8)

From the above interviewee's ideas we understand that the general information flows in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town is good. But, the experience of receiving employee's feedback is not much developed.

### **4.3 Discussion**

The main objective of this study was to investigate the organizational communication practices of Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. To achieve the objective a set of 25 items questionnaire at comprises four variables was used to investigate the general practices of organizational communication in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town.

Accordingly, the result showed that Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town has not adopted proper communication strategies in terms of openness, inclusiveness, two-way (bilateral) communication. And the employees did not involve in decision-making processes on the day today activities of the organization.so the study finding shows that Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town has not adopted proper communication strategies. The result was supported by a local study by Getachew (2021) who also has demonstrated that the Ministry of urban development has not adopted communication strategies such as openness, inclusiveness, two-way (bilateral), and multi-channel communication to inform strategic urban development issues. And a study conducted by (Kibe, 2014) has demonstrated that in the business world, communication strategies are frequently employed as part of an organization's plan that specifies how to communicate with various categories of individuals. A single company may have a variety of strategies for various types of individuals, including customers, investors, rivals, or staff. For communication within the company itself, some business organizations even have internal communication strategies. These strategies are used to choose the information to communicate with clients or investors as well as the format in which that information should be presented. The study came to the conclusion that open, inclusive, two-way, result-driven, multi-channelled communication techniques were necessary for any organisational performance to be successful.

Organizations should develop a clearly defined communication strategy and align it with their strategic objectives to encourage employees to focus on goals and priorities (Kibe, 2014).

Concerning organizational information flow, most employees (64.5%) (Indicated that they were receiving information from management on how the organization is doing. and on how the organization is performing. This is an element of downward communication that forms a part of organizational flow of information. Downward flow of communication concerns a great number of matters in an organization which include daily instructions to workers, directives, and information regarding processes policies and procedures to give directions for implementing goals, strategies and objectives (Verma, et al 2013).Therefore, it is quite crucial for employers to

ensure that such information is passed to employees in good time. A study conducted by (Jaradat & Sy, 2012a) shows that downward organizational communication practices pervading in TOC Glycol Company Ltd., Thailand were deemed to be generally effective by the respondents. The management adopted the open book management, which was a practice of sharing with employees at all levels of the organization vital information previously meant for management's eyes only. So in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town downward organizational communication was active and accurate. Another study conducted by Eziefula G. Uchechi, 2017 found that there is appropriate information from the top management to the subordinate through correspondences. Although they agreed that this downward communication is effectively on the average, it is seen that there is no proper avenue for the subordinate staff to communicate in the form of feedback to the top management staff thus resulting in working slow down and general apathy. If appropriate communication is thus established, the maximum output would be achieved. On the other hand (62.4%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement with the top managers were not available for feedback on how the organization was doing. or managers did not practice feedback oriented communication in the organization This is an element of upward communication which is key in inspiring employees to take part in forming policies for the organization hence helping them feel as part of the organization (Giri and Kumar 2009). Top management in TOC Glycol Company Ltd., Thailand adopted an open door policy which International Peer Reviewed Journal 95 encouraged people to share valid information with their superiors. These were done over coffee breaks, lunch and other ways which made upward communication easier and doable for all (Jaradat & Sy, 2012a).

In addition to this the researcher wanted to find out how employees communicated with management and their peers the finding shows that informal communication within the organization was active and accurate. This was a clear indication that employees sought alternative ways of filling in the gaps left by their top managements. So, the research findings show that there was a gap in the organizational flow of information in Bank of Abyssinia Bank Jimma town. A study conducted by (Jaradat & Sy, 2012a) shows that the top management of TOC Glycol Company Ltd., Thailand accomplished high level of lateral communication and cooperation through easy access between divisions and departments.

The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data indicated that, the dimensions of electronic and written communication tools are still widely used in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town as the

majority of the respondents rated their agreement as "agree" and "strongly agree" while publications are not widely used in the study area. Smith & Mounter, (2005) cited in Zivrbule (2015) stated that communication is the most effective when appropriate channels and tools of organizational communication are used. This is important to provide the possibility to interact during the communication, as well create the reciprocal link between the managers" and employees" conversation in the organization and motivating them through communication. Communication tools such as bulletin boards, intranets, newsletters and e-mail are an efficient mode of communication for certain message. However the power of face-to-face communication cannot be underestimated. Media such as reports and letters are less effective for information exchange than "dynamic" channels such as one-on-one conversations, corridor chats, and telephone that incorporate dialogue in the workplace (Grunig, 1992).

Findings on communication barriers in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town indicated that there was language/semantic barriers that hinder the communication activities in the organization.

The result was supported by a study Arifin & Abuisaac, (2018) concluded that there is a serious miscommunication issue between expatriates and their Malaysian counterparts at UM. This is due to linguistic and cultural barriers that differentiate ways of thinking, work, handling problems and management styles between the expatriates and their Malaysian counterparts. As far as linguistic barriers are concerned the study concluded that lack of English proficiency hinders the flow of successful communication between expatriates and their Malaysian counterparts.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

The study findings show that Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town has not adopted proper communication strategies in terms of openness, inclusiveness, two-way (bilateral) communication. The managers were not open for feedback from employees. And the employees did not involve in decision-making processes on the day today activities of the organization. so the study finding shows that Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town has not adopted proper communication strategies.

Concerning organizational information flow, most employees agreed that they were receivers of information from management on how the organization is doing. So, down ward organizational communication was active and accurate and the top managers were not available for feedback on how the organization was doing or managers did not practice feedback oriented communication in the organization In addition to this the researcher wanted to find out how employees communicated with management and their peers the finding shows that horizontal communication within the organization was active. This was a clear indication that employees sought alternative ways of filling in the gaps left by their top managements. So, the research findings show that there was a gap in the organizational flow of information in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town.

The researcher based on system theory discussed in chapter two that managers“ and employees“ are creating good relationship and creating open system for feedback based on the organizational communication in order to achieve goal, vision and mission of the organization. Therefore, effective communication process should be an integral part of management strategy because it goes a long way to enhancing the realization of organizational goals.

The study also revealed that communication tools such as electronic and written communication tools are still widely used in Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. While the use of publications was not that much enough.

From the findings on communication barriers in Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town, there were not physical, environmental, cultural and attitudinal organizational communication barriers that hinder the communication activities in the organization. But, the quantitative data reviled that there were language/semantic barriers that hinder the communication activities in the organization.

## 5.2. Recommendation

To ensure effective organizational communication practice in the study area, the researchers made the following recommendations.

- ❖ Bank of Abyssinia Jimma town should adopt the communication strategies such as open, two-way (bilateral), inclusive, and result-oriented communication. Employees should be given space to express their feelings on the tasks and responsibilities assigned to them. Staff should be involved in decision-making processes on issues that require decisions, and these issues must be communicated through multiple channels.
- ❖ The study recommended that communication flow inspire employees to participate in developing communication policies for the organization. Therefore, managers at Bank of Abyssinia should strive to have means of receiving information concerning the organization from the lowest level and disseminating the same downwards.
- ❖ As electronic and written communication tools, were widely used in the organization, publications should be given a good priority in the organization.
- ❖ Furthermore, the study also recommends that managers must ensure they are good communicators in that; they strive to convey their ideas persuasively. Their behaviour must be dependable at all times and be consistent with what they are communicating, both officially and unofficially. This will ensure that employees are easily convinced with the kind of information they put across at any given time, whether negative or positive.
- ❖ Creating open communication system is one in which all members of the organization feel free to share feedback, ideas and even criticism at every level, thereby encouraging employees to freely give their views without being victimized by the managers.
- ❖ The study also recommended that managers should work towards open communication environment. An open door policy where employees feel free in expressing honest feedback to their colleagues and management should be highly encouraged. The process needs to work from either side in that, both management and employees are considerate in the communication and applaud feedback that helps in achieving greater success.

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APPENDIX 1  
JIMMA UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES  
MA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS



Dear Respondents,

My name is Rabia Jemal and I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Media and communication studies in partial fulfillment of Master of Arts (MA) in Public Relations and Corporate Communications (PRCC) at Jimma University. Currently, I am conducting a study on organizational communication practices on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma town. Hence, your cooperation is valuable in conducting this research and you are kindly requested to cooperate. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect primary and necessary data for the study; it will be used solely for academic purposes, and your honest responses will be kept strictly confidential. So, please spare a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and put [✓] mark to answer the following questions correctly.

General instruction

- ✓ Please don't write your name or address on the questionnaire
- ✓ Please answer all questions

Thank you for contributing your time and information to this case!!

## Part I. Demographic Information of Respondents

- 1) Sex    a) Male     b) Female
- 2) Age    a) 20-29     b) 30-39     c) 40-49     d) above 50
- 3) Educational status    a) diploma     b) degree     c) masters     d) PhD     e) others
- 4) Work experience    a) Less than 1 year     b) 2-5 years     c) 5-10 years     (d) 10 years and above
- 5) position    a) teller     b) Cashier     c) Accountant     d) manager     e) Other

## Part II. Basic questions

Instruction: Please tick [√] under the response with the most honest and accurate answers and gives your answer according to your level of agreement.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

### 1, organizational communication strategies in Bank of Abyssinia

No		Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Your organization involves the employees in the decision-making processes regarding their day-to-day activities.					
2	In your organization, There is an open communication environment to make employees feel free to share feedback, ideas, and even criticism at every level.					
3	Your organization delivers information/ messages in multiple ways (email, phone calls, messaging, and social media) to have the desired impact on the receivers.					
4	Bank of Abyssinia involves employees in discussing their work, their ideas, and their perspectives on services, customers, and the business environment in which they are.					

## 2. Organizational information flow in Bank of Abyssinia

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	when a major change is happening in your organization, you receive information from top managers					
2	You receive information from managements on how the organization is performing.					
3	The top managers welcome your feedback to express your thoughts and give ideas on how an organization is performing.					
4	Meetings with supervisor are well structured and organized.					
5	you communicate freely with your colleagues as well as coordinate your daily duties in the organization					
6	You communicate more with your peers than your supervisor in case of a problem.					

### 3, Organizational communication tools in Bank of Abyssinia.

NO	Items	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Your organization uses telephone calls to inform issues within the organization					
2	Your organization uses e-mail to inform issues within the organization.					
3	Your organization uses Telegram and Twitter to inform issues within the organization.					
4	Your organization uses video conference to inform issues within an organization.					
5	Your organization uses reports to inform issues within an organization.					
6	Your organization uses memos to inform issues within an organization.					
7	Your organization uses bulletin boards to inform issues within an organization					
8	Your organization uses newspapers and magazines to inform issues within an organization.					
9	Your organization uses newsletters to inform issues within an organization.					
10	Your organization uses bulletins, and pamphlets to inform issues within an organization.					

#### 4, Organizational communication barriers

No	Items	Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	There are language barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.					
2	There are organizational environment barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.					
3	There are cultural barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.					
4	There are attitudinal barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization.					
5	There are physical barriers that hinder the flow of information in your organization					

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **II - INTERVIEW GUIDE: FOR KEY INFORMANTS (TOP MANAGERS OF THE BANK**

**Dear respondents,**

This interview guide is prepared to conduct a study on 'assessing the Organizational communication Practices on Bank of Abyssinia in Jimma Town. You are kindly requested to provide your accurate responses to the given questions. The responses you reveal are great importance to the research findings of this study. Feel free to respond since your responses will only be used for research purposes.

1. How do you describe the general practice of organizational communication in your organization?
2. What organizational communication tools are used in your organization?
3. What is the information flow like in your organization?
4. Which organizational communication type is used frequently in your organization? Hint: downward, upward, horizontal.
5. What are the communication barriers that hinder organizational communications in your organization?

### APPENDIX 3

#### ለባንኩ ሀላፊዎች የተዘጋጀ ቃለ-መጠይቅ

##### ውድ ተሳታፊዎች

የዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ዝግጅት ዋና ዓላማ በጂማ ከተማ በሚገኙ የአቢሲኒያ ባንክ ቅርንጫፎች ላይ የድርጅታዊ የግንኙነት ልምዶችን ለመገምገም እና ጥናት ለማካሄድ ነው። ይህ ቃለ- መጠይቅም የሚያተኩረው በባንኩ ከፍተኛ ስራ ሀላፊዎች ላይ ነው።

ስለሆነም እርስዎ የሚሰጡት ቀናና ትክክለኛ ምላሽ ለጥናታዊ ስራው ውጤታማነት ጉልህ ድርሻን ይይዛልና ከታች ለቀረቡት ጥያቄዎች ያለዎትን ትክክለኛ ምላሽ እንዲሰጡ በአክብሮት እጠየቃለሁ፤ የሚሰጡት ምላሽ ለጥናታዊ ስራው ብቻ የምጠቀምበት መሆኑን በአክብሮት ለሰብ እወዳለሁ። በቅድሚያ ስለሚያደርጉልኝ ትብብር ላቅ ያለ ምስጋናዬንም አቀርባለሁ።

- 1, በድርጅትዎ ውስጥ የድርጅታዊ ግንኙነት አጠቃላይ ልምድን እንዴት ይገልጹታል?
- 2, በድርጅትዎ ውስጥ ምን ዓይነት የድርጅት ግንኙነት መሣሪያዎች ጥቅም ላይ ይውላሉ?
- 3, በድርጅትዎ ውስጥ ያለው የመረጃ ፍሰት ምን ይመስላል?
- 4, በድርጅትዎ ውስጥ ብዙውን ጊዜ ጥቅም ላይ የሚውለው የትኛው የድርጅት ግንኙነት አይነት ነው? ፍንጭ: ከላይ ወደታች ፣ ከታች ወደ ላይ ፣ አግድም.
- 5, በድርጅትዎ ውስጥ ድርጅታዊ ግንኙነቶችን የሚያደናቅፉ የግንኙነት መሰናክሎች ምንድን ናቸው?