

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses findings of the three main research questions on management and communication channels in Sulfo Rwanda Industries. The results from data and information were taken from the survey and the interview about staff' interest towards the most efficient and effective communication channels between managers and employees of Sulfo Rwanda industries. Therefore, that has given implications to the researcher.

The findings and discussions provide implications and limitations of the study. However, the study recommended the future research as well as researcher came out with conclusion.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The conceptual framework of this study was derived from Media Richness Theory which was established by Daft and Lengel 1984, 1986; the media classification order based on the theory, its richness was face-to-face, phone, and written documents. Daft, *et al* (1987) discussed the hierarchy of media richness that makes face-to-face as the richest medium of communication channel followed by cellular phone calls. They describe written and addressed documents such as notes, internal memos and letters as moderate medium of communication and unaddressed documents such as bulletins

and reports as the lowest and unpopular medium of communication. In the Sulfo Rwanda industries, the most commonly used media between the managers and employees are; face-to-face, addressed documents notably short notes and internal memos, telephone calls (mobile and land lines), SMS, e-mails, Facebook, bulletin boards and notice boards. Sulfo Rwanda industries is a big company whose employees meet challenges of corporate communication with managers using common and shared type of medium to handle company tasks efficiently and effectively. Some employees prefer certain communication channels over others either to avoid ambiguity of communicated messages or to avoid unavoidable uncertainties that are common in the major organizations. Either way, the company needs a common shared medium of communication to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in information processing.

In the present day, media richness theory is observed as similar as it was in the earlier period. However, at the moment, most individuals believe that e-mail is the most popular as well as a preferred media to practice even with their acceptance that email is not the richest media. Working in a big company and large environment is a fast step by the Sulfo Rwanda Industries. That revolution happened rapidly, thus managers and employees need to be ready to interact with each other from different departments of the company anytime and wherever they are conducting their tasks. The present study was directed to explore which communication channels are preferred by Sulfo Rwanda Industries' managers and employees based on three competencies (R.U.C, O.C.A.C and E.P.C). The findings could be matched with media choice rank order for each competency matched the MRT ranking order. Meanwhile, the results showed that every competency may rank its particular ranking

from the others. But all competencies might be rank communication channels in order to bring into line media richness in the same ranking order as the MRT.

The data analysis indicated that e-mail is the most used in the company for both internal and external communication followed by addressed documents, face-to-face, mobile telephone calls, landline telephone calls, while SMS and Facebook were seen as the lower means of communication channels. However, face-to-face remains as the most preferred media than both Mobile and fixed line telephone in terms of R.U.C and E.P.C. that was totally different view with O.C.A.C as well as with previous studies.

The result of the current study creates good understanding about how using communication channels in a particular environment and period could be different from each other. Unfluctuating of communication channels regarding three competencies (R.U.C, O.C.A.C and E.P.C), which are the most perceived communication channel was fluctuated between e-mail and addressed documents as being higher than telephone, face-to-face, SMS and Facebook. There are several motives or explanations behind the ranking order which includes the ease of usage, the directions (upward and downward) of communication, accessibility, time management, nature of assignment, and distance between sender and receiver, in modern companies, institutions and organizations.

The present study found that Facebook communication is the lowest among the seven means of communication in Sulfo Rwanda Industries Ltd. However, that was different with Parker's (2011) findings that the Facebook conversation is encouraged

in organizations, means of communication with a high degree of social presence is equated to being. However, he showed that there is a correlation between content presentation (how content is presented) and Facebook fan reaction. As well as the nature of non-profit organization content - provoking change and human willing. He explained that organization that posted multiple content types have a higher social presence than the organizations that did not post multiple types of content. In addition, Hauswirth's (2010) found that non-profit organizations understand the impact and power of using Facebook to increase the visibility of their organizations, and they are launching Facebook Pages because of it. Also he found that non-profit organizations are using Facebook as a tool for public relations or general awareness about their presence both online and offline. Therefore, it can be inferred that the way profit companies, organizations and institution use communication channels are not similar to no-profit organizations. Thus, the current study support the hierarch of media richness theory, while previous studies look Facebook in different angle as show that it was richer communication channel in those researches.

This study found that the richer lever of face-to-face as a type of communication among other communication channels in Sulfo Rwanda Industries Ltd between employees and managers is high but lower than emails and addressed documents. That was not similar to O'Neill's (2011) whose findings showed that face-to-face was the communication channel reported to be preferred by respondents when they engaged in download communication. Repeatedly face-to-face communication was more proof and supported than written communication. In addition, respondents mentioned that negative messages through written channels were found to be strongly avoided except in the greatest cases. However, respondents stated that selection of

communication channel was affected by cultural factors. According to Liu (2010) He found that face-to-face interactions improved customer probability of compliance with a request to buy a membership card. Thus, the richness of means of communication might be related to the situation and nature of the company. Therefore, the current study support the hierarch of media richness theory, while previous studies look Facebook in different angle as show that it was higher communication channel in those researches.

Researchers, directors and executives have long agreed that communication procedures are a key element in organizational achievement (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; Snyder & Morris, 1984). Three researches showed that workers who have good communication channels with supervisors are more likely to enhance effective work relationships with those administrators, to incline their organizational identification and increase their performance, and to contribute to organizational productivity (Gray & Laidlaw, 2004; Muchinsky, 1977; Tsai, Chuang, & Hsieh, 2009). In addition, other researches demonstrated that staffs who have positive communication channels with superiors are also better able to cope with main organizational fluctuations, such as layoffs of employees for short time and unions of more than one company (Gopinath & Becker, 2000; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991), as has been mentioned before other scholars also pointed out that good communication channels give employees ability to present the higher organizational identification of the company (Bartels, Pruyn, De Jong, & Joustra, 2007, Smidts, Pruyn, & van Riel, 2001), meanwhile other researchers displayed that richer communication channels help employees to cope more successfully with job stressors (Stephens & Long, 2000; Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007). As a result, (Atwater & Waldman, 2008; Downs & Adrian, 2004) have

suggested many ways of improving communication tools within organizations. However, all these studies did not focus on richer media in the organizations, while others conducted in a totally different environment as most of the studies were conducted in western countries. In the role understanding competency it is the responsibility of the manager to provide clear messages to their employees. It is their role to ensure that the messages are clearly received and understood (Greenbaum, 1972). The present study therefore tries to find out whether the managers of Sulfo Rwanda industries meet these challenges of bridging these communication gaps.

The third competency is employees' performance competency. Greenbaum (1972) described the employees' performance competency as the duty of managers to evaluate the performance of the employees in the company. In most cases employees complain that managers do not communicate effectively the important information (Ramona L. Gabriel (nd). Furthermore, other scholars have also demonstrated the connection or relationship between communication and employees' performance. For example, Trombetta's study (1988) exposed that organizational communication, which was measured in the dimensions of information adequacy, communication openness, and decision contribution, affects organizational performance, while job satisfaction does not have emotional impact on organizational performance. DeCotiis and Summers (1987) suggested that organizational performance could be improved by clear communication about organizational objectives or plans, accomplishments, and performance, a sense of interconnection among employees. Steers (1977) argued that satisfactory assignment-regarded information, and positive information concerning an organization's ability to deliver challenging and significant responsibilities, is positively correlated to organizational performance or outcome. In Allen's study

(1992), it is established that employees' opinions or perceptions of the communication relationship between top administration and staffs, and the perceptions of the quality of top management's communication and manager-employee communication, are powerfully related to organizational performance. Gordon and Infante (1991) indicated that the staff with less perceived freedom of speech in the organization have less organizational performance and are less gratified with the job, the managers, and the company. The study that applies qualitative methods showed that interpersonal communication abilities and skills can develop the workers' organizational performance (Bambacas and Patrickson 2008). It can be observed that in those researches results discussed about relationship among information, organisational success and progress. Whereas the current study, examines the level of effectiveness of communication channels in different location of those previous researches.

On the other side, scholars such as related communication and organizational performance also with some other areas of research. In the earlier studies, such as Brown (2003), Miller (2009), Morrison (2003), Amberet al. (2008), Madlock and Booth-Butterfield (2008), Canary and Dainton (2002) and Brattonet al. (2007) on management and good governance behaviour, official and unofficial organizational communication, workplace relationships, relationship maintenance communication, feeling and emotion at the workplace. Other studies examined the influences of communication on both organizations and persons, which is not relevant somewhat for the present research. Among of them Madlock and Booth-Butterfield (2008) recommended that when staffs apply interpersonal maintenance strategies to communicate with colleague partners, the interactions can be engaged and improved. In addition, among the five elements of such a maintenance plan, sharing tasks

(accomplishment of person's duties) and positivity (interrelating with colleagues and partners in a happiness, accepting way and means) were recognised as the strongest predictors of employee job satisfaction, communication satisfaction, organizational performance, and work isolation. The previous researches discussed communication as among factors which motivate and improve employees' performance in general while present study test the level of effectiveness of certain communication channels.

Some scholars have maintained that relationship improvement is based on communication in the workplace (Parks 2007, etc.). Workplace relationship can be formed and advanced when individuals in a company are given an opportunity to communicate and cooperate with others for several time. Meanwhile, Sunnafrank and Ramirez (2004) showed that when persons, at the first step of a relationship, have a higher quantity of communication and more helpful prospects towards the relationship and results from it, discussions will proceed to a larger level and the relationship will advance more at a later period. Emmers-Sommer (2004) revealed that both the quality and quantity of communication developed and contributed to interpersonal understanding and closeness and interpersonal satisfaction. Additionally, in Morrison's study (2005), it is shown that the working together effectively and occasions for relationship are positively connected to job satisfaction, organizational performance and declined turnover purpose. While in the study of Raile et al. (2008), relationship system is significance in term of understanding and closeness among staffs is demonstrated to be completely correlated to job satisfaction. It can be seen that in those previous findings argued about job satisfaction, amount of information among employees especially in the beginning stages and how it progress affects the

productivity, however do not concern managers and employees' perceptions on communication channels.

Moreover, it should be simplified that, in comparison to previous researches and works, the two kinds of communication in the present study are not separated according to formal or informal communication channels. A formal channel could be used to talk about job-related matters which Bratton et al. (2007) explained that is a "communication process that follows an organization's chain of command", while an informal channel, which they described as a "communication process that follows unofficial means of communication, sometimes called 'the grapevine', usually based on social relations", may also be used to discuss about work issues. However, the present study measures the communication channels in both terms of the perceived quality and quantity as well as official and unofficial formal communication.

However, the effects of communication channels as a powerful predictor of organization's culture awareness may possibly vary across cultural limitations. For illustration, a literature review of researches of organization's culture awareness competency through national cultures found that different features are related to organization's culture in different countries. For instance, contribution in decision making was found to have an influence in Canadian samples, while no similar effect could be found in Japanese or English samples (Randall 1993). In a study conducted by Cheng and Stockdale (2003) which compare organization's culture awareness competency in China, Canada, and South Korea found that although all three types of organizational obligation as organizational culture commitment such affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, these types

might be recognized in the three countries, their relevant degrees of importance fluctuates across countries. Moreover, Chen and Francesco (2000) proposed, in their study relating to the cultural differences, that as a result of the effect of traditional Chinese culture, Chinese staffs in Chinese organizations perform differently from their Western counterparts. Meaning that, according to the previous study, differences in cultural background produce different study findings. However, it was not concerned with the level of effectiveness of communication channels matching to organization's culture awareness competency. It is the role of the managers to ensure that employees understand the core values of the organization, its rules and procedures (Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984). Sulfo Rwanda industries employs different workers from East African region including Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo. The present study explores the reasons that motivate managers and the employees in the Sulfo Rwanda Industries Ltd to choose specific media regarding their experiences in the organization's culture awareness competencies.

In addition, previous researches were conducted in Western contexts such as Porter (1974) which proposed that employees' performance in their organizations indirectly grows from the satisfaction with the job, and it is a mediator between job satisfaction, and turnover and intention to leave the company. On the other hand, also previous study such as Morrison (2005) indirectly related the satisfaction to employees' performance may be lower effective than western cultural contexts. Thus, the current examine the most used communication channel based on employees' performance which is not generalising all communication tools in the company as have been seen in the earlier studies.

The currently study found that there is a negative relationship between communication channels and three competencies (R.U.C, O.C.A.C and E.P.C) in Sulfo Rwanda Industries ltd. Those findings are different with Hayase's (2009) results which showed that there is a significant positive relationship between factors of internal communication and factors of employee commitment. Moreover, the study established that internal communication is connected to engagement, unrestricted decision effort, and significant work; all factors of engagement. In addition, findings also showed that communication channel satisfaction and channel combinations were related to employee commitment. Meanwhile, Dexter (2013) in his study found that as the process of certain communication channels, such as e-mail, telephone/conference Bridge, instant messaging, and face-to-face interactions improved, there was a trend for resistance to modify within the same measurement to be dropped. But, findings were not included in terms of observing at resistance to modify as a complete. In addition, Heather (2007) in his findings displayed that cellular phones are useful; they help to manage, organize and control in a company and in the other demands of everyday life. Also morality is produced through hetero-centric images of wives and mothers who use their cellular phones to reinforce their particular subject positions.

The present study found that e-mails communication is more preferred than other communication channels, especially SMS from both methods (quantitative and qualitative) in the Sulfo Rwanda Industries ltd. That was similar to what Al-Sanaa (2009) found in his study, it showed that instant messaging usage was negative correlated with the strength of social ties that individuals have with others, within the context of all three circles: family, friends and acquaintances. Also he found out that

new communication technologies have both frequent advantages and unintended disadvantages. Meanwhile, Janet (2011) in her research showed that although texting-based learning might have a slight impact on the student's efficiency while preparing formal written papers. But, the advantages outweigh the impact when considering the courses are accessible to the underserved students. Advantages to the universities are potentially reduced information technology staff for online learning, reduced facilities for traditional learning and increased enrolment associated with easier access to courses. The present study's findings look likely to Woods (2005) found that using of e-mail has had an effect on this law department, e-mail has changed the way lawyers and paralegals do their jobs in the department. The study also has brought to light how e-mail usage has affected internal and external communication with that law department the use of e-mail has had an impact on this law department.

The present research found that E-mails and addressed documents such as board, letter, and memos are more useful and favoured among other communication channels in Sulfo Rwanda Industries Ltd between managers and employees, company and customers, government authorities. This is different from what Aiyed (2008) found in his results, he indicated that face-to-face remains to be the most preferred among of other media according to the four cultures studied, followed by electronic communications (e-mail), phone, and then memos and voicemail. There were no mean differences in the equivocality situation media preference in the 11 equivocality situations. There were no relationships between dimensions of culture and communication media choice. At the same time, the current findings agreed with Cintron (2009). She found that the board of managers and employers of the organization should develop a culture of incorporating and adapting best practices into

the organization. Also the best practice identified herein is that of public awareness. And each individual organization should develop performance measures around this best practice and create a process for its execution and evaluation in order to have the best customized practices that are unique to the organization. In addition, Martha (2009) in her research found that to express concerns and frustrations in a manner that preserved the good relations between members and to improve through the audit process can be the best avenue for preserving these necessary and valuable relationships.

The present study findings showed that modern technology communication is the most commonly used communication channels. However, those findings criticized Dennis and Kinney (1998) are among those who criticized media richness theory. They proposed in their greatest explanation of their findings that is that media richness theory could not commendably define and refer to modern technology. They suggested that media richness theory may possibly be a proper theory for the old and classic media, such as letters and memos, whose levels of feedback and clues are faraway lower those of the new media verified in that results. The modern thin media could be just rich enough to support workers to completely connect for reasonably equivocal jobs. Hence, it can be inferred that the use of certain communication channels are not at the same level the whole period, it change as well as the technology develops every day.

The present study also showed that both managers and employees piloted their works by emails and addressed documents, that was totally different with what was found by Markus in his study (1994) tested media richness theory to find out or

imagine that superiority of administrators in such a company would be more likely to take in in equivocal communication works, and consequently they choose telephones or small face-to-face meetings are higher preferable than thinner media such as e-mail. In his study the analysis of media piloted by staff through the company showed that vice presidents focused more e-mails than lower-level administration. However, in this study focused on most common used communication channels in the Sulfo Rwanda Industries, the researcher disagreed with Dennis and Kinney who said that the theory could not be suitable for new technology, because both quantitative and qualitative approaches presented that some modern communication channels are likely best effectively more tradition media. The disagreement may be it is because of period, culture and nature of company.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications of this study range from a list or rank of media that could be used as communications framework for managers and employees in the Sulfo Rwanda Industries, which can help them to pick or select appropriate media in their daily task and assignment in various situations. In this way, managers could communicate with employees and use the appropriate means of communication.

The findings help to explain managers and employees' perception, such as the point that e-mail is the most preferred based on role understanding competency followed by addressed document and telephones (fixed line and mobile) calls. Meanwhile, it shows that addressed documents; telephones (fixed line and mobile) are also favoured based on the Organization's Culture Awareness Competency. Whereas,

addressed documents, telephones (landline and mobile) are also favoured based on Employees' Performance Competency.

The company is more charged time and money by means of communication, which are used by managers and employees, such as email, telephone and face-to-face. In addition, the study helps the company to choose which medium's infrastructure should be increased, which depends on the higher level of preference among managers and employees. If the enterprise or industries experiences to use certain type of communication, the superior /senior management should send message to the employees using preferred channel among others. Instructing employees about the benefits of matching the situation with the media could bring outcome in more effective communication and greater production.

In addition, the study proved that usage of newspaper, magazines, radio and television as communication channels between company and government authorities provide great information to the organization. Furthermore, the e-mail communication channel becomes very important and higher value between company and government authorities. Moreover, these channels are preferred in terms of public as well as lorry show that company may use to advertise its products.

The findings also help the other companies and organizations' planning to implement certain communication devices such as laptop, mobile telephone and tablet to be included in their efforts to make sure that high levels of information through an e-mail communication channel is shared with employees to lower level. In addition, the e-mail communication channel is the most used channel by managers to lower

level of supervisors, meanwhile, supervisors reply messages to the superior using the same means of communication.

Lastly, the study has implications that higher management should ensure that means of communications in the company are provided to employees, in order to be connected with employees by the modern technology devices of communication which are most useful for employees. Thus, those modern technology devices of communication are very important for better organizational outcomes.

5.4 CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The important objective of scientific research is to increase to the body of knowledge. For that reason, based on the implication of the study has contributed to body of knowledge, as believed that traditional communication channels are higher than new communication means. However, the findings of this study based on three competencies, each one highlights own preference of media from traditional to new technology tools of communication, based on role understanding competency the result of this study preferred e-mail as higher followed by addressed documents, face-to-face, fixed line telephone, and mobile telephone, but SMS and Facebook looked as lower media.

Organization's Cultural Awareness Competency could be an observed understanding and getting of the views or beliefs, values and ethics of others as well as the confirmed skills necessary to work and communicate with and serve various individuals and groups in company. Based on the Organization's Culture Awareness Competency mostly is addressed documents, telephones (landline and mobile) are also

favoured. However, other means of communication (E-mails, face-to-face, SMS and Facebook) as well are useful but in different level of usefulness.

The effective communication between employees and managers in the company is the key to successful performance among subordinates. Regular feedback helps employees focus their work accomplishments so the managers, the employees, and the department can succeed the company's objectives. It constructs accountability, since managers and employees identify, understand and discuss each other in achieving company's objectives. Based on the Employees' Performance Competency mostly is E-mail followed by addressed documents, face-to-face, mobile telephone calls, and fixed line telephone calls. However, other means of communication such as SMS and Facebook considered least useful. Figure 5.1 shows the preferred channels of communication according to the different competencies.

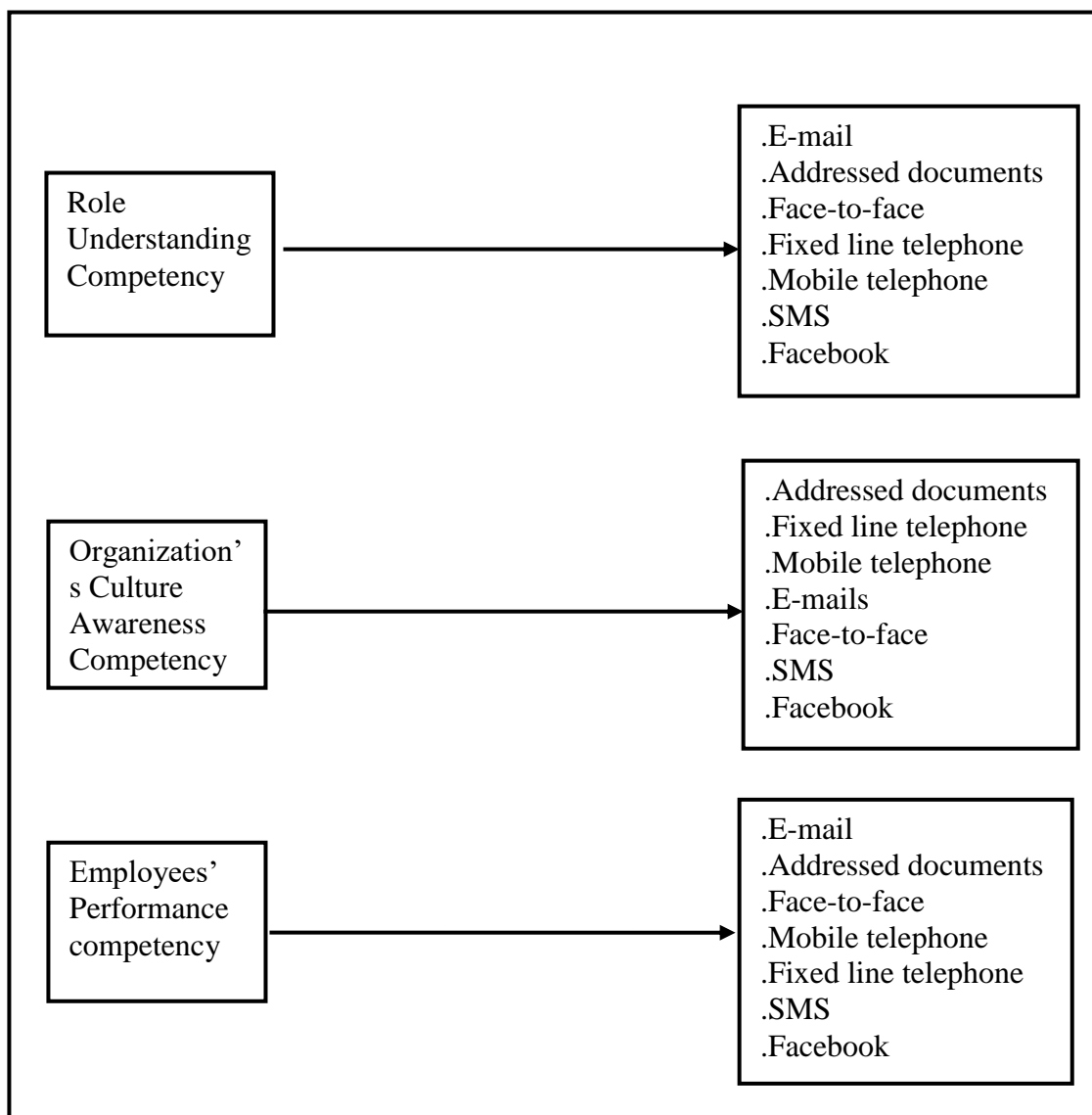


Figure 5.1: Model of management and communication channels in Sulfo Rwanda industries.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was focused on the media choice from the sender's prospective and receiver between superiors and subordinates in the mentioned company. Thus, the study has five limitations.

The first study limitation was that the study focused on the media choices made by managers and employees of Sulfo Rwanda Industries. It restricted itself to

seven types of media channels namely 1- face-to-face. 2- Addressed documents, 3- mobile telephone calls. 4- Fixed lines phone calls. 5- SMS. 6- E-mails and 7- Facebook. The other channels such as video teleconferencing, Viber, WhatsApp, Line, WeChat and Tweeter were not involved because they are perceived to be unpopular in the company.

The second limitation is that the Sulfo Rwanda Industries has branches inside and outside Rwanda. However, the researcher collected data only in the main headquarters and its branches that are situated in Kigali, Rwanda. The results of the study should therefore be limited to only managers and employees from headquarters and its branches inside Kigali. The exclusion of the other branches outside Rwanda has been because of different work environment with different languages especially in Uganda and Kenya.

The third limitation of this study, the researcher did not used research approaches like observations and phenomenological study because of time constraint. However, the researcher has been limited to the quantitative (questionnaire survey) and qualitative (face-to-face interview).

The fourth limitation was the study focused on the media choice from the sender and receiver's perspective from the company only. The study did not look to the communication sender and recipient's perspective in preferring the communication channel outside the company. For instance, the researcher did not get government authorities, external customers and public's perceptions in terms of communication between them and the company.

Finally, the main purpose of this study was to determine the most common used communication channels based on three competencies namely; role understanding competency, organization's culture awareness competency and employees' performance competency, was not ranking order of media richness and preferences for the company's decision making.

5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study, there are some recommendations for future research. First, future research should test the impact of the frequency of a communication channel used by managers and employees based on time frequently. How regularly managers and employees use a particular communication channel to get information about their everyday duties in the company, based on specific competency.

A second future research recommendation is to examine additional communication channels. A study to examine other modern communication channels such as social media (Viber, WeChat, WhatsApp, line) may help to add validations for this study. In addition, to examine other modern communication channels might determine whether the same relationships exist between communication channels preferred and employee's experiences.

A third recommendation is to examine the most perceived used communication channels between customers and employees may spread of this study to wider business environment populations. The ability to extend this study to non-company members with no restriction to years of experience with connection of the

organization will support the generalization of the results. In addition, this test will help validate the relationships identified between public communication channels and company's employees.

Lastly, the findings were inconclusive on determining the relationship between communication channels and level of sales and trades among customers, researchers should explore what other relationships exist between communication channels and organization. For example, the level of employee engagement and customers' perception regarding problem solving.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The study delivered some unexpected conclusions. The first surprise was that both managers and employees in the company emphasis on which medium, they transfer information through it regarding the communication channels are obtainable and less on which communication channels are most effective. Based on the results of this study, communication channels in general have a negative relationship with three competencies. There were a significant negative relationship between the communication channels and all variables related to competencies namely: Office assignment, Company time/schedules, and Company official announcements, Core values of the company, the rules of the company, Code of conduct and company activities.

The company increased usage of modern communication channels resulted in increased acceptance of innovation to the communication channels used. Consequently, management should evaluate the types of communication channels

most preferred between superior and employees to plan the increases of available types of communication.

The most perceived commonly used communication channels should be those channels preferred by managers and employees to send and receive information regarding their daily assignments, such as e-mail, addressed documents, face-to-face and telephone. Moreover, the company's management should limit means of communication provision to only the most chosen communication channels to effectively manage investments and information control.

According to Dennis and Kinney (1998), they propose that the best likely explanation for their results is that media richness theory cannot effectively define explain modern technology: therefore, media richness theory could be an appropriate theory for the traditional channels, such as letters and memos, whose levels of feedback and clues are faraway lower those of the modern communication channels verified in this study. The modern thin means of communication might be just rich sufficient to support workers to positively connect for reasonably achieve tasks.

Finally, many reasons other than organizational values do or should affect usage of means of organizational communication, including primary language, large departments of company, natural jobs, symbol representation, and technological environment (Baeza-yates, Fullee, Pino, & Goodman, 1995) the current study found that SMS and Facebook are thin used communication channels.

5.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE

The chapter contains the introduction of the chapter, which includes overview of source of findings; it also presents the discussion of the study. However, the chapter reports the implications, limitations of the study, it also talk about recommendation for future research as well as the conclusion of the study.

